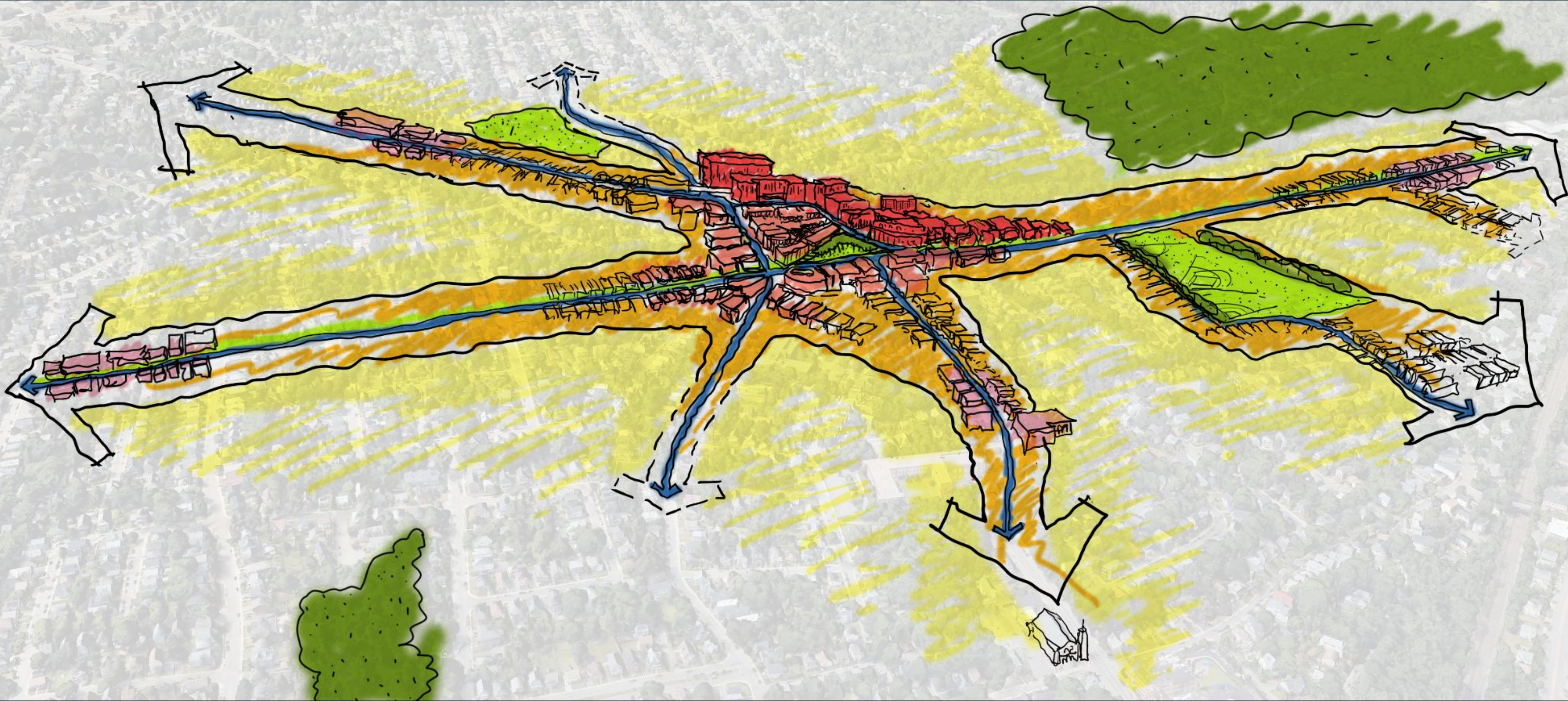


ROSLINDALE SQUARE: ZONING UPDATES GUIDE



A guide to highlight and explain the updated zoning rules in the Roslindale Square area that allow for more multifamily housing and mixed-use development.



Planning Department

Last Updated: June 2025

CITY of **BOSTON**

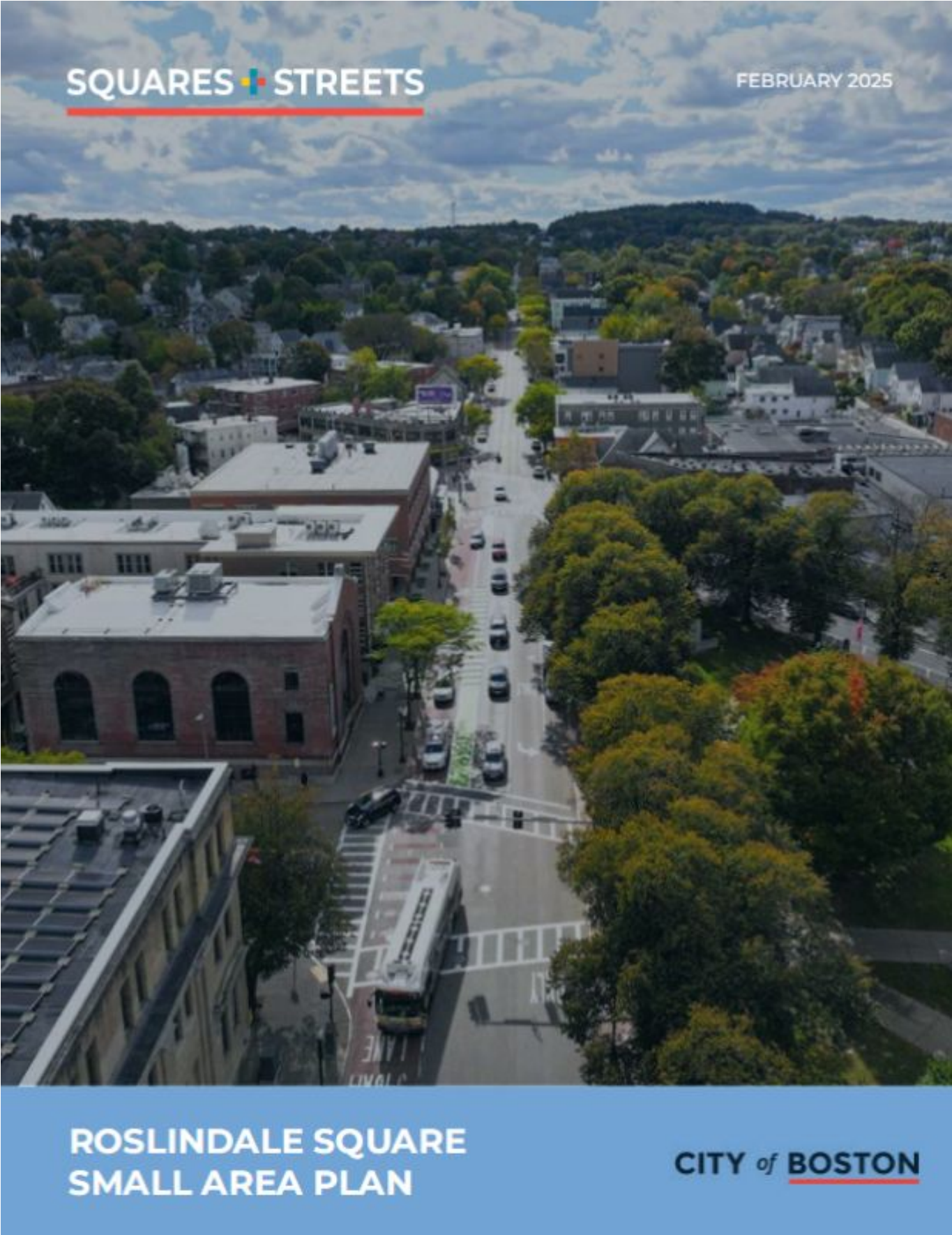
BACKGROUND: ROSLINDALE SQUARE SMALL AREA PLAN



The Roslindale Square Small Area Plan was adopted by the BPDA Board on February 13, 2025.

The Small Area Plan sets a vision for future building development and land uses, public investments from city departments, strengthening of the local business areas and housing growth opportunities.

The City of Boston will use the plan as a guide to provide resources and coordinate projects to meet the goals of that vision.




ROSLINDALE SQUARE | COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

FACILITATING EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION

Roslindale is a linguistically and racially diverse community, and the engagements summarized below encapsulate the team's efforts to reach a more diverse audience during the planning process.


Hosting an equitable process means that participants in Roslindale Square Squares + Streets engagements are representative of the neighborhood and inclusive of groups who historically have not been engaged in planning processes. Traditional meetings with pre-registration tend to attract fewer participants from low-income and BIPOC communities. To address this, staff have intentionally conducted numerous pop-ups, coffee hours, and focus groups at various times of day and days of the week/weekend to engage more diverse groups.

The following engagement activities were targeted to hear from Roslindale's Spanish-speaking communities, low-income households, immigrants, and BIPOC individuals. In order to meet these groups where they are at, staff attended existing community events and coordinated with scheduled programming/classes.



