

JANUARY 2012

# BRIGHTON

GUEST STREET AREA PLANNING STUDY  
DRAFT REPORT

DRAFT



CITY OF BOSTON  
Thomas M. Menino  
Mayor



BOSTON  
REDEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY  
Peter Meade  
Director



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1.0

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**01/27/2012**

# **PLANNING CONTEXT**

**DRAFT**

Boston  
National  
Historic Park

Harvard  
University

Boston  
University

I-90  
Exit 18

**ALLSTON**

Everett Street

Guest Street

Cambridge Street



N. Beacon Street

Market Street

**BRIGHTON**

St.  
Elizabeth's  
Hospital

STUDY AREA

**DRAFT REPORT**

# BACKGROUND

## PURPOSE OF STUDY

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

The 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 people made up of business owners, residents, and activists to serve as members of the Advisory Group (AG) for the Brighton/Guest Street 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 WORKING SESSIONS



ADVISORY GROUP WORKING SESSIONS

# History of the Study Area



OMNIBUS

CREDIT: BRIGHTON ALLSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



STREETCARS

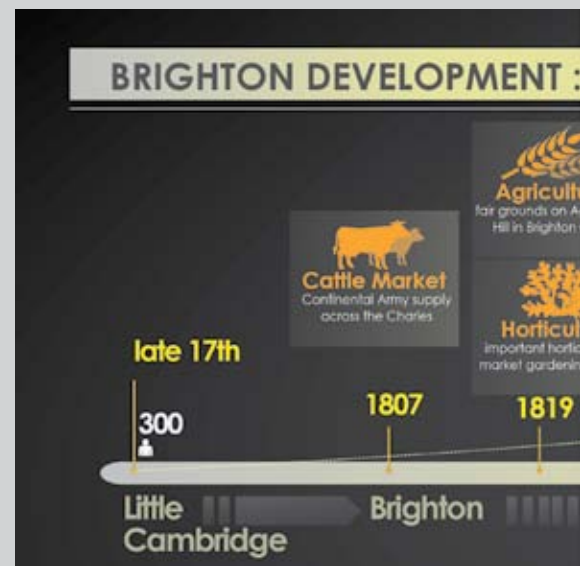
CREDIT: BRIGHTON ALLSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Historical Context

There is a rich history of 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.



