

BRIGHTON

GUEST STREET AREA PLANNING STUDY

MARCH 2012



Sasaki Associates | GLC Development Resources | City of Boston | Boston Redevelopment Authority

**Thomas M. Menino,
Mayor**

**Peter Meade,
Director**

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The background of the slide is a vibrant orange color with a 3D isometric architectural pattern. The pattern consists of numerous rectangular blocks of varying heights and widths, arranged in a complex, grid-like structure that resembles a city skyline or a modern building complex. The perspective is from an elevated angle, looking down at the structures.

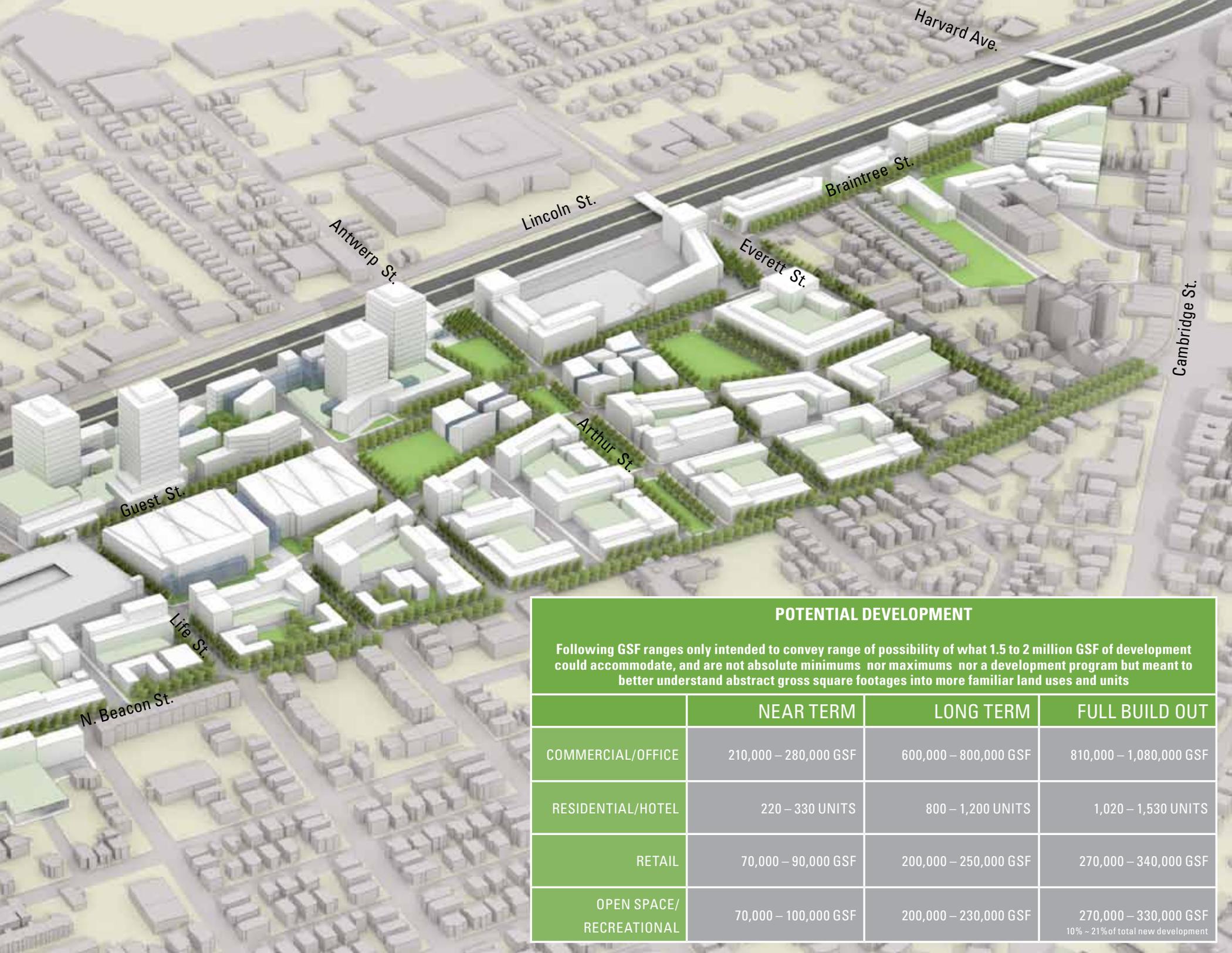
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2040 VISION: A CREATIVE DISTRICT

The Brighton Guest Street Area Planning Study establishes the framework and urban design guidelines that will shape future development and a coherent vision for an innovative and vibrant mixed use urban destination in Brighton, Boston's western "front door." The underutilized 100-acre district will become a destination in the heart of the Allston Brighton community with a unique identity and an attractive blend of pedestrian scaled streets, public parks and plazas, and neighborhood amenities.

Building on a rich history of transportation and workplace, this Planning Study seeks to position the area for new economic prospects in the context of a mixed-use, 18 hour vital urban center. With the established presence of WGBH Headquarters and New Balance's plans for expansion, the Study Area is on the cusp of a major transformation. The Brighton Guest Street Area Planning Study will be a valuable resource as the community, the City, private landowners, and businesses work together to realize a shared vision for the district.





POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

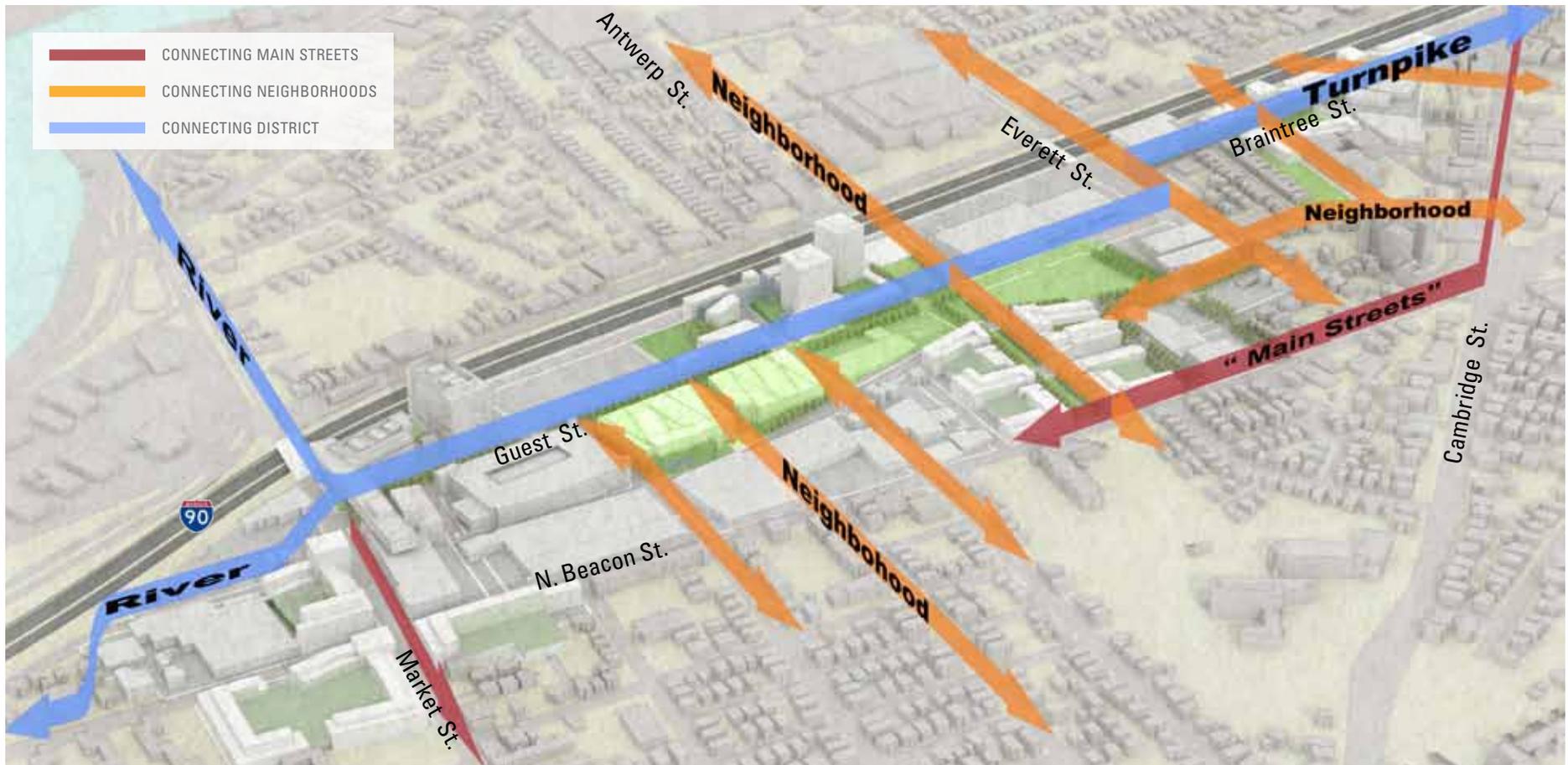
Following GSF ranges only intended to convey range of possibility of what 1.5 to 2 million GSF of development could accommodate, and are not absolute minimums nor maximums nor a development program but meant to better understand abstract gross square footages into more familiar land uses and units

| | NEAR TERM | LONG TERM | FULL BUILD OUT |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| COMMERCIAL/OFFICE | 210,000 – 280,000 GSF | 600,000 – 800,000 GSF | 810,000 – 1,080,000 GSF |
| RESIDENTIAL/HOTEL | 220 – 330 UNITS | 800 – 1,200 UNITS | 1,020 – 1,530 UNITS |
| RETAIL | 70,000 – 90,000 GSF | 200,000 – 250,000 GSF | 270,000 – 340,000 GSF |
| OPEN SPACE/ RECREATIONAL | 70,000 – 100,000 GSF | 200,000 – 230,000 GSF | 270,000 – 330,000 GSF <small>10% ~ 21% of total new development</small> |

Unlocking the Area for Future Development

This part of the city has been shaped by regional transportation. Originally well served by rail, the area's industries prospered and later its neighborhoods flourished. The last few decades have seen the slow decline of transportation access in the area. Starting with the creation of the Massachusetts Turnpike, the area first lost its train stations and then its street car access. As public transit continues to face funding challenges, private and public transit service options will need to be developed.

The Brighton Guest Street Area Planning Study proposes guidelines and a plan for the redevelopment of this valuable urban land that relies on a robust transportation strategy. This transportation strategy begins with intersection and traffic changes that improve access to the regional network (I-90). Over time, transportation demand management strategies, a commuter rail station, and increased transit service will be necessary to realize the full development potential of the district. The Brighton Guest Street Area Planning Study identifies the specific transportation improvements that must be pursued as the area develops and becomes one of Boston's "creative" engines, generating jobs and new businesses in a diverse and sustainable urban context.



CONNECTING THE AREA TO THE RIVER, THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND TO NEARBY MAIN STREETS IS A CRITICAL ELEMENT OF THE PLAN.

Connecting to the Neighborhoods

Connecting the Brighton Guest Street Area to its context is critical to the success of this emerging district. The area has long suffered from a lack of integration with the adjacent neighborhoods and a disconnected grid of streets both within and at its edges. This Planning Study proposes a series of connections that will tie the area to the adjacent neighborhoods, both to the south and to the north across the Turnpike, to the Charles River via Market Street and North Beacon, and to “main streets” in Brighton Center and Allston Village.

Boston’s Innovation Gateway

The Brighton Guest Street Area extends approximately one mile along the Massachusetts Turnpike. It is the key western approach to Boston, the nation’s “Innovation Capital”. The creativity and vitality of Boston’s innovation economy is important to express along the Turnpike approach to the city. Through urban design guidelines that call for variety, transparency, innovative and expressive building design, a bold strategy to embrace the locational attributes of the area is presented in this Planning Study.

Development Capacity

In the near term, 500,000-700,000 square feet of mixed use development can be built in the area, provided a number of traffic improvements and transportation demand management (TDM) measures are implemented. In the long term, 1.5-2.0 million square feet of mixed-use development will depend on additional TDM measures and more comprehensive transit investments including a commuter rail station. These measures are described in more detail in the report. Major transportation investments include: connecting Guest Street to Braintree Street via Everett Street, creating a comprehensive street grid, improving intersections and changing traffic flows east of Everett Street, improved transit service, and building a commuter rail station in the future.

This study’s transportation analysis indicates that new development proposals could be accommodated in the area assuming that additional traffic signals, enhanced commuter rail service and other TDM measures are implemented adequately to modify the current projected mode share for the area. The thresholds at which the different measures and other improvements are undertaken within the phasing of development should be an important consideration of any development to be reviewed as part of the BRA’s Article 80 process.

Urban Design Guidelines

The urban design guidelines present a framework for development in the district. The guidelines include:

- Creating mixed use development with office, live/work, residential, community, retail and active/recreational uses along primary streets
- Developing a range of street types to create a diverse neighborhood
- Creating a “flexible” open space zone at core with parks, plazas, and indoor/outdoor recreational amenities
- Allowing a height and density range from FAR 3.0-4.0 and 150 ft or 10-13 stories at the Turnpike to FAR 0.75-1.5 and 40 ft or 3 stories along North Beacon Street.

The Brighton Guest Street Area Planning Study will be a valuable resource as the community, the City, and private landowners and businesses work together to realize a shared vision for the district. The BRA’s Article 80 development review process has the ability to be flexible with such guidelines, if significant greater public benefits are provided by a developer that support the goals of the Planning Study.



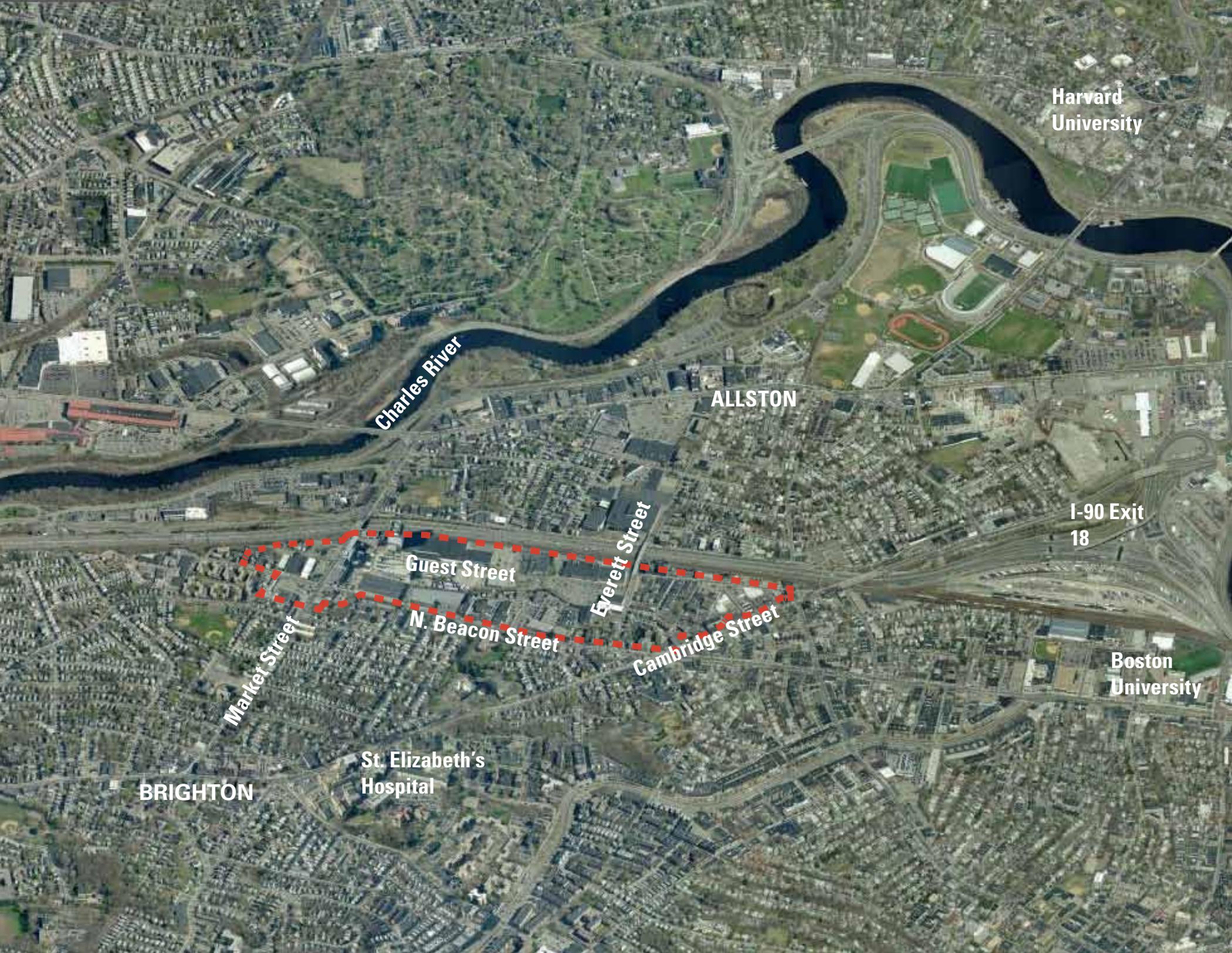
A CENTRAL ZONE OF THE DISTRICT WILL BECOME A CREATIVE CENTER WITH A RANGE OF COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL AMENITIES.

