



HARVARD ERC DISTRICT AND GREENWAY PLAN

Advisory Group Meeting #6 - April 7, 2026

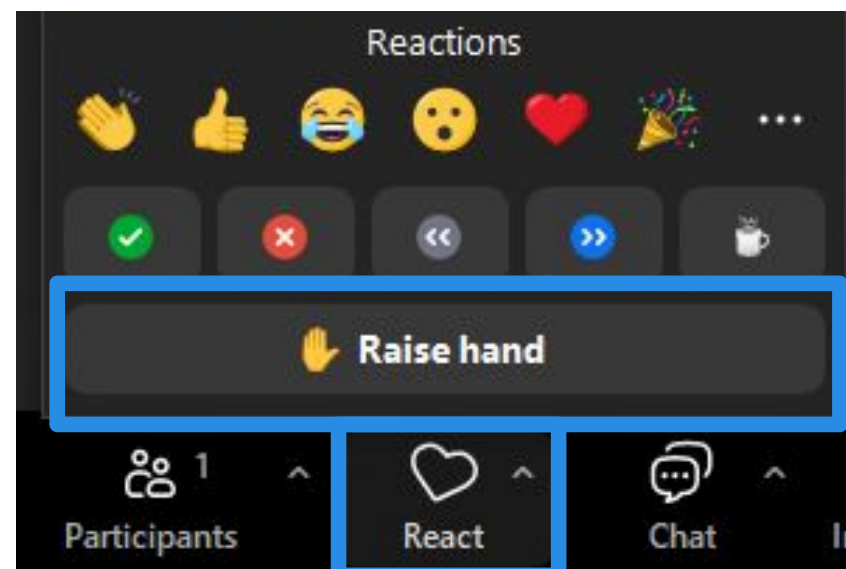


Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

ZOOM MEETING INFO AND TIPS

- **This meeting will be recorded** and posted on the project webpage. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.
- **Zoom controls are available at the bottom of your screen.** Clicking on these symbols activates different features.
- **Use raise hand function** (dial *9 followed by *6 if joining by phone) **and wait to be called upon** before asking your question or providing comment.



Raise Hand



Mute/Unmute

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WELCOME + PURPOSE OF TONIGHT'S MEETING



Tonight we will:

- Close out public comment period
- Share what we've heard
- Introduce interim conditions approach
- Confirm next steps to BPDA Board

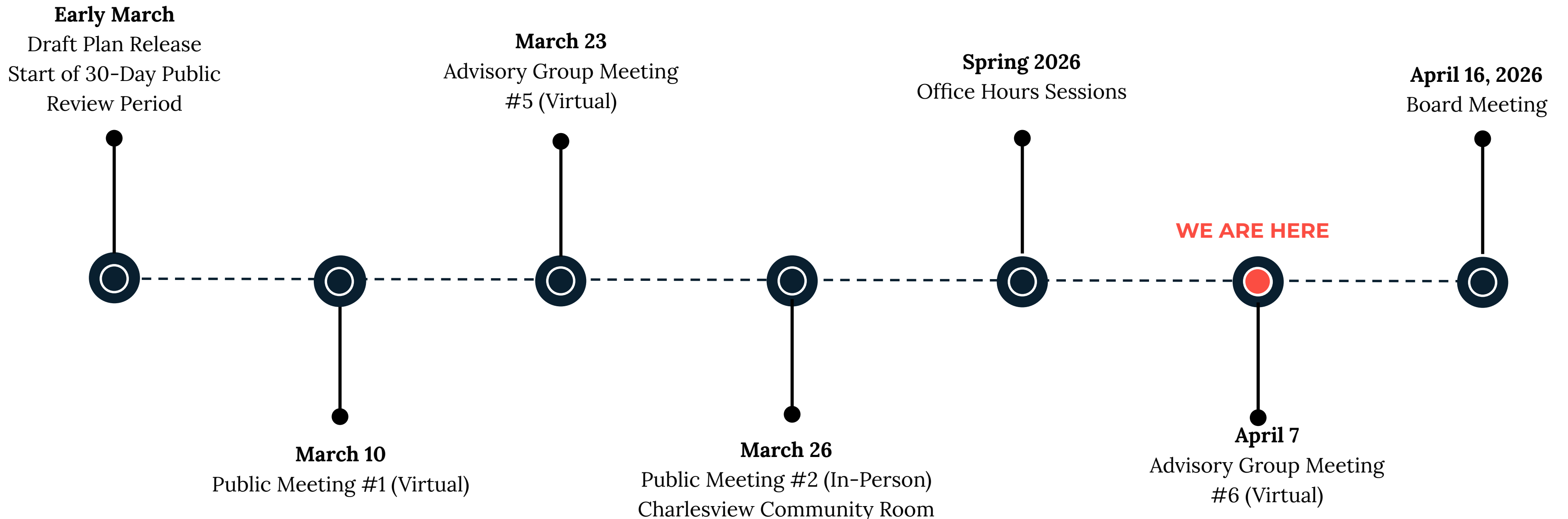


WHERE WE ARE IN THE PROCESS



Next steps:

- The **30-day public comment period** for written and verbal feedback, **March 9th - April 8th**
- Refining the draft based on Advisory Group, public, and partner input
- Presenting the final draft to the BPDA Board for approval and adopt the plan



WHAT WE HEARD



Through the public comment period and recent engagement, we heard consistent feedback across a few key areas. Overall, there is support for the Plan's direction, along with clear input on connectivity, open space, activation, and the experience of the district over time.