ESL ENGAGEMENT






Staff and interpreters attended 4 ESL classes at the Caswell House and ABCD, providing an opportunity for primarily Spanish and Italian-Cuban speaking students to learn about Squares + Streets and complete an activity about what they love and want to see improved in the Square.



POP-UPS AND TABLING

Pop-ups at Archuleta events, the Summer School, library, and two twice-weekly outreach to more residents - especially those who speak a language other than English - who cannot attend longer meetings or do not feel comfortable in those spaces. Spanish-speaking staff were present at all of these pop-ups.


ROSLINDALE SQUARE | IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

#	GOAL	HOUSING AND REAL ESTATE STRATEGIES	#	GOAL	SMALL BUSINESS STRATEGIES
H-1		Encourage an additional percentage of rental units to be offered to housing voucher holders in new developments subject to Affirmatively Fair Housing (AFFH) requirements (generally residential projects with more than 50,000 square feet).	SB-1		The following commercial uses are desired by the community through new development or adaptive reuse of existing or vacant buildings: affordable and healthy food retailers, cafes, sit-down restaurants, and daytime casual eateries.
H-2		Request a higher proportion of 2+ bedroom units in new residential development.			
H-3		Develop guidelines for parcel acquisition in housing production. This may include identifying buildings or empty lots that the City can acquire and develop.			
H-4		Identify parcels with Southeast Boston CDC for acquisition/preservation of affordable housing.			

ROSLINDALE SQUARE | LAND USE AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK


COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

INTERSECTION AT ALEXANDER THE GREAT PARK ON BELGRADE AVE



A POSSIBLE FUTURE FOR ROSLINDALE SQUARE

Current Conditions:



BACKGROUND: LAND USE AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK




The Small Area Plan includes a chapter called the **Land Use and Design Framework**.

The Framework sets a vision for **more multifamily housing and mixed-use development** in and around Roslindale Square to expand housing opportunities near major public transit resources and local small business areas.

It includes a recommendation to **update the zoning rules** in and around Roslindale Square to encode the Plan’s goals for multifamily housing and mixed-use development.

This guide provides an overview of proposed updates to the zoning rules of the area, including a walkthrough of each segment of the area that will be updated.



SQUARES + STREETS CITY OF BOSTON

CHAPTER 03

LAND USE AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK

This Plan supports mixed-use growth in the existing commercial core of Roslindale Square and surrounding gateway streets while reserving zoning reform for the majority of lower scale residential fabric for future initiatives.

The Land Use and Design Framework recommends where future development should occur in key local areas, and what that development should look like. The framework can identify where to allow land uses, what the scale of new buildings should be, and what kinds of infrastructure and community improvements should accompany that growth.

This chapter 1) summarizes present-day land use patterns and opportunities; 2) presents the proposed Land Use and Design Framework; and 3) identifies how new development should shape the public realm and built environment.

ROSLINDALE SQUARE | LAND USE AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK

LAND USE AND ZONING

RECOMMENDATION:

LD-1. BASED ON THE LAND USE AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK, UPDATE THE ZONING MAP TO ENCODE THE GOALS FOR MIXED-USE AND MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN AND AROUND ROSLINDALE SQUARE.

- Map Squares + Streets districts, through a Zoning Map Amendment, throughout mixed-use areas of the Square, at key gateways to the Square, and to provide transitions to smaller-scale residential areas.
- Where this Plan envisions continued small-scale residential uses and incremental growth, update residential zoning to reflect existing built patterns, support safe walking routes to Roslindale Square, and enable the development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and small multi-unit residential buildings.

Squares + Streets Districts (enacted on April 17, 2024) are six mixed-use zoning districts that support a diversity of land uses, significant transit service, and high levels of pedestrian activity.

The purpose of these districts is to complement and increase the mix of uses, encourage walkability and adaptive reuse, and designate areas as appropriate for self-development and housing growth.


ROSLINDALE SQUARE | IMPLEMENTATION

#	GOAL	LAND USE AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK STRATEGY
LD-1, LD-1A, LD-1B		Based on the Land Use and Design Framework, update the zoning map to encode the goals for mixed-use and multi-family Roslindale Square.
	FUNDING CATEGORY	NO additional budget needed
	TIMELINE	Winter 2025 adoption of ordinance (update 2025)
LD-2		Incorporate the Land Use and Design Framework into the ongoing review of proposed project.
	FUNDING CATEGORY	NO additional budget needed
	TIMELINE	Outstanding of this Plan updated 2025
LD-3		Complete an Area Form update - including historic structures - for the Roslindale Square Historic Commission (MHC).
	FUNDING CATEGORY	Operating/Annual Budget and Grants
	TIMELINE	2-3 years

ROSLINDALE SQUARE | LAND USE AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK

COMMUNITY AND COMMERCIAL CORE


THROUGH BLOCK ON TAFT CT, BETWEEN SOUTH ST AND CORINTH ST



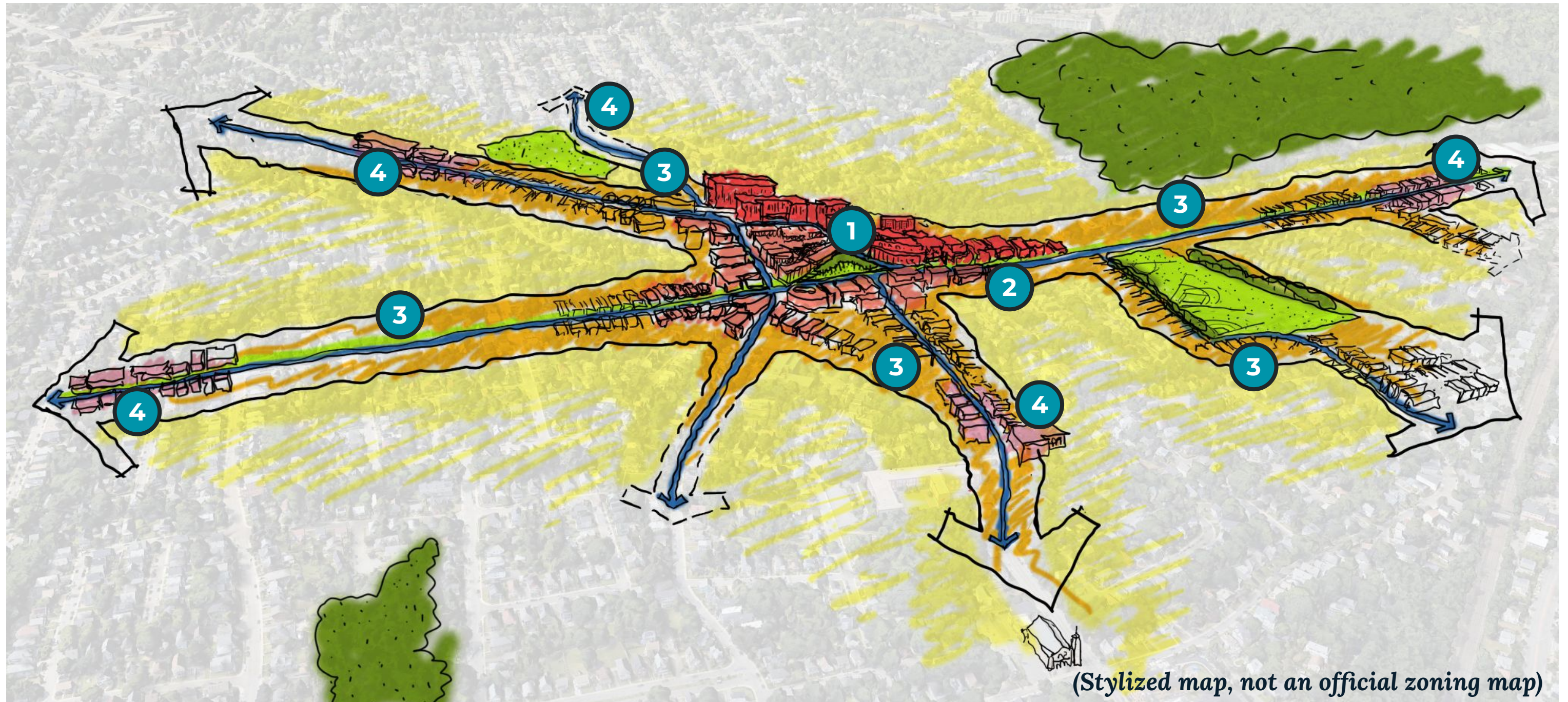
NEW PUBLIC AMENITY SPACES

In the central block bounded by Poplar Street, South Street, and Corinth Street, development should consider meeting their Outdoor Amenity Space and Lot Coverage requirements by dedicating space to the creation of publicly accessible through-block connections, especially between Corinth Street and South Street and between Poplar Street and Taft Hill Court.