2





PLANNING CONTEXT



Harvard University

Charles River

ALLSTON

I-90 Exit 18

Boston University

BRIGHTON

St. Elizabeth's Hospital

Market Street

Guest Street

N. Beacon Street

Everett Street

Cambridge Street

BACKGROUND

Purpose of Study

Brighton, one of Boston's most diverse and dynamic neighborhoods, is within walking distance of many of the great urban districts in the Boston area but is often overlooked - hidden behind significant geographical barriers that surround its modest footprint. Embedded in the heart of the Allston/Brighton neighborhood, the Guest Street Area is one of the last mixed industrial areas in the neighborhood with an uncertain future. The goal of this Planning Study is to proactively work with the community to determine the future character and function of it.

This study presents a tremendous opportunity to transform an undefined neighborhood sub-area into a vibrant urban district with a character and identity of its own. The study embraces an urban regeneration model that is in scale with the neighborhood yet responsive to the changing needs of the City's economic base.

Advisory Group Process

Mayor Thomas M. Menino appointed 13 business owners, residents, and activists to serve as members of the Advisory Group (AG) for the Brighton Guest Street Area Planning Study (see adjacent image for the Study Area boundary). The AG played a key role in assisting the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and Sasaki Associates, with public participation and community input throughout the planning process. The AG's active role was vital in guiding feedback for future development so that the plan meets the needs of the diverse community.

The first AG working session was held in late July 2011 to review an analysis of the Study Area. Subsequent meetings were held in September, October (2), and November to review and provide input on work-in-progress. A presentation of the preferred plan and report highlights was given in mid-January 2012 followed by a report work session at the end of the month and a final presentation on February 9, 2012.

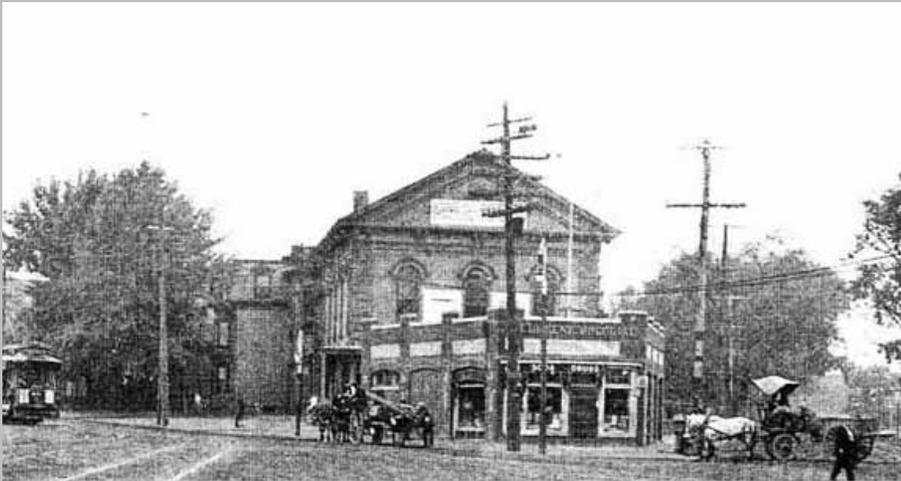


ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY ATTEND WORKING SESSIONS



ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY ATTEND WORKING SESSIONS

HISTORY OF THE STUDY AREA



OMNIBUS
CREDIT: BRIGHTON ALLSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

There is a rich history of people living and working in the Study Area. In the nineteenth century, the area grew around the presence of the railroad and included Brighton Station, Allston Station and the adjacent railyards. Stockyards near Brighton Station provided employment for many and were also an important element of Greater Boston's economy well into the early twentieth century. Early residential areas were established towards the western extent of the study area, but much of the surrounding property was still in use as farmland.

By the 1920s, the stockyards had expanded and a number of warehouses and light industrial facilities were established nearby. Many of these utilitarian buildings continue to exist as defining elements of the neighborhood. While rail remained a critical mode of transportation for both people and goods, Soldier's Field Road introduced vehicular traffic along the Charles River. The River itself was enhanced with the establishment of the Charles River Reservation. Several other parks and playgrounds were also built in areas surrounding the Study Area.

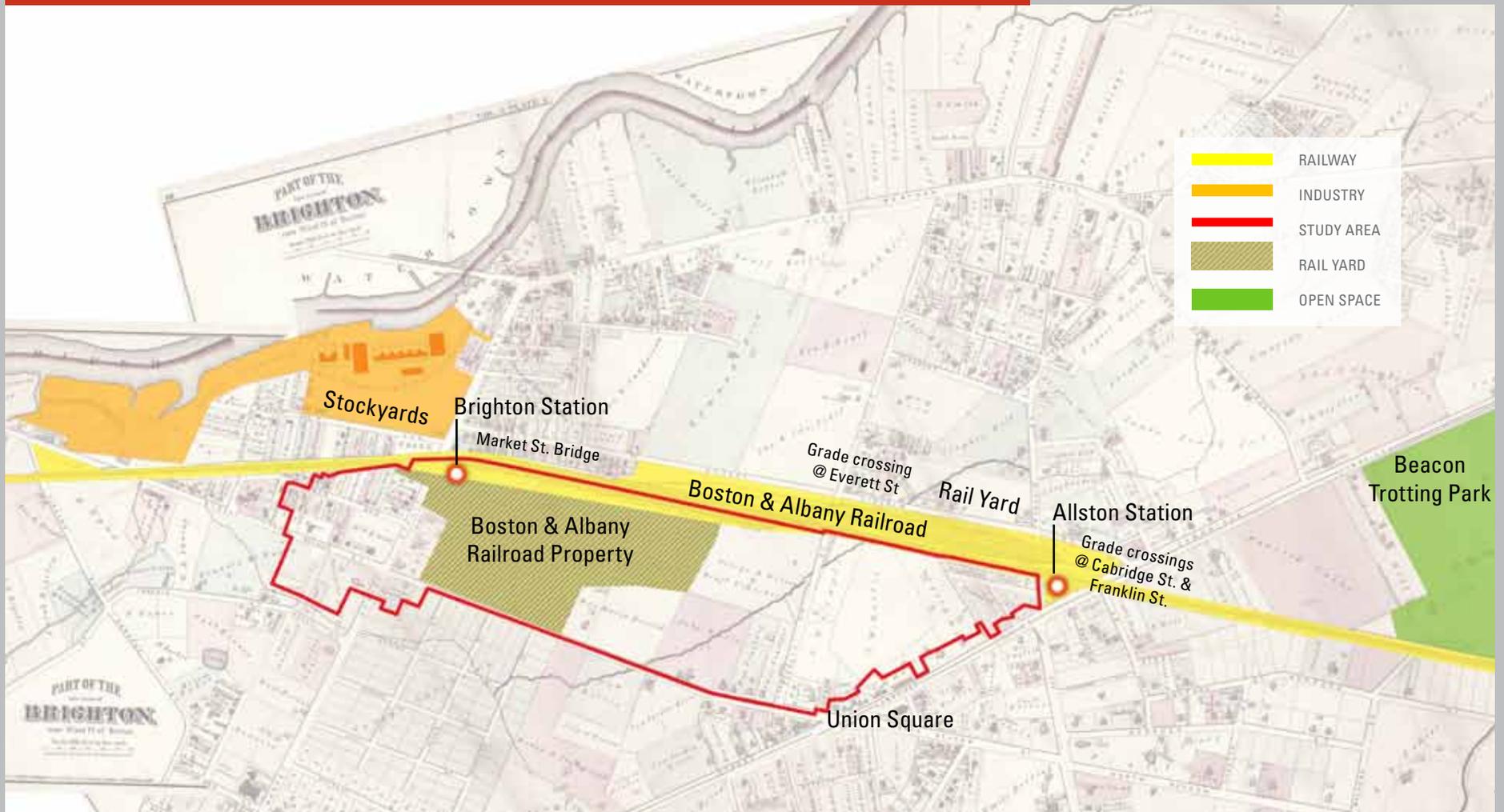
The character of the Study Area changed drastically in the 1960s with the introduction of the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) which divided and interrupted existing neighborhoods and transportation patterns. By this time, the stockyards were gone and the Study Area included warehouses and light industrial use. The "A" branch of the MBTA Green Line provided streetcar access to Union Square at the southeast corner of the Study Area. The A line was discontinued in 1968.



STREETCARS
CREDIT: BRIGHTON ALLSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