Connectivity + Access

- Strong need for safer, clearer routes, clearer hierarchy

Greenway + Open Space

- Desire for early access, not just long-term buildout

Activation + Use

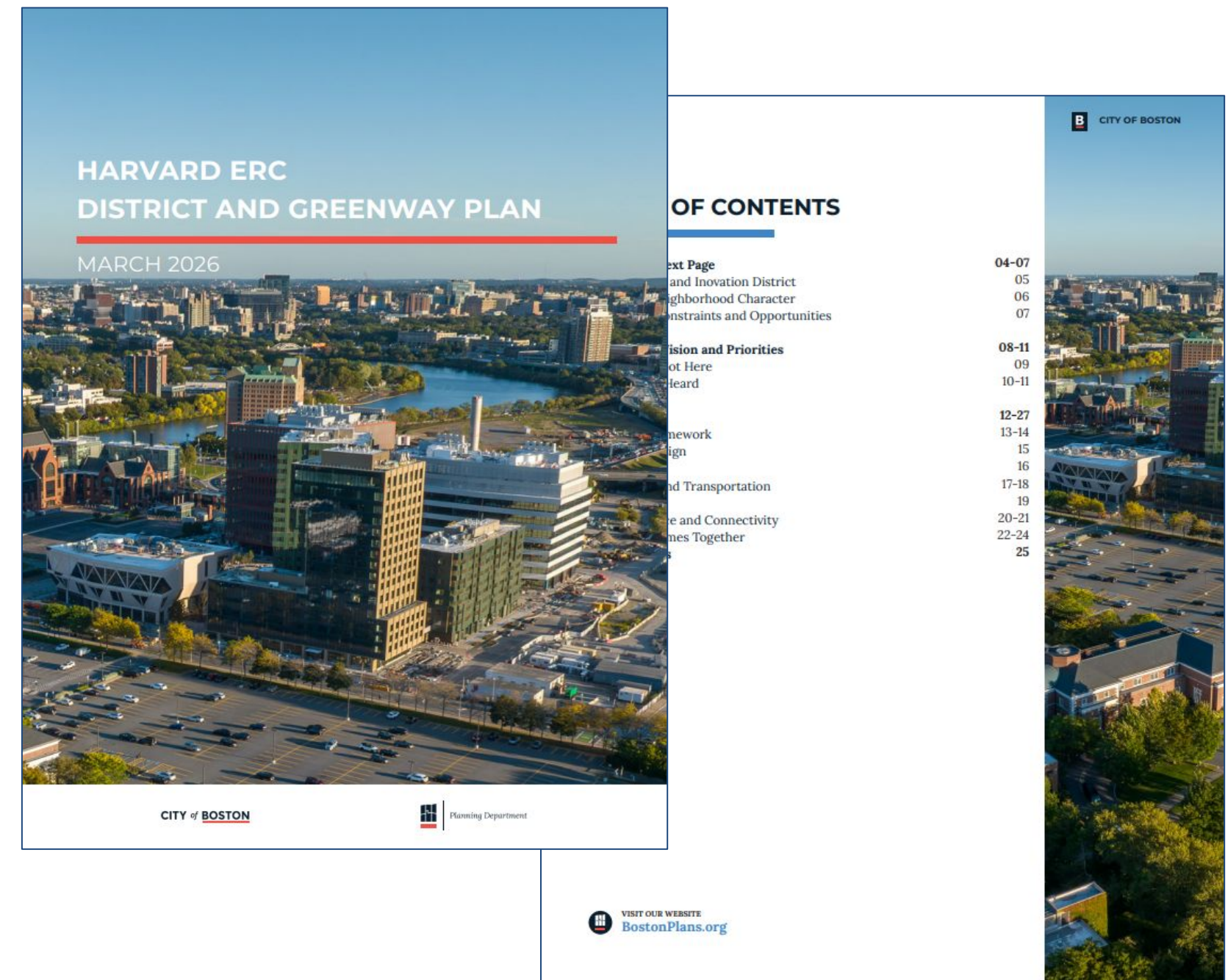
- Avoid inactive or “dead” spaces during phasing

