FAIRMOUNT INDIGO PLANNING INITIATIVE

UPHAM'S CORNER
STATION AREA PLAN

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CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh
Mayor

Boston
Redevelopment
Authority

STATION AREA PLAN ***DRAFT***
FEBRUARY 2014

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FAIRMOUNT INDIGO PLANNING INITIATIVE

UPHAM'S CORNER STATION AREA PLAN

DRAFT Final Report Contents

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*An **Executive Summary** of the Station Area Plan is also available at: www.FairmountIndigoPlanning.org*

Dudley Street, Upham's Corner

UPHAM'S CORNER STATION AREA PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Upham's Corner Station Area Plan Main Ideas

Across all key findings, recommendations and strategies several main ideas emerged as part of the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan. The following six main ideas resonate throughout the plan and report sections that follow.

The historic commercial center of Upham's Corner

The restored marquee of the historic Strand Theatre

Historic Center of Activity

The historic strength of Upham's Corner as a commercial center should be a focus to build upon today. The scale and height of the historic buildings that remain in Upham's Corner recall an era of prosperity and a city-wide focus on this historic crossroads. The future evolution of Upham's Corner should look to its own past significance and enduring patterns of development to renew itself. To recapture the success of the past commercial era, growth and new housing are required to support local-serving retail uses. An increase in the intensity of uses near the Main Streets district and rail station would be consistent with the historic prominence of the district. This type of focus on Upham's Corner would bring density and height near the commercial district similar to the historic building fabric.

Arts and Culture Destination

Upham's Corner is an arts and culture concentration in the City and should be cultivated and grown as a destination for the arts. The city-owned Strand Theater is an incredible cultural and historic asset of the Station Area. The collection of area artists, art programs and events should be promoted as a source of activity and draw for visitors to the station and Main Street district.

Walkable Commercial District

Reinforcing a social and walkable commercial district is the center point of creating a thriving neighborhood center. Creating a walking environment that is safe and comfortable through improvements to sidewalks, street crossings and streetscape promotes the district, enhances surrounding neighborhoods and invites visitors to stay and be social without driving. The integration of new

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public spaces into an improved public realm helps to build Upham's Corner into a vibrant center.

Sidewalk and storefronts along Dudley Street

Rail Station as a Gateway

The improvements along the Fairmount Indigo Line are unlocking a new era of connectivity in Upham's Corner. As service further improves in the coming years, connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and continuity of the Main Street down Dudley Street are critically important. The integration of the station into the center of activity will leverage it as an asset and reinforce Upham's as a destination for residents, businesses and visitors.

The rail overpass at Upham's Corner Station

Neighborhood Amenity and Services

Upham's Corner boasts an impressive collection of health and community centers today and should retain this as a Station Area asset. New community-oriented uses should complement existing resources to reinforce high quality neighborhoods with a high quality of life that are rich with housing, employment, community and entertainment opportunities. New investments should look to strategically fill gaps that exist in the assets of the Station Area.

The new Salvation Army Kroc Community Center

Shared and Managed Parking

A neighborhood center with cultural and community destinations requires adequate and convenient parking. However, not all of these activities require parking capacity at the same time. The current parking provided to service the Main Street district has capacity and is well-located. Future parking resources in the Upham's Corner Station Area should be coordinated and managed on a district-wide basis to balance parking needs. Reinforced pedestrian connections should encourage a "park-once and walk" environment. Parking should be made to be more efficient and fully used district-wide. The addition of large amounts of new parking in Upham's Corner would counteract many of the other strategies and recommendations for Station Area improvements.

Access to public parking at Belden Street

Key Findings

Prosperity

1. Redevelop City-owned Maxwell Property to bring new investment
2. Address negative impact of Leon Building - short and long term
3. Reinforce Upham's Corner as an arts and cultural destination
4. Strengthen an active and walkable Main Street District

Home

5. Encourage a mixed-use Main Street with new residential uses
6. Increase housing choice with multi-family near rail station
7. Infill vacant lots with new housing opportunities
8. Minimize displacement of existing residents

Place

9. Reinforce Dudley St/Columbia Rd connection to station
10. Improve wayfinding to Upham's Corner
11. Strengthen gateways into Upham's Corner