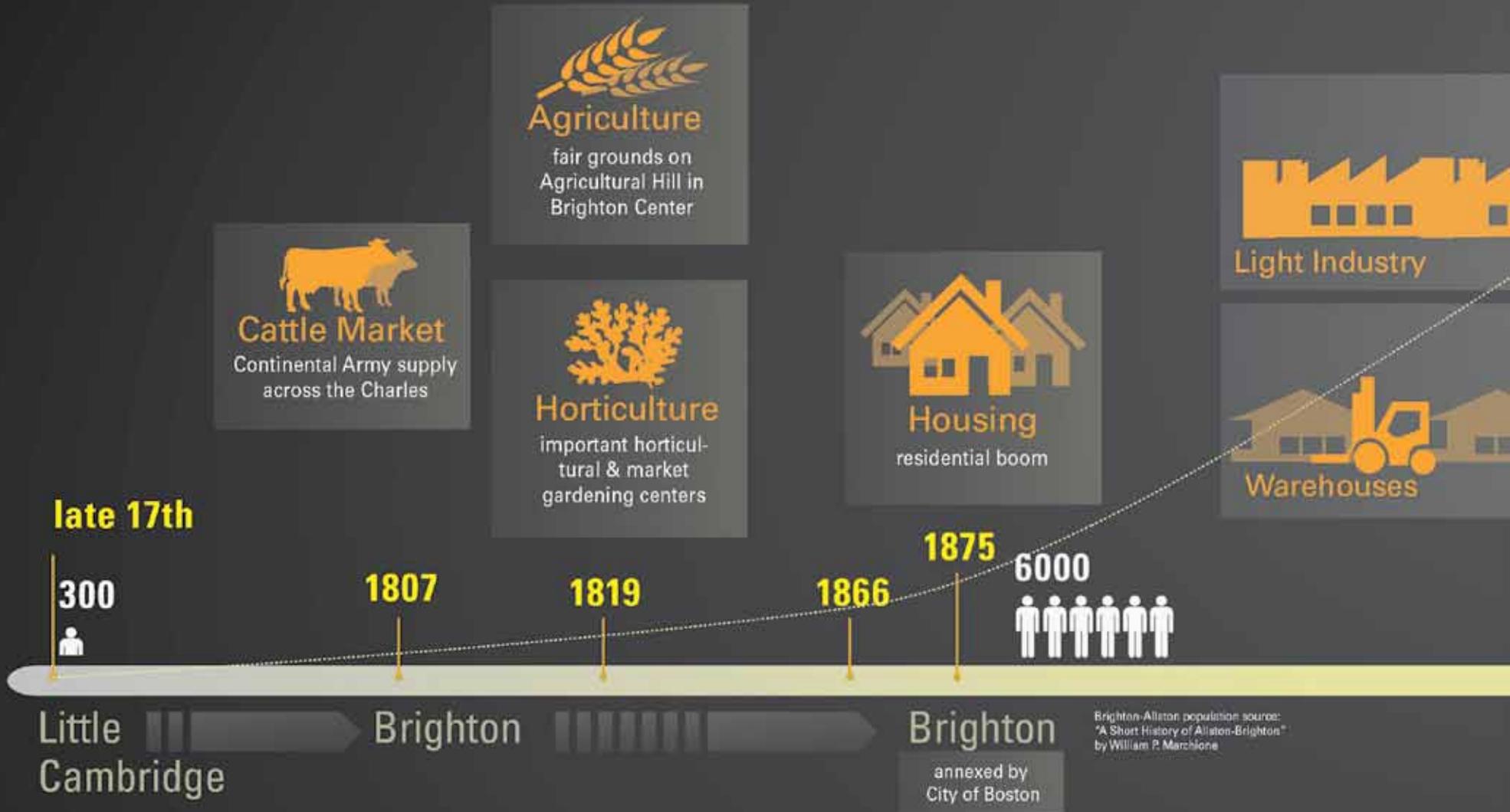
Key Historical Findings

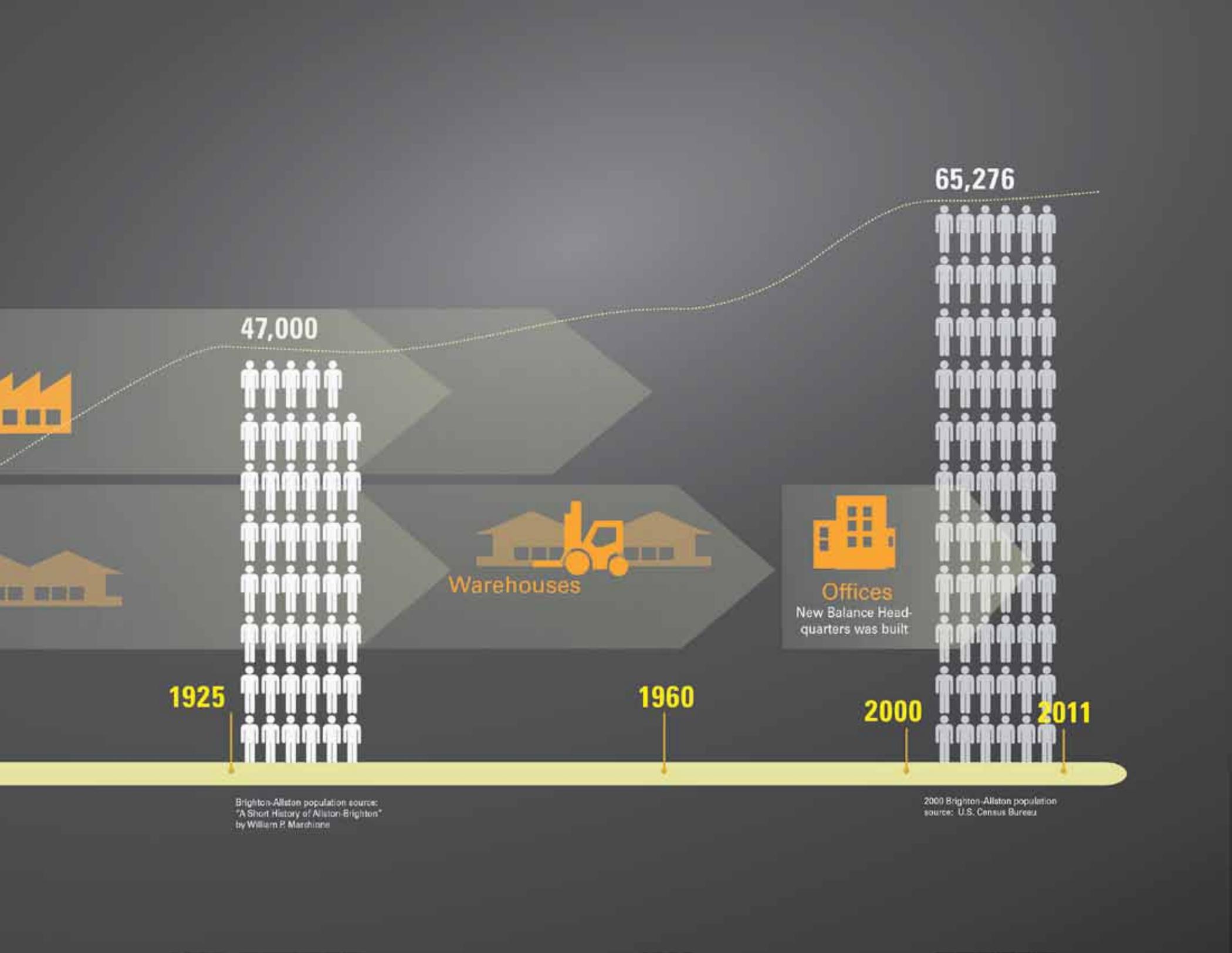
- Historically, the Study Area has been an economic engine for the city
- The Study Area was once well served by rail but access to the Charles River has always been limited
- After the neighborhood boom of the early 20th Century, Brighton has grown steadily in population
- Brighton's population continues to become more ethnically diverse but less diverse by age



BRIGHTON DEVELOPMENT : TIMELINE

 = 1000





1925

47,000

1960

Warehouses

2000

Offices
New Balance Headquarters was built

2011

65,276

Brighton-Allston population source:
"A Short History of Allston-Brighton"
by William P. Marchione

2000 Brighton-Allston population
source: U.S. Census Bureau

EXISTING ASSETS AND CHALLENGES

The Study Area Today

In recent decades, office buildings, including the headquarters for WGBH and New Balance, have replaced some of the former warehouse and light industrial uses in the Study Area. The Study Area has experienced a 4.1% population increase over the last ten years, as well as greater diversity and educational attainment of its residents. The median household income continues to be lower than Allston-Brighton overall.

A prominent characteristic of the Study Area is the predominance of paved surfaces. Only 1% is green space; paved roadways make up 13% of the site, building footprints another 37%. The remaining 49% is other impervious surfaces such as parking lots. With little pervious surface available to help absorb storm water, drainage is a crucial issue. This is further impacted by the location of the Study Area's two high points – one along Market Street to the west and the other in the southeast near Union Square.

Despite the lack of green space within the Study Area, there are a number of nearby neighborhood parks such as the McKinney Street Playground, the Portsmouth Street Playground, and the Mt. St. Joseph Academy Athletic Fields. Other nearby open spaces include Union Square Plaza and the Birmingham Parkway. Also of note is the proximity to the Charles River Reservation. The river is only one-quarter mile from the edge of the Study Area but is very difficult to reach on foot. The Study Area has few institutional and civic amenities despite the large number of hospitals, schools, churches and civic spaces within the surrounding context boundary.



NEW BALANCE HEADQUARTERS IS HOME TO MANY JOBS IN THE STUDY AREA.



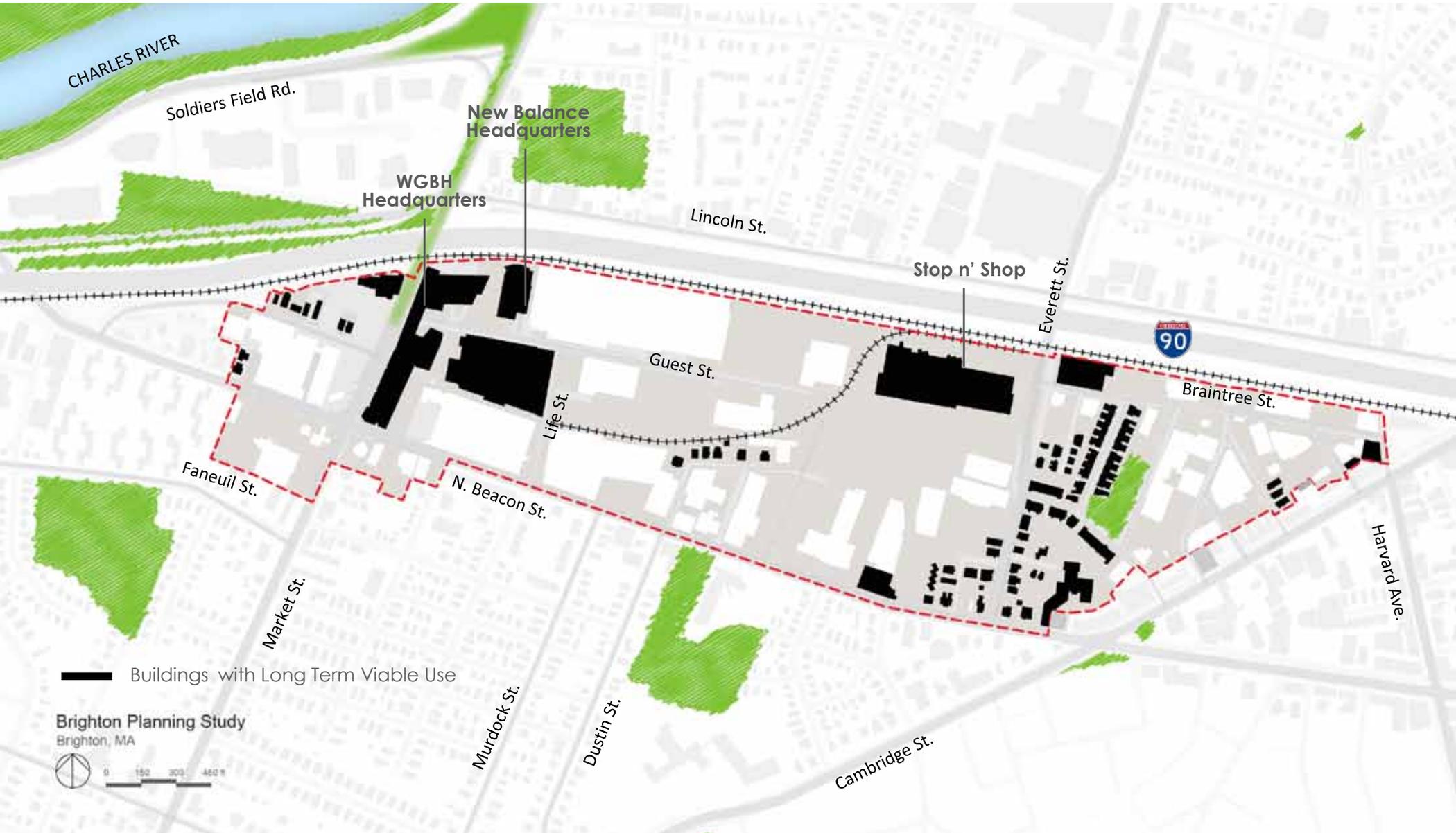
SOME OLDER BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN RENOVATED AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF THE STUDY AREA.



WGBH HEADQUARTERS REPRESENTS A BOLD NEW ARCHITECTURE THAT REFLECTS THE CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE ACTIVITIES THAT EXIST IN THE AREA TODAY.



GUEST STREET REFLECTS THE INDUSTRIAL AND UNDERUTILIZED CHARACTER OF THE AREA AND IS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT.



EXISTING ASSETS

Regional Context

Although the Study Area is near the geographic center of Greater Boston, major transportation corridors such as the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) and the MBTA Commuter Rail pass through the Study Area without stopping, limiting regional access. The area boasts a number of regional amenities including the Charles River Reservation, neighborhood parks, employment and commercial centers such as Brighton Center and Allston Village, and institutions that include a number of hospitals and universities. The economic, environmental, and transportation context are all very important in determining the appropriate character and uses within the Study Area.

Economic Considerations

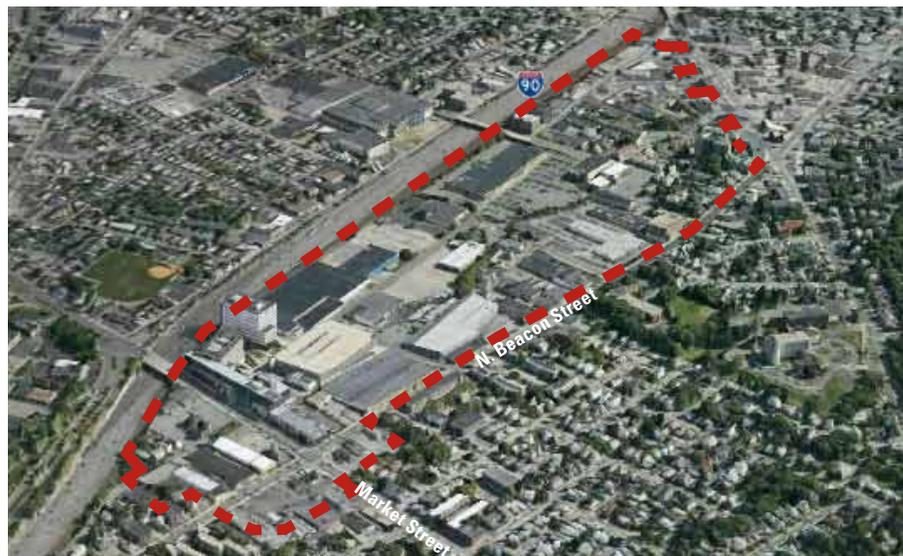
Today, the economic condition of the Study Area's commercial real estate market is closely related to the condition of Boston's commercial real estate market. Presently, there is no established sub-market for office and retail in this section of Brighton. Nearby sections of Brighton and Allston do have market recognition as a residential district due to their proximity to major institutions such as Harvard University, Boston College, Boston University, Saint Elizabeth's Medical Center and other area hospitals.

As of early 2012, there is limited development of new office and retail space in Boston. Select projects for specific users, like Liberty Mutual or Vertex, are moving forward as well as a few buildings that are pre-leased. But speculative office development is limited. Retail is still under development on key sites but is also limited. Only market-rate residential is currently returning to demand levels and rents which warrant new investment and development. While there are some exceptions, in general, office occupancy and rents have not yet reached the required thresholds for new development. Development of national retail stores (including pharmacies) on high traffic sites and some restaurants are also starting to be developed with greater frequency.

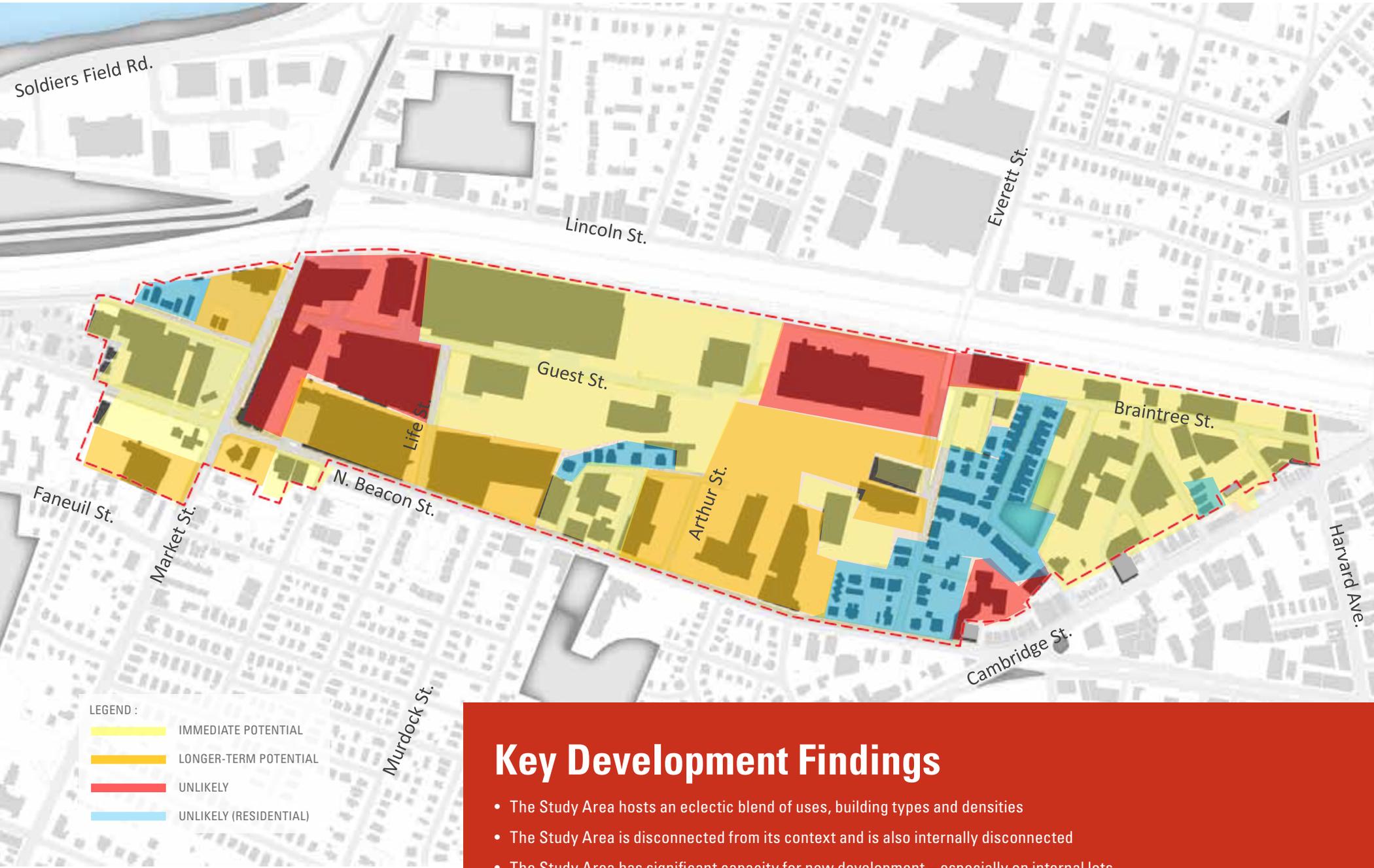
In Brighton, residential development is returning, with rents reaching thresholds required by developers to start new projects. Retail is being developed on sites with strong traffic counts and adjacent to other retail. While there has not been extensive office development or redevelopment due to low rents, the New Balance and WGBH headquarter properties are relatively recent additions to the Guest Street area. However, these were developed for users already in the area that needed additional space or relocation and were built prior to the major financial downturn. Still, there is evidence from recent real estate acquisitions, that there are users willing to pay rents, adequate to

finance new construction, in order to be located near existing office users and/or remain and grow in the area.