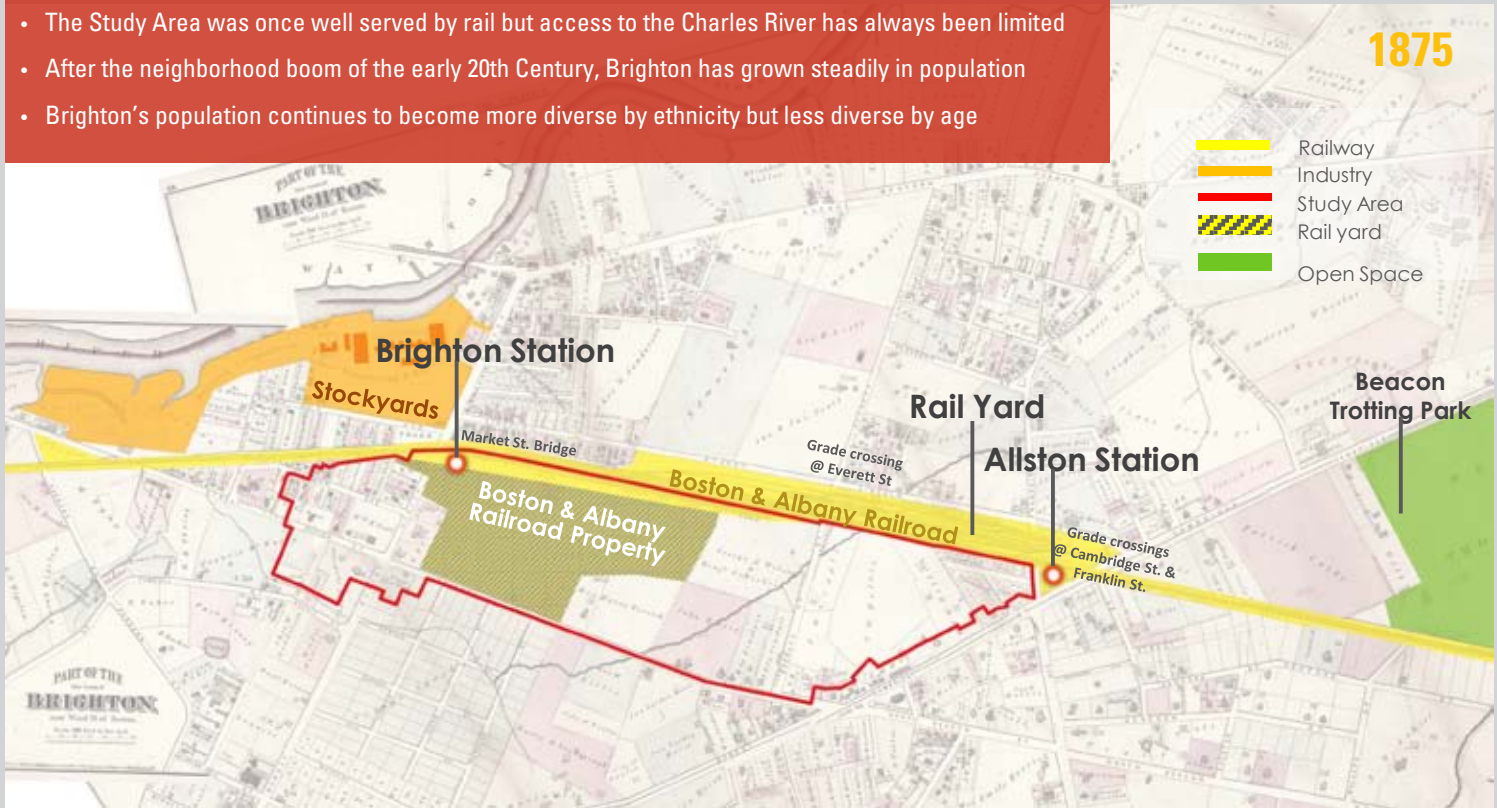
TIMELINE

CREDIT: BRIGHTON ALLSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

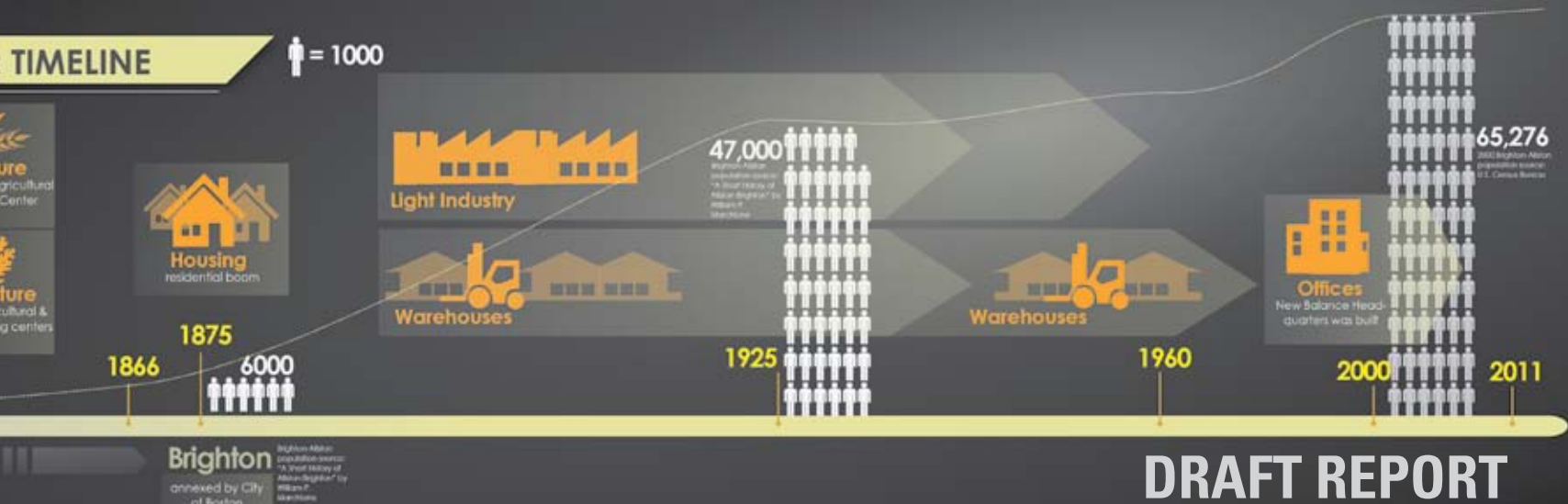


# KEY HISTORICAL FINDINGS

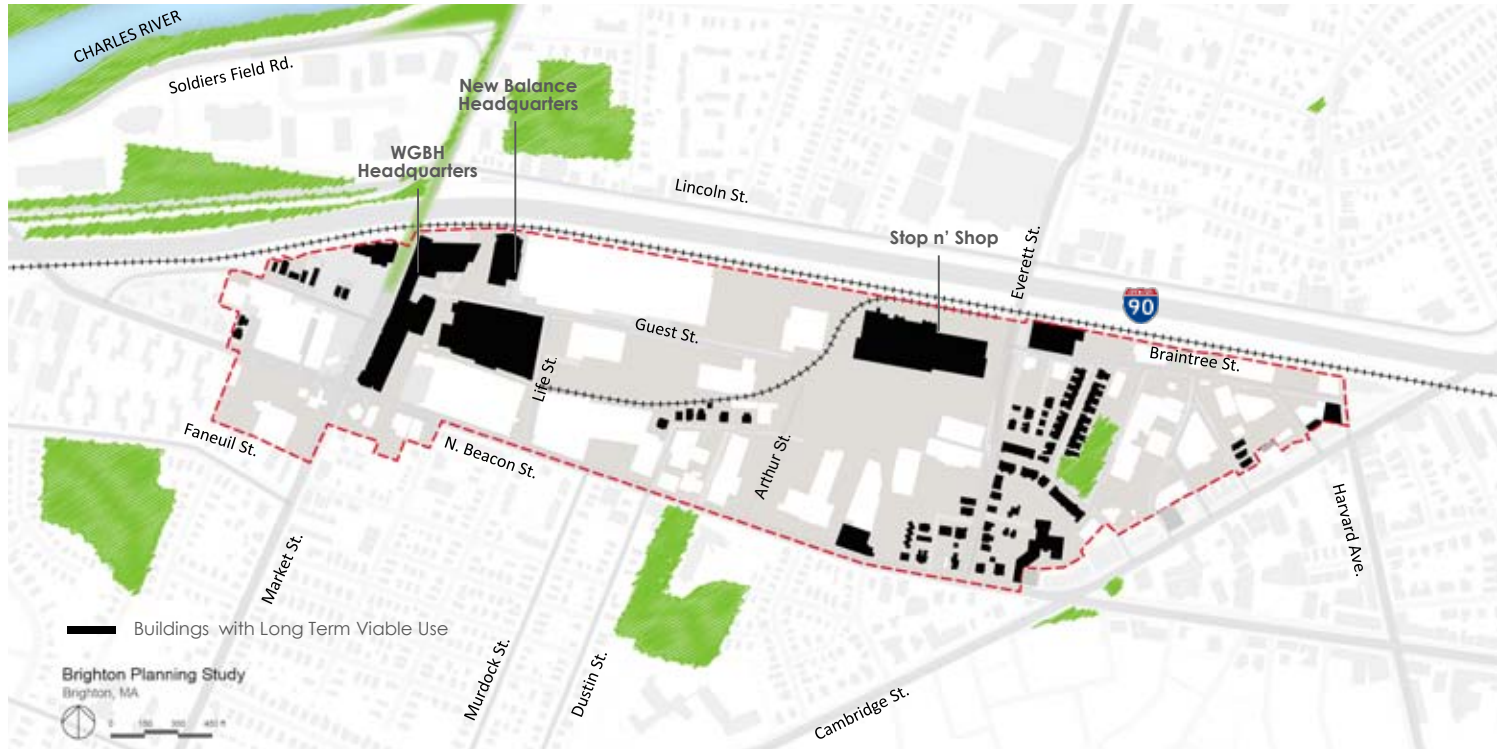
- Historically, the Study Area has been an economic engine for the city
- The Study Area was once well served by rail but access to the Charles River has always been limited
- After the neighborhood boom of the early 20th Century, Brighton has grown steadily in population
- Brighton's population continues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



HISTORICAL MAP  
 CREDIT: BRIGHTON ALLSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



# Existing Assets and Challenges



EXISTING ASSETS

## The Study Area Today

In recent decades, office buildings including the headquarters for the WGBH and New Balance have replaced some of the former warehouse and light industrial uses in the Study Area. The past ten years have shown a 4.1% population increase in the study area as well as a diversification of residents and a general increase in their educational attainment. Still, median household income in the study area remains below that for Allston-Brighton overall.

A prominent characteristic of the Study Area is the predominance of paved surfaces. Only 1% of the site is green space. Paved roadways make up 13% of the site, building footprints another 37%, and the remaining 49% is other impervious surfaces such as parking lots. With little pervious surface to help absorb stormwater, drainage is an important site 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 Birmingham Parkway, 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 site but 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 contributed to the historical character of the study area.

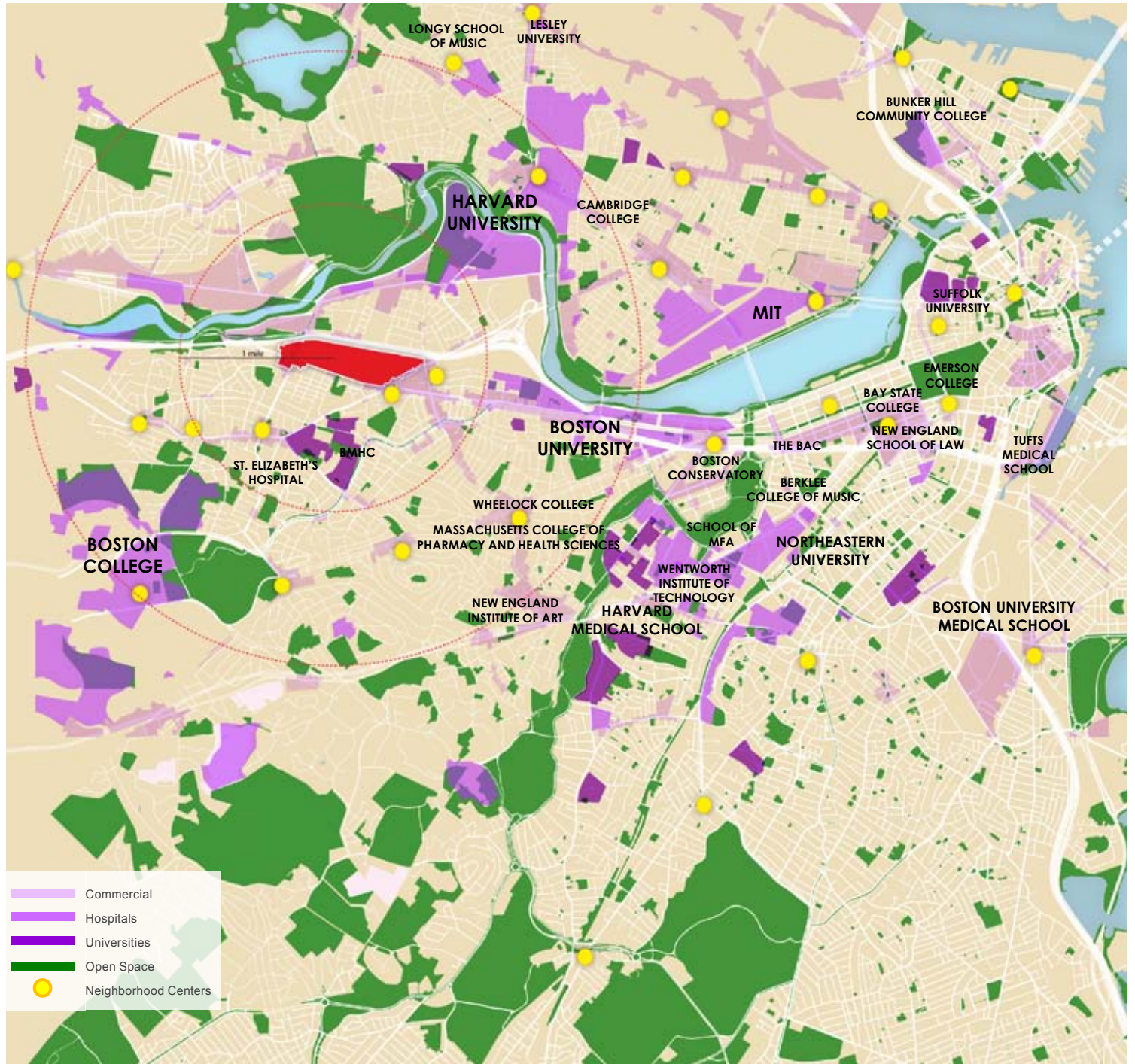


Wgbh headquarters represents a bold new architecture that reflects the creative and innovative activities that exist in the area today.



Guest street reflects the industrial and underutilized character of the area and is in need of improvement.

# Economic Context



ECONOMIC CONTEXT

CREDIT: BILL RANKIN "COLLEGE TOWN"

## Regional Context

Though 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 nearby including open space amenities such as the Charles River Reservation and neighborhood parks, employment and commercial centers such as Brighton Center and Allston Village, and institutions including a number of hospitals and Boston University. 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 the Boston commercial real estate market. Presently, there is not an established submarket 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 and Saint Elizabeth's Medical Center and other area hospitals.