Current Conditions



BACKGROUND: LAND USE AND DESIGN FRAMEWORK



The **Land Use and Design Framework** specifies different types of areas in and around Roslindale Square and makes recommendations for guiding future development. **The specific areas are:**

- 1) A **community and commercial core** centered around Adams Park that serves as the Square's center of activity
- 2) An **active main street** from Adams Park to Healy Field
- 3) **Connecting, transitional streets** between the core area and local gateways
- 4) **Mixed-use gateways** located at existing commercial clusters around the Square

UPDATED ZONING: SQUARES AND STREETS DISTRICTS

This map showcases the **updated zoning map for Roslindale Square**, which maps Squares and Streets districts in the area as part of the implementation of recommendations from the Small Area Plan's Land Use and Design Framework.

The zoning updates process took place from Feb 2025 through May 2025. Updates to the zoning regulations in the Roslindale Square area were **adopted by the Boston Zoning Commission on May 21, 2025**.

The specific rules for land uses and dimensional scale in these districts are written in **Article 8 (Regulation of Uses)** and **Article 26 (Squares and Streets Districts)** of the Boston Zoning Code.

You can check out those rules at:

bosplans.org/Article8Uses

bosplans.org/Article26SquaresStreets



SUMMARY: WHAT ARE SQUARES AND STREETS DISTRICTS?

Squares and Streets districts have zoning rules that allow for mixed-use development of multifamily housing, commercial spaces, and cultural spaces in neighborhood squares around Boston near transit resources. They **each have different rules** around the maximum scale of buildings, the yard space surrounding buildings, and land uses. **You can read and reference the full zoning rules at:** bosplans.org/Article8Uses and bosplans.org/Article26SquaresStreets

●● S0 - Transitional Residential



- Up to 4 stories maximum
- Up to 14 residential units maximum
- Primarily residential uses
- **Requires residentially-scaled front, side, + rear yards**
- Transition from high activity mixed-use areas to low activity residential areas

●●● S3 - Active Main Street



- Up to 7 stories maximum
- Allows a larger mix of small and medium-scale commercial uses that promote activity

●● S1 - Main Street Living



- Up to 4 stories maximum
- For parts of a main street that are largely residential but have occasional non-residential uses
- **Requires residentially-scaled front, side, + rear yards**
- Allows more flexibility for small-scale commercial uses

●●● S4 - Active Squares



- Up to 7 stories maximum
- Allows for wider buildings than S3 and more flexibility for medium- and large-scale uses
- Higher Outdoor Amenity Space requirement than S3

●● S2 - Main Street Mixed Use



- Up to 5 stories maximum
- First of the districts to allow 0 foot side yards for buildings that share a party wall
- Flexible rules to allow for both mixed use and fully residential multifamily buildings along a main street

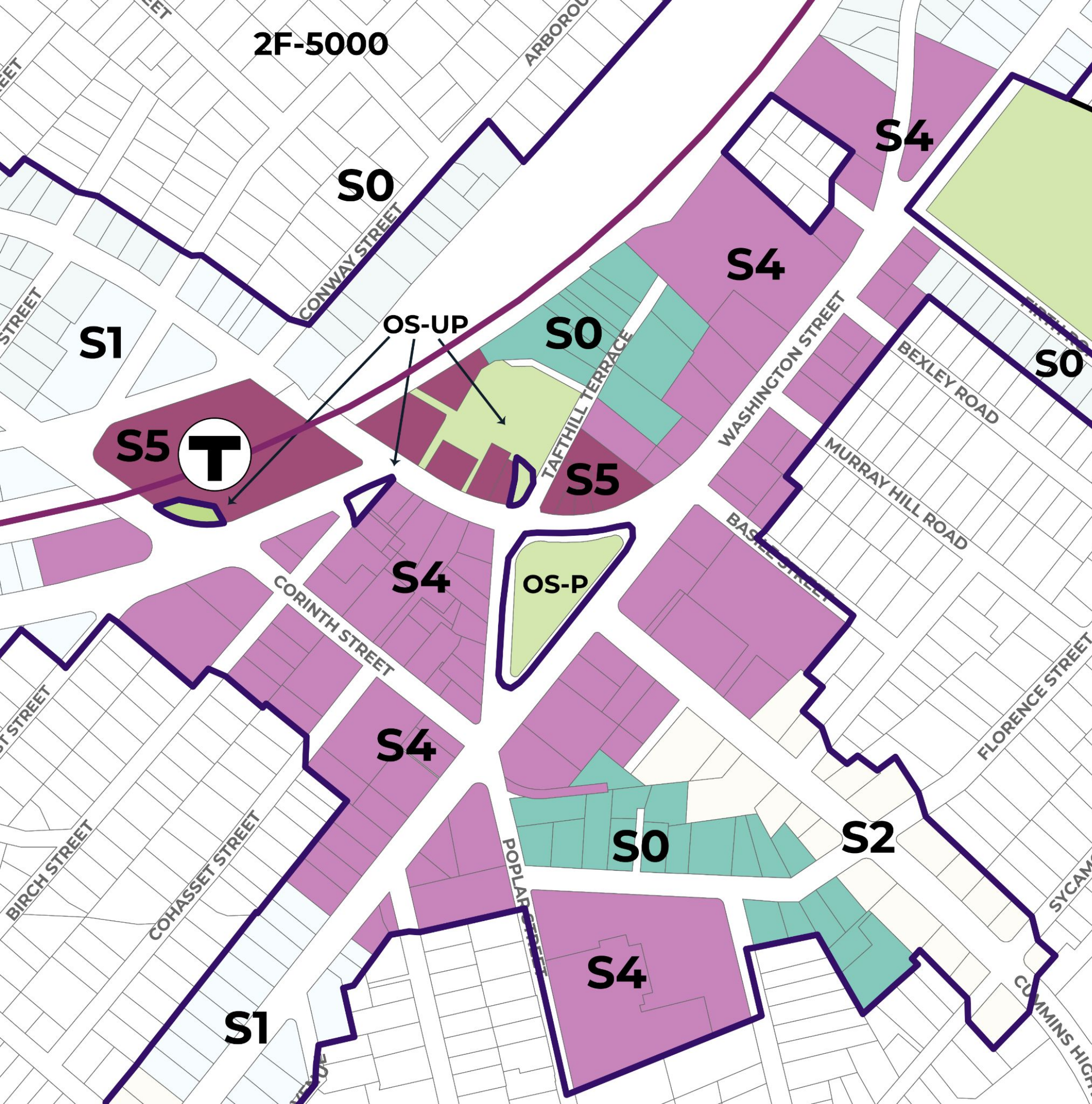
●●● S5 - Placemaker Squares



- Up to 145 feet maximum
- Taller and wider mixed-use buildings that allow the most flexibility of ground and upper level uses
- Highest Outdoor Amenity Space requirement of the districts

● has a Permeable Area of Lot Requirement on all lots ● has a Permeable Area of Lot Requirement lots >11,000 sf ● has an Outdoor Amenity Space Requirement ● has a Ground Floor Active Use Requirement ● has residentially-scaled front, side, and rear yards

ZOOMING IN: Roslindale Square and Washington St S0, S4, S5, and OS-UP Districts



Implementing the vision for this area from Land Use and Design Framework of the Small Area Plan:

- A **community and commercial core** centered around Adams Park that serves as the Square's center of activity
- An **active main street** between Adams Park and Healy Field

Existing Context + Plan Vision

Roslindale Square and Washington St

- **Existing:**

- Core mixed-use area of mostly two- and three-story buildings as well as surrounding multifamily properties at three and four stories
- Large public or formerly public facilities (i.e., BCYF Roslindale, Roslindale Library, The Substation)
- Multiple multifamily properties north of the Taft Hill Municipal Lot