Factors that contribute to the desirability of the Study Area include visibility from the Massachusetts Turnpike, relatively convenient access to it and Soldiers Field Road, as well as larger-scale parcels suitable for modern office buildings or larger-scale retailers. Factors that are detrimental to its attractiveness include the area's relative lack of public transportation access to downtown and the western suburbs, lack of identity and visibility from major streets in the area, access that is less than clear, and a public realm that is lacking. These factors are particularly important for office users and are important to retail tenants only to the extent that retail will either need to be located in a visible location with high traffic counts or of a critical mass that it can serve as a destination. Office users that are already located in the area and want to grow or relocate or have a desire to be proximate to WGBH or New Balance will put less weight on the negative location issues. Residential uses are negatively impacted by the lack of public transportation but that is offset by close proximity to employment generators such as the institutions mentioned above and the local retail district of Allston Village that appeals to a young demographic.



STUDY AREA



Key Development Findings

- The Study Area hosts an eclectic blend of uses, building types and densities
- The Study Area is disconnected from its context and is also internally disconnected
- The Study Area has significant capacity for new development – especially on internal lots

Development Potential

Currently, the majority of the Study Area is zoned as a local industrial sub-district, a classification that is somewhat outdated and could limit the range of future development. Existing land uses cover a range of residential, commercial, office and industrial uses. This mix is reflected in the diverse character of buildings within the Study Area and in the range of densities throughout it. The Study Area includes a number of large properties, particularly in its center. The relatively low number of property owners could facilitate future redevelopment within the Study Area. The diagram above indicates potential areas that could be developed in the near and long term. Existing residential areas and recent commercial development are less likely to be redeveloped in the near future than other properties.

Below are rents and sales prices applicable to the office, retail, residential and other user markets in the Study Area, based on recent experience in the market (for more information see technical memorandum in the appendix).

- **Office:** The rents available for office space in this area are not generally high enough to support new construction or redevelopment. 116 Braintree is one of the few non-headquarters office properties in the area with rents in the high teens. However, for users that want to locate near New Balance or WGBH and/or have established a significant presence in the area and want to be part of a major character-defining project, they may be willing to pay in the low \$30 per square foot range, that rent is needed for development to occur, assuming a moderate land cost basis.
- **Residential:** Allston-Brighton is a recognized residential area for young workers within Boston. The residential market has improved to the point where new projects can be permitted and financed.
- **Retail:** There are a number of large retail land users (such as Wolfer's, Walgreens, Stockyard, and Boston Volvo) which are doing business in the kind of high traffic locations where national retailers would like to be located. However, it is difficult to assemble sites large enough for a national retailer today. The secondary locations in the area may be less expensive, larger or easier to assemble, but do not have the foot or car traffic and visibility adequate enough to make them appealing to retailers. Destination retail might be possible.

Recommendations

We believe that new construction of office, destination retail, not big-box, and rental residential land uses are most viable in this area. Consistent with this plan, for there to be growth of market-oriented development in the Study Area, this area needs to be better defined as a district and desirable destination, and its interior parcels made more visible and attractive. Recommendations to enhance that identity include:

“Place making”: Residential and office are more likely to be successful with an improved environment, but for retail to be successful in the district, other than along North Beacon Street and Market Street, it is imperative for the BRA / City and development interests to use streets and open space and good building design to create a greater sense of identity for the Arthur Street and Guest Street intersection and along Guest Street to Market Street. We recommend focusing on the public realm (open space, streetscape) when working with development interests to create a “place” for the success of street-oriented retail.

Expand the Residential Neighborhood Adjacent to Allston Village: We encourage development of a mix of residential types in the eastern segment of the Study Area, near Cambridge Street. In this area, there are a number of smaller light manufacturing buildings which could be redeveloped or demolished for new construction: this residential use would benefit from and help support the retail uses in Allston Village. Residential uses are also beneficial elsewhere in Study Area to support open space, streetscape and retail.

Define the Retail Relationship Between Guest Street and Main Street Districts: It is important that the relationship between Allston Village, Brighton Center, Guest and Arthur Street have distinct retail purposes so that they support one another and the retail draw of this larger area rather than just compete for one another's users. Guest Street is likely to be destination retail; it is unlikely that any retail development along Guest and Arthur Streets can provide sufficient services, entertainment and restaurants to compete with Allston Village. Allston Village is likely to be retail targeted at the existing and potential future residential neighborhood referenced above. The distance between the two areas is sufficiently great with large residential areas that cannot provide retail continuity. Reinforcing these areas as distinct and independent will be important.

TRANSPORTATION

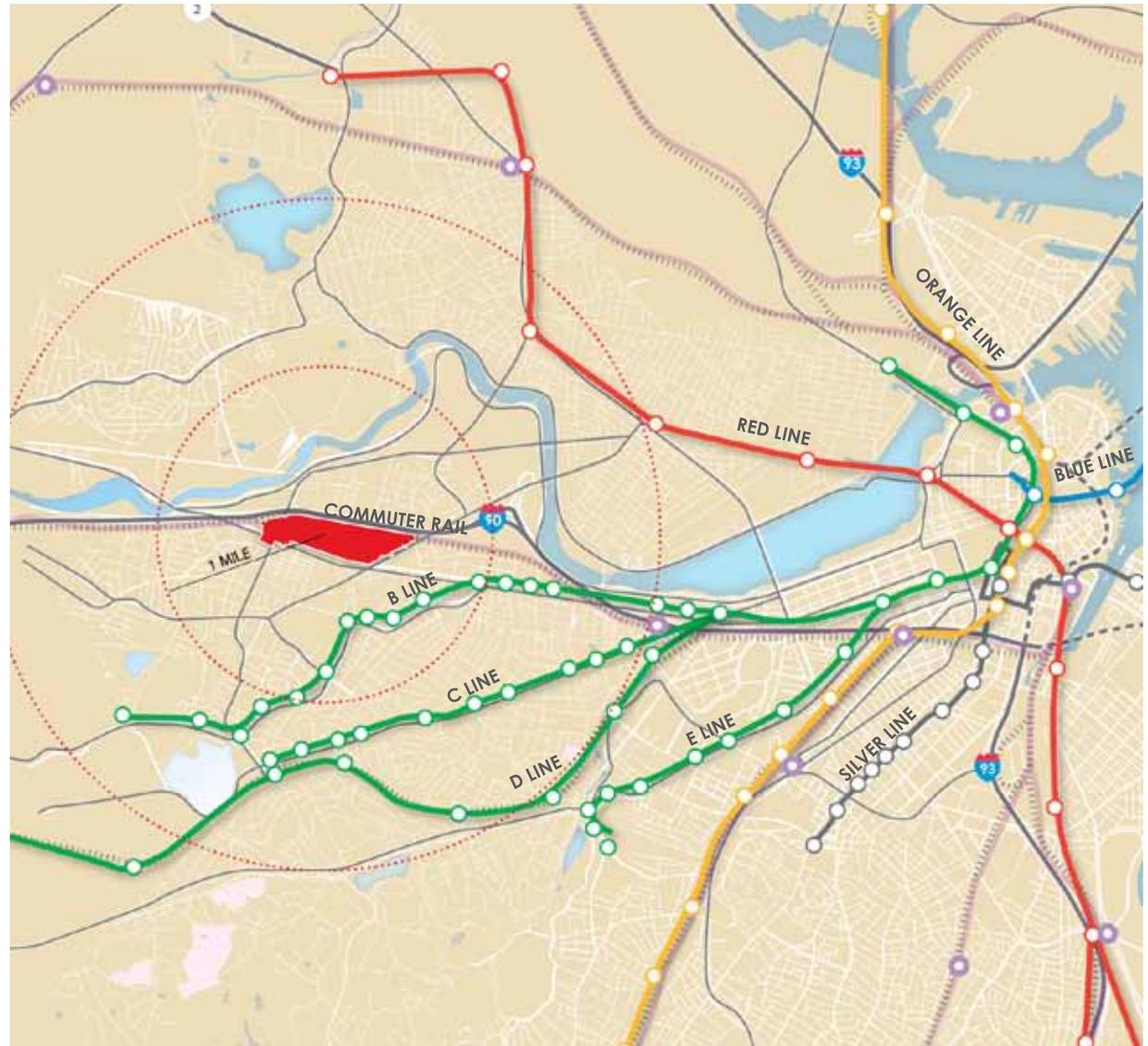
Transportation Conditions

Streets typically make up 30 to 40 percent of a city and are one of Boston's most utilized and most critical public assets. Competing demands on the streets, as well as, crucial access to the Study Area will shape the district's growth and impact the economic competitiveness of the area.

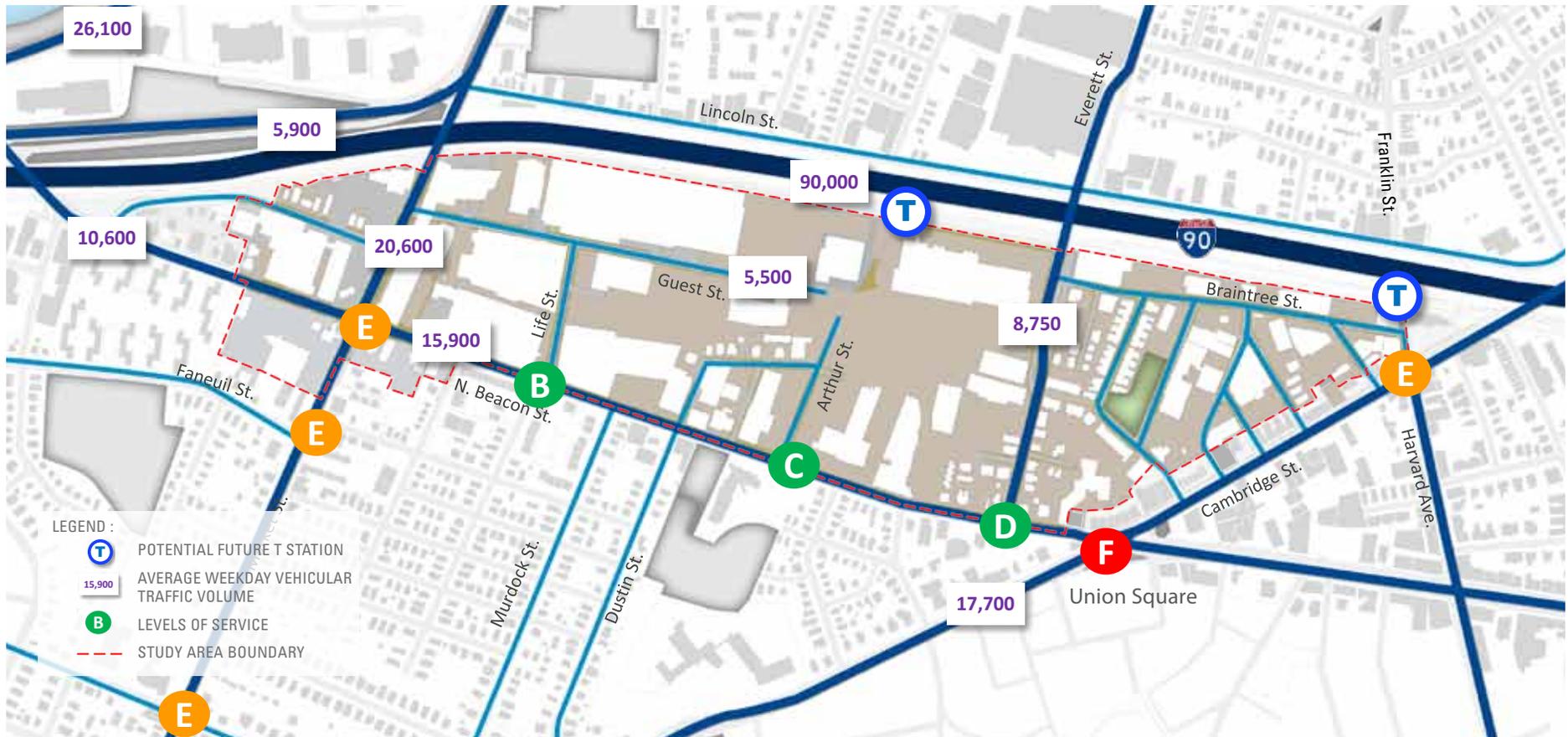
The Brighton Guest Street Study Area is framed by the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) corridor and a number of arterial streets but has a minimal internal road network. A combination of one-way streets and private ways segment the Study Area into a number of sub-districts among which there are few points of passage. Traffic in the Study Area attains varied levels of service (LOS) – movement along North Beacon Street from Life Street to Everett Street is quite smooth, though bracketed with relatively low LOS along the Market Street corridor and at the Union Square intersection.

There is a long history of public transit services in the Study Area, including four early passenger rail stops and the A branch of the MBTA's Green Line trolley, which have been discontinued. Presently, MBTA buses (Routes 64, 57 and 66) are the only form of public transit directly serving the Study Area. However, long-term MBTA plans support restoring rail service to the corridor by constructing a new commuter rail stop in the vicinity of the Study Area, most likely at Everett Street or Cambridge Street.

Regarding access, the Study Area has significant



TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS



STREETS, TRAFFIC AND TRANSIT
AVERAGE WEEKDAY TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND INTERSECTION LEVELS OF SERVICE (LOS).

advantages and disadvantages. It sits at the geographic center of the Boston metropolitan region’s distribution of residences and jobs. It lies along the Massachusetts Turnpike, an interstate highway, and its eastern end is within a half mile of the Allston interchange. It is served by North Beacon and Cambridge Streets, arterials that connect to Commonwealth Avenue and the Back Bay, Watertown Square, Brighton Center, Newton and Central Square in Cambridge. Adjacent local streets provide a good model of connectivity and neighborhood scale.

The Study Area is challenged by problems of traffic congestion, auto-dependency and lack of transit services, disconnection between internal streets, and the barrier caused

by the Turnpike. Transit service does not approach the level that was formerly provided by the A Line. The Turnpike hinders both vehicular and pedestrian North-South movement. The two Turnpike bridge crossings at Market and Everett Streets, have severe traffic design and operations deficiencies. As a result of these weaknesses, vehicular traffic is capacity-constrained, which will require private investment to achieve the area’s development potential. Public walkways, while not congested, are in many cases unmaintained and in need of improvement. The pedestrian crossing of Everett Street at the bottom of the bridge is inadequate, given the volume of pedestrian traffic in the area.

Opportunities

The Study Area's transportation deficiencies also represent opportunities:

- The nearby Charles River is an invaluable recreational resource. Overcoming the barrier of the Turnpike and the auto-dominated streets that cross it would open access to miles of river paths, public boat docks, and open space.
- In the center of the Study Area, the Everett Street corridor is an undeveloped node of neighborhood activity. Great numbers of pedestrians cross Everett Street and the bridge at all hours of the day, including school children and the elderly. Improving the safety and amenity of Everett Street and its crossings would help tie the Study Area together, by better connecting the shopping area west of the street to its natural customer base on the east.
- Guest and Braintree Streets are straight and relatively wide, together running almost the entire length of the Study Area. If they could be linked they would form a vital artery providing access to and between all parts of the Study Area, and would make a higher level of development possible. The new connection would even serve to moderate existing traffic congestion along North Beacon and Cambridge Streets, and would finally integrate the Study Area into the surrounding city. Guest/Braintree Streets also hold promise as a bicycle corridor, an alternative to other busy streets and a direct connection to Harvard Avenue and Brookline.
- The private ownership of the Arthur/Guest Street intersection leaves a gap which could be filled with a new focus point. Arthur Street could become a ceremonial gateway, giving the Study Area its own identity. Bringing the Guest Street intersection into the public realm would be beneficial to property owners, by providing the sidewalks and street plantings that form the framework of an urban district.
- The pattern of discontinuous and one-way streets that separate the Study Area's sub-districts can be turned into an advantage, by protecting the residential neighborhood from the civic and commercial activity associated with economic development. The Hano Street homes and the Honan Apartments are not in danger of suffering from cut-through traffic.
- The Harvard Avenue/Cambridge Street/Franklin Street intersection, while severely congested, gives direct access from the Study Area to the Turnpike. If its capacity can be maximized, traffic to and from the Study Area can grow without unduly affecting conditions at other nearby intersections. Signalizing the intersection at Franklin and Cambridge and creating a one-way street pair with Denby and Franklin

Streets. are the changes that will need to be implemented.

