HARVARD ERC DISTRICT AND GREENWAY PLAN

MARCH 2026

CITY of BOSTON

Planning Department

CITY OF BOSTON
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Letter from the Chief of Planning
March 2026

The Enterprise Research Campus (ERC) is one of Boston's next major redevelopment opportunities. It offers a chance to turn previously disconnected land into a more connected, resilient, and vibrant part of Allston.

The ERC is not just a real estate project. It's an example of how planning can reflect community input, improve infrastructure, and align private development with public needs.

Harvard University will steward the study area and is responsible for the ERC's long-term development. With Phase A already complete, the ERC is an active, ongoing project rather than a conceptual vision. This plan provides a framework to guide future phases so that development aligns with community priorities and citywide goals.

This plan lays the groundwork for a future development Master Plan that will set development rules, define community benefits, and support innovation. We appreciate the contributions of residents, partners, and stakeholders, and we're committed to working together to bring this vision to life.

Sincerely,

Kairos Shen
Chief of Planning; City of Boston

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DISTRICT CONTEXT

RESEARCH & INNOVATION DISTRICT

The Harvard Enterprise Research Campus Plan builds on the 2021 Framework and the Phase A PDA, offering an updated, comprehensive planning approach for the broader ERC. The 2021 Framework Plan established a long-term vision for the full site, while the Phase A Master Plans enabled development of several buildings and an initial segment of the district greenway. This current planning effort focuses on the remaining approximately 30 acres of the site, including more than 10 acres whose future development is dependent on the relocation of the I-90 ramps north of Cambridge Street. As part of the 2021 approval, Harvard University committed funding to support City-led planning and rezoning work in Allston–Brighton, creating the foundation for this updated plan.

The Harvard Allston Land Company is leading the development of the Enterprise Research Campus, advancing an innovation-oriented mixed-use district on land owned by Harvard University. The ERC is envisioned as a hub that strengthens Boston's economic competitiveness and provides new public-serving amenities.

The ERC District and Greenway Plan builds upon prior planning, including the City of Boston's North Allston Strategic Framework for Planning (2005) and Harvard's 2018 and 2021 ERC Framework Plans, to advance the vision for an open and connected innovation community. The plan emphasizes a mix of jobs, housing, public space and neighborhood-serving amenities that support both economic competitiveness and local quality of life. This direction reflects community feedback, City policy priorities, and a shared understanding that the ERC must function as an integrated part of Allston-Brighton rather than a standalone campus.

Successful innovation districts are anchored by a clear employment focus, supported by complementary uses that enable long-term adaptability. In this context, the ERC is envisioned as a predominantly employment district structured around a land-use mix that generally aligns with a one-third commercial/employment core, one-third residential, and one-third flexible future capacity, the land use for which will be codified in a future PDA Master Plan.

This flexible third is intended to accommodate evolving employment formats, research partnerships, future commercial demand, and potential housing needs while not diluting the district's employment orientation. This approach preserves the district's competitiveness as a major job center, enables meaningful housing supply, and ensures the area can respond dynamically to shifting market, innovation, and institutional needs over several decades.

Drone image provided by Harvard University showing development in Phase A.

ALLSTON NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Allston is defined by creativity, contrast, and deep community roots. The Enterprise Research Campus is positioned to build on and support this existing context, catalyzing innovation and community through a mix of uses - commercial, residential, and campus; improves connectivity and neighborhood infrastructure; and serves as a nexus for the University community and neighborhood. Phase A is now complete, establishing the first buildings and open spaces that will anchor future phases of the ERC led by Harvard Allston Land Company on land owned by Harvard University.

Development on this site must do more than bridge physical divides. It should reflect Allston's lived character, advance its core values, and support the community's long-term aspirations.

In Lower Allston, where the ERC is located, residents describe the neighborhood as approachable, unpretentious, and shaped by an eclectic mix of homes, small businesses, cultural venues, and gathering spaces.

The ERC site has historically operated as a logistics and light industrial area with rail, trucking, and distribution uses, which sets it apart from the residential neighborhood to the west and highlights the significance of its transition to a mixed-use innovation district.

The community includes artists, longtime homeowners, students, and immigrant families, and the evolution of the ERC should strengthen its connection to this broader neighborhood fabric. In doing so, the ERC is intended to reinforce connections not only within Lower Allston but across the broader Allston–Brighton neighborhood and toward Cambridge, ensuring the district functions as an integrated part of its surrounding context.

Established residential streets reflect the neighborhood's modest scale, long-term residents, and strong sense of community.

The Honan–Allston Branch of the Boston Public Library functions as a key civic anchor in the neighborhood, offering educational resources, community services, and flexible gathering space.

Recent mixed-use development introduce new housing, grocery stores, and street-level activity, reshaping the neighborhood's built form and reinforcing its role as a local destination.

DISTRICT CONSTRAINTS

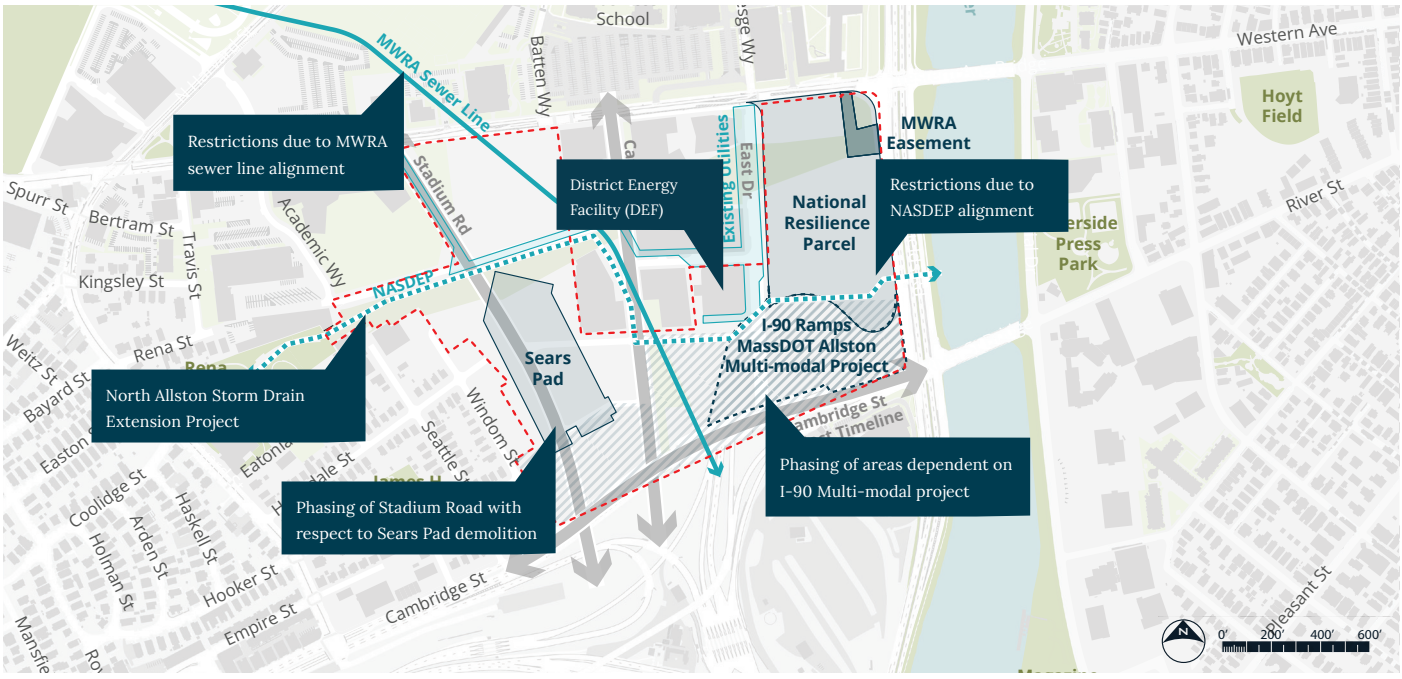
The district is shaped by a set of physical, environmental, and infrastructural conditions that both constrain near-term development and create opportunities for long-term connectivity and growth.