Phasing + Timing

- Concern about 10–20 year buildout timeline

Clarity + Communication

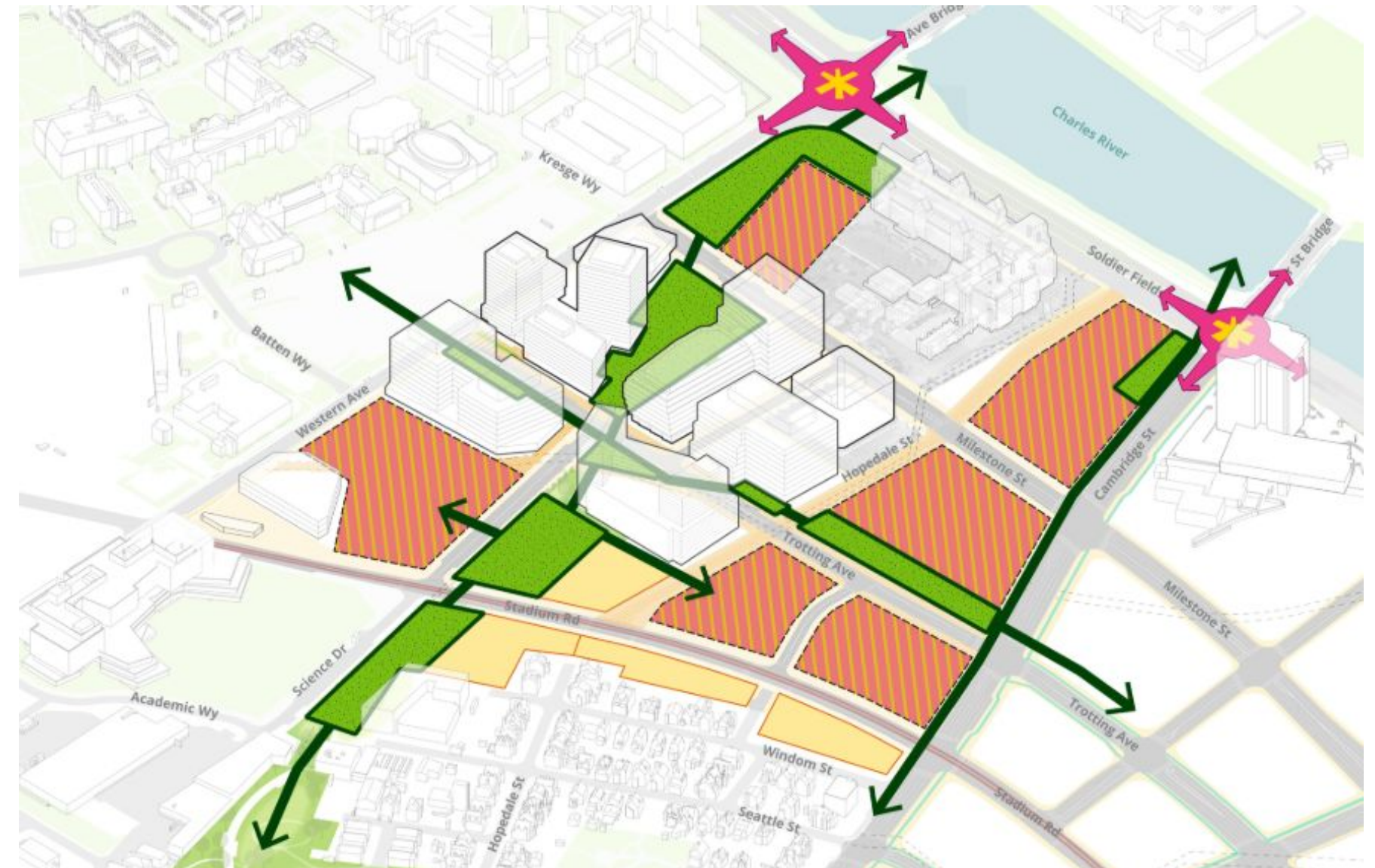
- Want clearer understanding of what happens when



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE PLAN

The feedback we heard helps clarify where to focus as the Plan moves forward.

- **Reinforces the need for early, visible improvements**
 - Prioritize actions that make the district feel active and accessible from the start
- **Highlights the importance of interim conditions**
 - Ensure the district functions well during phased development
- **Confirms the value of flexibility in the long-term framework**
 - Maintain the ability to adapt over time as conditions evolve
- **Supports a stronger focus on connections beyond the site**
 - Improve links to surrounding neighborhoods and destinations



WHY INTERIM CONDITIONS



While the Plan establishes a long-term vision, we heard clearly that how the district functions during buildout is just as important.

- The ERC will be built out over multiple years
- Community experience during this time matters
- Early phases can feel disconnected without clear guidance

Our goal:

Ensure the district is **usable, connected, and active from day one**, even as development continues

DESIRED INTERIM CONDITIONS

The ERC will be built out in phases, requiring ongoing coordination to ensure the district remains safe, connected, and active throughout development. The following place-based interim conditions describe how different areas should function during each phase, guided by community priorities and planning goals. Particular emphasis will be placed on site activation during development, using temporary uses, programming, and design strategies to maintain vibrancy, support local activity, and foster a sense of place as the district evolves.