Capacity Thresholds

In order to assure that the area's transportation system can accommodate the traffic generated by the Study Area when it is redeveloped, a traffic model was created that projects the traffic volume through a set of intersections in the Study Area. The goal of the modeling effort was to identify a development program that would not increase total traffic in the area by more than ten percent.

The model methodology is described in the Traffic Impact Analysis Appendix. The specific transportation improvements that make development possible in the Study Area are described in Chapter 3. With near term development assuming that automobile mode share decreases from seventy percent to fifty percent, it is estimated that the average increase in traffic, at the six intersections whose level-of service is below C, will be eight percent.

Key Transportation Findings

- Significant traffic congestion at Union Square and in Market Street corridor
- Transit service in the neighborhood has been reduced
- MBTA is investigating restoring rail transit service
- Public street network is disconnected at center of the study area
- Access to river and river roads to the north is constrained

OPPORTUNITIES

1 RESPECT THE HISTORY Build On Area Assets

The Study Area has historically played a significant role as a center of employment in Allston/Brighton

GOAL: Embrace the historic assets of the Study Area and create a vision for the future prosperity of the neighborhood

2 POSITION THE SITE Greater Economic Context

The Study Area is well positioned geographically to play an important role in the “new” economic opportunities of the Boston area

GOAL: Position the Study Area to capitalize on these latent opportunities with development strategies

3 RECONNECT THE SITE Comprehensive Mobility

The Study Area can be better linked to regional pedestrian and bicycle networks

GOAL: Improve circulation within the Study Area to address traffic issues and connectivity

Locate a station in the Study Area to restore important rail service even if a long term investment



RESPECT THE HISTORY



POSITION THE AREA



RECONNECT THE AREA WITH GREAT PEDESTRIAN STREETS AND TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

4 ASSESS DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL Create Value

The Study Area has significant capacity for new development but each sub-district will require different development strategies

GOAL: Draw on local strengths and develop a bold vision and framework that create a great new place in the neighborhood



CREATE A UNIQUE DESTINATION WITH A STRONG IDENTITY

5 CREATE DISTRICT IDENTITY Become A Destination

The Study Area can become a distinct cultural and economic center in Boston that complements the surrounding neighborhood centers

GOAL: Create a vibrant public realm of streets and squares that will transform the Study Area into an attractive, pedestrian-scaled, climate appropriate new district

3





URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

LEGEND:

- LINKING GUEST STREET TO BRAINTREE STREET
- LINKING TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD
- CREATING A NETWORK OF GREEN SPACES LINKED TO THE RIVER
- POSSIBLE FUTURE TRAIN STATION



FRAMEWORK CONTEXT

The planning approach allows for flexibility to respond to unforeseen changes in the market over time. Overarching urban design guidelines establish a level of predictability necessary to inspire investment from multiple property owners. Derived from community input, conversations with stakeholders, the analysis of current issues, and an understanding of the significant potential of the Study Area, the urban design guidelines outlined in this chapter create the basis for future development. The framework context establishes the overall foundation for the following recommendations:

- Create better access to Exit 18 (Allston interchange) of the Massachusetts Turnpike (I-90) to unlock the area for new development without significantly increasing traffic.
- Invest in transportation infrastructure over time to reach the long term potential of 1.5-2 million square feet of new development.
- Stitch the area into the surrounding context through new street connections to the south and a new pedestrian connection at the location of the future train station to the north.
- Connect a necklace of parks, plazas, and green streets along the Briantree/Guest Street corridor and at Everett and Arthur Streets.



CONNECTIONS



CONNECTING THE AREA TO THE RIVER , THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND TO NEARBY MAIN STREETS IS A CRITICAL ELEMENT OF THE PLAN.

The following guidelines expand upon each of these foundations with greater detail. To create connections within the Study Area:

- Align new streets with existing streets edges to weave the new district into the adjacent neighborhood context.
- Improve connections from the corner of Market Street and Guest Street to the Charles River by improving the pedestrian experience.
- Create a framework of interconnected open spaces and green streets in the district.
- Improve connections to Everett Street and through Everett Street to connect Guest and Braintree Streets.

The Turnpike edge is a prominent gateway for visitors coming into Boston from the west. Capitalize on this visibility by celebrating the arrival into arguably the most innovative city in the U.S. with appropriate design:

- Reveal the creative uses occurring in the district by making buildings transparent where possible.
- Reflect a forward thinking architectural building treatment with contemporary design, green technologies, and exciting architecture.
- Encourage the use of lights and appropriate signage to add visual interest to the edge at all times.
- Vary building massing with a balance of higher and lower building forms to avoid the creation of an impenetrable wall.
- Leave frequent sky zones to break up the edge.

The creative center is a zone at the heart of the district between Guest Street and Hichborn Street that should:

- Accommodate frequent parks, plazas, recreational uses, and community and cultural uses.
- Make pedestrian access paramount.
- Include restaurants, galleries, and institutions with mixed-use housing and work space above.

Creative/Active Zone

The heart of the district between Guest Street and Hichborn Street should:

- Accommodate a variety of parks, plazas, indoor/outdoor and recreational uses, community and cultural uses.
- Become an active public realm with recreational uses and activities and pedestrian access is paramount.
- Include uses like restaurants, galleries, institutions, with mixed use housing and work space above.



THE TURNPIKE EDGE IS A PROMINENT GATEWAY TO BOSTON. ARCHITECTURAL TREATMENT OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS MUST REFLECT THE CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION OF THE CITY

LEGEND :

- ACTIVE EDGE
- VIEWS
- MIXED USE
- RETAIL / ACTIVITY / RECREATIONAL EDGE
- POTENTIAL T STATION



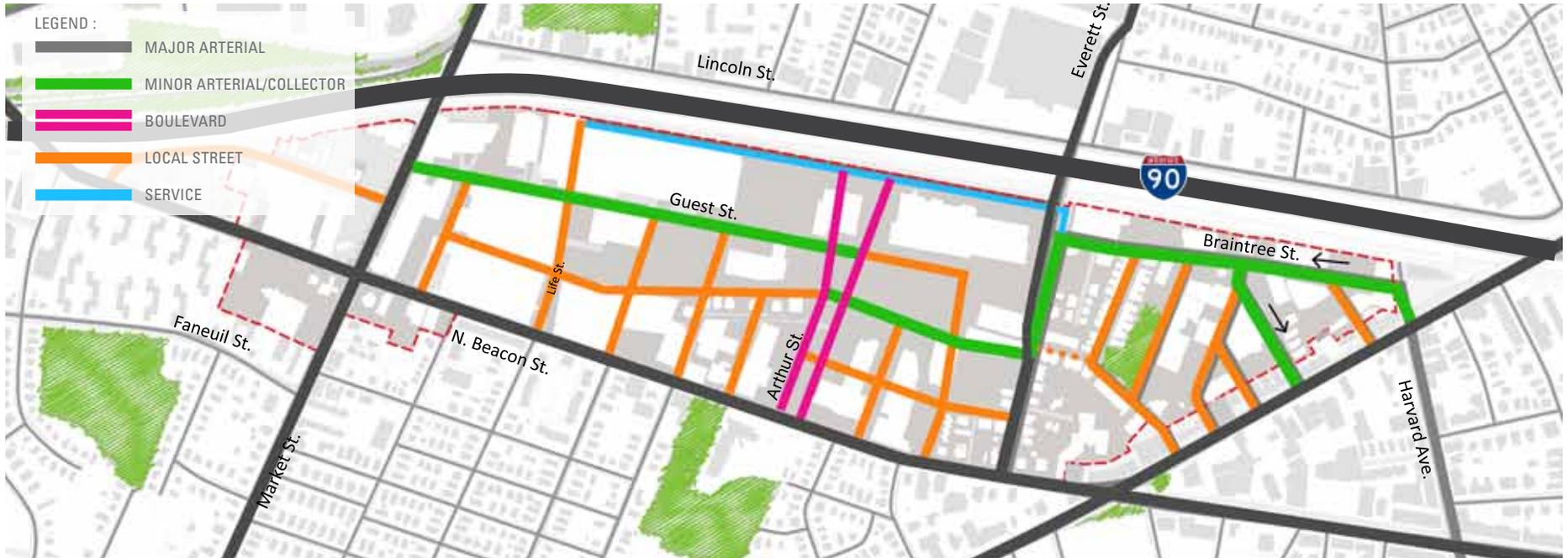


URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The urban design framework establishes the structure within which development will take place, and offers the strongest opportunity to create a distinctive identity:

- Create a pattern of blocks and streets that is consistent with adjacent neighborhoods.
- Step down development from the Turnpike to appropriately meet the scale of the adjacent neighborhoods.
- Follow the transition from predominantly office to live/work mixed-use along the Turnpike to predominantly residential along North Beacon Street.
- Preserve the central core for open spaces retail and active indoor /outdoor recreational uses.
- Transform Arthur Street into a generous landscaped boulevard that connects the north south axis to the future train station location and future pedestrian bridge linking to Allston north of the Turnpike.
- Emphasize active uses including retail, restaurants, ground floor assembly and work spaces with a high degree of visual interest, and residential uses with frequent entrances.

STREET TYPES



STREET HIERARCHY

Street Network

Streets are the hallmark of every great city. A street network with a range of typologies allows for a variety of transportation roles, physical dimensions, character, and supporting uses. To create a functional street system that provides direct and legible access both to/from and within the Study Area, a number of connections will have to be made or strengthened. The framework will connect the grid, and establish a hierarchy of arterial, collector and local streets that will effectively move traffic through the Study Area and its surroundings.

As noted earlier, the development of artery connections on Guest Street and Braintree Street and running the length of the study area is critical to providing convenient access to and from Market Street, Cambridge Street and the Turnpike. The recommendation to create a new public street between Arthur Street and Everett Street makes this point in a general way. The specific alignment of the new street will depend on the availability of land as well as the logic of urban design and traffic operations. Streets will create new vehicular, pedestrian and bike connections as well as privately owned on-site loading areas that allow for public access.



GUEST STREET TODAY: AN UNINVITING STREET WITHOUT PEDESTRIAN AMENITIES OR VITALITY.

Streetscape

Gracious streets change the perception of an area, improve the pedestrian experience and create value for adjacent real estate.

Guest Street is designed as a “main street” lined with active uses including retail, restaurant, cultural and recreational uses, galleries, educational institutions. It is a “complete street” that manages pedestrians, bicycles, parking, vehicles and public transit in a well-landscaped and human scaled environment while accommodating storm water in swales appropriate for urban conditions. Service access will be provided off-street.

Arthur Boulevard is a one way couplet that is generously landscaped with a park median wide enough to support informal recreational uses.

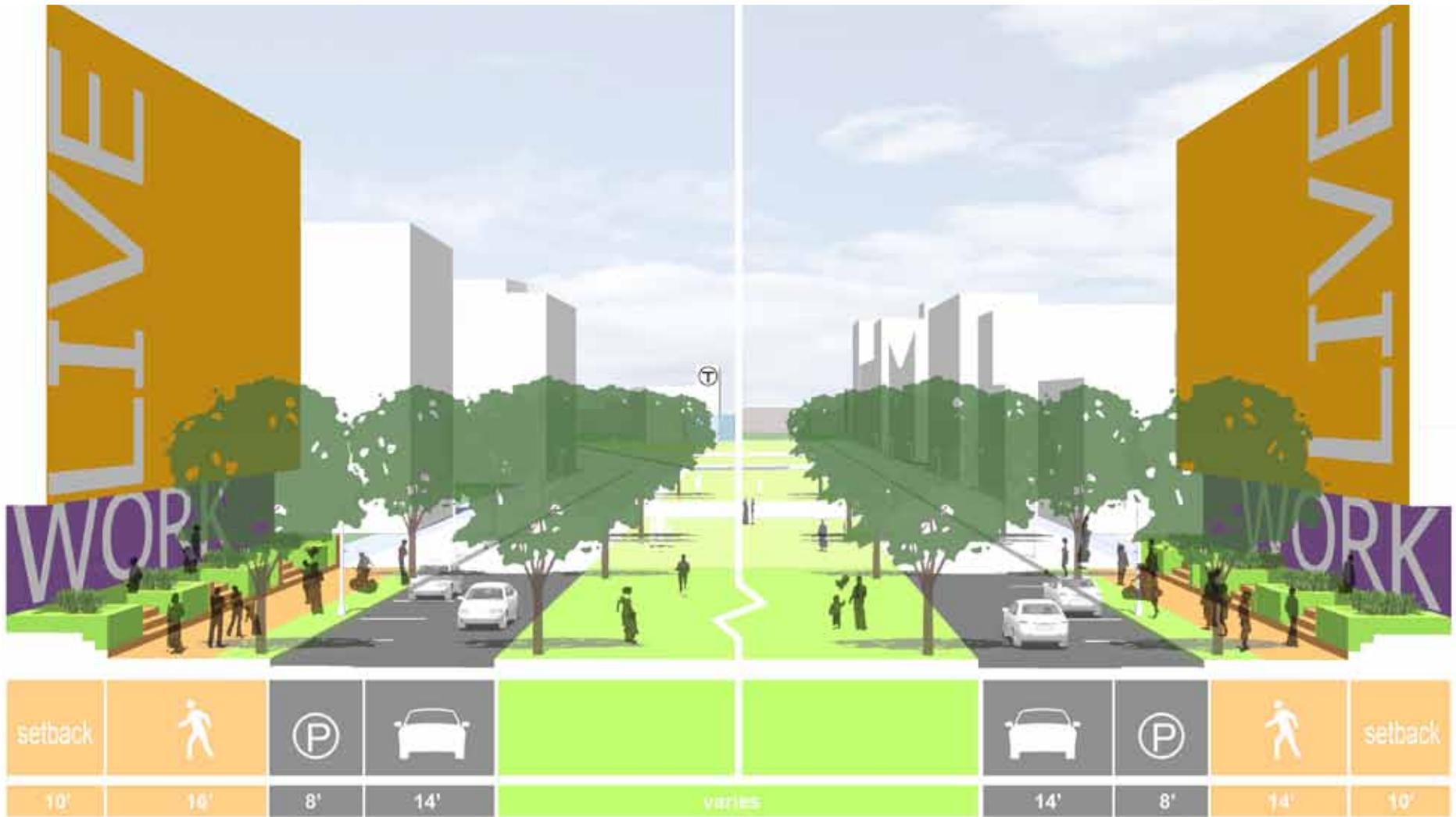
Braintree Street is envisioned as a live/work street with a narrow right of way. Street trees alternate with parking spaces to balance convenience with greenery. It has active street edges with frequent entrances, lots of windows.