As of early 2012 in Boston, there is limited development of new office and retail space. 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 retail development 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 (ex. 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

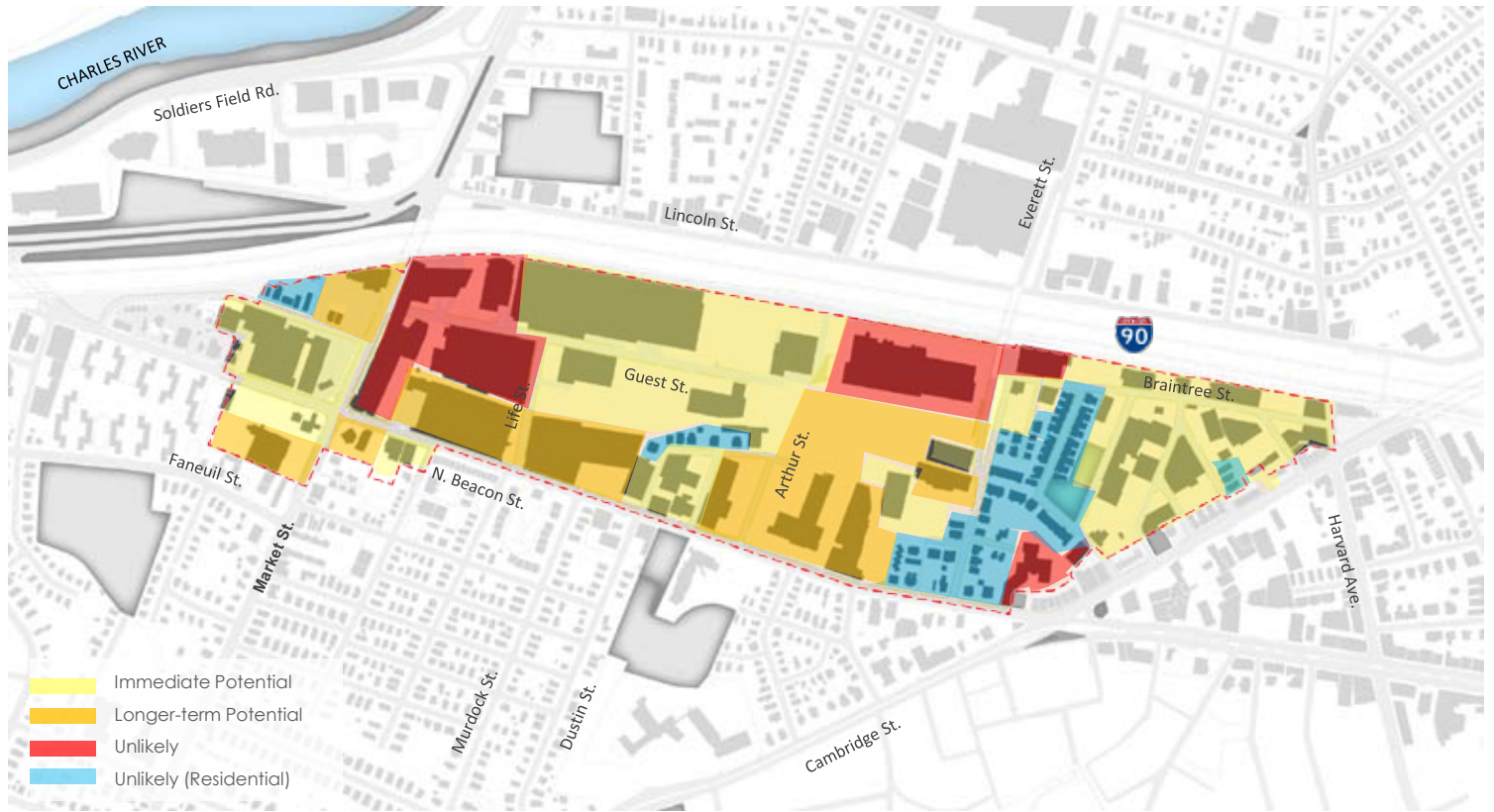
or redevelopment due to low rents, the New Balance and WGBH properties are relatively recent additions to the Guest Street Area. However, these were developed for users already in the area that needed additional space or relocation and were built prior to the major financial downturn. Still, there is evidence from recent real estate acquisitions by New Balance, that there are users willing to pay rents in the \$30-33/SF range, adequate to finance new construction, in order to be located near New Balance and/or remain and grow in the area.

Factors that contribute to the desirability of the study area include visibility from the Massachusetts Turnpike and 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 inferior physical environment. 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 of employment generators such as the institutions mentioned above and the local retail district of Allston Village that appeals to a young demographic.



STUDY AREA

# Economic Context



## Development Potential

At present, 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 of uses is reflected in the diverse character of buildings within the Study Area and in the range of densities throughout the site. The Study Area includes a number of large properties, particularly in the center portion of the site. 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 near and long term. Existing residential areas and recent commercial development are less likely to be redeveloped in the near future than

other properties.

Based on recent experience in the market (for more information see technical memorandum in the appendix), below are rents and sales prices applicable to the office, retail, residential and other user markets in the study area.

- » Office: The rents available for office space in this area are not generally high enough to support new construction or redevelopment, with 116 Braintree as 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 as that proposed by New Balance, they may be willing to pay in the low \$30 per square foot range which is the rent that is needed to allow for development 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 like the recently permitted 60-66 Brainerd Road project, a new residential building near Harvard Avenue, can be permitted and financed, with rents in the \$3 per square foot range.

» Retail: There are a number of large retail land users (such as Wolfer's, Walgreens, Stockyard, and Boston Volvo) which are doing an active 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, national-retailer-anchored retail 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 district 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 among other ideas 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 place identity for the Arthur Street and Guest Street intersection and along Guest Street to Market Street. We recommend focus on the public realm (open space, streetscape) working with development

interests to create a “place” for the success of street-oriented retail.

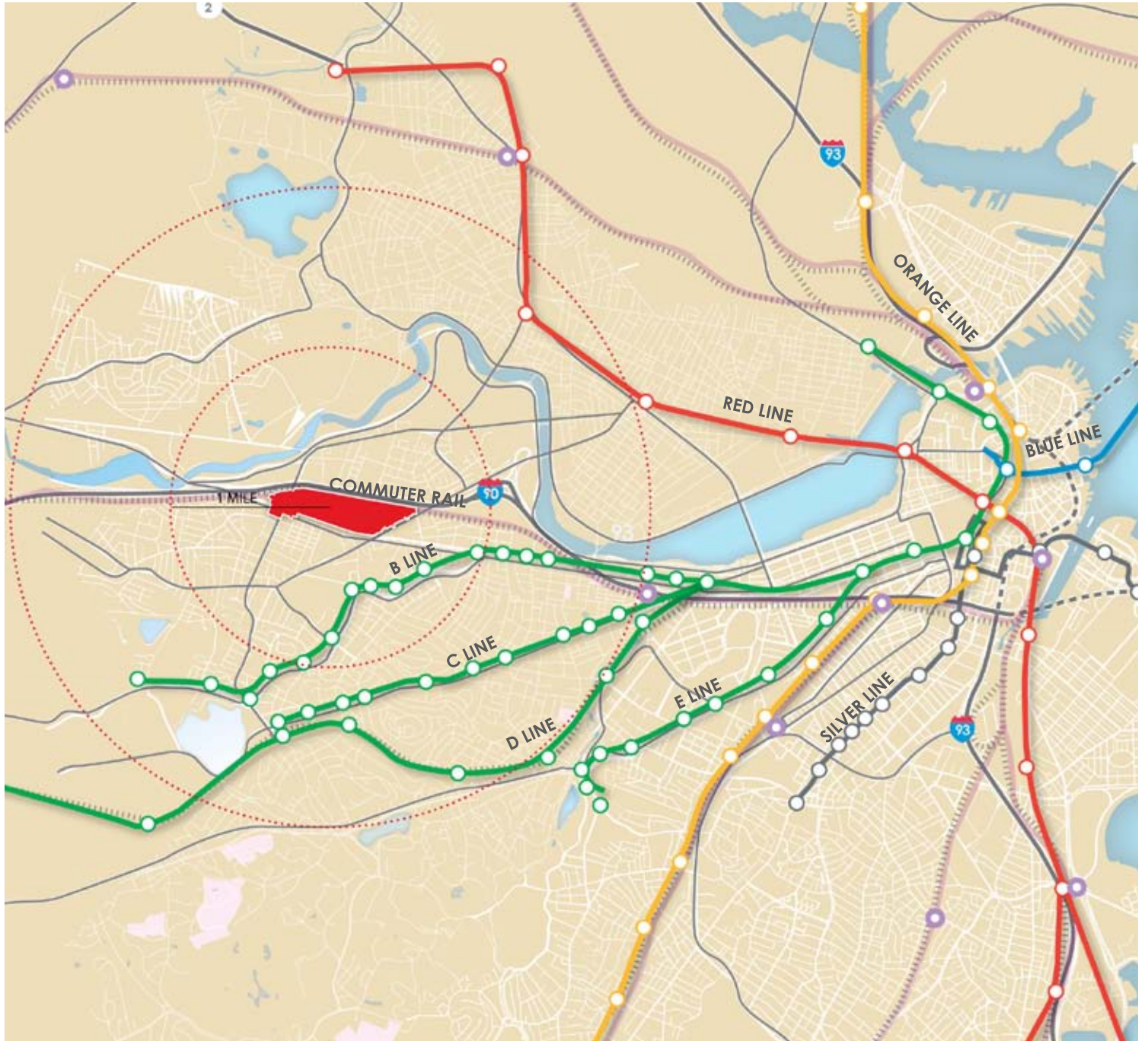
Residential Neighborhood Adjacent to Allston Village: We encourage development of a mix of residential types in the eastern segment of the study area, near Cambridge Street. In this area, there are a number of smaller light manufacturing buildings which could be redeveloped or demolished for new construction: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

Defining the Retail Relationship Between Guest Street & Allston Village: It is important that the relationship between Allston Village, Brighton Village, 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.