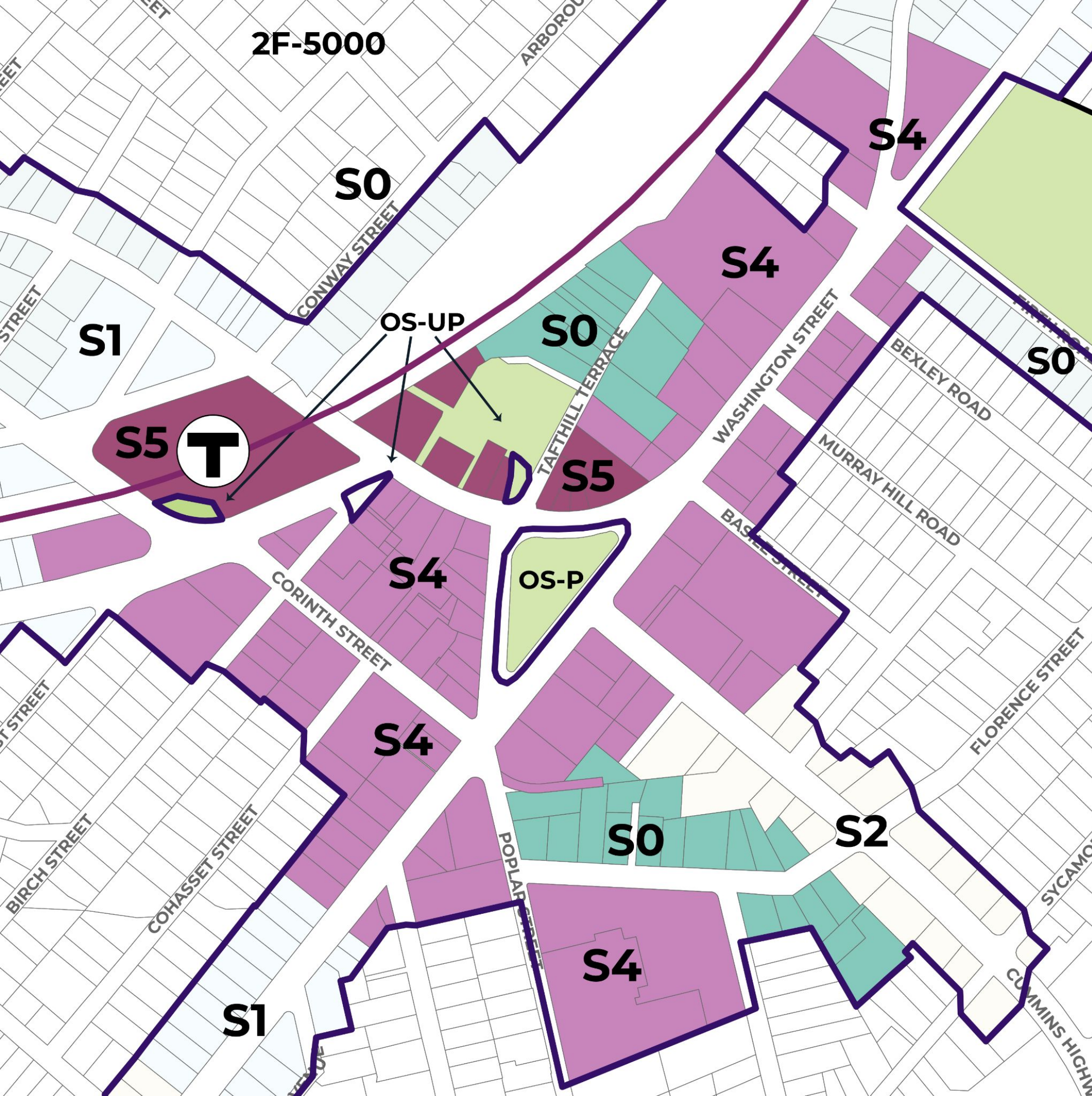
- **Small Area Plan Vision**

- Center of commercial activity
- Active main street condition between two public green spaces
- Highest level of potential density compared to the surrounding streets



Roslindale Square and Washington St

S0, S4, S5, and OS-UP Districts

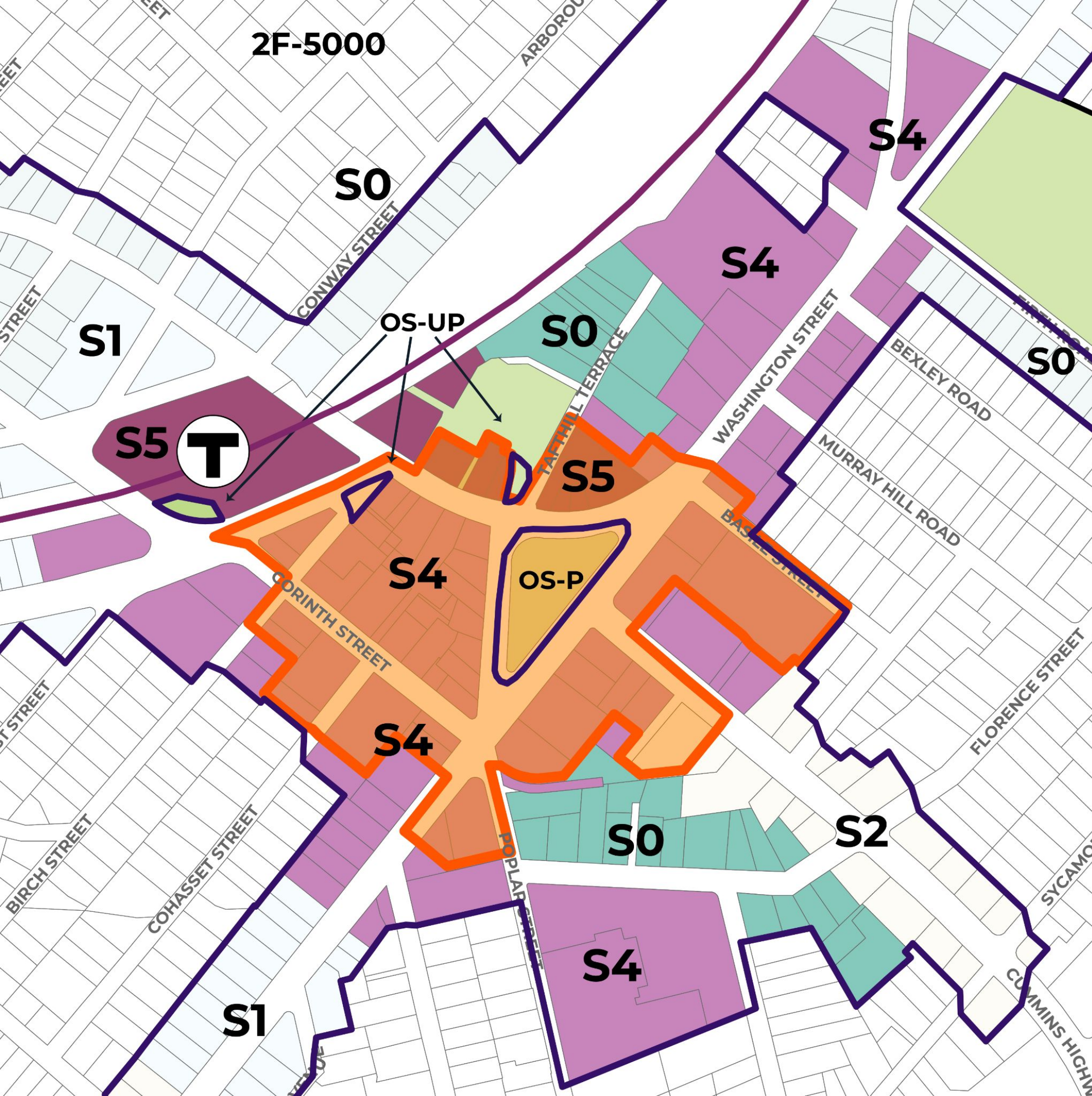


- **S4** and **S5** mapped to allow for the highest housing density and a mix of commercial use sizes
- **S4** and **S5** require active ground floor uses, permeable area of lot, and the highest percentages of outdoor amenity space
- **S4** includes affirms and increases development potential of large scale parcels
- **S5** mapped on and adjacent to major publicly owned parcels
 - i.e., Roslindale Village MBTA Lots, Greater Roslindale Medical Center
- **S0** mapped to affirm smaller multifamily cluster and to transition between larger S+S districts
- **OS-UP** mapped to affirm parking lot use and occasional, temporary community uses

Roslindale Square and Washington St

Roslindale Neighborhood Design Overlay District (NDOD)

- Text amendment to retain applicability of the Roslindale Neighborhood Design Overlay District (NDOD)
- Provides a layer of design review for renovations and redevelopment projects ≥ 300 sq ft and that impact aspects of the public realm
- Leaves opportunity for community process around project design, even for projects below Article 80 scale



ZOOMING IN:

Major Streets

Washington St North + South,
Cummins Hwy, Belgrade Ave
S1 and S2 Districts



Washington St North

Washington St South



Cummins Hwy

Belgrade Ave

Implementing the vision for this area from Land Use and Design Framework of the Small Area Plan:

- **Connecting, transitional streets** between the core area and local gateways
- **Mixed-use gateways** located at existing commercial clusters around the Square