New neighborhood streets handle two-way traffic and have street parking. They are designed with room for trees along the curb as well as a 10' landscape setback zone to line residential streets, providing a buffer to ground floor units. It is recommended that townhouse units line the streets to create a fine grain rhythm and interest at the street level.



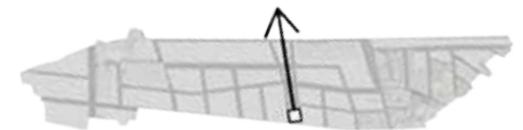
Guest Street

Guest Street will be an active human scale “main street” lined with retail, restaurant, cultural and recreational uses. It will accommodate pedestrians, outdoor seating, and street trees in generous sidewalks. A two-way cycle track could, with a grade separation, create a safe route for bicyclists.



Arthur Boulevard

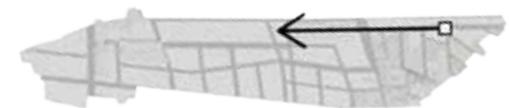
Arthur Boulevard is a one way couplet that is generously landscaped with park median wide enough to support informal recreational uses. Bicycle lanes can either be incorporated in the vehicular travel lane or in the park median.





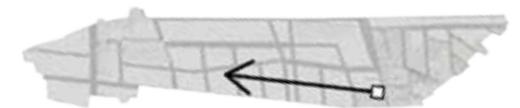
Braintree Street

Braintree Street is envisioned as a live/work street with a narrow right of way. Street trees alternate with parking spaces to balance convenience with greenery. It has active street edges with frequent entrances, lots of windows. Buildings along Braintree Street will have no setback requirements, but will have a 15' setback requirement at 40' height of street wall.



Neighborhood Street

New neighborhood streets handle two-way traffic and have street parking. There are trees along the curb and a 10' landscape setback zone to line residential streets, providing a buffer to ground floor units. It is recommended that townhouse units line the streets to create a fine grain rhythm and interest at the street level. Bikes can share the road with the cars.





FLEXIBLE/ACTIVE ZONE WILL ALLOW FOR A VARIETY OF USES.

OPEN SPACE

The open space framework ensures that a variety of human-scaled parks, plazas, and publicly accessible gathering places will be created that are privately developed. The “necklace” of open spaces that is linked together by the Guest Street/Braintree Street spine will distribute a diverse range of these amenities throughout the Study Area. Different outdoor spaces, although privately developed, will create new neighborhood play areas, gathering spaces, and leafy pocket parks where locals and visitors of all ages can enjoy a range of outdoor activities. From children playing, splashing in fountains, and skating to people dining outdoors, or just relaxing and enjoying a music or dance performance, the Study Area will have a range of outdoor venues. The photos on the opposite page illustrate this range of activities that can make the area a four season destination.

The blocks sandwiched between Guest Street and a new parallel street that runs just south of it will remain a flexible zone where 40 to 50 percent of the land should be devoted to publicly accessible open space/recreational. Although the choice of where the open space amenities should be located within the zone is flexible, this guideline will result in a significant and interconnected “necklace” of publicly accessible spaces at the heart of the district. The north/south park boulevard at Arthur Street will create a significant gateway to the area from the south and align the gateway with the future possible train station and a possible future pedestrian bridge across the Turnpike to Allston integrated with the future train station design.



A PASSIVE PARK CAN SUPPORT A RANGE OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES FROM INFORMAL RECREATION TO COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL EVENTS.



A SKATING RINK AT MILLENNIUM PARK IN CHICAGO PROVIDES OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES DURING THE WINTER



FANEUIL HALL PLAZA IN BOSTON IS AN ACTIVE GATHERING SPACE FOR OUTDOOR DINING AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES.



A NEW PLAZA AND FOUNTAIN IN CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS IS A GREAT PLAY AREA FOR CHILDREN.



ACTIVE EDGES: PRIMARY SPINES WILL BE LINED WITH ACTIVE USES.



A MIXED-USE DISTRICT PROVIDING WORKPLACES, HOMES AND CULTURAL, COMMUNITY, RECREATIONAL AND RETAIL USES THAT WILL SUPPORT A LIVELY, DIVERSE AND 18 HOUR QUALITY OF LIFE.

LAND USE

Active Edges

Primary spines within the planning area such as Guest Street, Braintree Street, Arthur Street, and the new east/west street south of Guest Street – should be lined with active uses to ensure a lively and interesting street level experience for residents, workers, and other visitors. Active uses include retail, restaurants, recreation, galleries, lobbies, lounges and places where people are actively working together. Active edges also include residential uses with frequent front doors and front gardens. A block-long building façade with infrequent entrances and little transparency is not considered an active edge and is strongly discouraged in the active edge zone.

Land Use

The Study Area will become a mixed-use urban district providing workplaces, homes and a host of supporting cultural, community, recreational and retail uses that will support a lively, diverse and 18 hour quality of life. Land uses will be most mixed along the center spine of the active zone area. Radiating out from this core, the types of uses will gradually change to blend into the existing adjacent uses surrounding the Study Area. Along the Turnpike, uses will be dominated by workplaces, a more appropriate use along this major traffic corridor. Along North Beacon Street, uses will be primarily residential with retail and active uses at a few of the intersections where retail exists today. Land uses on blocks adjacent to existing residential or office uses will appropriately mix in with the uses there today.

DENSITY AND BUILDING HEIGHT



HEIGHT AND DENSITY GUIDELINES ARE PAIRED TO PROMOTE A RICH AND DIVERSE RANGE OF BUILDING FORM AND MASSING.

Heights and Density

The height and density guidelines for the Study Area will allow for an urban scale of development along the Turnpike and in the core, while stepping down to appropriately meet the existing height of the adjacent neighborhoods. Height and density guidelines are paired to promote a rich and diverse range of building form and massing. For example, the blocks along the Turnpike have a height limit of 150' or 10-13 stories and a Floor

Area Ratio (FAR) range of 3.0 to 4.0. As illustrated in the implementation chapter, this can mean a pattern of long 4-6 story buildings that have a larger footprint on the site or 13 story towers that have a smaller footprint. The central zone will have a height limit of 110' and an FAR of 1.25-3.25 and the blocks along North Beacon Street will have a height limit of 40' and an FAR of 0.75 to 1.5 – gradually stepping down in height and density to meet the adjacent

Brighton neighborhoods across North Beacon Street. Throughout the Study Area, street walls should not exceed 40' in height. Stepbacks of 15' at 40' heights will ensure a human scale to the streets. These height and density guidelines will result in an overall capacity of 1.5 to 2 million square feet of future development.

4



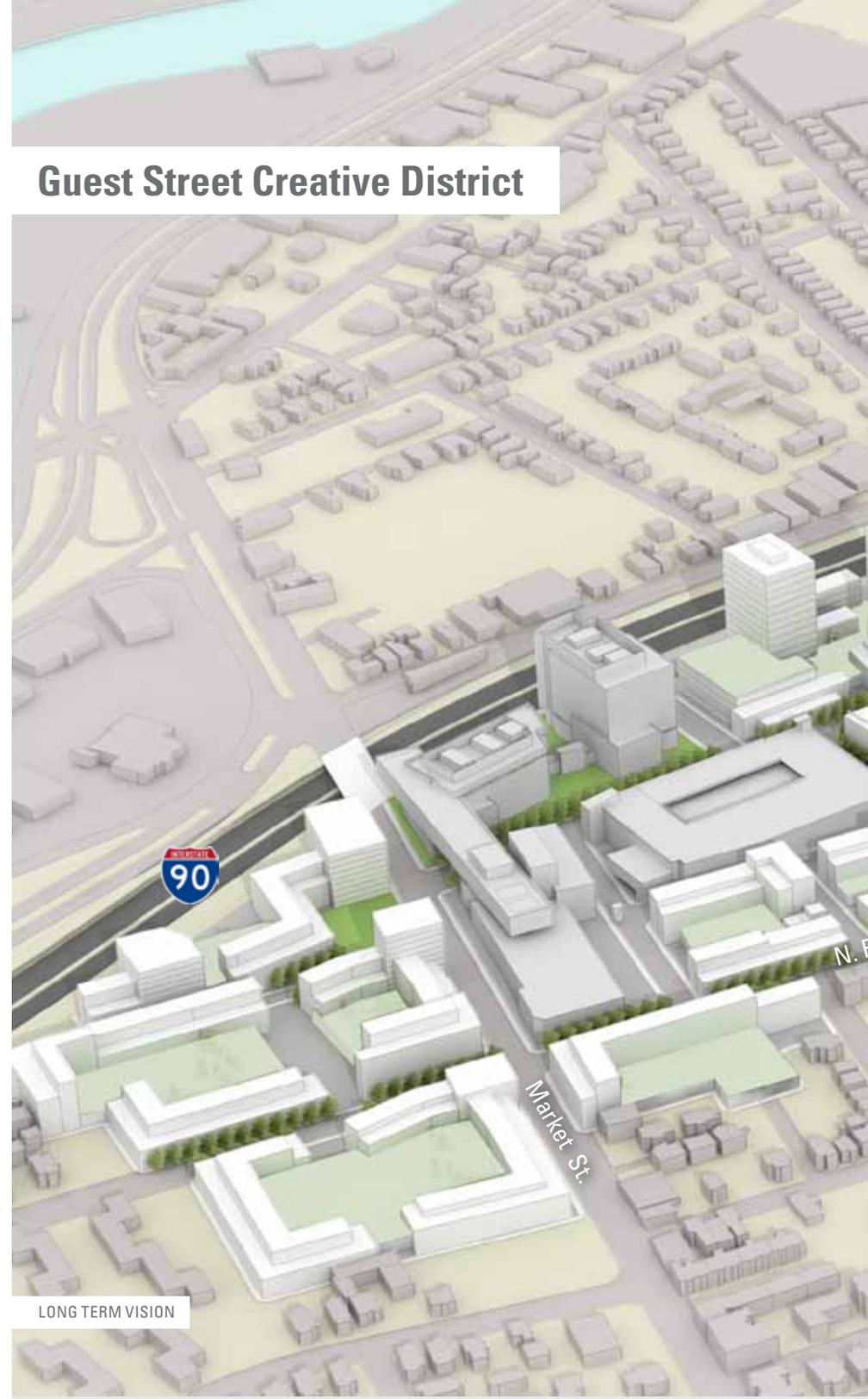
An aerial, isometric view of a city grid. The buildings are represented as 3D rectangular blocks of varying heights, rendered in a color palette of warm yellows and oranges. The perspective is from a high angle, looking down and slightly across the city. The text '2040 VISION' is overlaid in the lower-left quadrant in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

2040 VISION

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Vision

This chapter illustrates a vision of what the Study Area might look like in both the near term and the long term. The following three-dimensional illustrations give a sense of block scale, street layout, building form, massing, and uses, as well as, the way in which any new development will blend into the surrounding neighborhoods. The illustrations do not depict the real development proposals of any land owner or developer; they represent one of the many ways the area may develop over time based on the urban design framework and guidelines described in Chapter 2 of this report. The actual building forms, massing and uses of future development proposals will be determined through the Boston Redevelopment Authority’s Article 80 process which includes City and community review.



Guest Street Creative District

LONG TERM VISION

| POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Following GSF ranges only intended to convey range of possibility of what 1.5 to 2 million GSF of development could accommodate, and are not absolute minimums nor maximums nor a development program but meant to better understand abstract gross square footages into more familiar land uses and units | | | |
| | NEAR TERM | LONG TERM | FULL BUILD OUT |
| COMMERCIAL/OFFICE | 210,000 – 280,000 GSF | 600,000 – 800,000 GSF | 810,000 – 1,080,000 GSF |
| RESIDENTIAL/HOTEL | 220 – 330 UNITS | 800 – 1,200 UNITS | 1,020 – 1,530 UNITS |
| RETAIL | 70,000 – 90,000 GSF | 200,000 – 250,000 GSF | 270,000 – 340,000 GSF |
| OPEN SPACE/RECREATIONAL | 70,000 – 100,000 GSF | 200,000 – 230,000 GSF | 270,000 – 330,000 GSF 10% – 12% of total new development |

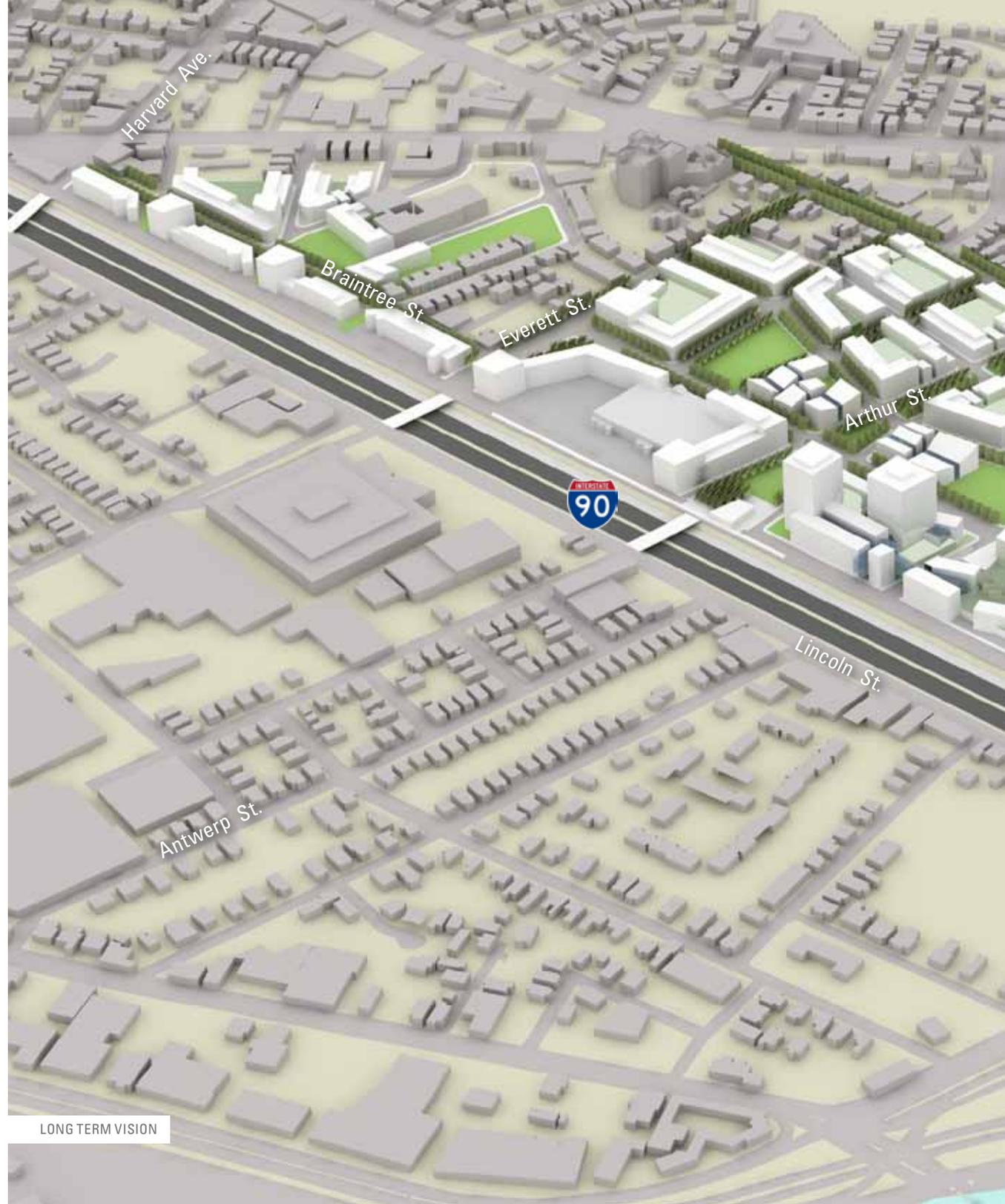


Images are illustrative for planning purposes and not definitive; Line work does not represent actual alignments or dimensions & instead reflects general intent