## 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

# Transportation



TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS



## 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 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. At present, 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.

With regard to access, the study area has significant advantages and disadvantages. It sits at the geographic center of the Boston metropolitan region's distributions of residences and jobs, giving it a locational advantage. It lies along the Massachusetts Turnpike, a main 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.

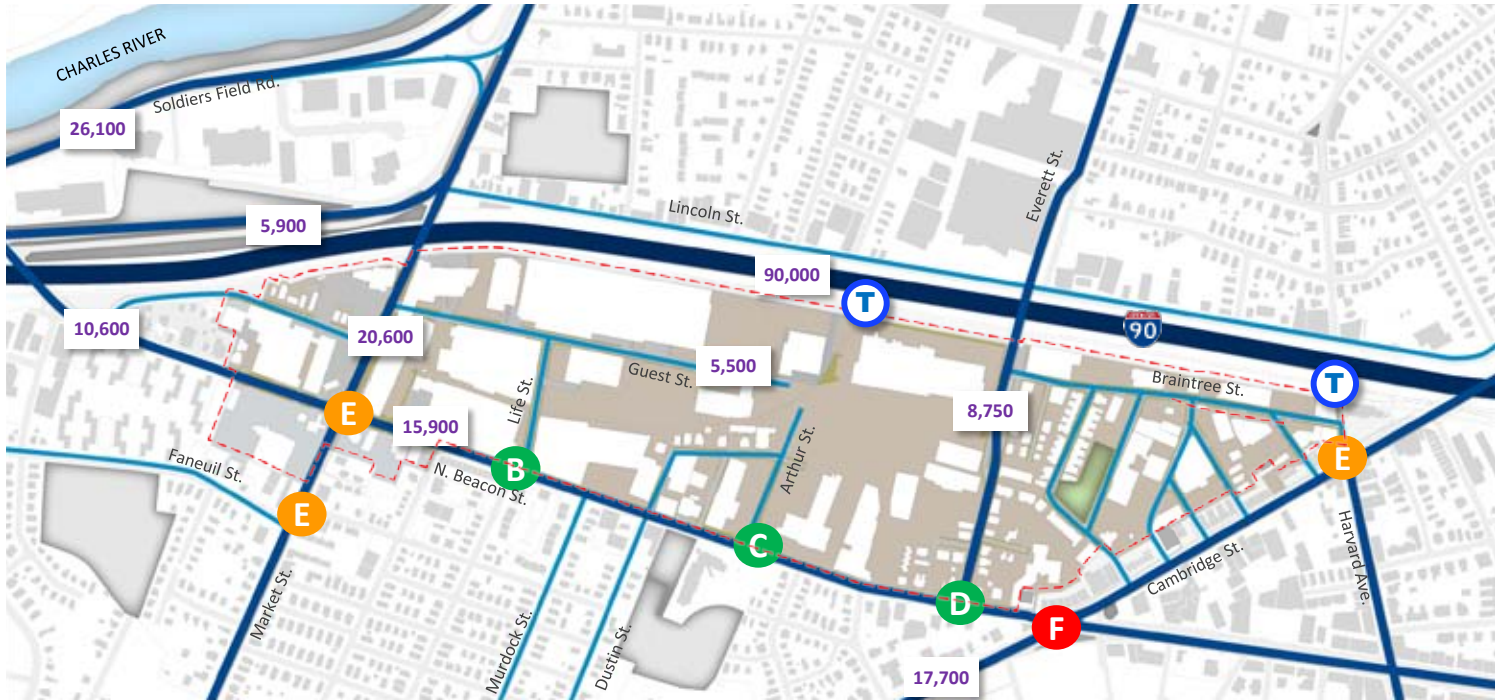
The Study Area is challenged by problems of traffic congestion, auto-dependency and lack of transit services, disconnection between

internal streets, and the barrier of the turnpike. Transit service does not approach the level that was formerly provided by the A Line. The Turnpike hinders North-South movement both vehicular and pedestrian. The two turnpike bridge crossings, Market and Everett Streets, each have severe traffic design and operations deficiencies. As a result of these weaknesses, vehicular traffic is capacity-constrained, leading to concerns about limits to 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 forbidding auto-dominated streets that cross it would open up 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 center 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, 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 possible a higher level of development. 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



STREETS, TRAFFIC AND TRANSIT  
 AVERAGE WEEKDAY TRAFFIC VOLUMES AND INTERSECTION LEVELS OF SERVICE

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, 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.

## 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 volumes of traffic through a set of intersections in the context 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 above whose level-of service is below C, will be eight percent.



ILLUSTRATION OF TRANSPORTATION SOFTWARE USER INTERFACE THAT MODELS CONTEXT AREA TRAFFIC IMPACTS.

## 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

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

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

## 3 RECONNECT THE SITE Comprehensive Mobility

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

Improve circulation within the Study Area can be improved 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

## 4 DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL Create Value

The Study Area has significant capacity for new development and sub-districts of the Study Area will require different development strategies

Drawing on local strengths and developing a bold vision and framework that creates a great new place in the neighborhood



DISTRICT IDENTITY

## 5 DISTRICT IDENTITY Create A Destination

The Study Area can become a distinct cultural and economic center in the City to complement the surrounding neighborhood squares

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

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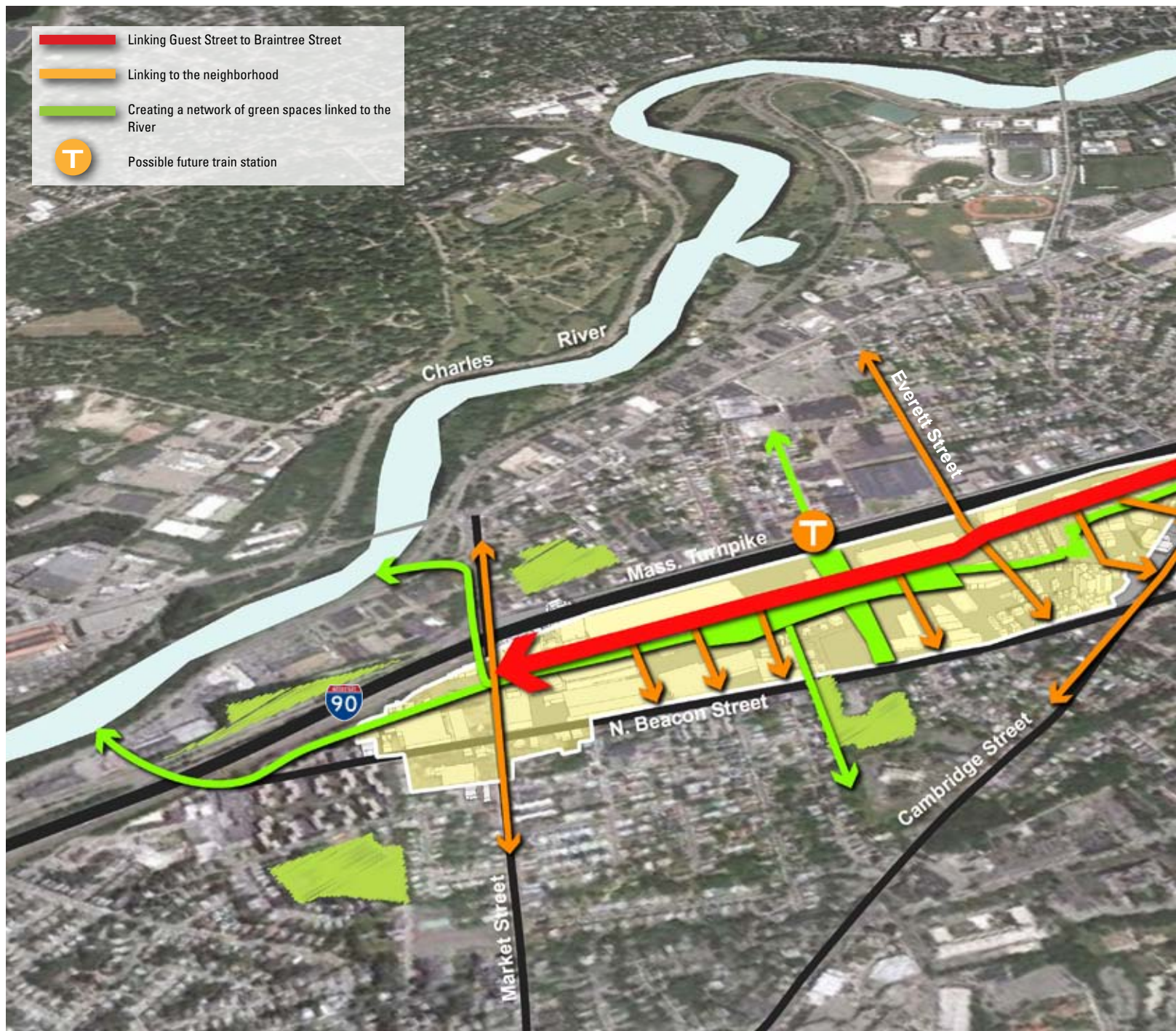


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# URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

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# Framework Context



FRAMEWORK CONTEXT





## Framework Context

The planning approach allows for flexibility to respond to unforeseen changes in the market and technology 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 vision for future development. The framework context establishes the overall foundation for these recommendations:

- Create better access to Exit 18 of the I-90 Turnpike 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 TURNPIKE EDGE IS A PROMINENT GATEWAY TO BOSTON. ARCHITECTURAL TREATMENT OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS MUST REFLECT THE CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION OF THE CITY

## Connections

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

- Align new streets in the area 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.
- Create a framework of interconnected open spaces and green streets in the district.
- Make better connections to Everett Street and through Everett Street to connect Guest and Braintree

The Turnpike edge is a prominent gateway for visitors coming into the City of Boston from points west. Capitalize on the 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 even during the night.