Existing Contexts + Plan Vision

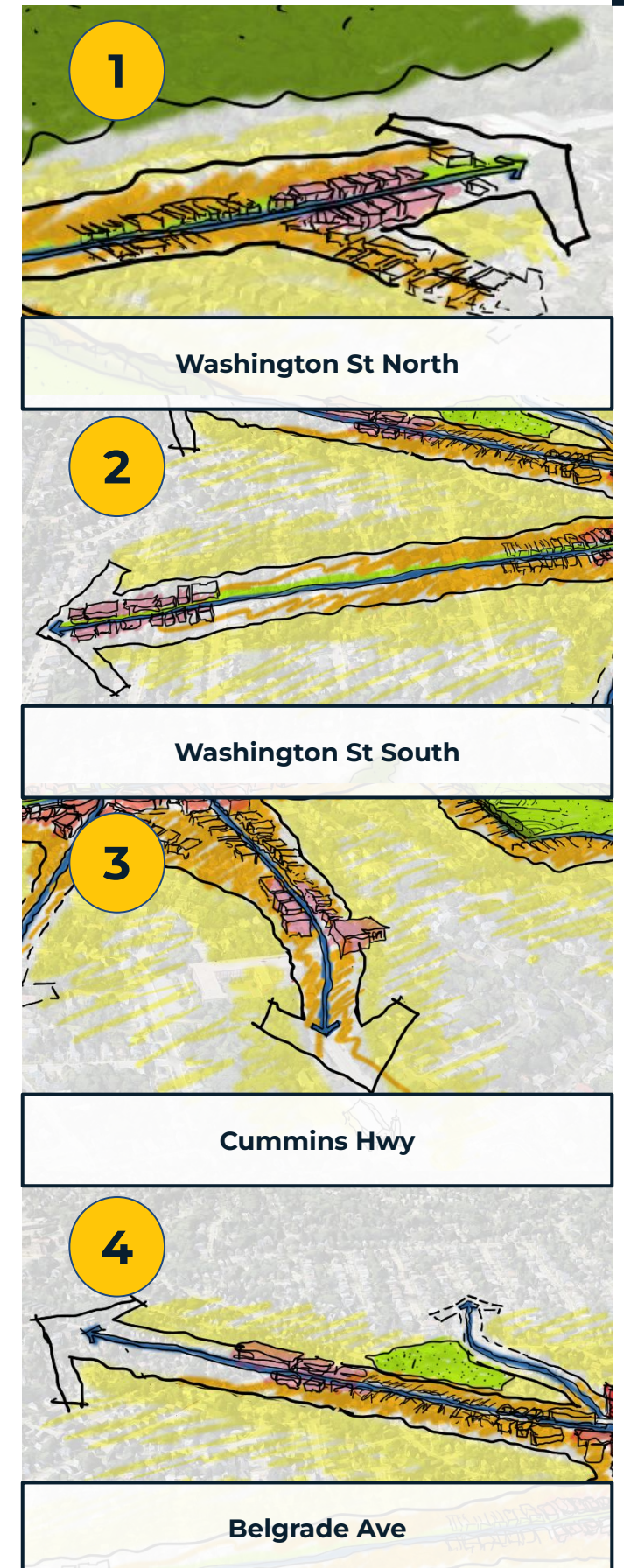
Major Streets

- **Existing:**

- A mix of heavily residential and nonconforming mixed-use blocks along main streets
- Existing nonforming three-unit and multifamily housing in each area
- Each connect Roslindale Square and another commercial cluster, transit hub (Forest Hills), or major street (Hyde Park Ave)

- **Small Area Plan Vision**

- Increase housing and commercial activity along these connecting streets
- Promote existing commercial clusters (or “gateways”) by allowing greater land use flexibility and density



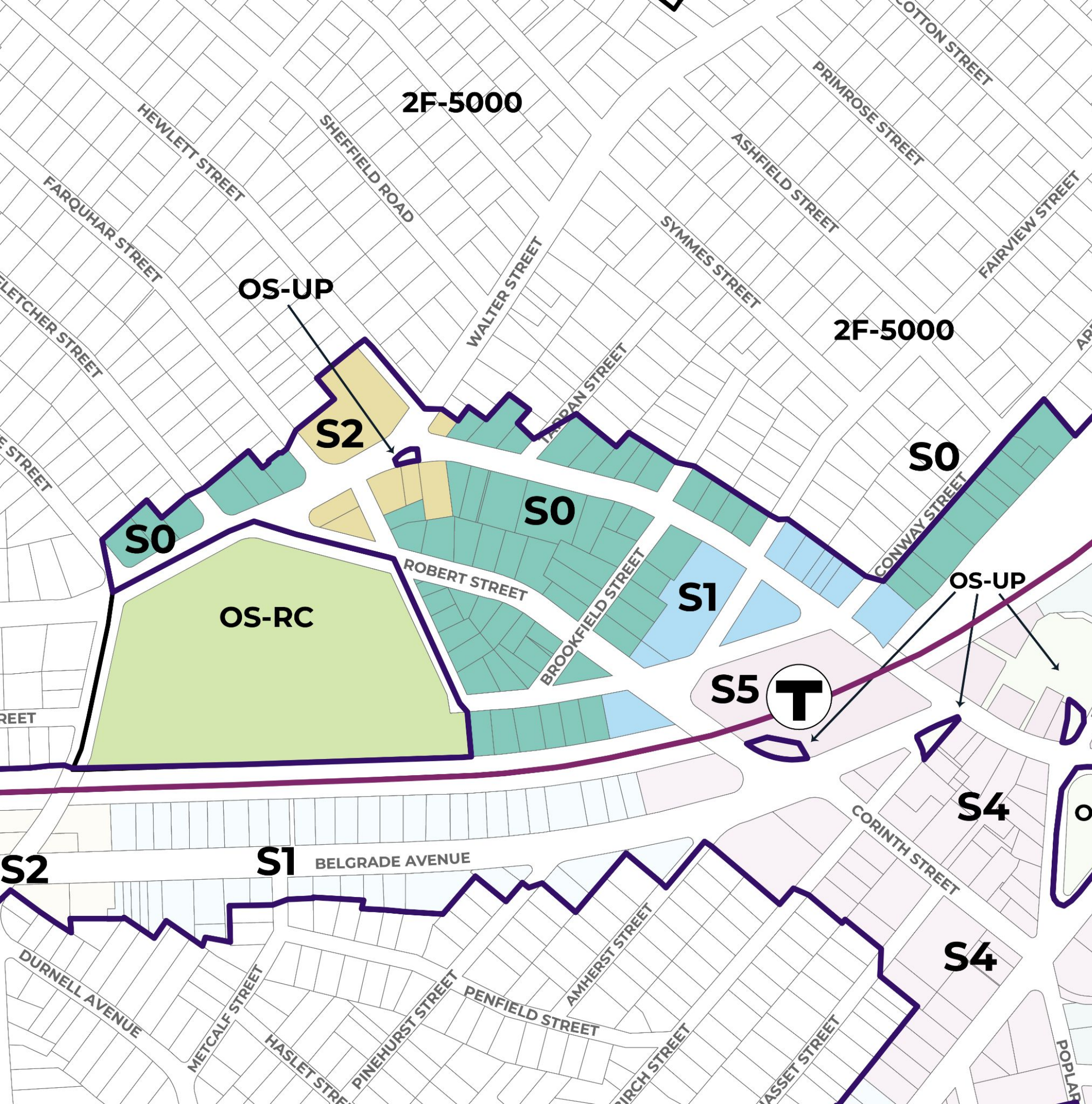
Major Streets

Washington St North + South,
Cummins Hwy, Belgrade Ave
S1 and S2 Districts

- **S1** and **S2** mapped to allow moderate housing density and small-to-medium commercial uses – both above and below Article 80 scale
- **S1** mapped on fully or majority residential blocks to align with and affirm the existing residential condition and existing multifamily and large building footprints
- **S2** mapped at existing commercial clusters and areas identified by local residents for future mixed-use growth
- **S2** at Washington St North includes parcels abutting the Archdale BHA property currently used for construction storage to incentivize a more appropriate and healthy land use future



ZOOMING IN: North of the Roslindale Village MBTA Station S0, S1, and S2 Districts



Implementing the vision for this area from Land Use and Design Framework of the Small Area Plan:

- **Connecting, transitional streets** between the core area and local gateways
- **Mixed-use gateways** located at existing commercial clusters around the Square