Much of the ERC's buildout benefits from the future implementation of the Allston Multimodal Project (AMP), which will reconstruct and realign roadways and rail, add transit, and create new development opportunities. These benefits also depend on the future north–south roadway alignment that will connect the ERC to the broader network and create a critical opportunity for district-wide connectivity. Until these improvements advance, development must adapt to a limited footprint of approximately 16 acres available in the pre-AMP condition.

The site-specific constraints underscore the importance of a phased, flexible planning approach. By recognizing these limitations up front, this plan guides development toward achievable, coordinated interventions.

Several fixed conditions shape the ERC:

- **Sears Pad:** This large, inactive concrete slab divides the site and limits connectivity. To support new development, it must undergo demolition and site remediation.
- **District Energy Facility (DEF):** Due to operating noise, residential development must be buffered from the active district energy facility.
- **MWRA Sewer Easement:** A major sewer line crossing the site restricts buildable area and requires access coordination.
- **National Resilience Parcel:** This privately operated facility has been removed from the planning area.
- **Institutional Parking and Support Uses:** Adjacent Harvard-controlled properties at 114 Western Avenue and 2 Hague Street continue to function as active parking and institutional support facilities, limiting near-term development options.
- **North Allston Storm Drain Extension Project:** this critical project will address long-standing drainage deficiencies in North Allston. It is being constructed by Harvard University for the Boston Water and Sewer Commission at no cost to the City.



Site contraints & existing conditions as seen on the ground today.

COMMUNITY VISION AND PRIORITIES

HOW WE GOT HERE

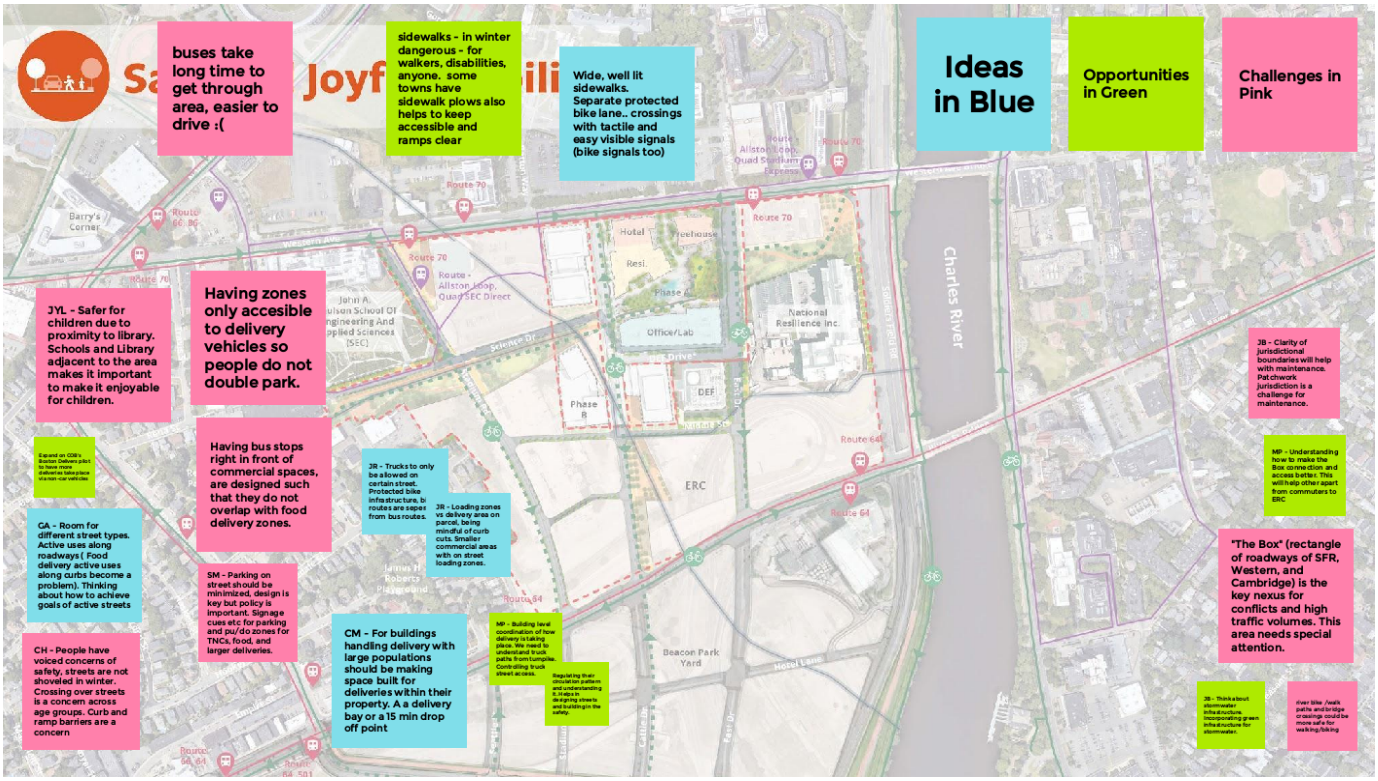
Following the approval of Phase A, community members voiced the need for a more transparent, City-led process to ensure that future development across the ERC is responsive to local needs.

Launched in 2023, this planning study prioritized the engagement of stakeholders and neighboring residents. To accomplish this task, the Boston Planning Department sought to reach a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including renters, homeowners, artists, students, and immigrant families. The ERC Advisory Group played a key role, bringing together neighborhood representatives, advocates, and institutional partners to advise on priorities.

Connectivity Activity From Site Activation Event September 2023.

Engagement at a Glance: Over the course of one year, the team conducted a range of engagement activities to gather community input and local insight.

- ERC Advisory Group Meetings (3)
- Public Forum (1)
- Stakeholder Interviews (5)
- Focus Groups on housing, open space, and mobility (3)
- Site Activation Event (1)
- Online Survey (1)

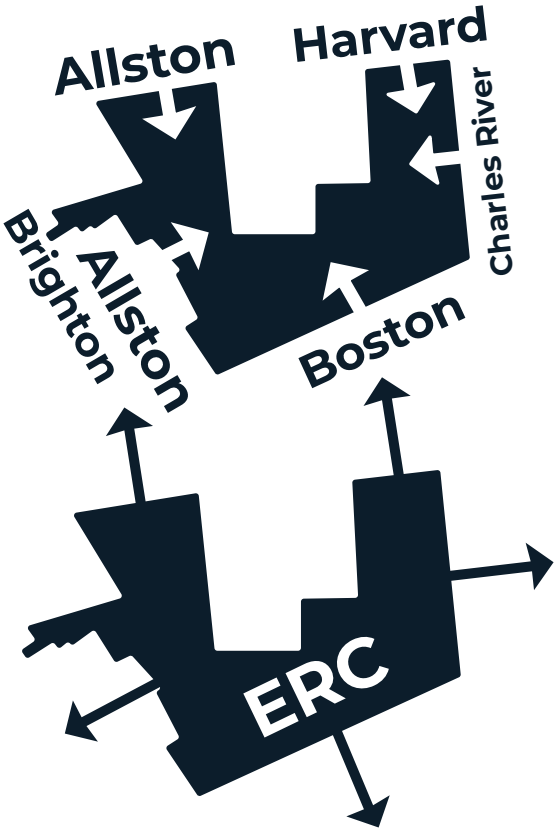


Feedback From Focus Group Meeting 3, January 2024.

WHAT WE HEARD

Over more than a year of engagement, one message emerged consistently: the Enterprise Research Campus should grow as an integrated extension of the Allston–Brighton neighborhood, rather than function as a standalone campus or office park.