- Vary building massing with a balance of higher and lower building forms. The edge should not feel like an impenetrable wall and should have 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, and community and cultural uses.
- Make pedestrian access paramount.
- Focus on uses such as restaurants, galleries, and institutional uses, with mixed use housing and work space above.

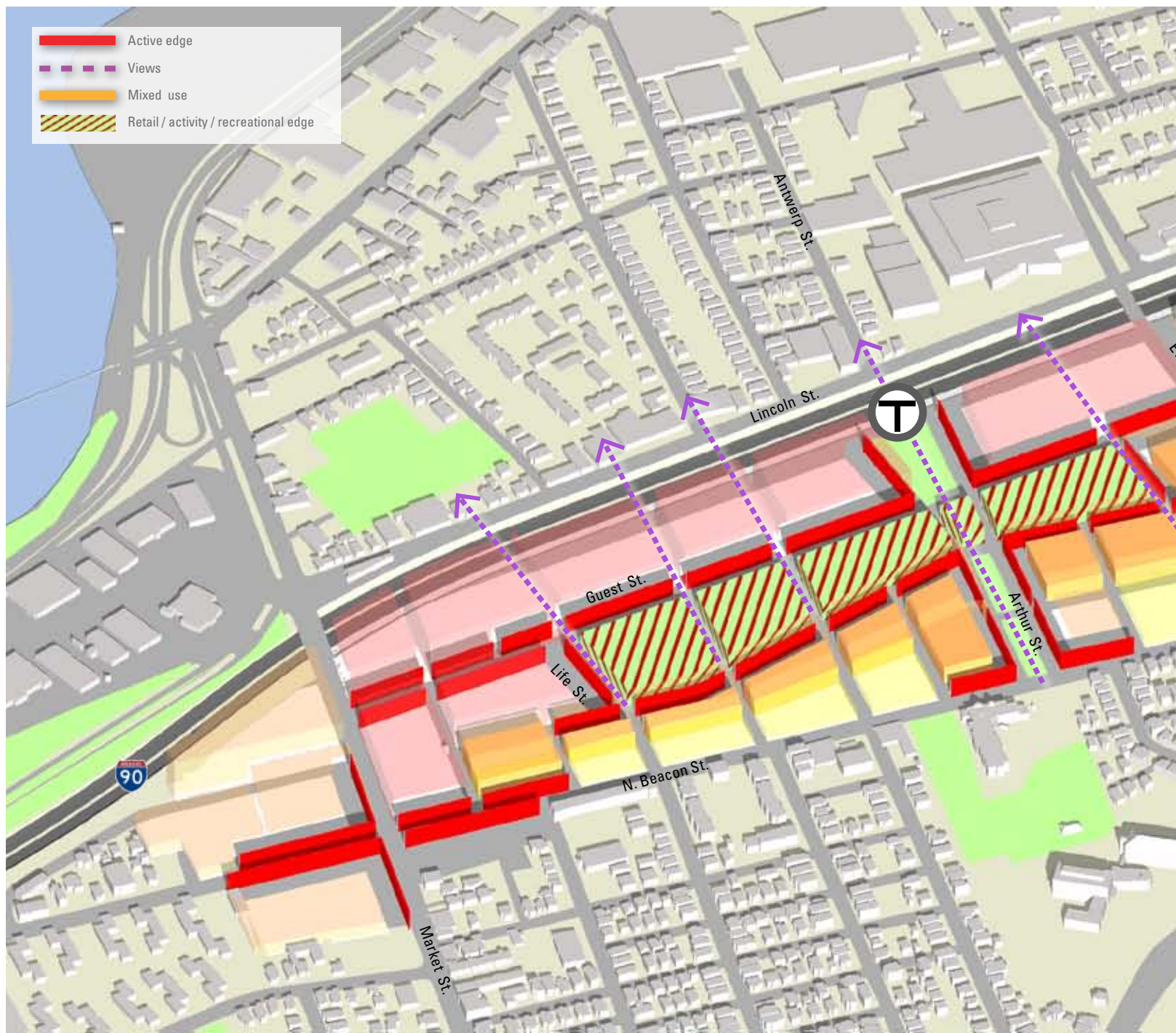
## Creative Center



### CREATIVE CENTER

- The heart of the district between Guest Street and Hichborn Street should accommodate parks, plazas, community and cultural uses.
- An active public realm with recreational uses and activities. Pedestrian access is paramount.
- The center should include uses like restaurants, galleries, institutions, with mixed use housing and work space above.

# Urban Design Framework



URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

## DRAFT REPORT

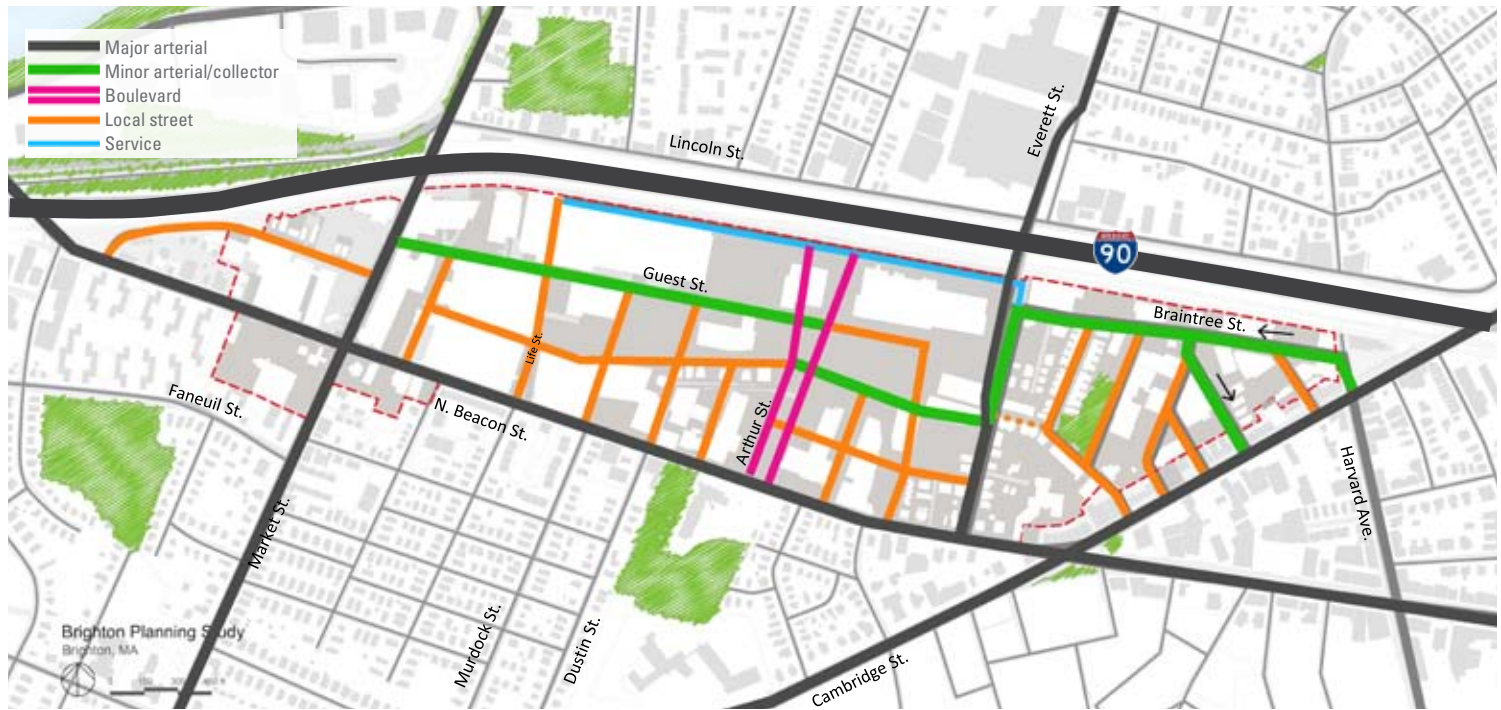


## URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

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 office to live/work mixed use to residential from the Turnpike to North Beacon Street
- Preserve the central core for open spaces and active recreational uses
- Transform Arthur Street into a generous landscaped boulevard that lines up the north south axis to the potential 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, establish a hierarchy of arterial, collector and local streets that will effectively move traffic throughout the area and its surroundings.