Development Parcels + Construction Edges

Focus: Safety, interface, and visual quality

Maintain safe, protected pedestrian and bicycle routes along parcel edges during all phases of construction; design construction zones to minimize conflicts with public movement and avoid long-term detours; and use screening, signage, lighting, wayfinding, and public art to improve visibility, safety, and the quality of active edges.

Streets, Gateways, and Connections

Focus: Legibility, access, and movement

Maintain Western Avenue and key corridors as safe, legible connectors throughout phased development; provide clear interim routes where permanent connections are incomplete; strengthen east-west and north-south links between Lower Allston, the Greenway, and surrounding neighborhoods; prioritize gateway locations with safe crossings, lighting, visibility, and a welcoming presence; ensure consistent wayfinding; and coordinate with City agencies and partners to align construction, circulation, and public realm improvements.



Example of Emerald Necklace detours that maintain access to green space and walking/biking routes, clearly guiding the community around construction and demonstrating effective use of wayfinding.



Example of a construction edge that integrates educational elements and clear wayfinding to guide movement around active work zones.

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Interim Conditions

Activation Zones

Screening, and avoiding

Remain vacant for term inactivity by space, recreation, etc. For example, Night at Harvard underutilized green spaces programming fosters community vibrancy, low-cost, legible, and support hip-based uses that welcoming public



Example of the Cisco Brewers Beer Garden in the Seaport, activating a vacant site with a temporary, vibrant use during interim conditions.

Communication

Clarity, and public

Information on maintain ongoing construction, detours, and establish a cohesive consistent signage, elements that reinforce recognizable place development, drawing comparable institutional



Example of the Waterloo Greenway in Austin, Texas, illustrating a phased approach to developing a continuous open space network over time.

Interfaces

Boundaries and safety

Access along the network; provide where segments are



Harvard GSD Construction Fence, 2002. Photo by Michael Goorevich.

impacted; ensure lighting, visibility, and year-round usability; activate edges where open space meets development parcels; and implement Harvard's Phase A commitment to construct a shared-use path along the Greenway from Rena Park to Milestone Street, available for public use no later than 13 months after Phase A occupancy.

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INTERIM CONDITIONS



We've organized interim conditions into a few key areas to guide how the district functions during phased development.

Development Parcels + Construction Edges

- Maintain safe pedestrian and bike routes around construction
- Minimize conflicts and avoid long detours
- Use screening, lighting, and wayfinding to improve the experience

Streets, Gateways, and Connections

- Maintain clear and safe connections across the district
- Strengthen links to surrounding neighborhoods
- Prioritize visibility, lighting, and safe crossings at key points



DESIRED INTERIM CONDITIONS

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Example of a construction edge that integrates educational elements and clear wayfinding to guide movement around active work zones.

INTERIM CONDITIONS



Open Space + Greenway

- Provide early access to portions of the Greenway where feasible
- Support temporary paths, seating, and landscaping
- Create usable open space even before full buildout

Interim Use + Activation Areas

- Avoid long-term vacant or inactive spaces
- Support temporary uses like open space, recreation, and programming
- Allow flexibility for community-led or low-cost activation

District-Wide Experience + Communication

- Provide clear information on what is open and accessible
- Use consistent signage and wayfinding
- Maintain a cohesive identity during phased development

Interim Use Parcels + Activation Zones

Focus: Activation, programming, and avoiding vacancy

Prioritize parcels likely to remain vacant for interim uses, avoiding long-term inactivity by supporting temporary open space, recreation, and community programming. For example, events such as Midsummer Night at Harvard University demonstrate how underutilized sites can be activated through programming that draws people in and fosters community engagement. Encourage flexible, low-cost, and evolving activation strategies, and support community-led or partnership-based uses that contribute to an active and welcoming public realm.



Example of the Cisco Brewers Beer Garden in the Seaport, activating a vacant site with a temporary, vibrant use during interim conditions.

District-Wide Experience + Communication

Focus: Cohesion, transparency, and public understanding

Provide clear, accessible information on phasing across the district; maintain ongoing communication about construction, detours, and temporary conditions; and establish a cohesive ERC identity through consistent signage, wayfinding, and visual treatments that reinforce the district as a distinct and recognizable place throughout all phases of development, drawing on best practices from comparable institutional and mixed-use districts.



Example of the Waterloo Greenway in Austin, Texas, illustrating a phased approach to developing a continuous open space network over time.

Open Space + Greenway Interfaces

Focus: Continuity, usability, and safety

Maintain continuous, safe access along the Greenway and open space network; provide clear, high-quality detours where segments are impacted; ensure lighting, visibility, and year-round usability; activate edges where open space meets development parcels; and implement Harvard's Phase A commitment to construct a shared-use path along the Greenway from Rena Park to Milestone Street, available for public use no later than 13 months after Phase A occupancy.



Harvard GSD Construction Fence, 2002. Photo by Michael Goorevich.

WHAT THE PLAN DOES AND DOESN'T DO



This Plan sets the long-term direction for the ERC district and guides future planning and development.