Getting Around

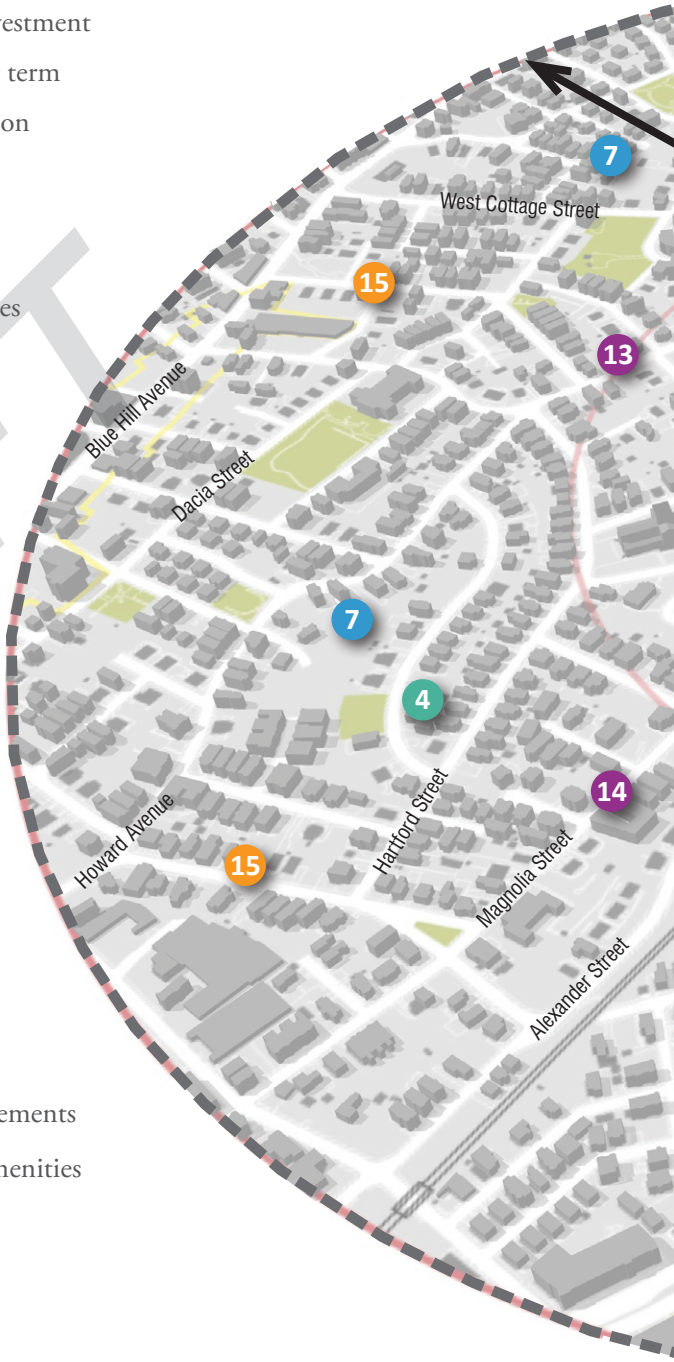
12. Create a multi-modal hub connecting to rail station
13. Enhance safety with neighborhood street improvements
14. Link connections as per Greenway Concept Plan

Parks and Public Space

15. Establish new neighborhood open spaces/agriculture sites
16. Expand public space with rebalanced public realm improvements
17. Improve access to existing public space and community amenities

Quality of Life

18. Add a new station entrance and platform connection
19. Encourage shared/managed public and private parking
20. Promote public art as a consistent feature of the district



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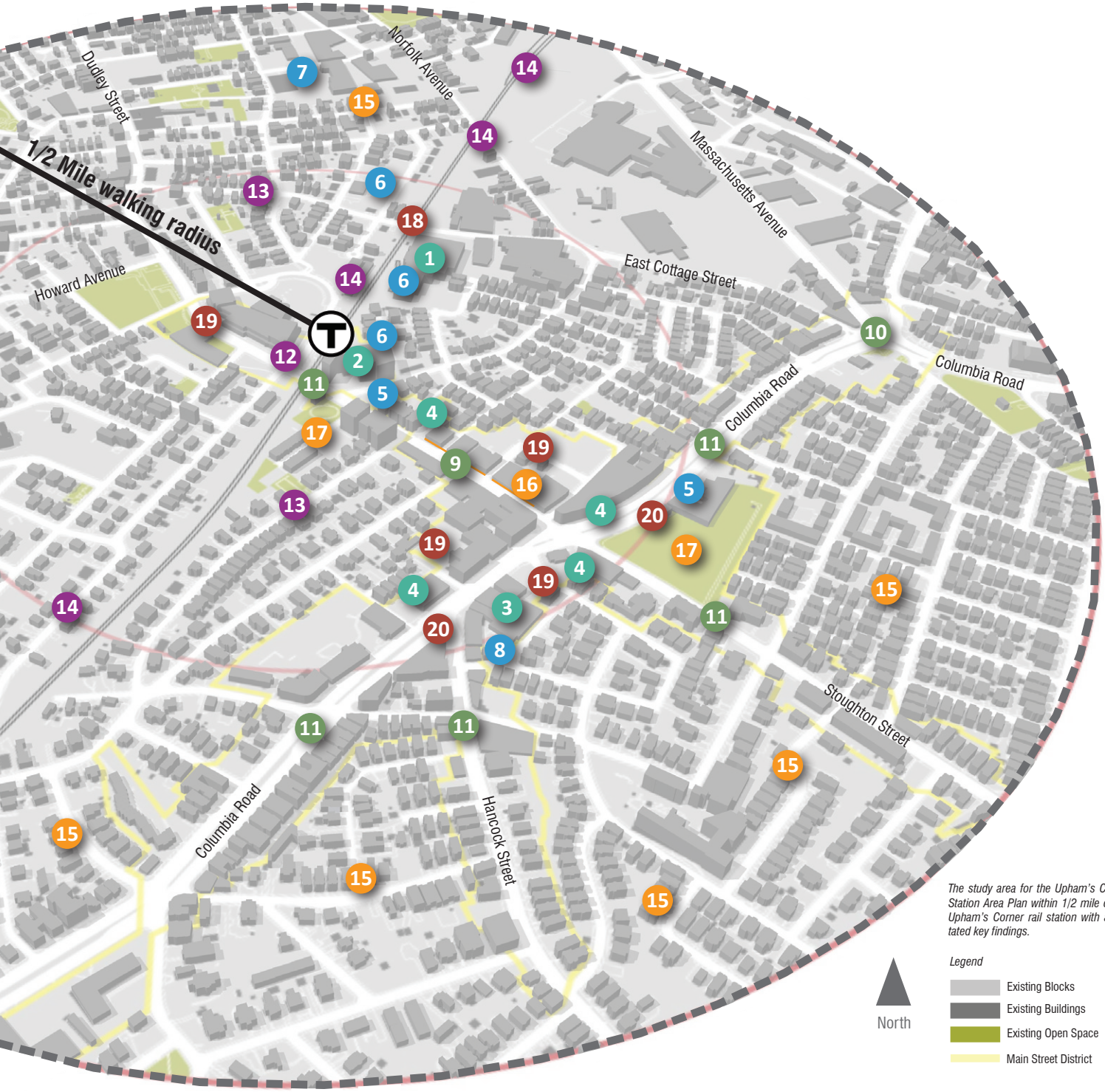