As noted earlier, the development of artery based 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 serving and loading areas that allow for public access.



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

**DRAFT REPORT**

# 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 CYCLE TRACK WILL 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.



## 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 transit in a well landscaped and comfortable human scaled environment while accommodating storm water in swales along the rows of trees.

Arthur Boulevard is a one way couplet that is generously landscaped with 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

# Braintree Street



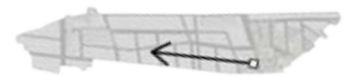
BRAINTREE STREET IS ENVISIONED AS A LIVE/WORK STREET WITH A NARROW RIGHT OF WAY. STREET TREES ALTERNATE WITH PARKING SPACES TO BALANCE CONVENIENCE WITH GREENERY. IT HAS ACTIVE STREET EDGES WITH FREQUENT ENTRANCES, LOTS OF WINDOWS.



# 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



**DRAFT REPORT**

# Open Space



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

## Open Space

The open space framework ensures that a variety of human-scaled parks, plazas, and publicly accessible gathering places will be created while allowing a more flexible implementation strategy for the private development of publicly accessible open space. 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, skating and outdoor dining, or just relaxing and enjoying 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 will make the area an attraction during all

seasons of the year.

The blocks sandwiched between Guest Street and the parallel street that runs just south of it will remain a flexible zone where 40-50% of the land should be devoted to publicly accessible open space. Although the choice of where the open space amenities can be built within the zone is flexible, this guideline will result in a significant and interconnected “necklace” of public spaces at the heart of the area. 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.

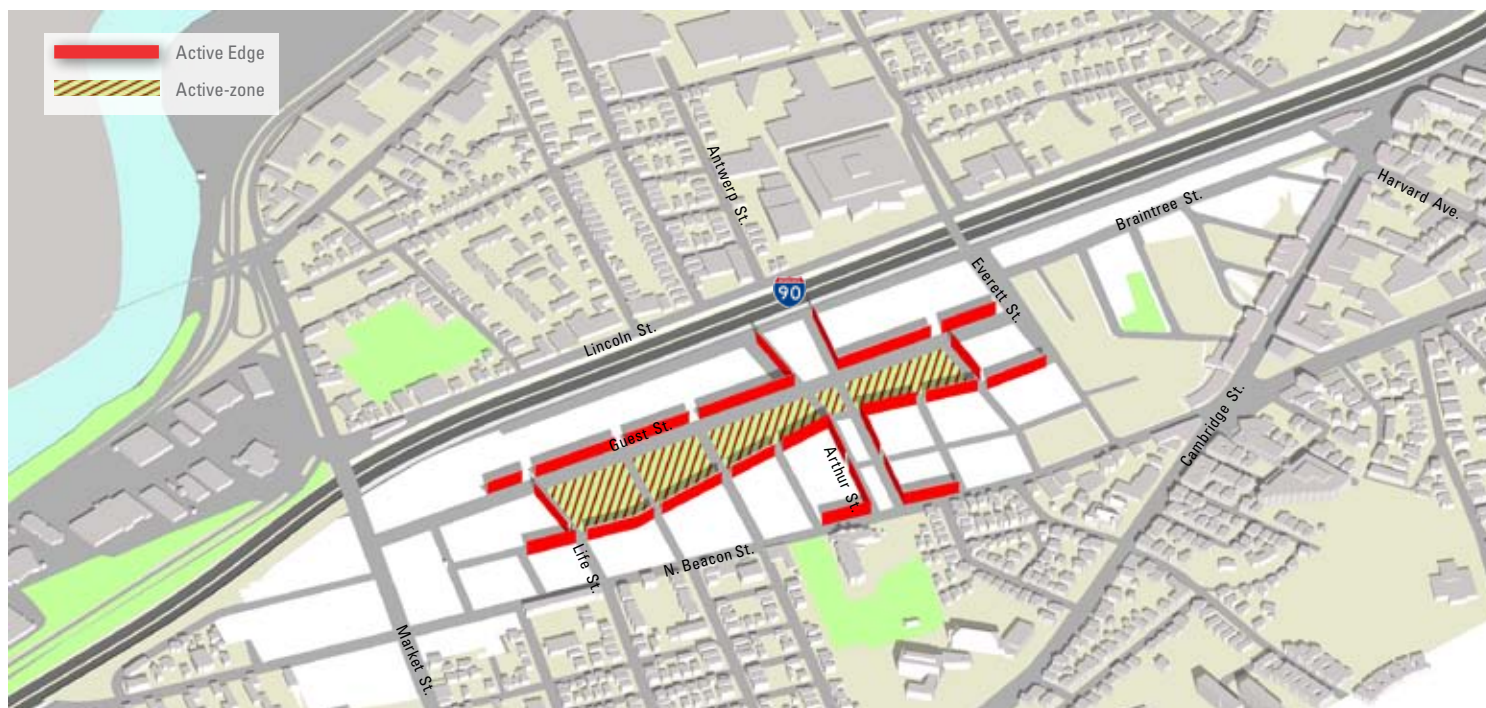


a new plaza and fountain in corpus, texas is a great play area for children.

# Land Use / Active Edge



A MIXED USE DISTRICT PROVIDING WORKPLACES, HOMES AND CULTURAL, COMMUNITY, RECREATIONAL AND RETAIL USES THAT WILL SUPPORT A LIVELY, DIVERSE AND 24/7 QUALITY OF LIFE.



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

# Density and Building Height



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

## 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, galleries, lobbies and 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 planning 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 24/7 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 planning 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.

## HEIGHTS AND DENSITY

The height and density guidelines for the planning 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 planning area, street walls should not exceed 40' in height. Stepbacks of 15' at 40' height will ensure a human scale to the streets. These height and density guidelines will result in an overall development capacity of 1.5 to 2 million square feet of future development.





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**01/27/2012**

**IMPLEMENTATION**

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# Phasing - Near Term

## Implementation

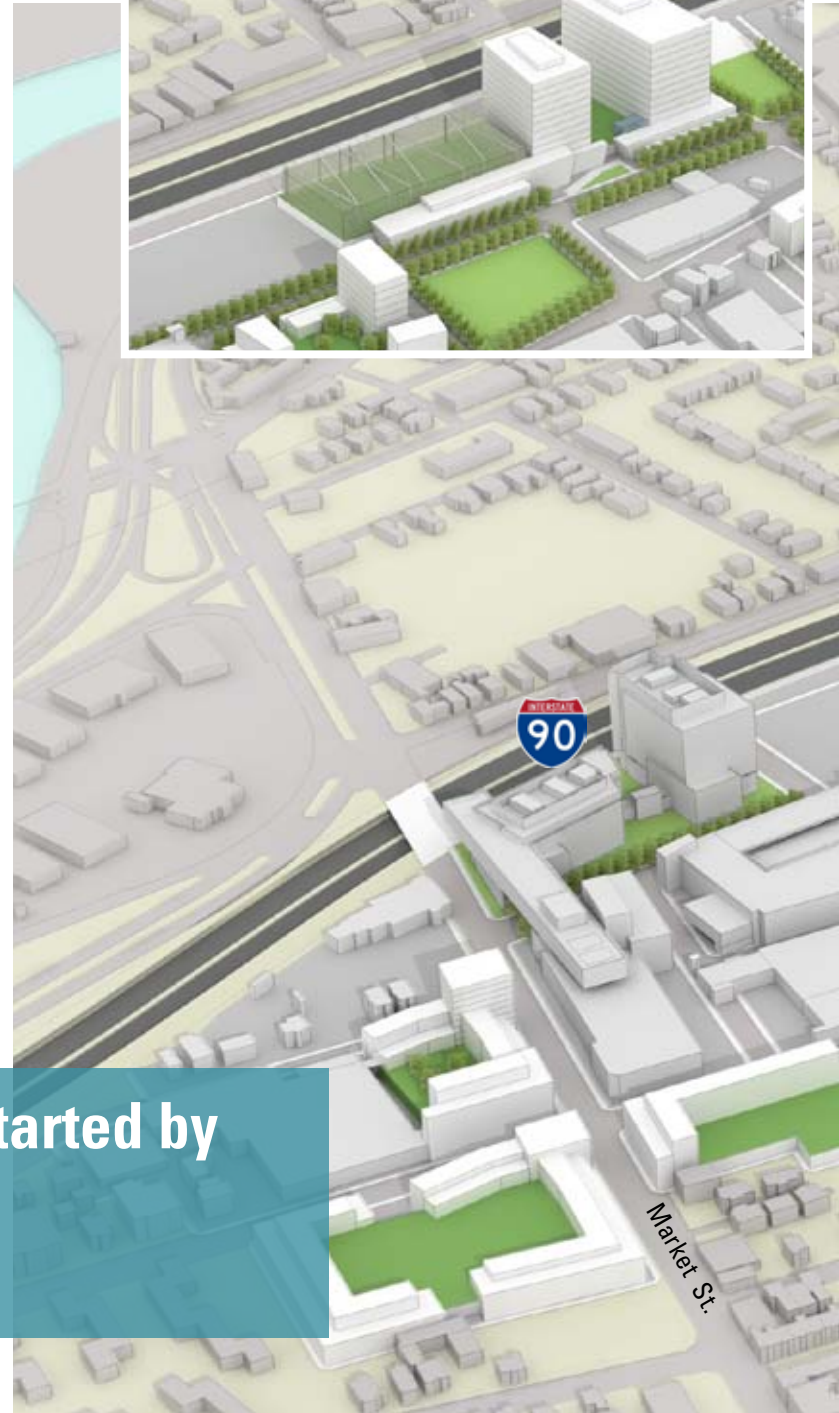
Districts are not built by any one entity, but instead are the amalgamation of many actions by different sectors and involved stakeholders over time. For the Study Area to be successful, the future will involve congruent actions by the private sector, the public sector, and other involved parties. Since 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, urbanistic, district for the community and the city.