Existing Context + Plan Vision

North of the Roslindale Village MBTA Station

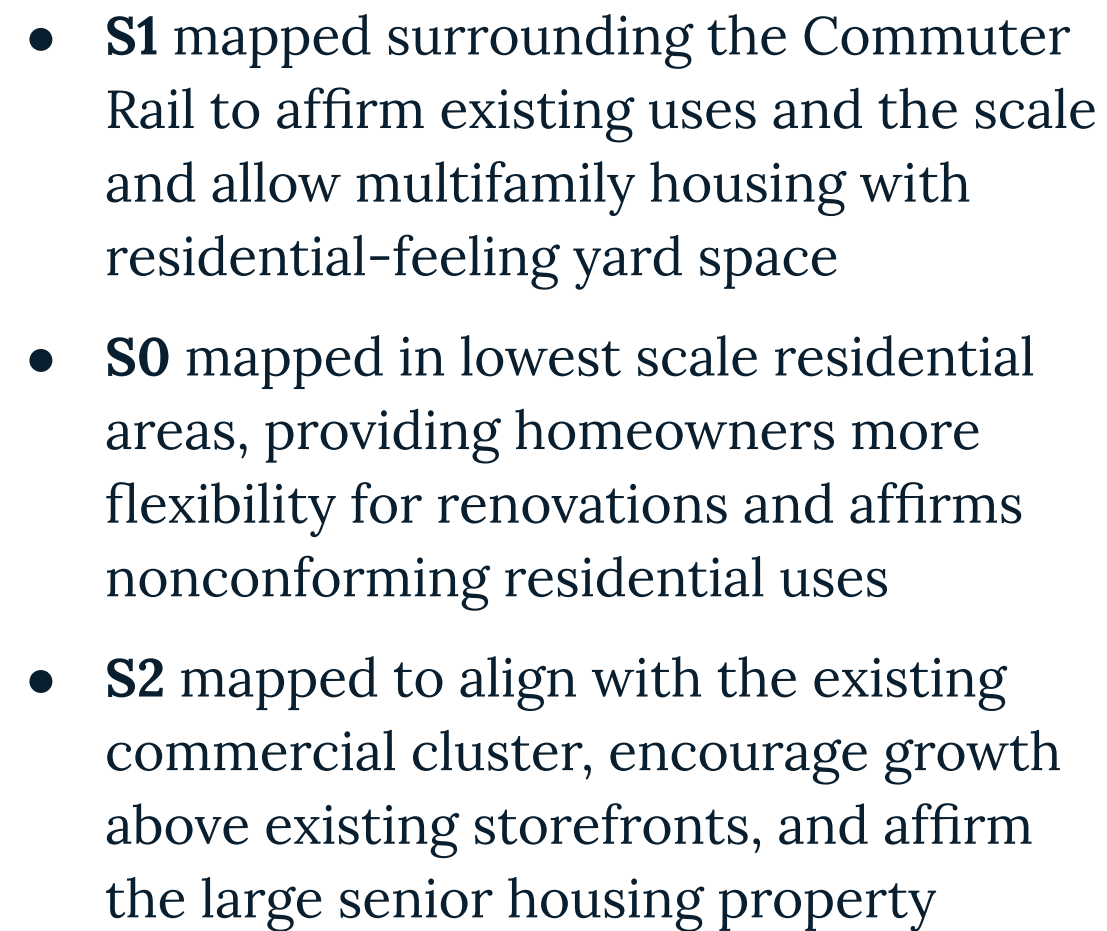
- **Existing:**

- Mostly two-unit properties with some nonconforming three-unit and multifamily properties
- Non-residential properties at a larger scale than currently allowed (i.e., Beacon Academy, REO National)
- A small business cluster with one-story buildings and a large multifamily senior housing development

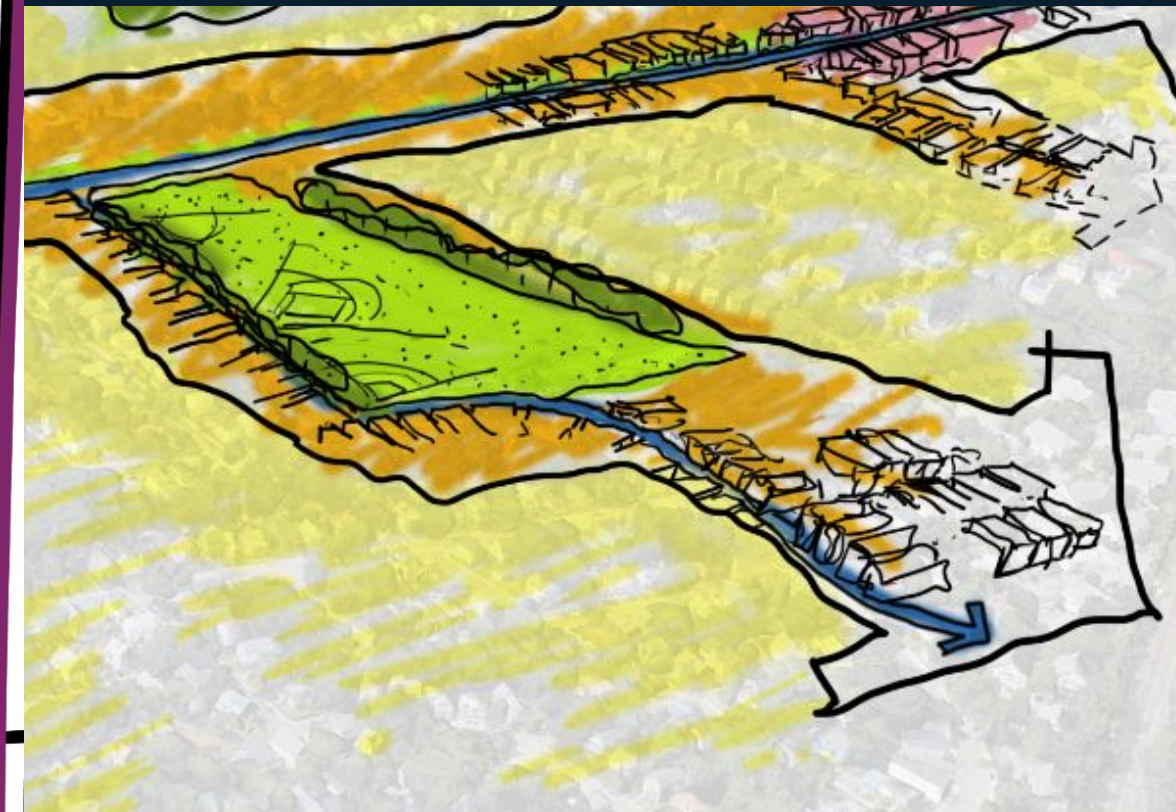
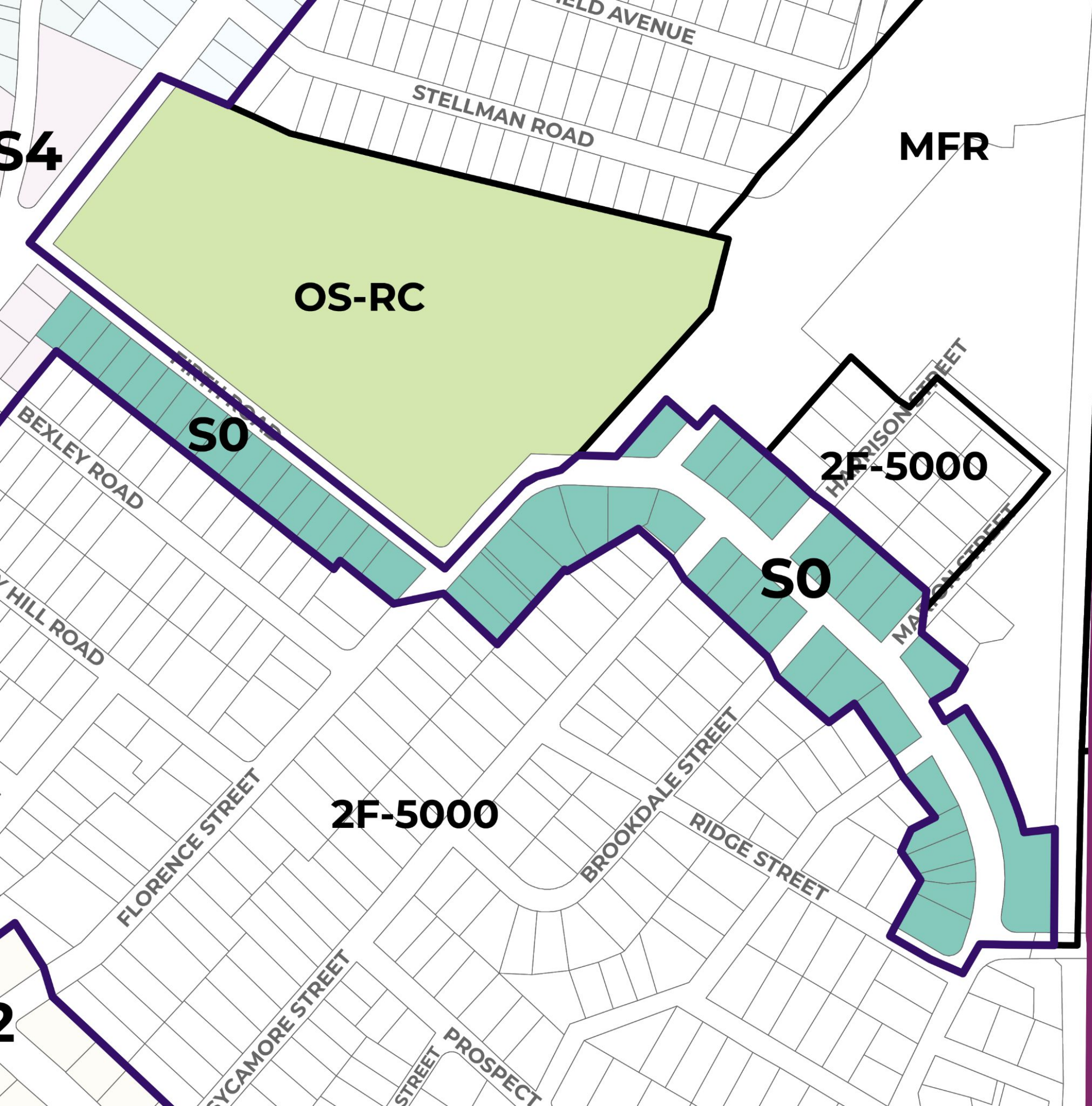
- **Small Area Plan Vision**