The study area for the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan within 1/2 mile of the Upham's Corner rail station with annotated key findings.

Fairmount Indigo Corridor

The Fairmount Indigo Corridor in the context of the City of Boston's neighborhoods

Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative

In February 2012, the City of Boston launched the Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative at the historic Strand Theatre in Upham's Corner, Dorchester. The Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative is a comprehensive community based, corridor-wide planning process that the City of Boston has undertaken with the involvement of community participants and partners.

Boston has a unique opportunity to address the critical need for economic growth and physical improvement along the Fairmount Indigo Corridor, a 9.2 mile transit corridor that runs through some of Boston's most disadvantaged neighborhoods. The communities along the Corridor have experienced poor access to public rail transit - creating significant barriers to economic opportunity for both residents and businesses.

Now with new rail stations operational, residents and local businesses have improved access to economic opportunity both within and beyond the Corridor. The City recognizes the significant potential for growth in the area and looks to capitalize on this momentum.

The Fairmount Indigo Corridor includes rail stations at South Station, Newmarket, Upham's Corner, Four Corners/Geneva Avenue, Talbot Avenue, Fairmount and Readville. A rail station is under design at Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway and potential stations have been discussed at Columbia Road and River Street.

The Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative is the City's largest planning initiative to date. The City Team, led by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, along with its consultants and the community, have developed a long term strategy for business growth, employment opportunities, housing development, and Corridor branding.

The purpose of the Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative is to create a shared vision and coordinated set of strategies to unlock greater potential for each of the Station Areas and neighborhoods than would exist for each area

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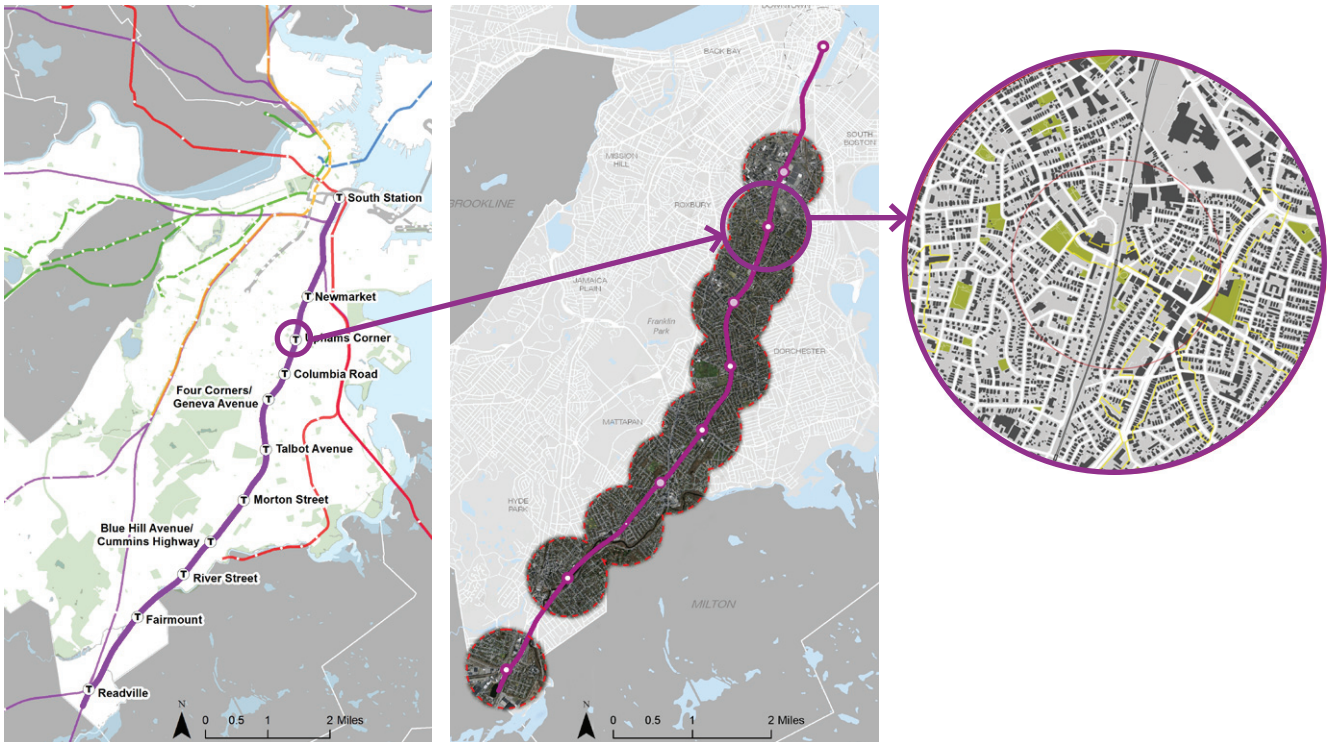
acting in isolation. The planning effort focuses upon the following:

- *Guiding physical and economic development*
- *Encouraging sustainable growth and transit-oriented development (TOD)*
- *Prioritizing economic prosperity for existing residents and businesses*
- *Incorporating existing planning initiatives (City-led and Community-based) into one vision for the future*

The Planning Initiative encompasses two major planning approaches: Corridor-wide Planning and Station Area Planning. The Corridor Plan documents the Fairmount Indigo Corridor process and recommendations for improving the Corridor in the context of the City of Boston. The Station Area Plans document the Station Area planning at each Station Area. The initial phase of planning will result in Station Area plans at three stations. Upham's Corner was the first Station Area plan to be undertaken.

Additionally, a Fairmount Indigo Corridor Profile was created in November of 2012 to provide baseline information for a variety of interested parties in the community, elected officials, planners, investors, researchers, and others. Key areas of focus include demographics, business, real estate, infrastructure and quality of life. The profile represents a collaborative effort between City agencies, foundations, and other planning entities. It provides current data and some trends that give a useful framework to inform the planning process.

All reports, profiles and presentations as part of the planning initiative can be found at: **www.fairmountindigoplanning.org.**

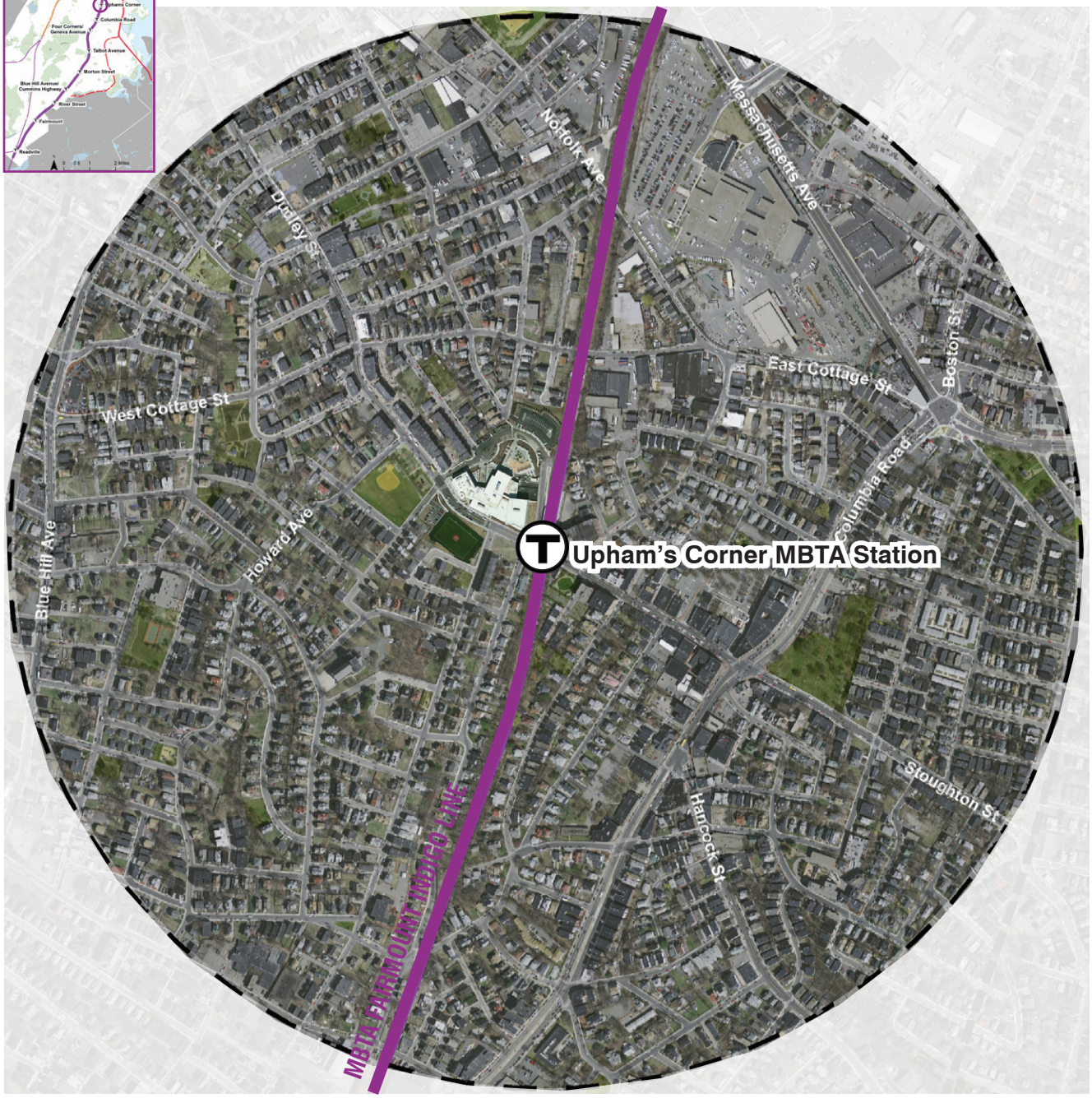


Complementary scales of planning - City-wide (left), Corridor-wide (center) and Station Area (right)

Upham's Corner Context

Fairmount Indigo Corridor Context

The study area for the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan includes portions of Roxbury and Dorchester within 1/2 mile of the Upham's Corner rail station.