## 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 framework. As described in Chapter One, new development in the district is reliant 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 alongside the Turnpike as well as two options for connecting Guest Street to Braintree Street via Everett Street.

**Incremental development jumpstarted by interested landowners**

THIS RENDERING DEPICTS TALLER BUILDINGS, SIMILAR IN SIZE TO EXISTING NEW BALANCE HQ



RENDERING DEPICTS A POSSIBLE 1ST PHASE WITH A RECREATIONAL / DISPENSATIONAL FACILITY

THIS RENDERING DEPICTS LINEAR BUILDINGS



Everett Street Option

# Phasing - Long Term

THIS RENDERING DEPICTS TALLER BUILDINGS, SIMILAR IN SIZE TO EXISTING NEW BALANCE HQ



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

THIS RENDERING DEPICTS LINEAR BUILDINGS



Everett Street Option

# Phasing - Transportation Improvements

## Near and Long Term

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 as short term are necessary to achieve the development of the first 500,000-700,000 square feet of development.

## Transportation Phasing

MEASURE	DESCRIPTION/JUSTIFICATION	PHASE
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 under-utilized 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
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



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
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 including school children and elderly people. As the study area grows and develops, pedestrian and vehicular volumes 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
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
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
Improve traffic operations in the Market St. corridor.	Solutions should be sought to 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 attendant insufficient intersection operations. It may be possible to remove existing signals and conflicting movements.	Long-term
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

# Development Thresholds

## Connections and Open Space Improvements

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.

Development in this area will likely take a single developer to develop 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.

Our 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 points at which the different measures and other improvements are undertaken within the phasing of development should be an important consideration of the development.

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, either in-kind or in cash 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. 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. In this process, it is important that those open spaces which encourage the pedestrian environment along Guest Street are prioritized and take place first. It will take time for the destination concept to be established for users and the space which defines that best 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:** This is the most challenging and important of the categories of improvements because it inhibits the parking demanded in future phases. [We recommend that the developer should either develop the Commuter Rail facilities and the station equipment to a certain threshold for connection with the Commuter Rail at a future time. Alternatively, the developer can go forward without the station improvements but must build its parking facilities only to the scale which would be allowed by BTM without the commuter rail.]

**Everett Street Traffic Signal:** Should include this improvement 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 costs 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 away 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 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

# Transportation



TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS NECESSARY TO ACCOMMODATE NEW DEVELOPMENT

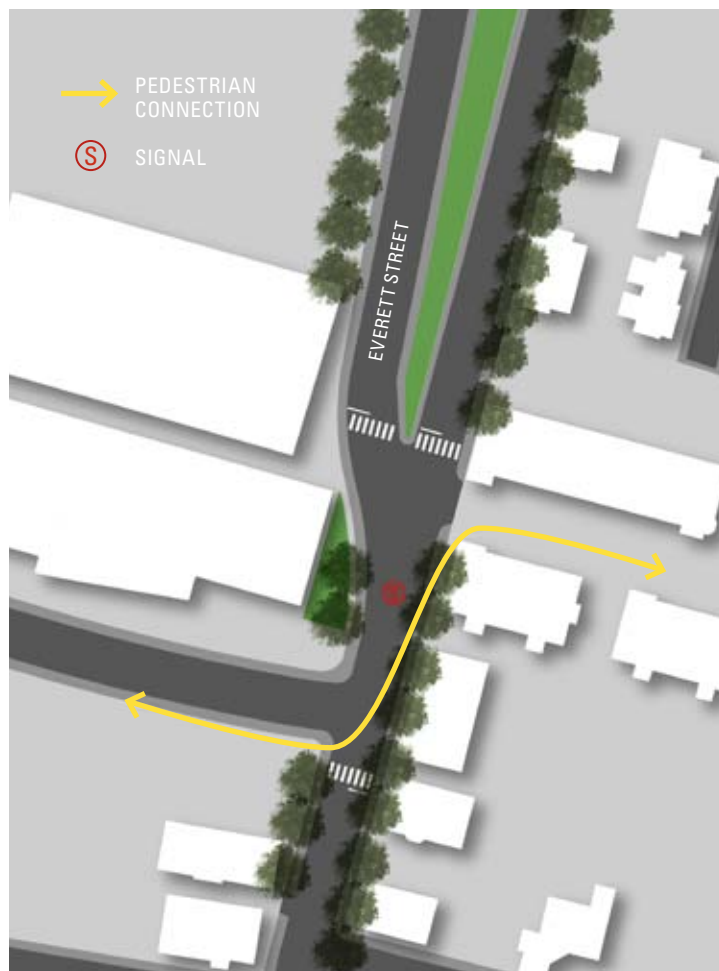
Western Avenue, would reduce traffic in the Market Street corridor north of Guest Street.

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 combined 24% of traffic that the three improvements would remove from the Market Street corridor (north of Guest Street), Union Square, and the North Beacon/Everett Street intersection equates to approximately 67,000 square feet of office development in the Guest Street corridor alone. The street improvements thus would significantly increase the development capacity of the study area.

## Everett Street Options

There 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. However, an alignment along the north side of the building would create a safer and more pedestrian-friendly intersection with Everett Street.

Because of the offset between the new street and the end of the Everett Street bridge, the area between stop lines – approximately 150 feet along Everett Street from the foot of the bridge to the new



EVERETT STREET CONNECTION



intersection – would become inaccessible to pedestrians and would be safe only for vehicular traffic. Also, pedestrians coming from the Honan Apartments area would be forced into an indirect path as they cross Everett Street to the shopping center. Nevertheless, the exigencies of private development may make the south-side option more easily achievable.



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## Study Conclusion

The success of any plan is ultimately determined by how it is implemented. This plan 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 leadership and understanding - we urge the community and stakeholders to embrace the guidelines and necessary improvements incorporated in the plan and to formally incorporate them into their own plans and actions in the coming years.

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**01/27/2012**

**2040 GUEST STREET  
DISTRICT VISION**

# Near term & Long term program

	NEAR TERM	LONG TERM
OFFICE	TO BE INSERTED	
RESIDENTIAL		
RETAIL		



## Guest Street Creative District

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## 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 city around it. The illustrations do not depict the real development proposals of any land owner or developer; they represent one of many ways the area may develop over time based on the urban design framework and guidelines described in Chapter Two 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 involves City and Community review.



**2020 Vision**

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# 2040 Guest Street District