✓ Does

- Establishes the vision and structure for district growth
- Defines the land use approach and mix
- Sets the Greenway, open space, and mobility framework
- Identifies urban design principles and transitions
- Informs future zoning and development review

⊘ Does Not

- Rezone the site or change existing zoning
- Set building heights, FAR, or parcel-level details
- Approve specific buildings or designs
- Replace future PDA planning or Article 80 review
- Determine final design or construction details



OPEN SPACE & PUBLIC REALM FRAMEWORK

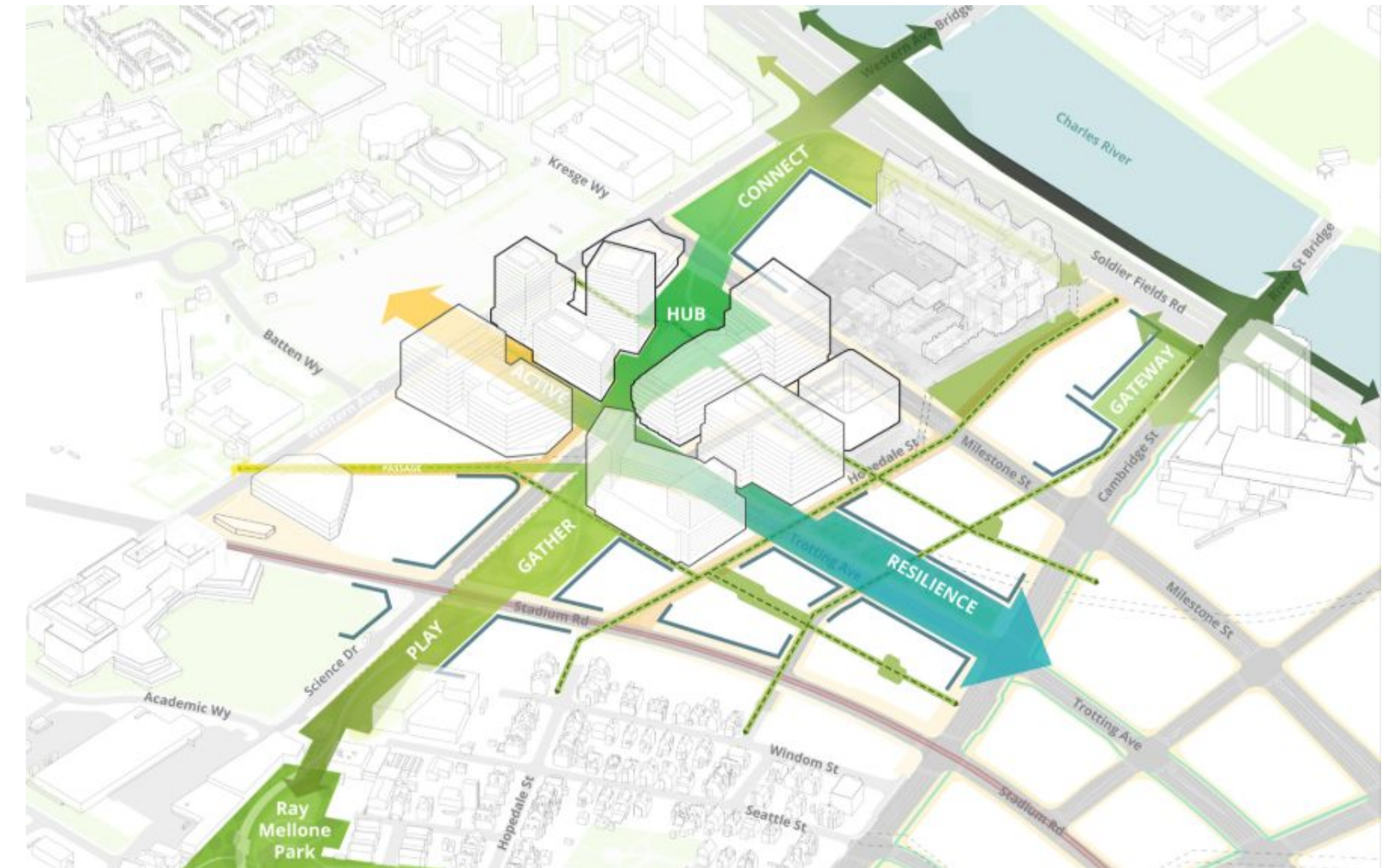
We heard two consistent priorities: early access to the Greenway and stronger north–south connections across the district.