Residents, students, workers, and other stakeholders articulated a shared vision for a district that is welcoming, walkable, and resilient. Community input emphasized the need for new housing, active public spaces, opportunities for small and local businesses, and strong connections to surrounding streets, open spaces, and nearby institutions. These priorities directly informed the plan's guiding principles and overall development framework.



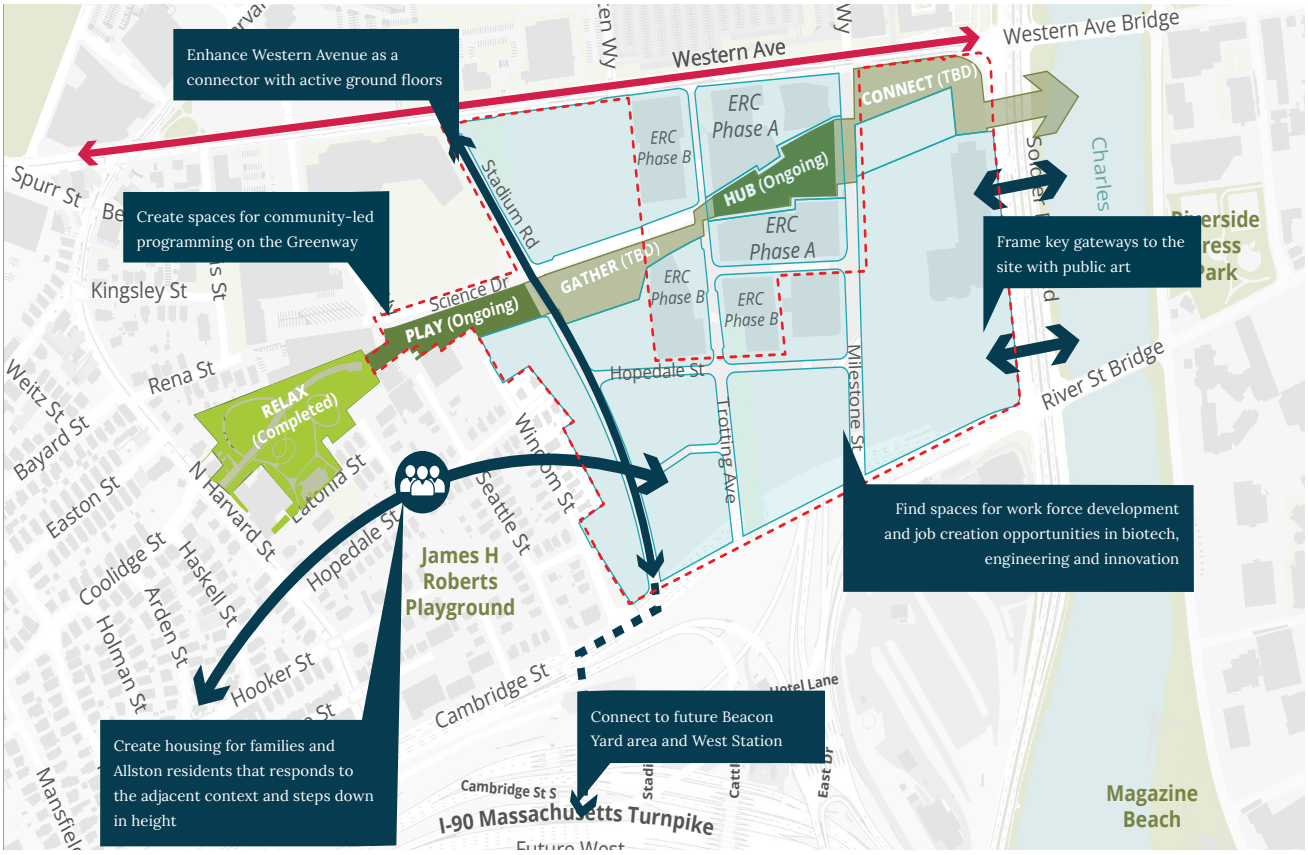


Diagram illustrating how community priorities inform the plan framework.

Across focus groups, surveys, and public forums, participants consistently highlighted the following priorities:

1. Housing choice and affordability, including options for families, artists, and lower-income residents
- A mix of unit sizes, including larger two- and three-bedroom homes that support family living.
- Residential buildings located along neighborhood-facing edges, including Stadium Road and Cambridge Street, to create appropriate transitions to adjacent residential areas.

2. Safe, resilient, multimodal connections to Western Avenue, the Charles River, and the future West Station
- Context-sensitive street design on Stadium Road, Trotting Avenue, and Milestone Street.
- Clear and intuitive pedestrian and bicycle connections to Western Avenue, the Charles River paths, and the future West Station

3. Year-round open space and community-serving uses that support daily life and cultural activity
- Flexible, programmable, and green open spaces that accommodate both active and passive use throughout the year.
- Amenities such as seating, shade, restrooms, and other community-serving features.lo

4. Support for small, local, and minority-owned businesses, with particular emphasis on Trotting Avenue.

5. Green infrastructure and climate-resilient design across both the public realm and new building.

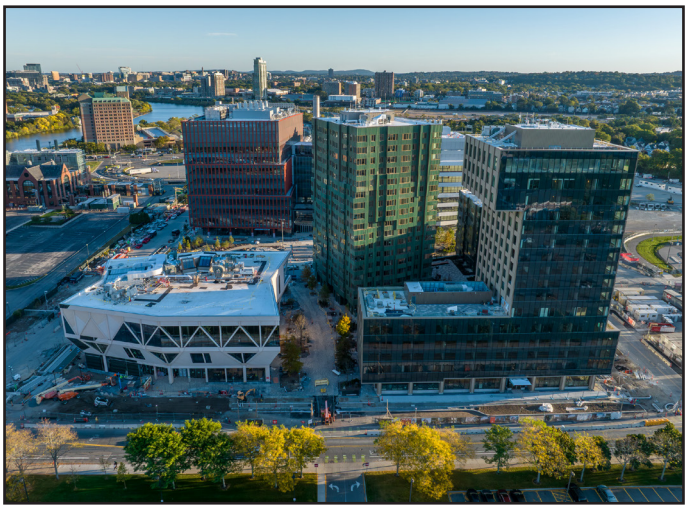
Drone image showing the development of Phase A.