**Existing Condition**



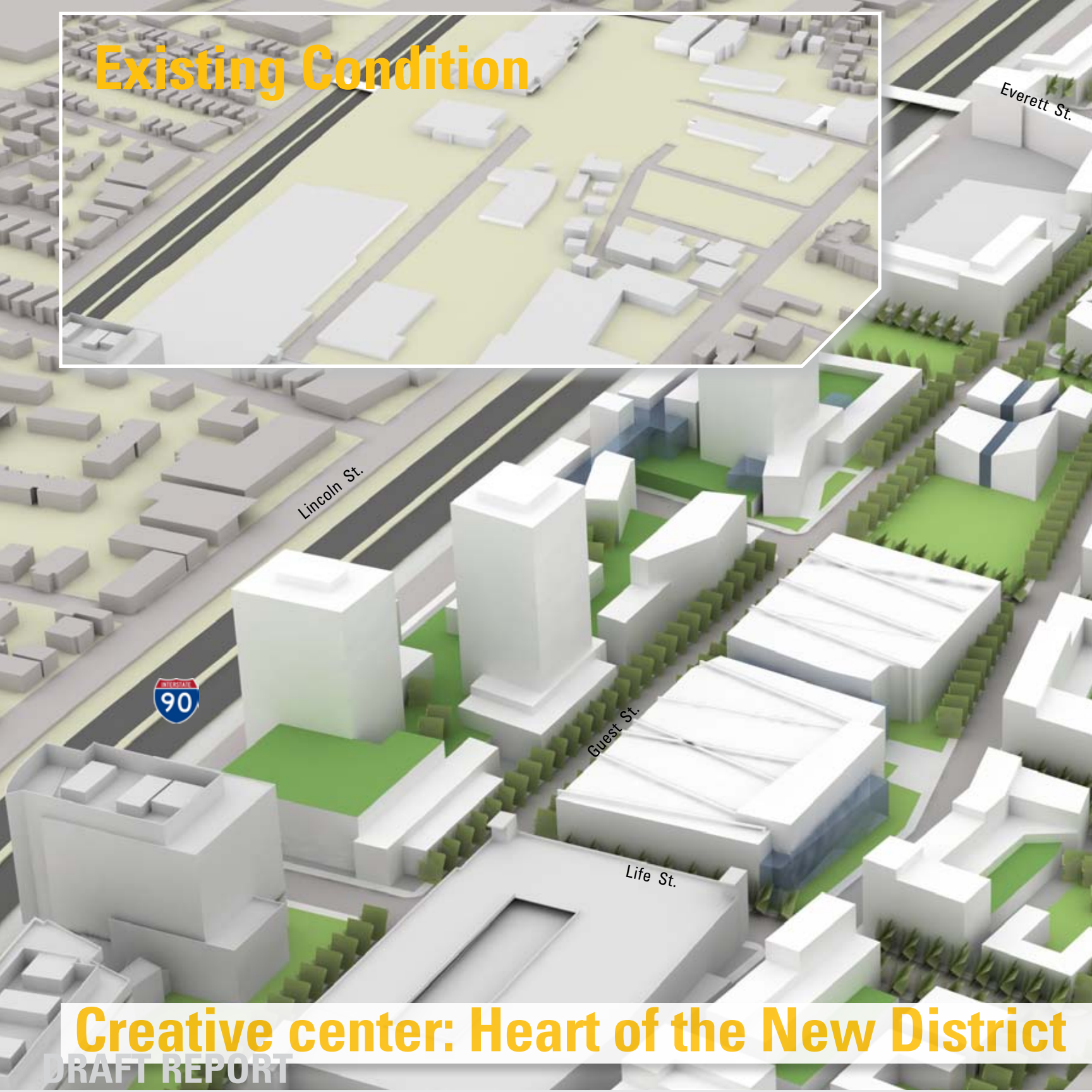
## 2020 Vision

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

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


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# Existing Condition



## Creative center: Heart of the New District

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The “creative center” will evolve as properties get redeveloped with active/recreational and creative mixed-uses. Over the long term, the area will become a transit-oriented mixed-use destination with a blend of workplaces, homes, and neighborhood amenities.

Arthur St.

N. Beacon St.



2020 Vision

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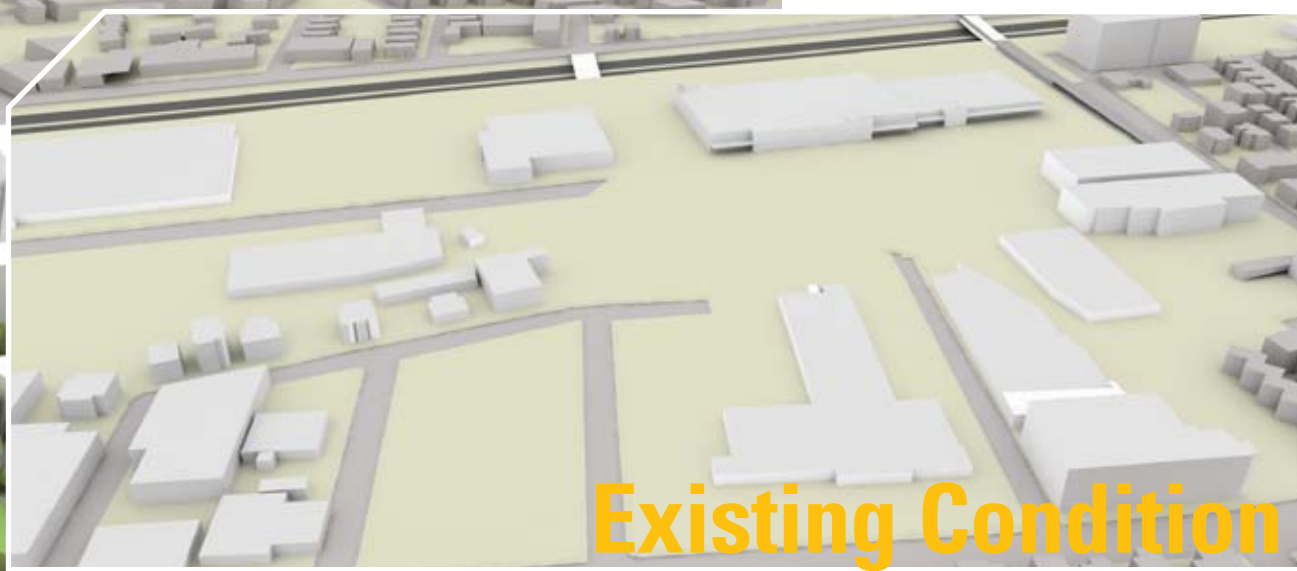
As the properties along Arthur Street are redeveloped, a generous boulevard will create a prominent gateway...  
...eventually leading to a new train station and a pedestrian bridge across I-90.



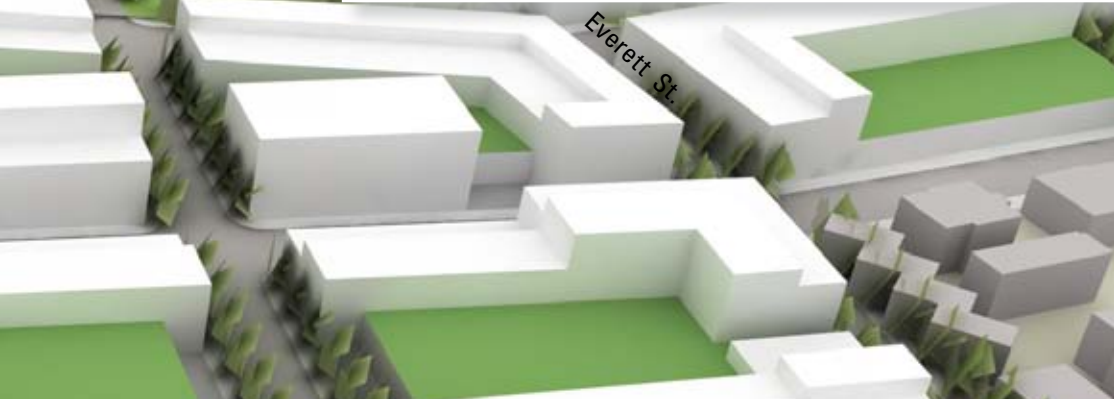
# Arthur Street: Gateway Boulevard

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**Existing Condition**



**2020 Vision**

# Market Street: Urban Crossroads

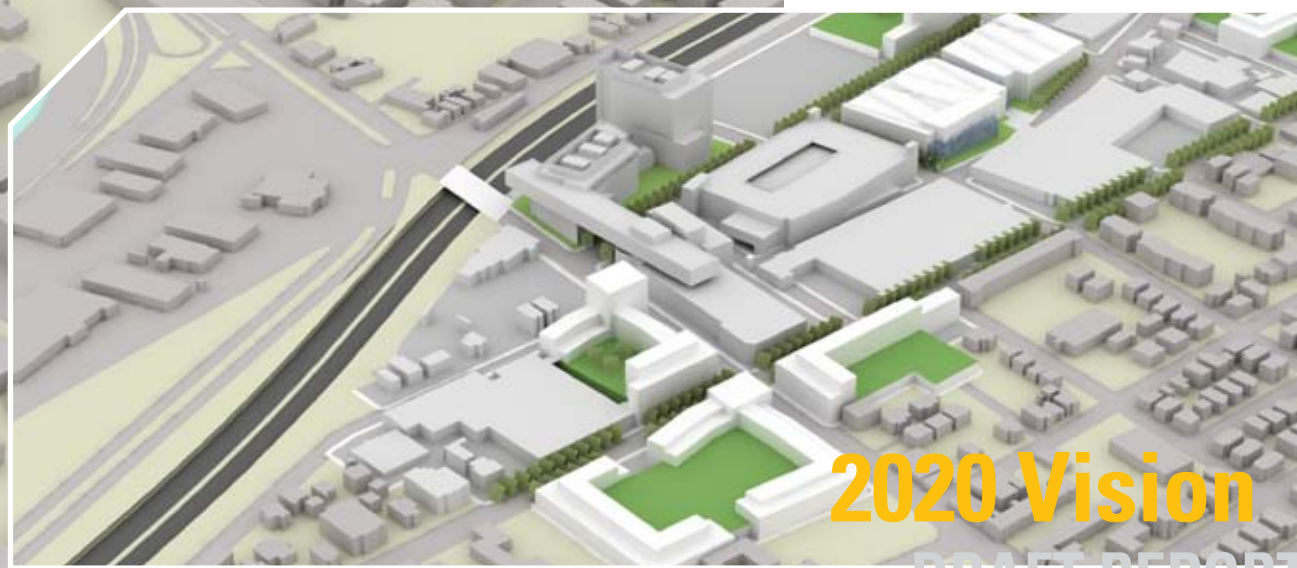


**Existing Condition**

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



**2020 Vision**

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Guest St.

N. Beacon St.

Lincoln St.

Everett St.

Cambridge St.



**Existing Condition**

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# Braintree Street: Live/work Corridor

Antwerp St.

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

Braintree St.



Harvard Ave.



2020 Vision

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# TECHNICAL APPENDIX