Phase A Commitment (Near-Term Implementation)

- As part of Phase A, Harvard University will deliver:
 - A public multi-use path along the Greenway alignment
 - Extending from Rena Park to Milestone Street
- This path will be open to the public **within 13 months of Phase A occupancy**
- Establishes a foundational segment of the Greenway early in the buildout

North–South Open Space Connections

- While the primary Greenway runs east–west, the plan supports north–south connections through the district
- These connections will be created through:
 - **Landscaped streets** (such as Trotting Avenue and Stadium Road)
 - **Open space nodes and gathering areas** distributed across the district
 - **Pedestrian and bicycle connections linking to surrounding neighborhoods**
- Together, these elements form a **connected network of green and public spaces**, rather than a single continuous corridor



STREET HIERARCHY & FUNCTION

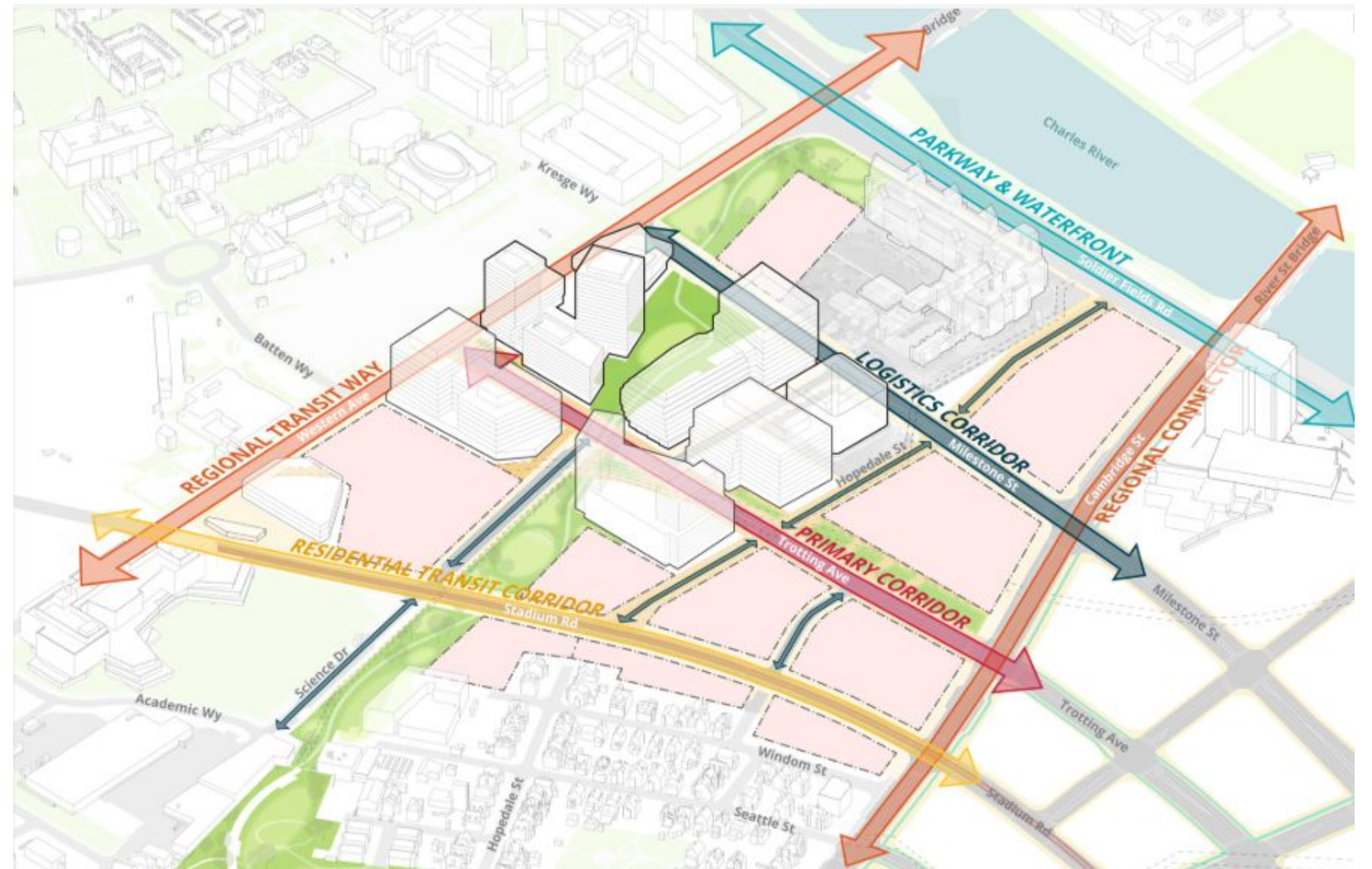


Stadium Road – Residential Transit Corridor

- **Primary modes:** Pedestrian + Bicycle + Transit
- Residential and transit-oriented; prioritizes comfort and safety
- Limited curb cuts, garage access, and loading
- Concept includes:
 - Wide sidewalks and landscaped buffers
 - Potential dedicated bus lanes
 - Protected bicycle facilities
- Designed to support safe, legible movement from early phases

Trotting Avenue – Primary Corridor

- **Primary modes:** Pedestrian + Bicycle + Transit + General Traffic
- Main circulation corridor with active ground-floor uses
- Key north-south connection to Cambridge Street and future West Station
- Concept includes:
 - Expanded pedestrian space and seating
 - Enhanced bicycle accommodations
- Supports high activity and continuous movement through the district