- Promote existing commercial clusters (or “gateways”) by allowing greater land use flexibility and density
- Moderate housing density close to the Commuter Rail but tapered down in scale compared to the Square





ZOOMING IN: Firth Rd and Florence St S0 District



Implementing the vision for this area from Land Use and Design Framework of the Small Area Plan:

- **Connecting, transitional streets** between the core area and local gateways

Existing Context + Plan Vision

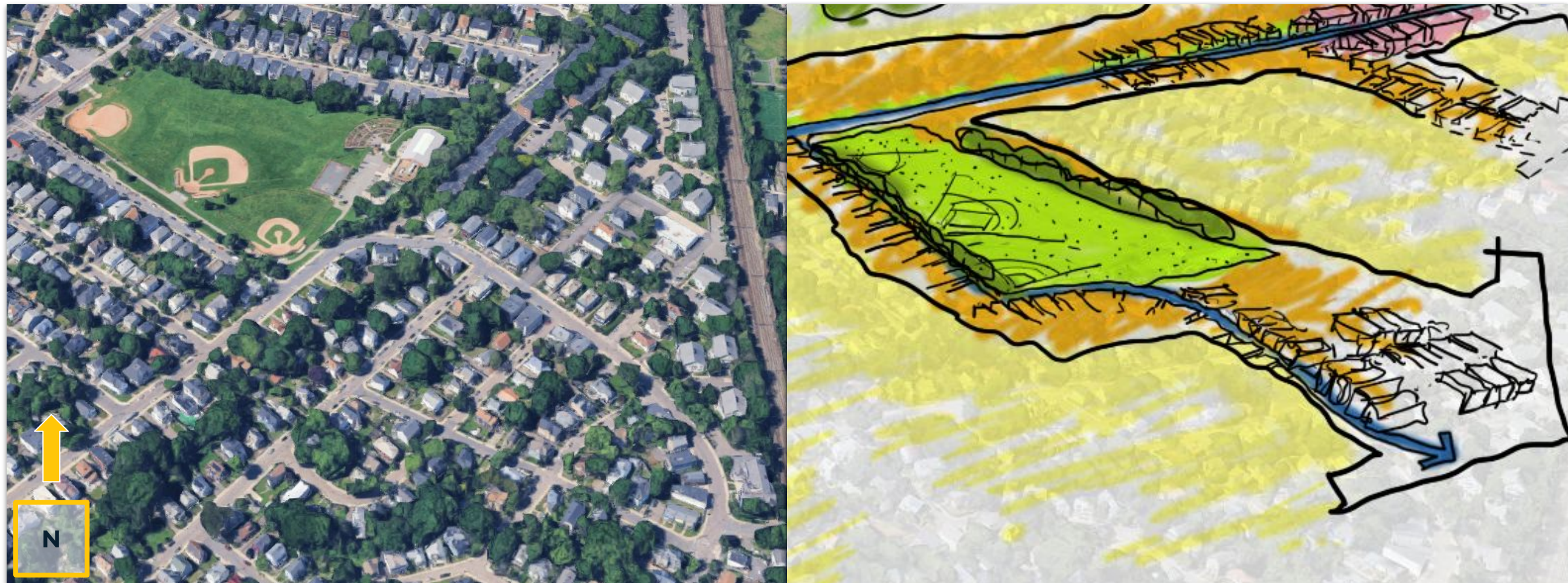
Firth Rd and Florence St

- **Existing:**

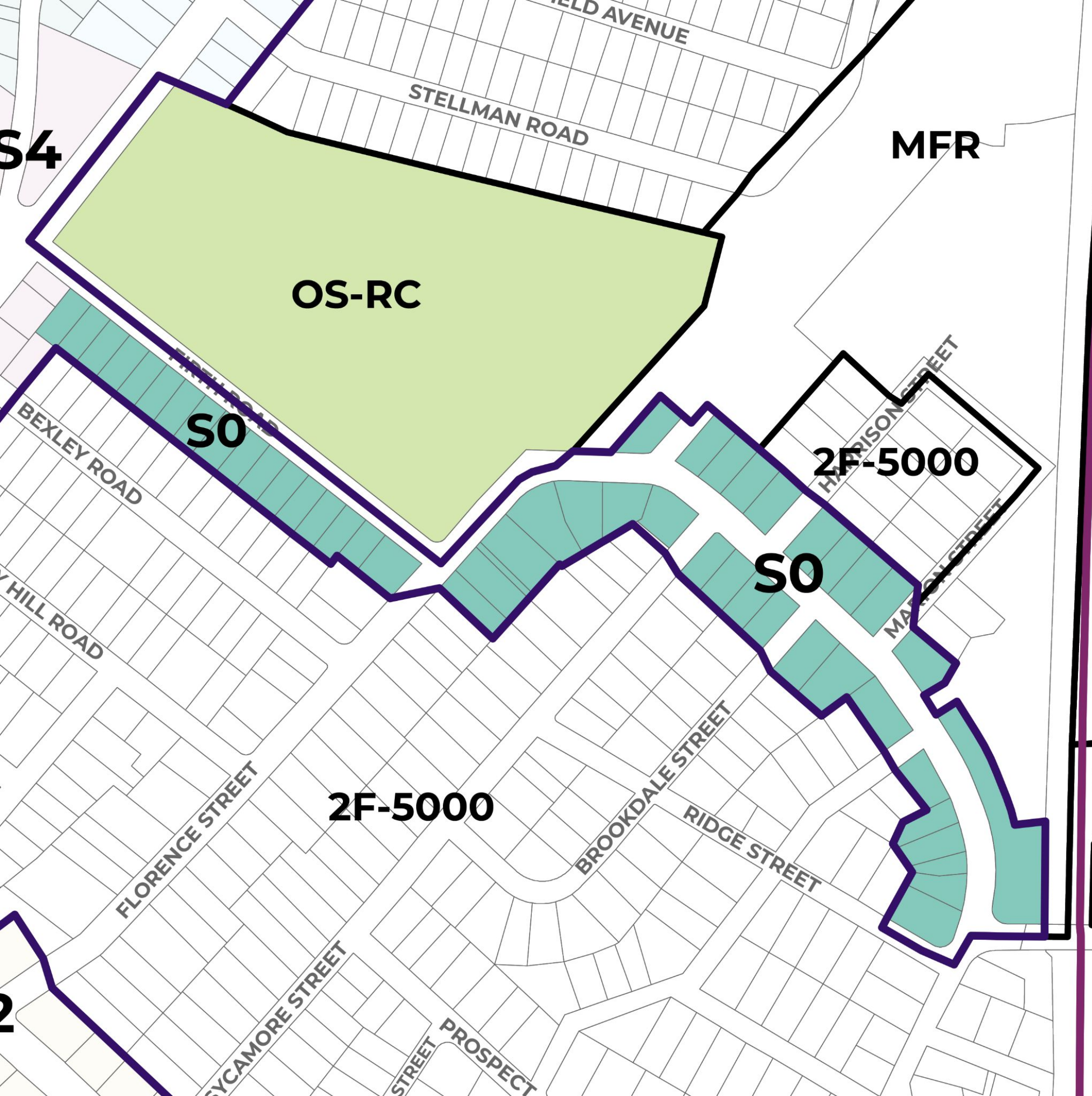
- Residential streets holding a mix of housing, including nonconforming three-unit and multifamily homes
- An existing corner store right at the intersection leading to Hyde Park Avenue

- **Small Area Plan Vision**

- Increase housing and commercial activity along connecting streets



Firth Rd and Florence St S0 District



- S0 mapped to affirm many of the existing three-unit and multifamily residential buildings
- Encouraging multifamily housing development fronting and near a major public green space
- Allow for multifamily projects that maintain a residential feeling in scale and use along a frequently used transitional street

PROMOTING HOUSING AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Updated zoning with Squares + Streets districts in Roslindale will:



affirm the scales and uses of existing properties, especially three-unit dwellings, multifamily dwellings, and mixed-use buildings,



open regulatory pathways for more mixed-use and multifamily buildings at various scales, including adaptive reuse and the building of housing or commercial space above or attached to existing structures at scales aligned with building code,