Upham's Corner Station Area Geography

The Station Area planning for Upham's Corner focuses upon an area within a 1/2 mile radius centered on the Upham's Corner rail platform at Dudley Street. The 1/2 mile radius encompasses the area within which people would most likely walk to transit service at the station. This type of planning boundary is hypothetical and groups together neighborhoods that are adjacent, but that may have been considered separately in previous planning efforts.

The Fairmount Indigo Line forms the boundary between Dorchester and Roxbury. In fact, the planning study and Station Area follow the station name, Upham's Corner, but some of the areas included within this study area may not be traditionally considered Upham's Corner. This geography is useful to focus on a closely connected set of neighborhoods and a commercial district that are most likely to benefit from enhanced rail service along the Fairmount Indigo Corridor and access to the Upham's Corner station.

City Context

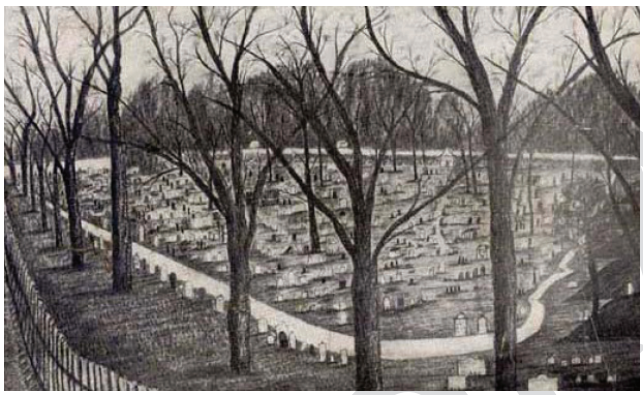
Upham's Corner is located at the critical junction of Columbia Road, Dudley Street, and Stoughton Street, and has been a historic and important crossroads for Dorchester and the City of Boston. Due to this busy intersection in the street network, Upham's Corner has always been a center of activity and commerce. The neighborhood's transportation network has evolved over the years from a streetcar hub, but the importance of Upham's Corner as a critical center of activity in an evolving network has remained constant. Historically, it was a key transfer point for many of the city's streetcar lines, while today it remains one of Dorchester's main shopping districts and accommodates a variety of uses and activities. The Station Area population is approximately 17,000 people.

In the context of the Fairmount Indigo Corridor, Upham's Corner has a very important role to play as a commercial and cultural destination in the City. For many visitors it is the first introduction to the Corridor and should act as a gateway for other Fairmount Indigo attractions.

A historic postcard of the main intersection of Upham's Corner at Columbia Road, Dudley Street and Stoughton Street

Historic Context

Upham's Corner has a significant history that includes many interesting highlights as Dorchester and the City of Boston have evolved. Many of the facts and history of the area are reported from the Dorchester Atheneum (www.dorchesteratheneum.org). One of the oldest sites in the Station Area is the Old North Burying Ground, a historic cemetery at the corner of Stoughton and Columbia Road. The burying ground was established in 1634 and was enclosed by the perimeter wall in 1912. The burying ground is such a prominent feature at the center of Upham's Corner that it was known as "cemetery corners" in the eighteenth century.



Old North Burying Ground

Upham's Corner receives its name from the historic dry goods and general store owner Amos Upham, who's store was located at the historic crossroads. Amos Upham opened the Upham General Store in 1804 at the bustling corner, operated a thriving business and played a prominent role in Boston's annexation of Dorchester. The store became a fixture to the crossroads of the area and eventually came to bear his name. Upham's Corner thrived as an important hub in the streetcar network in the late 19th century.

Upham's market was continued by the Cifrino family and cultivated into one of the world's first one-stop supermarkets, helping to solidify Upham's Corner as a commercial center of activity. The Cifrino's grew the market into a 50,000 square foot store that was billed as a one-stop shop and designed to accommodate automotive delivery trucks and to provide parking for customers. It was one of the first marketplaces of its kind.

Historic advertisement for Upham's Corner

The significance of Upham's Corner as a commercial and cultural center of activity was increased with the opening of the Strand Theatre. The Strand Theatre, which was built in 1918, was Boston's first movie theater. It capitalized on the amount of activity in Upham's Corner and added a cultural attraction to this burgeoning commercial center. The Strand Theatre is now owned by the City of Boston. At its peak, Upham's Corner was the second largest shopping district in they City of Boston.

The end of Boston's streetcar era in the 1950's brought major changes to many of the communities along the Fairmount Indigo Corridor. The resulting changes in City transportation and commuting patterns led, in part, to a pattern of disinvestment in Upham's Corner. What was once a hub of transportation and activity was now a congested node in a crowded vehicular network with few transportation alternatives.

A compounding pattern of vacancy, loss of resident population, crime and arson through the 1960's, left Upham's Corner as one of the most blighted districts in Boston. A grassroots effort of neighborhood advocates and residents have turned the neighborhood in a more positive direction beginning in the 1980's. This momentum has been solidified by recent efforts by The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation, Upham's Corner Main Street, Nuestra Comunidad and the City of Boston to stabilize the surrounding neighborhoods and revitalize the commercial center.