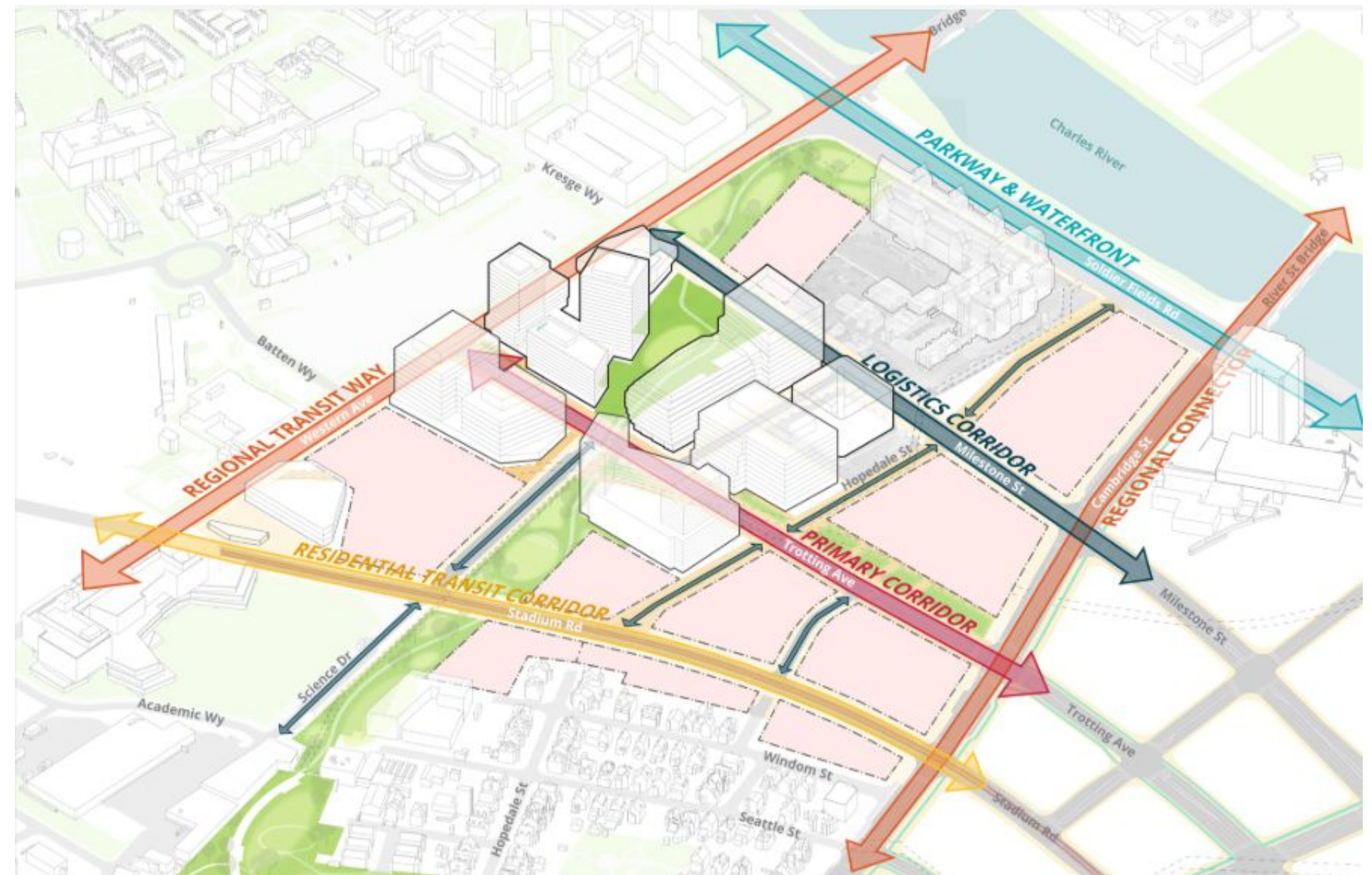
MOBILITY & TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Cambridge Street – Regional Connector

- **Primary modes:** Transit + General Traffic + Pedestrian + Bicycle
- Primary east–west connection linking ERC to Cambridge
- Serves as a gateway corridor with strong regional function
- Will continue to support high-capacity transit and multimodal access

Milestone Street – Logistics Corridor

- **Primary modes:** Vehicular Access (Service + Parking)
- Concentrates loading, garage access, and circulation
- Minimizes conflicts on primary pedestrian-oriented streets
- Not intended as a primary pedestrian or bicycle corridor



THE NEED FOR FLEXIBILITY

Future development must remain adaptable as **markets, infrastructure, and economic conditions evolve over time.**