Vision 2040: A Creative District

Development will occur incrementally and will be jump-started by private landowners' interests

The long term vision will be to create an urban mixed-use district featuring vibrant community uses and residential development



LONG TERM VISION



EXISTING CONDITION



NEAR TERM VISION

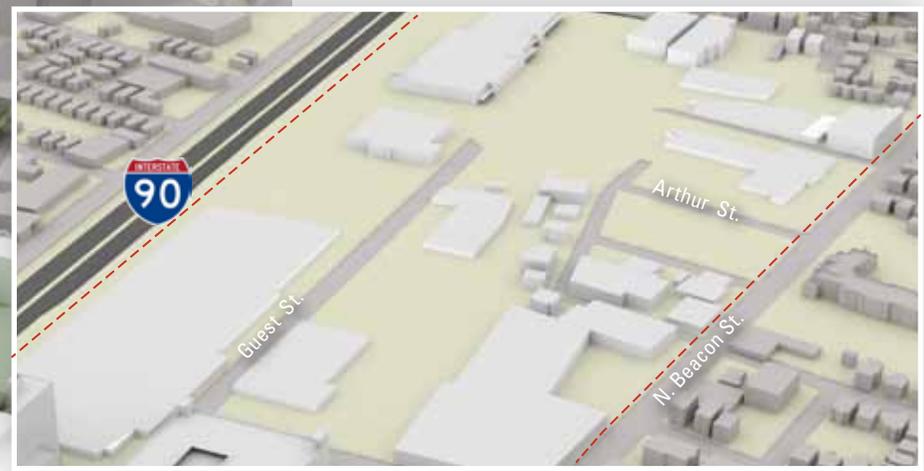
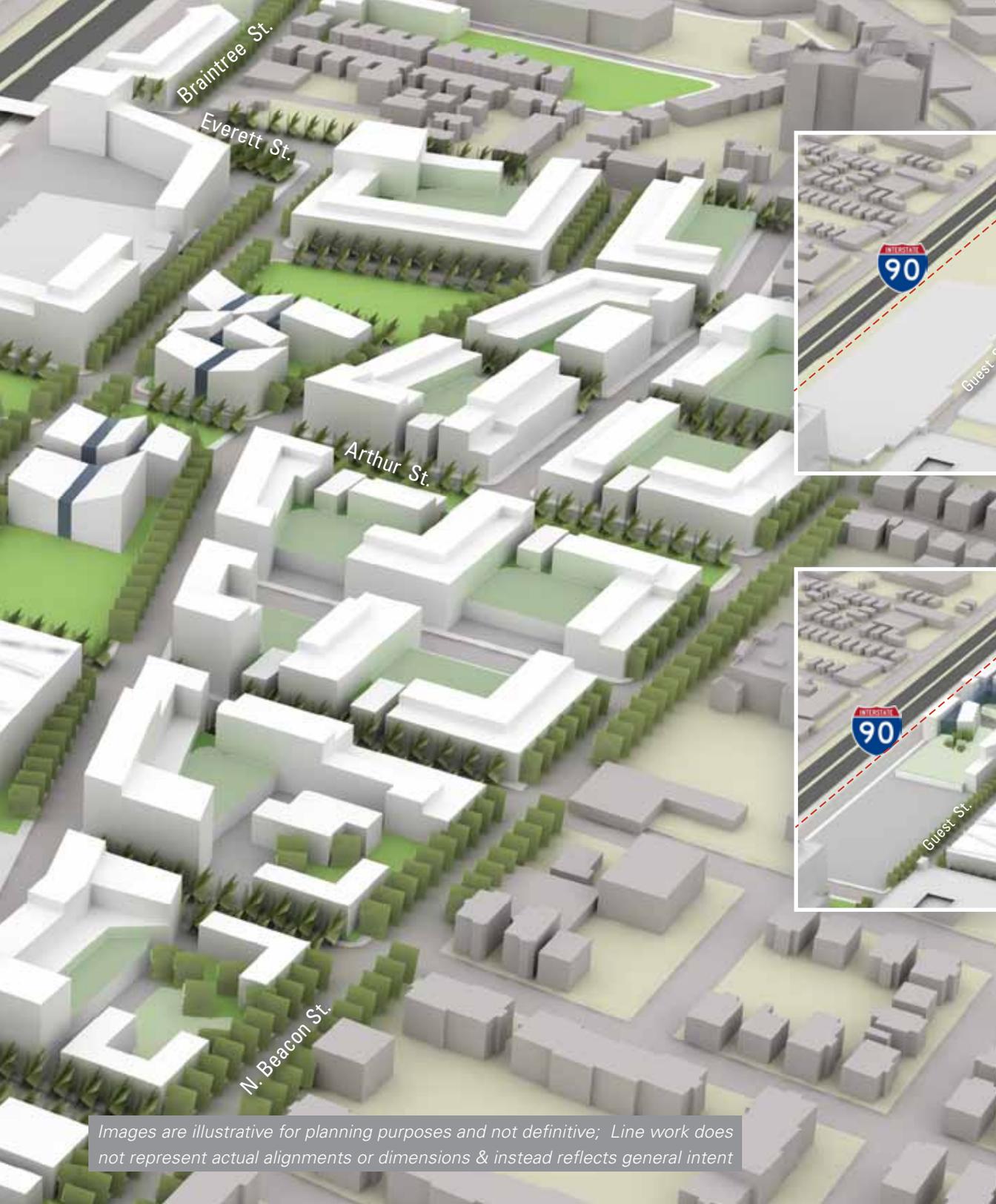
Images are illustrative for planning purposes and not definitive; Line work does not represent actual alignments or dimensions & instead reflects general intent

Creative Center: Heart of the New District

The “creative center” will evolve as properties are redeveloped with creative mixed-uses and active/recreational uses

Over the long term, the area will become a transit-oriented mixed-use destination with a blend of workplaces, homes, and neighborhood amenities.





EXISTING CONDITION



NEAR TERM VISION

Images are illustrative for planning purposes and not definitive; Line work does not represent actual alignments or dimensions & instead reflects general intent

Arthur Street: Gateway Boulevard

As properties along Arthur Street are redeveloped, a generous boulevard will create a prominent gateway...

...eventually leading to a new train station and a pedestrian bridge across I-90.

The State will have the final decision as to location of the commuter rail location. A key guideline is to have access to the station be prominent and well located and viewable from North Beacon Street even if the alignment shifts to the right or left of Arthur Street.



LONG TERM VISION



EXISTING CONDITION



NEAR TERM VISION

Images are illustrative for planning purposes and not definitive; Line work does not represent actual alignments or dimensions & instead reflects general intent

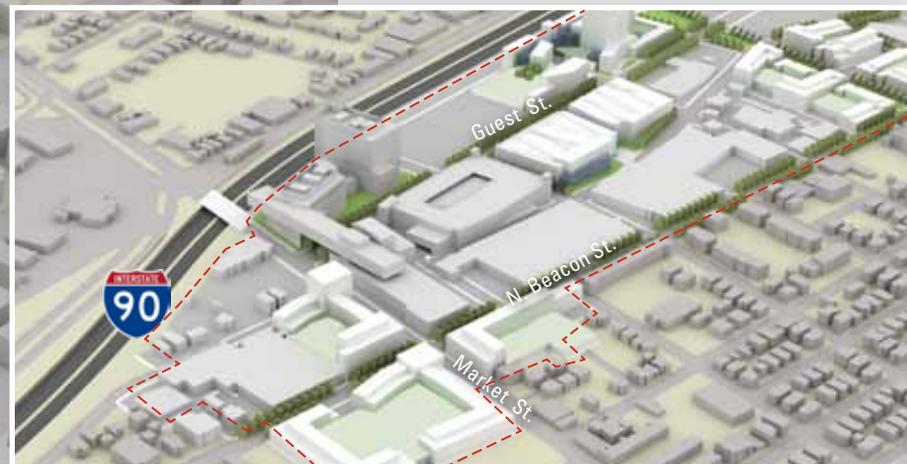
Market Street: Urban Crossroads

Over time, properties will be redeveloped, transforming the Market/North Beacon intersection into a vibrant urban crossroads.





EXISTING CONDITION



NEAR TERM VISION

Images are illustrative for planning purposes and not definitive; Line work does not represent actual alignments or dimensions & instead reflects general intent

Braintree Street: Live/work Corridor

**Linking Guest Street to
Cambridge Street via
Braintree Street through
new Everett Street
connection and traffic
changes will spur new
development.**





EXISTING CONDITION



NEAR TERM VISION

Images are illustrative for planning purposes and not definitive; Line work does not represent actual alignments or dimensions & instead reflects general intent

5



An aerial, isometric view of a city grid, rendered in a monochromatic green color. The buildings are represented as 3D blocks of varying heights and widths, creating a sense of depth and perspective. The streets form a regular grid pattern, and the overall scene is viewed from an elevated angle, looking down and slightly across the city.

IMPLEMENTATION

PHASING: NEAR TERM

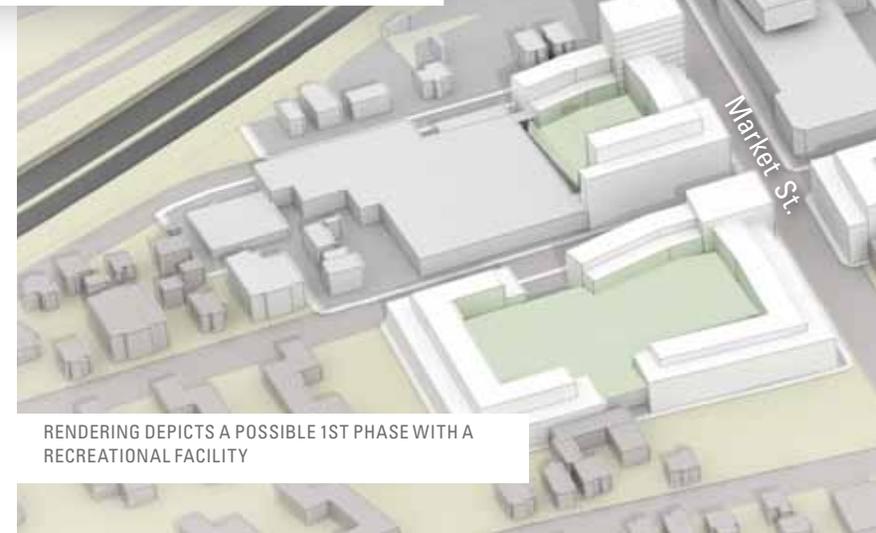
Implementation

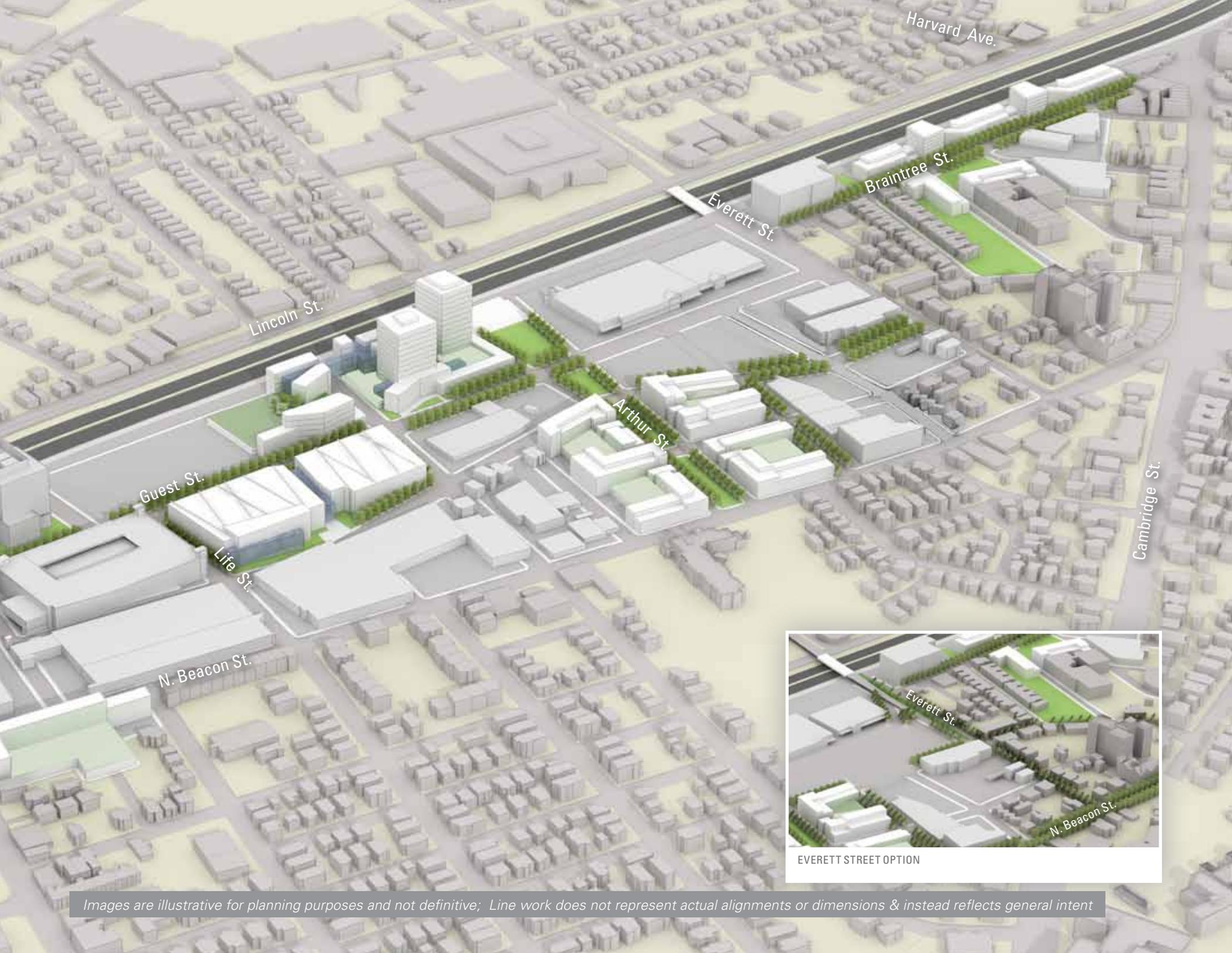
Districts are not built by any one entity, but instead are the amalgamation of many actions by different sectors and involved stakeholders over time. For the Study Area to be successful, congruent actions must be undertaken by the private sector, the public sector, and other involved parties. Since cities are functioning in a highly competitive environment to attract investment, the concerted efforts of all involved must be focused on a broadly shared vision. This plan illustrates the potential of the Study Area to reposition itself for the future, moving beyond a zone of disparate uses to become a multi-dimensional, urban district for the community and Boston.

As specific developments for this area are proposed, the BRA's Article 80 process will involve review of project elements such as design, layout, and distribution of heights. If aspects of a proposed development are inconsistent with this Planning Study's guidelines, but provide significant public benefits, there is opportunity to be flexible. Mitigation and overall benefits, however, must be provided to accommodate exceptions as part of the Article 80 community review process.

Phasing

This chapter describes a phasing strategy that integrates the near term development goals of landowners like New Balance and Stop&Shop into a district wide urban design





Harvard Ave.