FRAMEWORK

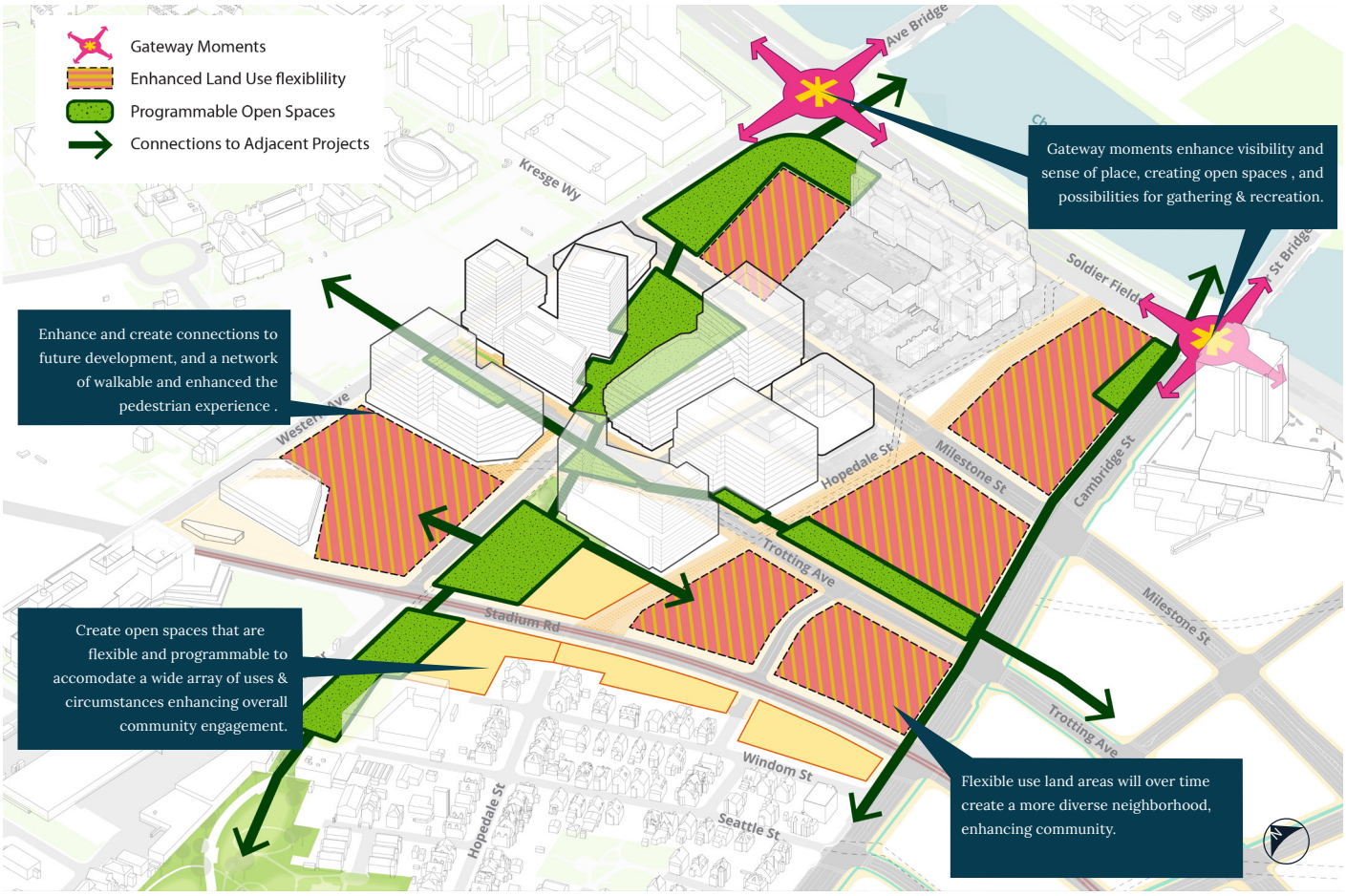
VISION FRAMEWORK

The vision for the Enterprise Research Campus is to establish a vibrant mixed-use urban neighborhood and employment center that supports working, living, learning, and recreation, with a focus on innovation and interdisciplinary research.

The ERC land use mix is designed to create a cohesive district that connects seamlessly with surrounding institutional and mixed-use areas to the north and northwest, adjacent residential neighborhoods to the west, and future redevelopment opportunities at Beacon Park Yard to the south. Given the ERC's proximity to and relationship with the Allston Multimodal Project, the land use framework is intentionally flexible, allowing development to adapt over an extended, multi-phase implementation period.



Aerial View of Phase A ERC.

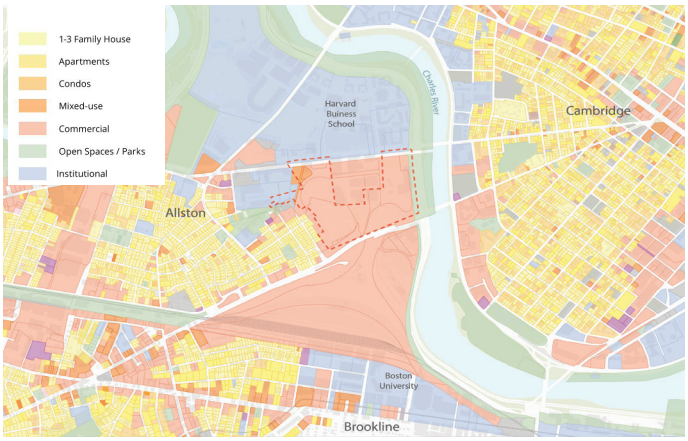


Overall vision & connections diagram. Enhances the relationships with the existing community & future development projects.

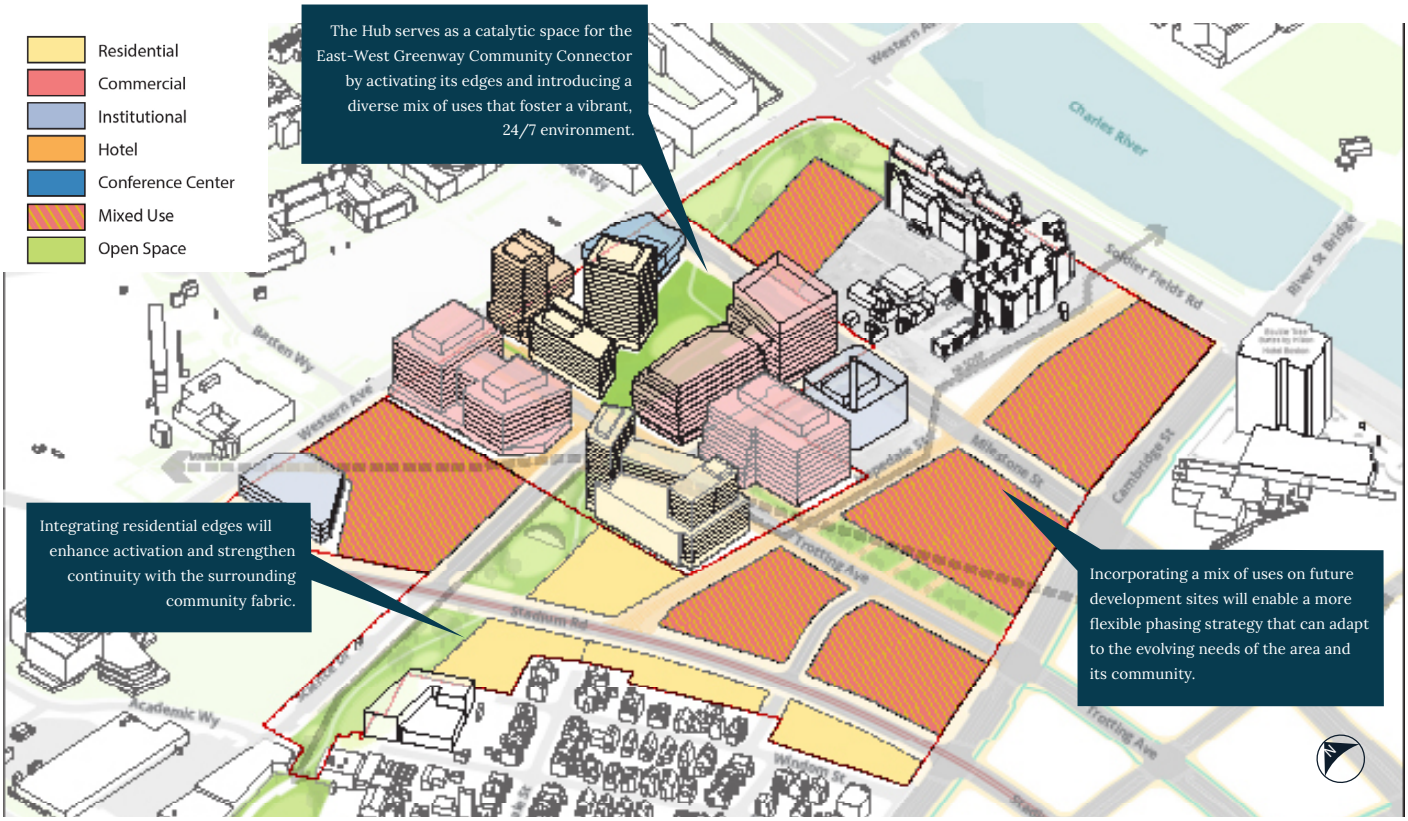
The success of the ERC as an urban district depends on a complementary mix of uses that includes commercial office, laboratory and research space, residential development, retail, and publicly accessible open space. This diversity of uses is intended to attract a wide range of users and support activity throughout the day, serving the ERC, the University, and the surrounding community.