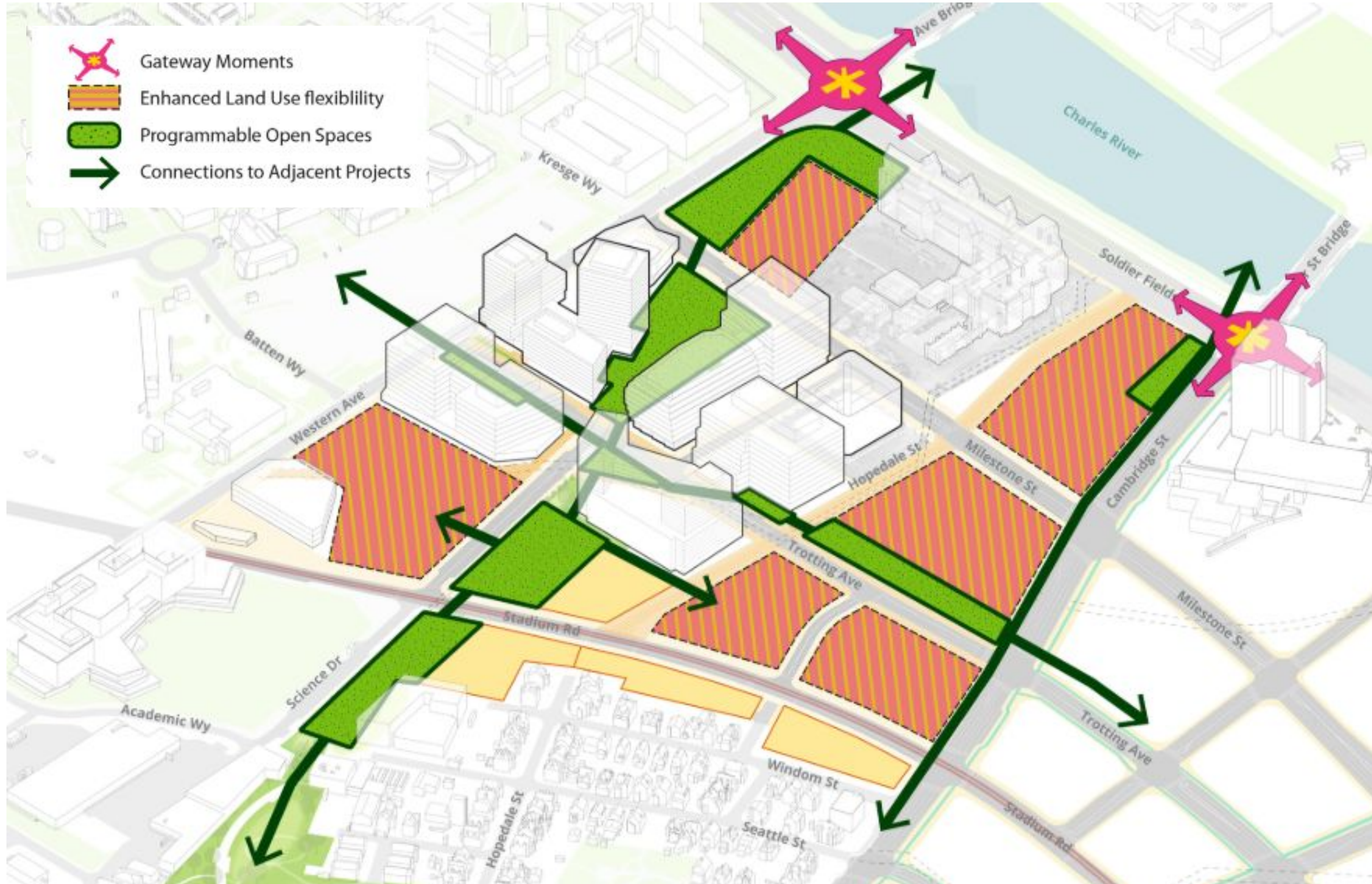
Market Conditions

- Demand for life sciences, office, and housing fluctuates with economic cycles
- Market demand for lab and commercial space can shift rapidly
- Parcels may need to transition between commercial, residential, and mixed-use over time
- Development feasibility is influenced by construction and financing costs

Development Timeline

- Full district buildout is expected to occur over multiple decades
- Early phases will prioritize sites that can advance with existing infrastructure and access
- Phasing is closely tied to the timeline of the Allston Multimodal Project and supporting infrastructure
- Parcel development will occur in coordination with infrastructure sequencing and district readiness

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT APPROACH



CODIFYING THE PLAN

The next steps will follow a multi-phase process:

1. Final Draft Plan Adoption

- Adopted by BPDA Board following comment period

2. Future Planned Development Area (PDA) Master Plan

- A PDA is a **zoning overlay** district that establishes special zoning under Article 80-C
- A PDA Master Plan establishes **detailed zoning, massing, design guidelines, phasing, and infrastructure**
- Will occur sometime in the future **after** the district plan is finalized
- This plan will be used to guide the PDA Master Plan

3. Subsequent PDA Development Plan + Parcel-Level Review (Later Stages)

- A PDA Development Plan will **specify** the proposed location, dimension, and all appearances within the PDA
- Design review, Article 80 (as applicable), and additional public engagement

THANK YOU



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ACCESS AND PARKING