Braintree St.

Everett St.

Lincoln St.

Arthur St.

Guest St.

Life St.

N. Beacon St.

Cambridge St.



EVERETT STREET OPTION

Images are illustrative for planning purposes and not definitive; Line work does not represent actual alignments or dimensions & instead reflects general intent

PHASING: LONG TERM

framework. As described in Chapter 1, new development in the district is reliant upon investment in transportation infrastructure and policy initiatives. Development thresholds— when specific street connections, intersection improvements and traffic rerouting will need to occur — are described in greater detail in this chapter. The following views illustrate possible massing alternatives for the parcels along the Turnpike as well as two options for connecting Guest Street to Braintree Street via Everett Street.



Long term vision as an urban mixed-use destination with vibrant community and residential uses

THIS DEPICTING OF BUILDINGS ALONG THE TURNPIKE REPRESENTS A COMBINATION OF LINEAR BUILDINGS AND FEWER TALLER STRUCTURES



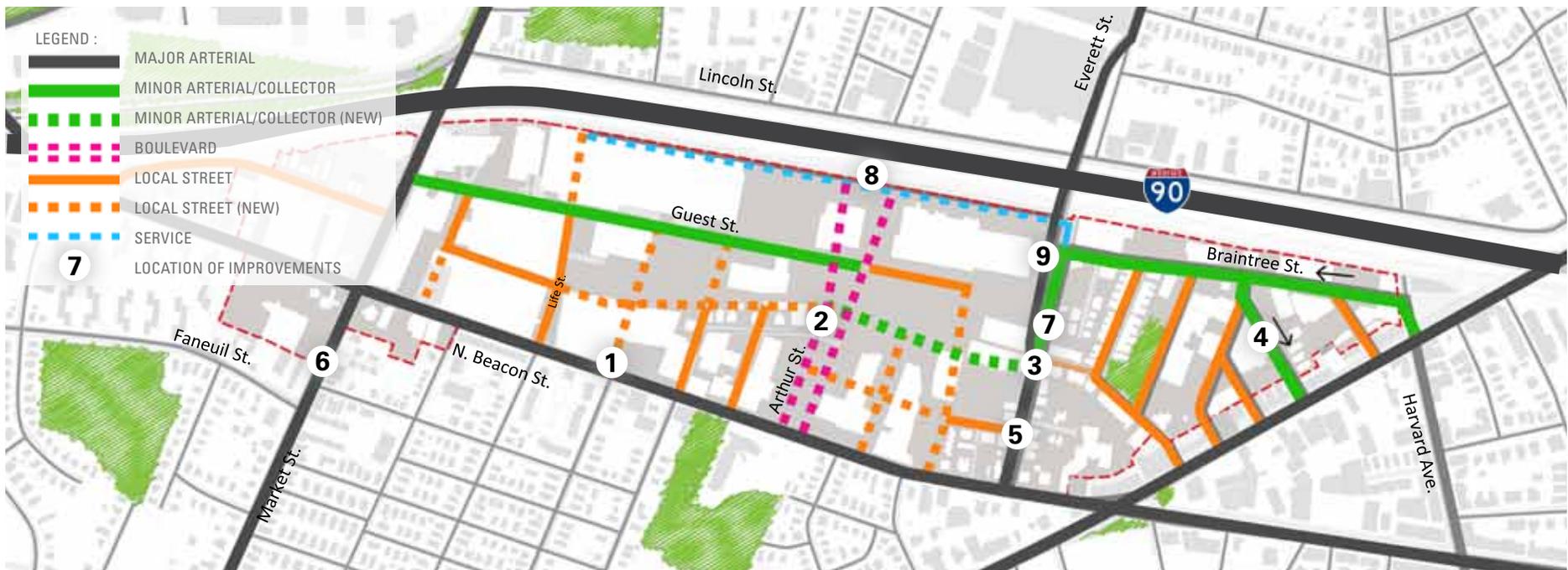
Images are illustrative for planning purposes and not definitive; Line work does not represent actual alignments or dimensions & instead reflects general intent

PHASING: TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Near and Long Term

The transportation planning measures identified as near term in this Study address a proposed order of magnitude that would be necessary to achieve the initial build-out of the first 500,000- 700,000 square feet of development. Specific transportation improvements and their implications (analyzed through a more detailed Transportation Study by a development proponent) would be reviewed as part of the BRA's Article 80 process.

The transportation planning measures identified as near term in this Study address a proposed order of magnitude that would be necessary to achieve the initial build-out of the first 500,000-700,000 square feet of development. Specific transportation improvements and their implications (analyzed through a more detailed Transportation Study by a development proponent) would be reviewed as part of the BRA's Article 80 process and will determine whether the threshold ranges will be lower or higher as well as further elaborate on the specific set of traffic improvements.



STREET HIERARCHY

Transportation Phasing

| # | MEASURE | DESCRIPTION/JUSTIFICATION | PHASE |
|---|---|--|------------|
| 1 | Connect the Study Area's streets to the local grid. | For the Study Area to become a fully integrated part of Brighton, it must have a street system that contributes to the function of traffic both within and outside its borders. Guest and Braintree Streets are an important pair of currently underutilized links, which could, if fully connected, activate the Study Area's east-west flow, reduce volumes on North Beacon St. and at Union Square, and provide a direct link to the Turnpike. | Short-term |
| 2 | Connect and upgrade Arthur St. | Arthur St. officially ends at Hichborn St. It connects to Guest St. on private property. The Guest/Arthur intersection is one of the Study Area's main corners, and Arthur St.'s design should reflect its status as the Study Area's central gateway. | Short-term |
| 3 | Signalize the foot of the Everett St. bridge | Pending further study. The area around the bridge and the Everett St. crossing into the shopping center to the west is a very busy place, with constant pedestrian activity that includes school children and elderly people. As the Study Area grows and develops, pedestrian and vehicular volume will increase. In order for the residents on the east side of Everett St. to have safe and pleasant access to the commercial destinations to the west, the crossing should be signalized with full pedestrian protections. | Short-term |
| 4 | Create a one-way pair out of Denby and Franklin Sts | Pending further study. If the Cambridge/ Franklin/Harvard St. intersection were simplified by removing the Franklin St. approach, levels of service there would improve markedly. Franklin St. and the eastern end of Braintree St., would then be one-way away from the intersection. Denby St. would be made one-way back to Cambridge St. The improvement would likely justify signalizing the Cambridge/Denby intersection. | Short-term |
| 5 | Invest in Everett St. | Between North Beacon and the foot of the bridge, Everett St. has mostly undefined asphalt sidewalks, with less than four feet clear width at points. As the only north-south artery going all the way through the Study Area, it should be better appointed. While the right-of-way is limited – thirty-eight feet – two eleven-foot travel lanes would leave eight feet on either side for substantial sidewalks and street trees. | Short-term |
| 6 | Improve traffic operations in the Market St. corridor | Solutions should be sought for the sluggish flow in the northern segment, from Guest St. to the river. While some of the signals are under the control of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the capacity of the segment could be increased if signals were fully coordinated. Birmingham Parkway represents excess capacity, with correspondingly insufficient intersection operations. It may be possible to remove existing signals and conflicting movements. | Short-term |
| 7 | Open an arterial connection from Guest St. to Braintree St. | Both streets are well-suited to carrying general traffic. Linked together, they would provide a direct connection from WGBH at Market St. to the turnpike at the Allston tolls. The recommended strategy for making the connection is two-pronged. | Short-term |
| | | A – Build a new public street between Arthur St. and Everett St. B – Utilize the existing underpass. Grade separation removes all conflict between north-south and east-west traffic. It is recommended that nothing be done to preclude a direct connection of Braintree and Guest Sts. via the underpass. | Long-term |
| 8 | Improve transit services | A – Preserve and expand bus service. In order for the Study Area to develop at all, it is imperative that MBTA bus service be improved to provide access to Downtown, the Back Bay, Longwood/Fenway, and Cambridge. | Short-term |
| | | B – Restore rail service. The MBTA's plan for a Commuter Rail (Framingham Line) stop should be pursued and incorporated into development of the Study Area's Turnpike edge. | Long-term |
| | | C – Build pedestrian bridge across the Turnpike at Everett St. to connect to the Allston neighborhood. | Long-term |
| 9 | Connect Braintree St. under Everett St. | Nothing should be done that would preclude a direct connection of Braintree and Guest Streets via the underpass. | Long-term |

DEVELOPMENT THRESHOLDS

The transportation/access strategy is built around the recommendations shown in the table below. The overarching purpose of the recommendations are:

- To remove impediments to the redevelopment of the Study Area as envisioned in the planning study; and
- To establish a smoothly functioning multi-modal circulation system that facilitates vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle mobility.

The table below describes the improvements needed to unlock near and long term phases of development. The table identifies the measures, the justification for the improvements, and time horizon within which each needs to be accomplished. The measures identified are possible ways to achieve the initial build-out of the first 500,000-700,000 square feet of development.

Connections and Open Space Improvements

Development in this area will likely take major developers to create enough critical mass to change market perception and create a successful environment. Much of the success of the district will depend on how this development is phased and paired with needed transportation, open space and street infrastructure, such as those indicated above.

The following development thresholds and triggers for connections and open space broadly describe the recommended steps to achieve a vibrant, mixed-use district for the Study Area. The section below sets forth a strategy for accomplishing the development outlined as part of the vision for the Study Area.

A significant amount of property can be redeveloped within the Study Area, especially west of Everett Street. Improvements, however, are needed in order for this development to be successful and include:

- Upgrading an unattractive industrial area;
- Achieving a high quality environment for the tenants and users;

- Creating real estate value to incentivize existing land owners to redevelop their property.

These improvements include open space, new public streets, traffic signal and intersection enhancement/connection between Braintree Street and Guest Street, and a commuter rail station. An important question is how will these improvements be planned, paid for and implemented.

This study's transportation analysis indicates that new development proposals could be accommodated in the area assuming that additional traffic signals, enhanced commuter rail service and other TDM measures are implemented adequately to modify the current projected mode share for the area. The thresholds at which the different measures and other improvements are undertaken within the phasing of development should be an important consideration of any development to be reviewed as part of the BRA's Article 80 process.

To create an attractive and desirable mixed use district, a robust public realm of parks, plazas and great pedestrian streets must be built. Since all of the land in the district, including land that will become publicly accessible streets, is privately owned, a finance mechanism must be considered to allow for the private financing of public infrastructure. There are two mechanisms, each of which has a range of variants, which might be considered to recover these infrastructure costs. A combination of these might be used:

1. Contributions by developers through the BRA's Article 80 review process, either in-kind or cash contributions to cover the cost of a portion of the infrastructure improvement. This might include the contribution of land for open space or roads, construction of these roads and open space, or payment of cash into a fund for development of infrastructure.
2. Special-purpose Assessment District. Tax-exempt bonds could be sold to pay for infrastructure improvements and the repayment of these bonds could be recovered by a special assessment against properties in the district.

We recommend that through the development review/permitting mechanism, a specific

framework be created to address the needed improvements for the project. This could both address the financial provision of improvements as well as planning provisions. For example, the selection of an open space approach which is focused on breaking up the open space in to smaller parks lends itself well to a multi-phase project. Important questions that should be asked as part of an evaluation and approved process are: When should the first open space be completed? When should the critical streets be included? While some of these issues will not be known until the design review is complete, the framework indicates the general location and amount that should be negotiated into the development review/permitting process.

Based on our current understanding, we believe that development exceeding 100,000 GSF should have thresholds set for public realm commitments which need to be complete before additional development “ceilings,” defined in terms of square footage or specific building construction, could be met. It is too soon to propose specific binding commitments in the absence of a design reviewed plan. However, we do have some specific recommended approaches for different forms of mitigation. Our recommendations include the following:

Open space: The development review/permitting mechanism should allocate the open space commitments of the developer to specific phases of construction. It is important that those open spaces which encourage the pedestrian environment along Guest Street are prioritized and are built first. It will take time for the destination concept to be established for users and the space which best defines that concept should be the first project.

New Connections and Public Streets: Like Open Space, street improvements and new connections should be coordinated with specific phases of construction and memorialized in the development agreement. Based on the plan, improvements to the Arthur Street and Guest Street and the streets which connect to them are the priority improvements.

Commuter Rail: Additional consideration must be made to ensure the linkage of a future train station to near term development agreements.

Everett Street Traffic Signal: This improvement should be included as an item to take place before the start of the 1st phase of construction. Relative to the other items, this element is likely to be one of the lower cost projects in terms of design and implementation.

With these aforementioned items included in a development review/ permitting mechanism, a proponent, the City, and the community should have a framework in place to create an orderly and attractive redevelopment plan.

Transportation Improvements

If transit service and use can be significantly increased, the development program for the Study Area can be accommodated by the existing streets with a general increase in traffic of approximately 8%. However, among the most important measures that can be taken to unlock the Study Area’s potential are improvements to the functionality of the street system. The changes that will do the most to increase the capacity of the network are:

- The connection of Guest Street and Braintree Street,
- The connection of Everett Street to the heart of the Study Area, via a new street between Everett and Arthur Streets and a full-service signalized intersection, and
- The increase of the Cambridge/Harvard/Franklin Street intersection’s capacity, by making Denby Street one-way toward Cambridge Street and making Franklin Street/ Braintree Street one-way westbound from the Harvard/Cambridge intersection to Denby Street/Rugg Road.

These enhancements will permit traffic to go directly from the Study Area to the Turnpike interchange in Allston without going through Union Square, as well as providing better access across the Turnpike to North Allston and Soldiers Field Road via Everett Street.

It is estimated that the Guest/Braintree connection and the improvements at the Harvard/ Cambridge Street intersection would remove as much as 16% of the traffic generated by development along Guest Street from North Beacon Street and Union Square. The Everett Street connection could divert another 3% off North Beacon west of Everett Street and out of the North Beacon/ Everett intersection. In addition, the Everett Street connection, by providing a new route to Western Avenue, would reduce traffic in the Market Street corridor north of Guest Street.

As much as 5% of the traffic generated along Guest, Arthur and Hichborn Streets could use the new Everett Street connection rather than going through the Guest/Market Street intersection and those to the north. The three improvements would remove a combined 24% traffic from the Market Street corridor (north of Guest Street), Union Square, and the North Beacon/ Everett Street intersections. These street improvements would significantly increase the development capacity of the Study Area.

TRANSPORTATION



TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS NECESSARY TO ACCOMODATE NEW DEVELOPMENT



EVERETT STREET CONNECTION - OPTION 1



EVERETT STREET CONNECTION - OPTION 2

Everett Street Options

Among other potential solutions, here are two options for accomplishing the improvements at the Everett Street intersection. It may be more immediately feasible to run the street along the property line between Stop & Shop and the Volvo dealership and along the south side of the Warrior & Brine building (option 1). However, an alignment along the north side of the building would create a safer and more pedestrian-friendly intersection with Everett Street (option 2).

Study Conclusion

The success of any plan is ultimately determined by how it is implemented. This planning study is being issued at a time of great opportunity for planning while the economy recovers. Timely action is required to achieve the full potential once the economy rebounds. To achieve this potential requires both clear leadership and understanding - we urge the community and stakeholders to embrace the guidelines and necessary improvements incorporated in the planning study and to formally incorporate them into their own plans and actions in the coming years.





Images are illustrative for planning purposes and not definitive; Line work does not represent actual alignments or dimensions & instead reflects general intent

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Brighton Guest Street Area Planning Study was the result of a collaborative effort with the dedicated members of the Advisory Group and the community. We thank all participants for their generous contribution of time and insight.

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