Analysis conducted as part of this planning process indicates that, at full build-out, the ERC may accommodate approximately 4 to 6 million square feet of development, inclusive of Phases A and B. To support long-term viability and mixed-use vibrancy, the plan recommends a land use mix of one-third commercial and employment uses, one-third residential, and one-third flexible uses that may include residential, retail, institutional, civic, and other mixed-use programs.

Parcels designated for mixed use provide adaptability over time, allowing for residential, commercial, or hybrid programs as the district evolves. This flexible framework supports a walkable, inclusive environment and reinforces the long-term vitality of Allston–Brighton by enabling a strong employment center, expanding housing opportunities, and creating new public spaces. As the ERC grows and adapts to changing market conditions.



Existing and adjacent land uses diagram



Land use diagram illustrating the mix of uses from Phase A and Phase B through future phases extending toward the Stadium Road and Cambridge Street edges.

URBAN DESIGN

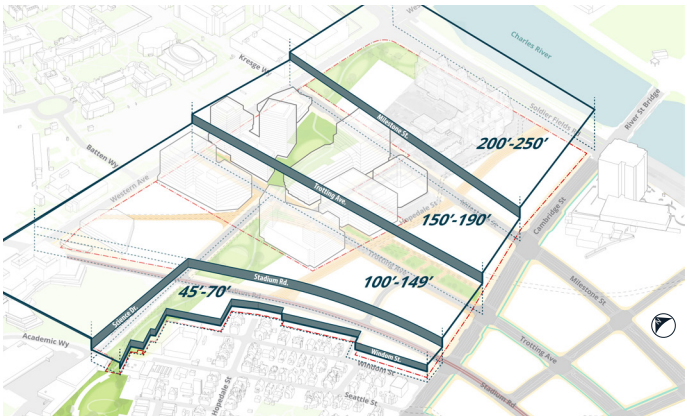
The land use framework for the ERC is designed to respond to the needs of a growing city and a dynamic economy over a long-term implementation horizon. It establishes a flexible platform for both commercial and residential development while prioritizing publicly accessible open space as a core community asset.

Building heights are organized to respect the adjacent lower-scale residential neighborhood, with lower-scale development along residential edges and increased height and density focused toward the district core, Phase A, and the Charles River.

Responding to adjacent context, residential uses are concentrated along Stadium Road and portions of Cambridge Street to create appropriate transitions and reinforce to align with the scale and character of Lower Allston. Commercial, lab, and institutional uses are located on central parcels and are supported by active ground-floor uses that strengthen the public realm.

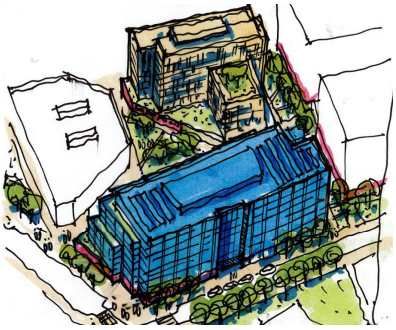
Across the district, publicly accessible open space accounts for approximately 20 percent of the total developable land area and is designed to be programmable and community-oriented. Mixed-use parcels and flexible development envelopes allow the district to evolve over time in response to market conditions, community priorities, and long-term infrastructure improvements associated with the Allston Multimodal Project.

Together, this approach supports a walkable and inclusive district that balances jobs, housing, open space, and community-serving uses.

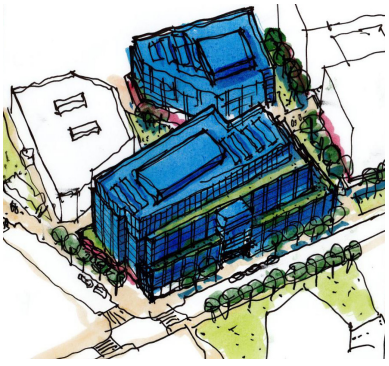


Proposed Heights for the overall site.

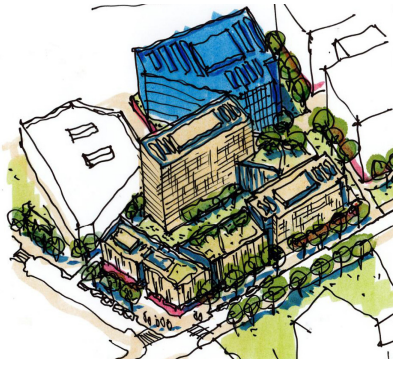
Office and residential mix with one to two floors of retail activation at the Science and Stadium corner. The residential tower overlooks the greenway and connects to the surrounding residential fabric.



Laboratory and residential mix with residential units oriented toward Western Avenue and laboratory uses along Science Drive and the greenway. Ground-floor retail and other commercial uses activate the first floor.



Office and laboratory mix, with both buildings featuring ground-floor retail activation that connects to the greenway. Office uses front Western Avenue, while laboratory buildings are located at the Science Road corner.



Office and residential mix with ground-floor retail activating the public realm. Office uses front Western Avenue, while a residential complex along the greenway creates strong connections to the Allston community.

Mixed-use blocks offer flexible development opportunities. The above examples illustrate how uses could be arranged on Parcel E10 at the intersection of Stadium Road and Science Drive.

HOUSING

Housing is a central component of the Enterprise Research Campus land use framework, integrated alongside research, employment, institutional, and community-serving uses. Harvard's early-phase commitment of approximately 1,000 housing units establishes an initial residential presence within the district, while the broader land use approach allows housing capacity to expand over time as the district develops. As part of its commitments, Harvard University has also pledged that 20 percent of all new ERC housing will be income-restricted.

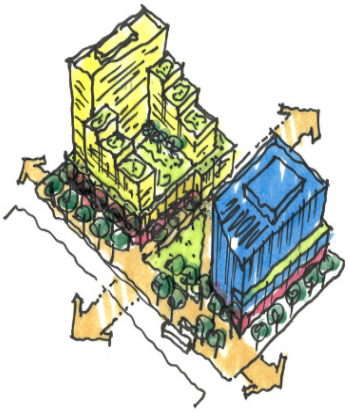
Within this framework, residential uses are expected to comprise at least one-third of the district's approximately 4–6 million square feet of development. The amount of housing delivered over time will be shaped by overall density, development phasing, and future planning and zoning requirements.

Housing supply could be expanded by increasing overall district density while maintaining the approximate one-third residential land use mix. This approach would create opportunities to deliver mid to high-rise housing types, support affordability, and foster a more vibrant mixed-use community that advances long-term sustainability and livability goals.

Additional housing could be achieved through a range of planning and zoning incentives, including density and height bonuses for residential parcels, particularly along Stadium Road and Cambridge Street, where building height and form can transition to the scale of adjacent neighborhoods.

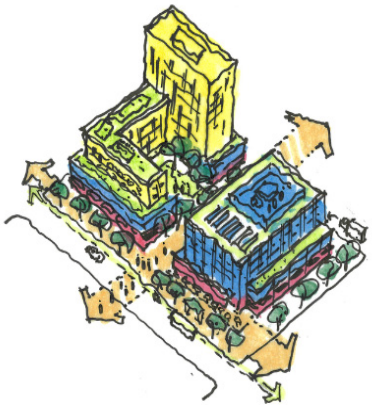
As development intensity increases and parcels are built out or redeveloped, these strategies would allow additional housing opportunities to be realized over time, supporting a broader range of unit types and contributing to long-term housing stability in Allston–Brighton.

Together, this flexible land use framework provides a clear pathway for housing growth over the life of the Enterprise Research Campus.