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Past Planning Efforts

As a part of this process, previous planning studies have been reviewed and evaluated to carry forward critical recommendations and directions. The following studies were included in this effort:

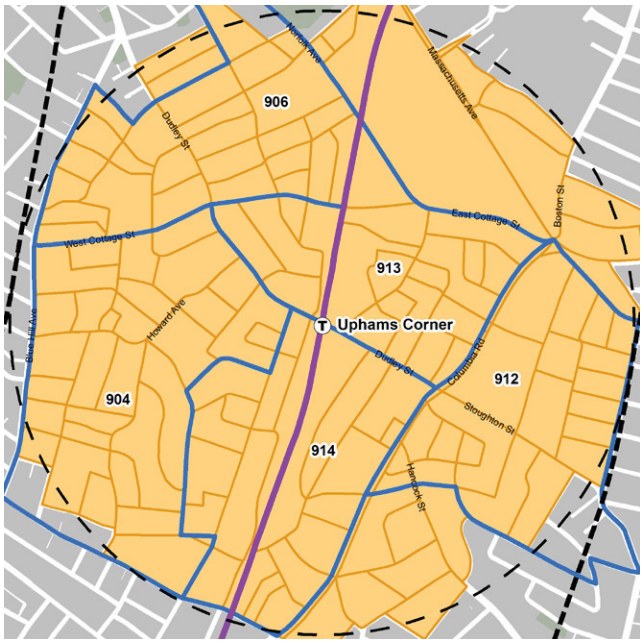
- Placemaking Along the Fairmount Indigo Line: Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper. A Short Term Action Plan by the Project for Public Spaces in 2012
- Newmarket and Upham's Corner Planning Initiative Concepts for a Walk to Work Community by The American City Coalition from 2013
- Crossroads: Upham's Corner as a Local and Regional Destination by MIT in 2010
- Upham's Corner Commercial District Profile and Business Mix Analysis from 2008
- Assessment Report for Upham's Corner Main Street Program, 1995
- The Fairmount Greenway Concept Plan from 2011

Columbia Road in Upham's Corner

Key Characteristics

As part of the Station Area planning an analysis of the existing conditions and context of Upham's Corner was prepared for land use, housing characteristics, demographics, transportation, and public space. A comprehensive catalog of this analysis is located in the appendix.

The most relevant observations regarding Upham's Corner today are included here. The analysis was completed using data sources from the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the City of Boston, and the U.S. Census 2010 American Community Survey.



U.S. Census Tracts in Upham's Corner

The census tracts used in the analysis are shown above and include 904, 906, 912, 913 and 914.

In terms of the demographics of Upham's Corner, several notable characteristics emerged. The first is reflected in the race and ethnicity of the Station Area. Upham's Corner is very diverse and reflects very balanced population distributions for white (10%), Hispanic or Latino (26%), black (39%), Asian (3%) and other (22%). In fact, the zip code that includes Upham's Corner (02125) has recently been named as one of the top ten most diverse neighborhoods in the United States by Trulia as reported by Forbes in November of 2012.

Other notable characteristics, focus upon education, earnings and opportunity. The current population has lower rates of educational attainment than the City of Boston with 62% of the Upham's Corner population 25

years or older with no more than a high school education compared to 49% for Boston. This could be a contributing factor to a disparity in median household income with Upham's Corner at $34,659 compared to the City of Boston at $50,684.

The lower median income is a factor in determining housing affordability and contributes to the number of severely rent burdened residents. Severely rent burdened is defined as a renter-occupied home where at least half of the household income is spent on rent. Upham's Corner has 37% of its households that are severely rent burdened, compared to 27% in the City of Boston. A comparison of median gross rents (rent calculated across all bedroom types) shows that Upham's Corner is relatively aligned with the City median of $1,199 with rents ranging from $691 to $1,217 depending upon Census Tract.

In terms of transportation, Upham's Corner is served by the Fairmount Indigo rail line and several bus lines. An indication of the commuter patterns of the streetcar past, Upham's Corner includes the MBTA's 11th busiest bus route, Route 15 with stops along Dudley Street. Route 15 will be improved as part of the MBTA's Key Bus Route Improvement Program. The Station Area is also served by Route 16, Route 17 and Route 41. The City of Boston, through the Department of Public Works-led Upham's Corner Roadway Construction Project, will be improving the critical intersection of Columbia Road, Dudley Street beginning in 2014 (www.cityofboston.gov/public works/).

One notable community deficiency found in the land use patterns of the Station Area is the lack of public open space. The overall amount of parks and public space provided in the Station Area is 3.9% as a percent of the total land area within a 1/2 mile radius of the station as compared to 15.7% for Boston as a percent of the total land within the City limits.

In terms of the built environment and physical attributes of the Upham's Corner Station Area, the historic commercial center is surrounded by cohesive and diverse residential neighborhoods. The Station Area is predominantly residential uses (76%) with commercial (7%) and tax exempt uses (15%) aligned on the frontages of the primary street network. A small amount of light industrial uses (1%) to the north of the Station Area are consistent with the land uses in the Newmarket Business District. The commercial uses roughly align with the boundaries of the Upham's Corner Main Street District at the intersection of Dudley Street and Columbia Road.