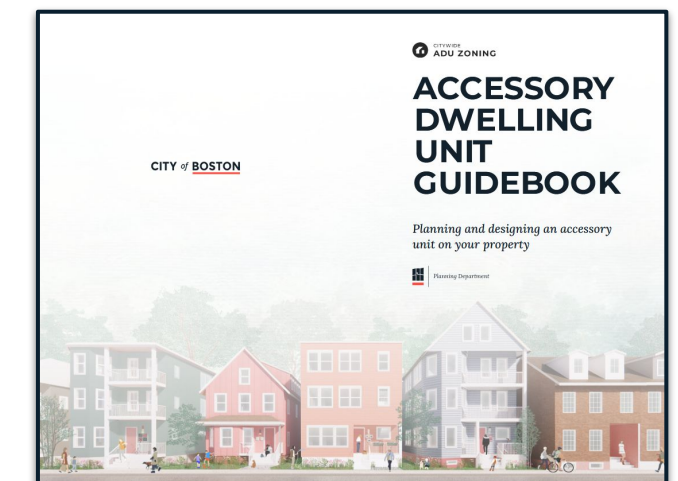
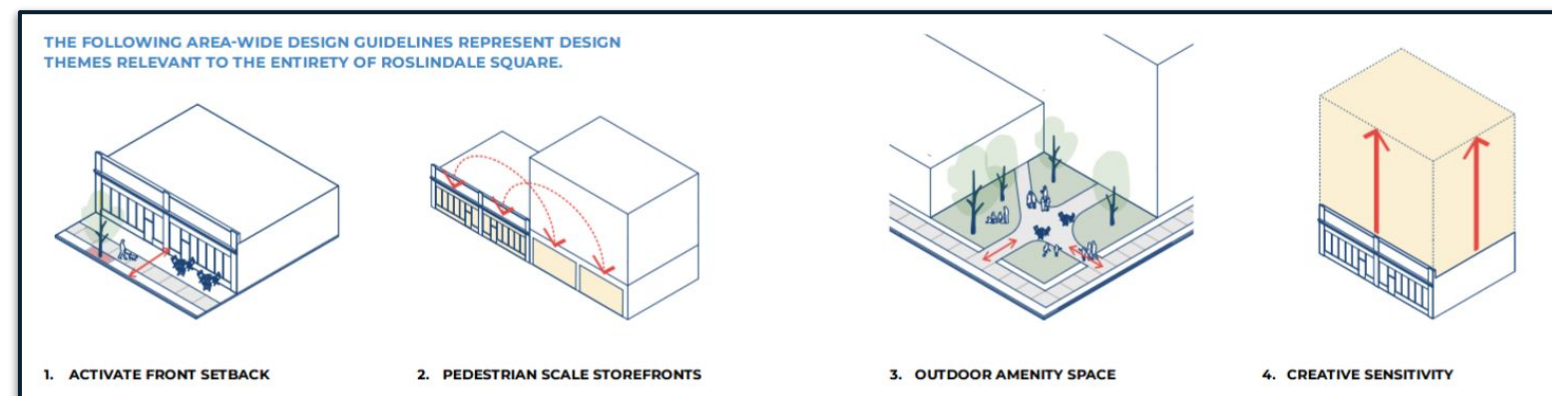
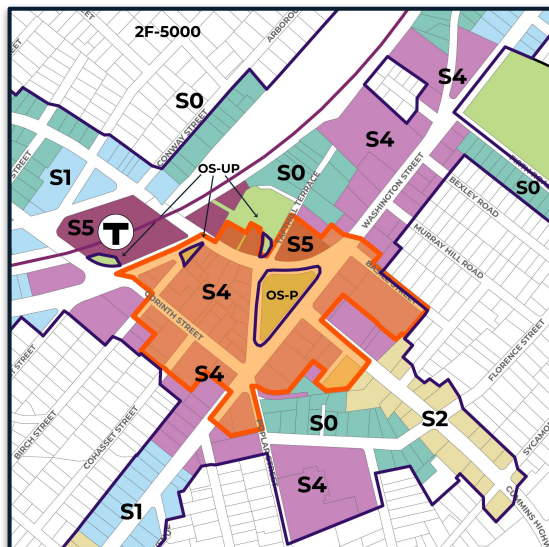
allow larger development scales that meet fair housing standards, affordable housing, income-restricted housing, and accessible housing needs by triggering several requirements for these factors, and



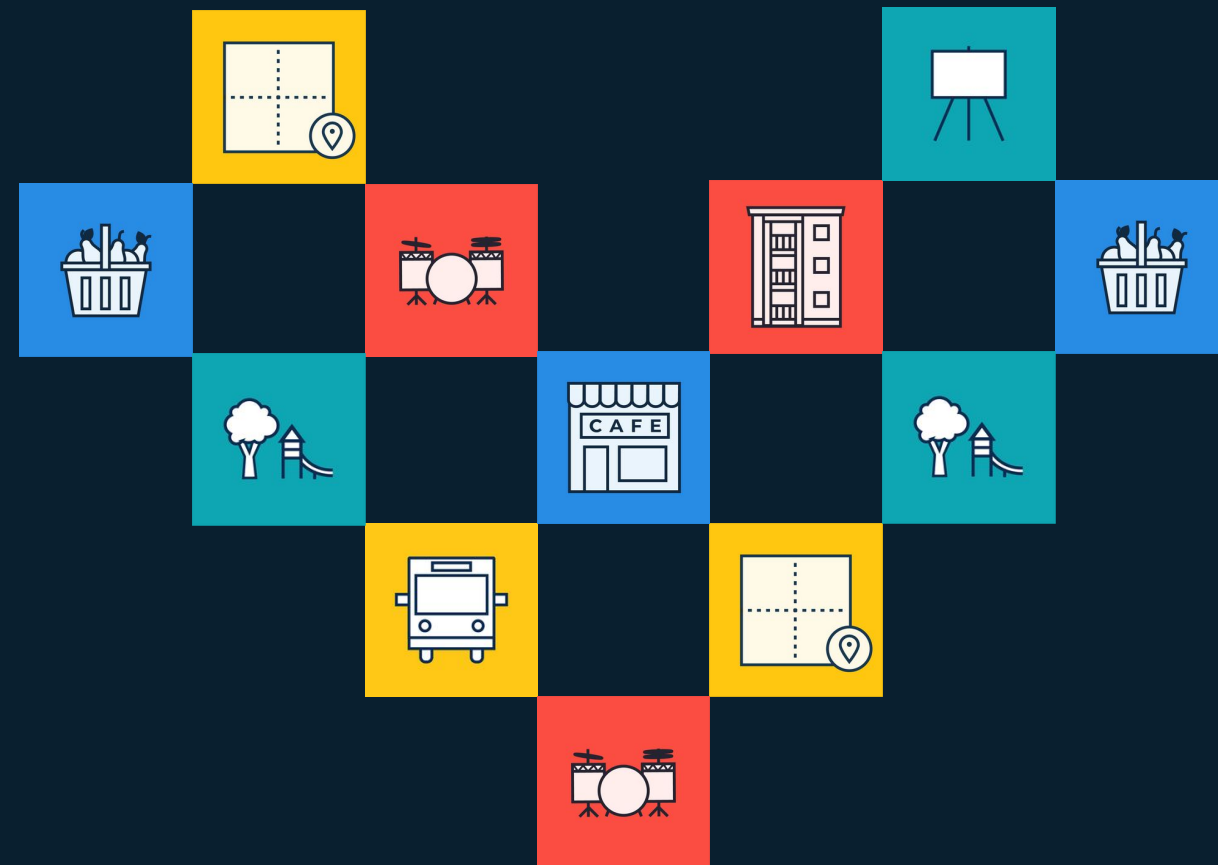
align zoning regulations in the area with climate resiliency and sustainability needs and policy goals through permeable area of lot requirements and alignment of these building scales with new net-zero carbon zoning requirements.

BEING RESPONSIVE TO URBAN DESIGN PRIORITIES

- Projects that trigger the requirements for Article 80 Development Review (typically true of projects built at five stories or larger scales), which will include **design review and a community public meeting**.
- Projects within the Roslindale Neighborhood Design Overlay District that make 300 sq ft or more of changes or significantly change the public structural facade of a property **trigger design review as well as a Zoning Board of Appeals hearing**.
- As part of the Roslindale Square Small Area Plan, Urban Design staff developed a set of **design guidelines** for these areas that are attentive to the creation of outdoor amenity spaces, gathering areas, and pedestrian-scale architectural elements.
- For small multifamily and mixed-use projects like these, the Planning Department is:
 - exploring the **creation of design resources** for these scales and types of development, such as a design guidebook on small multifamily housing *and*
 - investigating **appropriate triggers for site plan and design review of projects at these smaller scales** to further ensure we have clear citywide standards around design.



Example: ADU Guidebook



QUESTIONS?

You can email your questions about the Small Area Plan to squaresandstreets@boston.gov and questions about the zoning regulations in Roslindale Square to planningzoningqs@boston.gov.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT'S ZONING REFORM WORK?

Check out the Zoning Reform Team's webpage and our current zoning initiatives at: bosplans.org/ZoningReform.