High-rise residential development with podium parking, office or laboratory space, ground-floor retail, and active open space.

Office or laboratory uses with ground-floor retail.



High-rise residential with podium parking, office or laboratory uses, ground-floor retail, and active open space.

MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION

The district's street network is designed to support walking, biking, transit, and vehicles while remaining flexible to accommodate future improvements associated with the Allston Multimodal Project.

Each street within the ERC has a distinct character and function that supports movement through the district while reinforcing neighborhood quality and operational efficiency.

Stadium Road functions as a residential and transit-oriented corridor. It prioritizes pedestrian comfort, bicycle access, and transit while supporting adjacent residential uses and open space. To reinforce its role as a community-facing street, curb cuts, garage access, and loading are limited.

Trotting Avenue serves as the district's primary avenue and main circulation corridor, supporting higher levels of activity and movement. Mixed-use development with active ground-floor uses lines the street, reinforcing its role as a vibrant spine for the district. Trotting Avenue provides a key north–south route through the ERC, connects directly to Cambridge Street, and will link the district to the future West Station as part of the Allston Multimodal Project.

Cambridge Street functions as the primary east–west connector, linking the ERC to Cambridge. Stadium Road, Milestone Street, and Trotting Avenue feed into Cambridge Street, reinforcing its role as a critical gateway and regional connection.

Milestone Street serves as a logistics and service corridor, accommodating loading, garage access, and vehicular circulation. Concentrating these functions on Milestone Street allows primary streets to remain focused on pedestrian activity, transit access, and neighborhood character.

Together, this street hierarchy creates a clear and legible mobility framework that supports daily movement, efficient operations, and long-term growth as the district evolves.

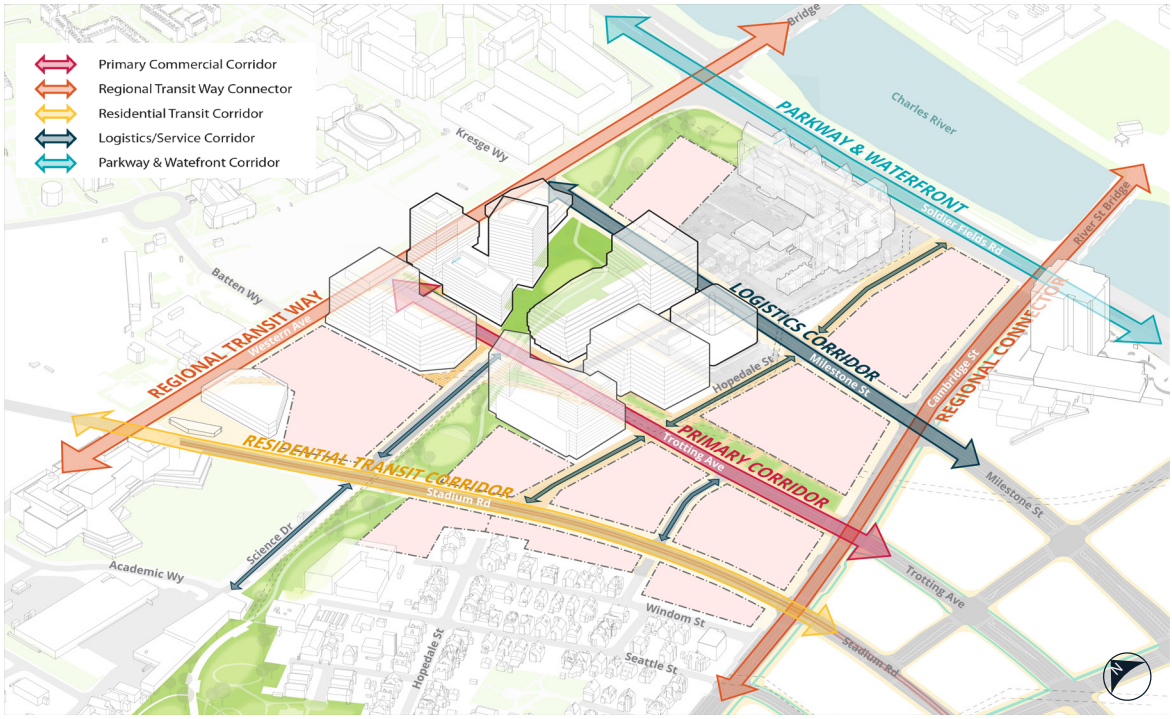


Diagram of the proposed mobility corridors.

These conceptual views are intended to illustrate how development, open space, and street networks could work together to strengthen walkability, public life, and connections to surrounding neighborhoods over time. The images are not final designs, but visual examples used to support discussion about how the ERC could evolve as a more connected and welcoming district.

A POSSIBLE FUTURE FOR STADIUM ROAD

This concept for Stadium Road illustrates the potential for a fully integrated, multimodal corridor. The design envisions wide sidewalks, generous tree plantings, and landscaped buffers to create a comfortable pedestrian environment. The corridor could accommodate dedicated bus lanes and protected bicycle facilities to support high-quality transit service and safe, all-ages cycling, with flexibility to adapt lane configurations over time as mobility needs evolve.

A POSSIBLE FUTURE FOR TROTTING AVENUE

The concept for Trotting Avenue emphasizes sustainable transportation and public life, with planned improvements to support multimodal circulation and expanded pedestrian space. Landscaped edges, seating areas, and active ground-floor uses are anticipated to strengthen comfort, safety, and community activity along the corridor.

PARKING

Parking for the district should allow for flexibility and recognize the changing needs of the district with greater density and improved transit infrastructure and services over time. Parking for the district should be provided in a combination of on-street spaces, below-grade parking, and, as necessary, district parking garages.

A district approach to parking supply and demand should:

- Align parking supply to district needs over time, recognizing the opportunities for modal shifts and lower parking ratios generated by greater density, housing, and improved transit infrastructure and services.
- Provide sufficient parking to meet reasonable demand without encouraging auto travel, including the use of market-rate pricing to manage demand;
- Prioritize the creation of shared parking opportunities to serve multiple users and destinations, such as providing structured parking below buildings where feasible that can be shared with other sites and future phases.
- Manage on-street curb space to meet short-term parking demand, accommodate pick-up/drop-off and transit stops, and address commercial loading and service needs.
- Minimize the impact of parking and parking structures on the public realm, pedestrians, and bikes by minimizing curb cuts and strategically locating parking facilities and their access points provide structured parking below buildings where feasible that can be shared with other sites and future phases.
- Provide aesthetic treatments, such as facade screens or wrappers, to above-ground garages to reduce their visual impacts and address land use incompatibility with adjacent uses.
- Maximize active ground-floor uses in structured parking facilities where feasible.

Loading and parking access minimized along Trotting Avenue.

OPEN SPACE AND CONNECTIVITY

The ERC establishes a connected network of greenways, plazas, and shared paths that organize the district and bring Allston, Cambridge, and the Charles River together. Harvard has committed that 20% of the total developable land area (inclusive of Phases A and B) will be dedicated to publicly accessible open space. This commitment forms the foundation for a district-wide open space network designed to support connectivity, ecological performance, and community use.

This network is designed to support safe, intuitive movement while improving access to open space across the district and surrounding neighborhoods. Open spaces are planned to accommodate both everyday use and larger community activities, including informal recreation and play, public art and temporary installations, and quieter areas for rest, gathering, and reflection.

At the heart of this system is a continuous half-mile east–west greenway extending from Raymond V. Mellone Park at the Honan-Allston Branch Library to the Western Avenue Bridge and the Charles River. Lined with active edges and connected to adjacent streets, plazas, and development parcels, the greenway provides places to pause, meet, and participate in everyday neighborhood life while supporting informal use, community events, and seasonal activities.