Vacant Parcels in Upham's Corner

In the large amount of residential land uses there is diversity in the existing housing types. Similar to many Boston neighborhoods and much of Dorchester, the largest proportion of residential uses is three-family homes (35%). Single-family homes are the next largest proportion of residential housing types at 26%, followed by two-family homes at 23%. The majority of the Station Area is built at a density of less than 24 units per acre. The Station Area includes a total of about 1,500 affordable housing units today with 72% of that total as rental units.

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A remnant of its turbulent past, the Station Area includes a relatively even distribution of vacant properties. Most vacant properties are small parcels (less than .25 acres). The image to the left shows the distribution of vacant property in Upham's Corner. Some of the vacancies have been converted to community gardens, others are open fields or dirt lots left generally unmaintained.

The Station Area is served by several active community centers including the Salvation Army Kroc Center directly adjacent to the station, the Bird Street Community Center, and Upham's Corner Health Center. The interior recreation spaces of the community centers help to balance one of the current deficiencies of the Station Area neighborhoods, access to open space. Other positive community anchors include numerous houses of worship such as Holy Family Parish, Pilgrim Church, St. Mary's Episcopal Church and the Universal Church.

Strand Theatre, Upham's Corner

UPHAM'S CORNER STATION AREA PLAN

COMMUNITY VISION

Community Process

At the beginning of the Upham's Corner planning process, the City of Boston assembled a Working Advisory Group (WAG) comprised of Upham's Corner residents, business owners, advocates and stakeholders. As part of this process, the WAG met with members of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) and the planning consultant team through a series of public meetings over the course of a year. Each of the thirteen WAG Meetings was open to the public and well attended. Each of the topic areas, strategies and recommendations were discussed in this series of meetings.

The broader community of Upham's Corner was engaged during a community workshop held in February of 2013. The community workshop was attended by over 100 participants representing the diversity of Upham's Corner and included discussion of issues and opportunities and a shared vision. This community input is the foundation for the Station Area Plan. A community wide open house was held during January of 2014 to review the Station Area Plan. The process owes much to the dedicated effort and involvement of the WAG as they helped to craft the community vision for Upham's Corner and shape recommendations that are relevant to and representative of the voice of the community.

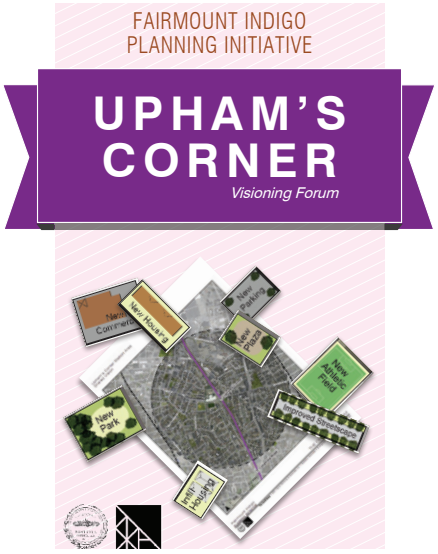
Community participation and break-out sessions

Community Vision

The Community Vision is embodied in the entire Station Area Plan. Each recommendation and strategy is intended to be consistent with the overall vision that was articulated and shared by the community. The Community Vision Statement and Goals that follow are a direct and simple description of the vision for Upham's Corner and are intended to provide a direction for the community that can be supported by many actions and entities working toward a shared purpose. As implementation of the community vision continues into the future, returning to this statement to consider the continuity of efforts with this shared direction would be an appropriate way to measure progress. The Community Goals add more detail to the Vision Statement.

The vision builds on the rich history of Upham's Corner's as a commercial hub in Boston. The Station Area Plan seeks to position Upham's Corner for new economic prosperity and to reinforce it as an important hub of cultural activity in the Fairmount Indigo Corridor. The cultural anchor of the Strand Theatre and new community amenities, such as the Salvation Army Kroc Center, anchor a renewed and evolving Station Area and neighborhood center.

Community workshop visioning materials



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Icons used throughout the report to organize recommendations

The strategies and recommendations for the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan are organized into six categories: prosperity, home, place, getting around, parks and public space and quality of life. The Station Area Plan balances recommendations in each topic area to reinforce a high quality livable district and neighborhood. The community vision and Station Area Plan are represented by the complete and complementary collection of these categories and recommendations. All of these elements are intended to improve Upham's Corner as a vital and thriving place to live, work, shop and visit.

During the community planning process, each category was used to organize conversations, feedback, presentations and discussion. Each of the categories facilitates organizing a focused set of priorities to address specific opportunities or deficiencies in Upham's Corner. The categories were used to frame break-out group discussions with the community at the forum and to organize Working Advisory Group meeting agendas.

The recommendations and strategies of the Station Area Plan build from the foundation of the Community vision. In the visioning forum, community members used an aerial map and scaled "game pieces" showing street improvements, new parks, and different types of new development to create a shared vision for the future of Upham's Corner. The image to the right illustrates the components used in this exercise. The results of this exercise translate directly into the key findings of the plan.

The community was also asked to write down three to four words that they associate with Upham's Corner. The community responses were organized into the image below. It is called a word cloud. The size of each of the words relates to the frequency of that word as a community response. For example, the words "Strand", "diversity" and "traffic" were some of the most frequent responses to what people associate with Upham's Corner.