The Phase A Greenway serves as the primary hub of activity for the district, functioning as the central spine of the ERC's public realm. The open space at the corner of Western Avenue and Soldiers Field Road acts as a gateway to the greenway and the ERC from the Charles River and Cambridge. The new open space along Stadium Road is envisioned as a flexible, community-oriented commons that complements the Phase A Greenway by supporting neighborhood-focused gatherings and programming while strengthening connections to the broader greenway system.

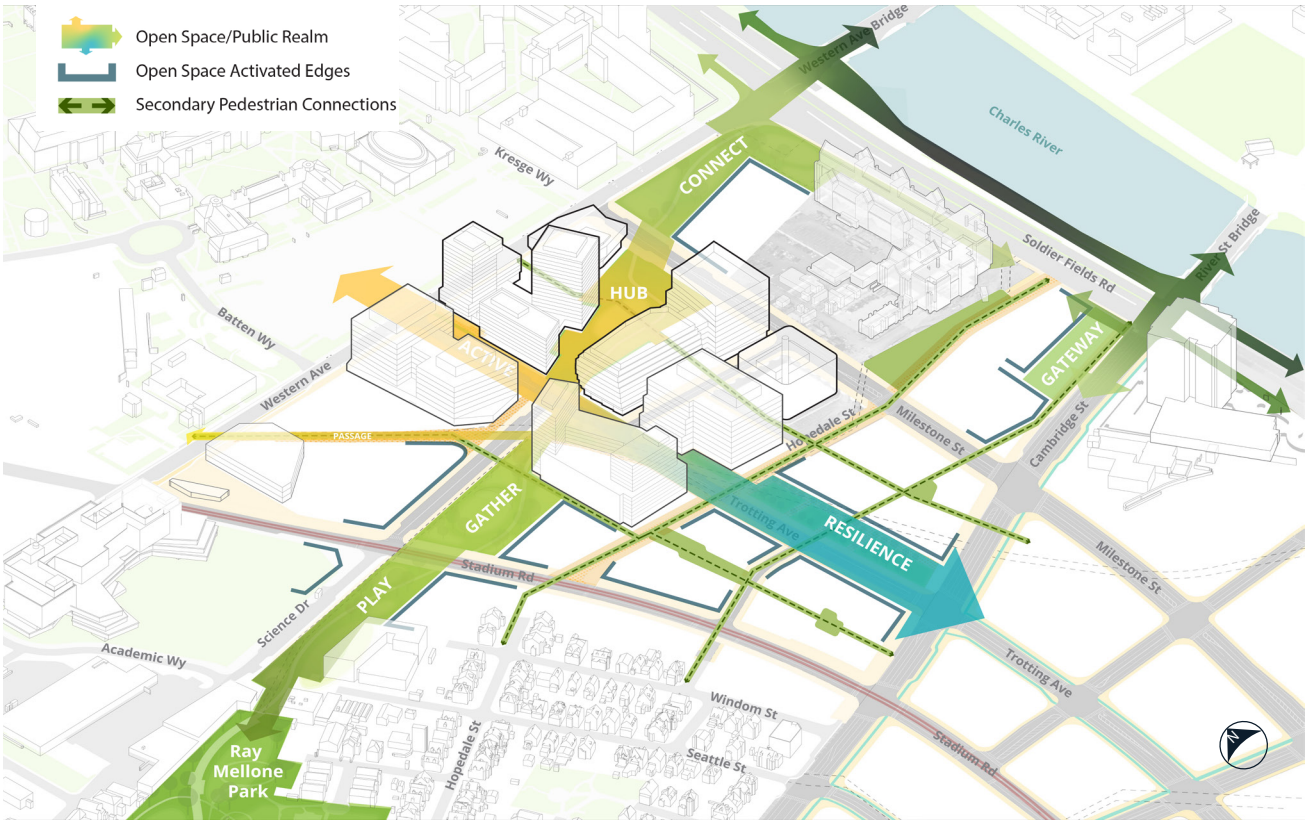
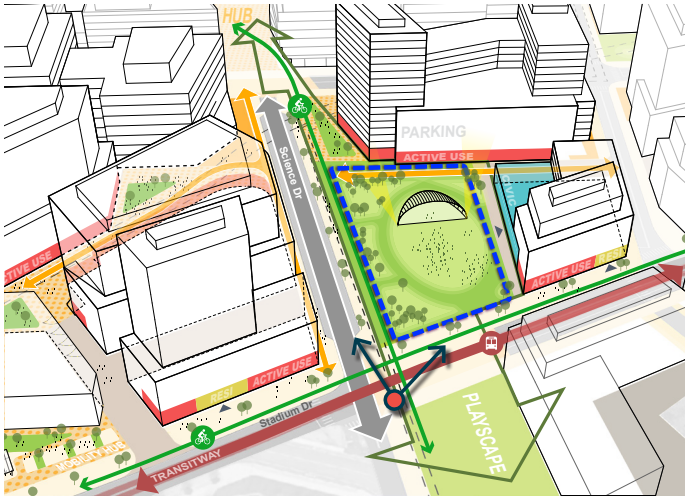


Diagram illustrating public realm and open space activity and how these spaces connect to the surrounding community..

Along Trotting at Cambridge Street, there is the opportunity for an additional open space constructed atop the North Allston Storm Drain Extension Project (NASDEP) line, which could incorporate green infrastructure and provide visual connections toward the future West Station. Together, these spaces accommodate informal recreation and play, public art and temporary installations, community events, and quieter areas for rest and reflection throughout the year.

The Stadium Road open space is envisioned as a flexible commons capable of hosting markets, performances, art installations, seasonal programming such as skating, and active recreation. Final uses and programming will be shaped through future design and community engagement as the district evolves, with an emphasis on complementing the programming of adjacent greenway spaces and contributing to overall greenway continuity.

The greenway and associated open spaces are designed as flexible and durable elements of the district's public realm, allowing them to evolve alongside future phases of development and infrastructure improvements. Streetscape plantings, shaded seating, and integrated green infrastructure reinforce connections between open spaces, contributing to improved ecological performance and pedestrian comfort.



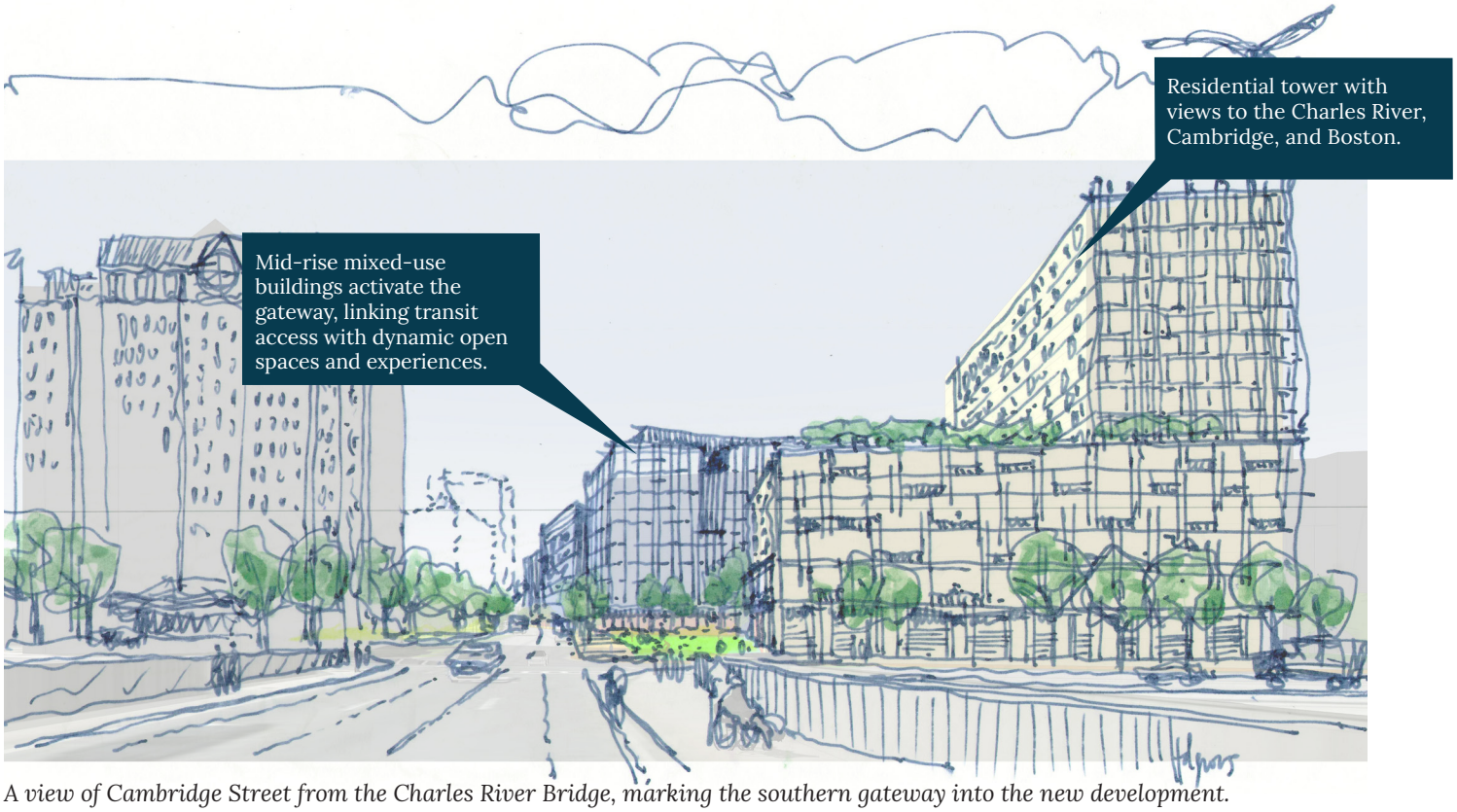
A flexible, community-oriented green space along Stadium Road supporting art, events, and active recreation.

View of the open space on Stadium Road.

HOW IT COMES TOGETHER

This illustration presents a possible future for the Cambridge Street gateway into the Enterprise Research Campus.

Viewed from the Charles River Bridge, the sequence of images shows how today's auto-oriented corridor could evolve into a vibrant, welcoming entrance to the district. In this scenario, mixed-use buildings frame the approach from Cambridge and activate the street with new retail, lab, and commercial spaces, while taller residential buildings offer views toward Cambridge, the Charles River, and Downtown Boston. Enhanced streetscapes introduce safer pedestrian and bicycle connections, expanded tree canopy, and generous public spaces, creating a more accessible arrival experience. The rendering is not a final design, but an illustration of how coordinated development, transit access, and high-quality open space could transform this important neighborhood gateway over time.



A view of Cambridge Street from the Charles River Bridge, marking the southern gateway into the new development.

Existing view from Cambridge Street Bridge looking west.

View Location Map.

This illustration depicts a possible future for Cambridge Street at Trotting Avenue, looking north toward the new Greenway.

Today this area is largely undeveloped, but over time it has the potential to evolve into a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood with a blend of residential, office, and lab spaces. In this scenario, active ground floors support shops, restaurants, and community-serving uses, while generous street trees, wide sidewalks, and connected public spaces create a comfortable and welcoming public realm. The mix of building types and uses would be shaped gradually through market conditions and future planning, resulting in a diverse and flexible district that strengthens the relationship between Cambridge Street, the Greenway, and the broader Allston-Brighton community.

Pedestrian sketch on Cambridge Sreet & Trotting Avenue looking north.

Existing view from Trotting Avenue looking north.

View Location Map.

This illustration shows a possible future for Stadium Road, looking south toward Cambridge Street.

Today the area is largely undeveloped, but over time it could transform into an inviting mixed-use district with active ground-floors, new businesses, and community-serving spaces. In this scenario, generous street trees, enhanced sidewalks, and a pedestrian-friendly public realm create a comfortable environment that strengthens daily life and supports local activity. The introduction of mid-scale residential buildings, provides new housing options and a thoughtful transition to the existing neighborhood. These elements together suggest how Stadium Road could evolve into a lively, walkable corridor that connects seamlessly with Cambridge Street and the broader Allston-Brighton community.

As currently conceived, Stadium Road is anticipated to accommodate exclusive bus lanes and separated bicycle facilities to support high-quality transit and safe, all-ages cycling. While these elements are not depicted in this illustrative rendering, final roadway configurations will be refined through future design and coordination as the district evolves.

Stadium Road Corridor looking south towards Cambridge Street.

Existing Stadium Road corridor alignment.

View Location Map.

NEXT STEPS

The Enterprise Research Campus Framework Plan is designed to deliver public benefits over time, even as development occurs gradually and in phases.

A PDA Master Plan is a regulatory tool that can be used in the future to formalize development standards, phasing, and community benefit commitments across a large site. While a PDA Master Plan is not being pursued now, it remains an important option as future phases of development become more clearly defined and market conditions evolve. Advancing a PDA Master Plan at the right moment will allow additional public review and help ensure long-term accountability as the district continues to grow.

As development moves forward incrementally, the plan guides decisions toward outcomes the community has consistently identified as priorities, including new housing opportunities, publicly accessible open space, improved connections to surrounding neighborhoods, safer and more comfortable streets and active public spaces that support everyday use and cultural life.

Because the ERC will be built over multiple decades, this plan emphasizes flexibility alongside commitment. Phased development allows community benefits to be delivered over time rather than delayed until a single, large buildout. Open spaces, mobility improvements, housing, and community-serving uses can be introduced as each phase advances, helping ensure that public value is realized alongside private development.

Drone image provided by Harvard University showing Phase A development.

PROJECT TEAM

CONSULTANTS

WXY architecture + urban design

Claire Weisz
Principal-in-Charge

Adam Lubinsky
Principal

David VegaBarachowitz
Associate Principal

Manasi Punde
Senior Associate

Bahij Chancey
Senior Associate, Director of Planning

Suryani Dewa Ayu
Senior Urban Planner

Govardan Rajasekaran Umashankar
Senior Urban Designer

ARUP

Kate Fichter
Associate Principal (Former)

Matthew Ciborowski
Associate (Former)

Raju Mann
Associate Principal

Amy Liu Pathak
Transportation Planner

Department of Play

Katarzyna Balug
Co-founder

ADVISORY TEAM

Laura Jasinski
Charles River Conservancy

Max Rome
Charles River Watershed Association

Galen Mook
MassBike

Jessica Robertson
Allston Resident

Andrew GianninoCurtis
Allston Resident

Stacy Thompson
LivableStreets Alliance

Bryan Chou
Mikyoung Kim Design

Karen Smith
McNamara House

Tina Chan
Allston Brighton Health Collaborative

Alex Cornacchini
Allston Village Main Streets

Barbara Parmenter
Allston Resident

Christine Varriale
Allston Resident

Mark Handley
Harvard Public Affairs and Communications

Justin Fay
Harvard University Planning and Design

CORE PLANNING DEPARTMENT TEAM

Kairos Shen
Chief of Planning

Devin Quirk
Deputy Chief of Planning

Diana Fernandez Bibeau PLA, ASLA
Deputy Chief of Urban Design

Meera Deean AICP
Deputy Director of Design

Caitlin Coppinger AICP
Deputy Director of Comprehensive Planning

Breeze Outlaw
Senior Urban Designer

Hernan Schlosman
Senior Urban Designer II

Matthew Hussmann
Comprehensive Planner II

Quinn Valcich
Senior Project Manager

Joe Blankenship
Senior Transportation Planner (Former)

Lamei Zhang
Planner II (Former)

CITY of BOSTON

Planning Department