Word cloud results from the community workshop

Illustrative Vision Plan

An illustrative plan of the community vision is shown below. The illustration reflects the physical strategies that are part of the Station Area Plan including new transit-oriented development near the rail station, new mixed-use development at the Main Streets district, new infill residential development in the surrounding neighborhoods, streetscape improvements to critical connections and an expanded open space network.

Recommendations illustrated within the study area for the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan includes portions of Roxbury and Dorchester within 1/2 mile of the Upham's Corner rail station

The Strand Theatre a cultural anchor to Upham's Corner

Vision Statement

Upham's Corner is a revitalized commercial, cultural and community center that is a celebration of diversity and an arts and cultural anchor of the Fairmount Indigo Corridor.

Community Goals

The goals of the community vision are to:

- Strengthen businesses and activity to revitalize and support the commercial and cultural center
- Provide new housing opportunities near the station and Main Streets District to support vitality
- Reinforce a direct connection between the center of activity and the rail station
- Reinforce a walkable neighborhood orientation through public realm and open space improvements to enhance Station Area quality of life
- Protect existing community assets found in the current residents, businesses, and historic sites and buildings of Upham's Corner
- Minimize displacement of current residents and businesses to preserve diversity

Columbia Road, Upham's Corner

UPHAM'S CORNER STATION AREA PLAN

STRATEGIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROSPERITY

The *Prosperity* section focuses on issues and opportunities related to economic development in Upham's Corner. Strategies and recommendations emphasize improving opportunities for the shops and businesses in Upham's Corner, building upon existing anchors and destinations, attracting new economic activity, and connecting residents and businesses to new opportunities.

Prosperity

Strengthen business activity to revitalize and support Upham's Corner as a commercial and cultural anchor. The approaches to reinforcing the prosperity of the Station Area follow:

A **Identifiable and Attractive** - an attractive central district must be identifiable at its entry points and draw in residents and visitors at the rail station and Columbia Road.

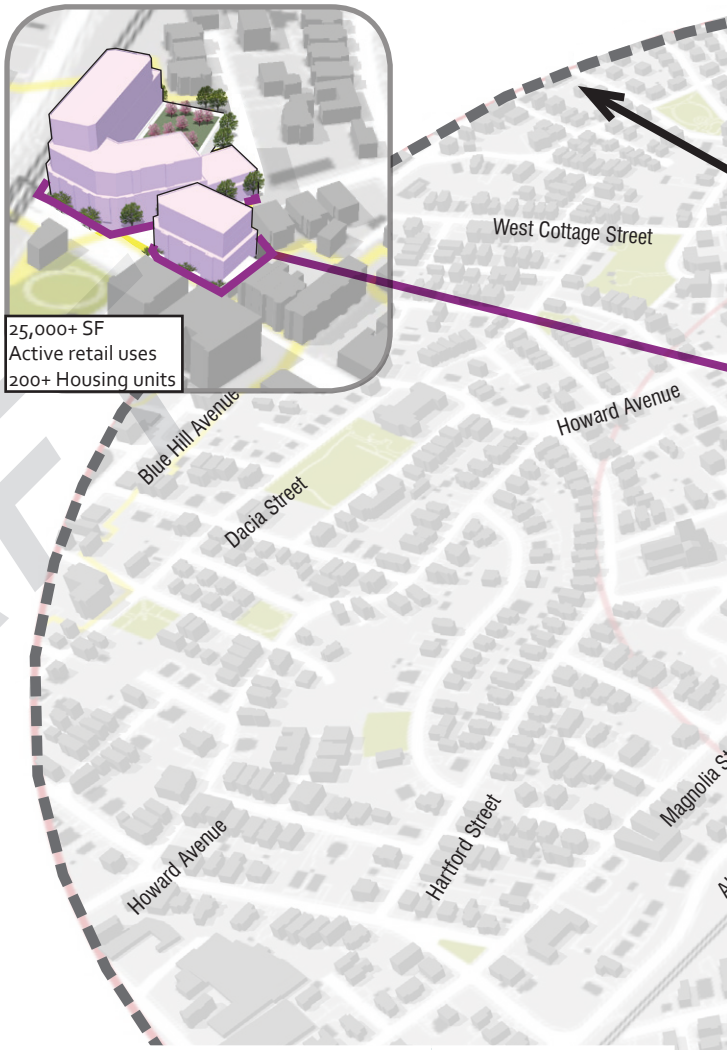
B **Mixed-use Activity** - renovation and redevelopment should add new residential activity above active ground floor uses to support a vibrant retail district.

C **Cultural Complements** - new and existing retail and restaurant businesses should complement the Strand Theatre to reinforce the district as a destination for cultural events.

D **Local-serving Businesses** - small businesses need to sustain active patronage from local residents to grow and thrive. Conversely, residents need to drive local spending.

E **Training and Connection** - coordinate community, health, and training centers as a network to serve residents and businesses to connect to opportunity and partners.

Leon Electric Building
Corners of Dudley St and Humphreys St



Potential Redevelopment of Key Sites	
Commercial/Light Industrial (Gross Square Feet)	50,000
Residential (Units)	460
Retail (Gross Square Feet)	60,000

The following area calculations are based upon hypothetical redevelopment scenarios on (5) sites in Upham's Corner selected by the Upham's Corner Working Advisory Group (WAG). Potential redevelopment would require reinvestment in private property and modification to current zoning regulations to achieve. The scenarios tested the scale and feasibility of potential redevelopment at these key sites.

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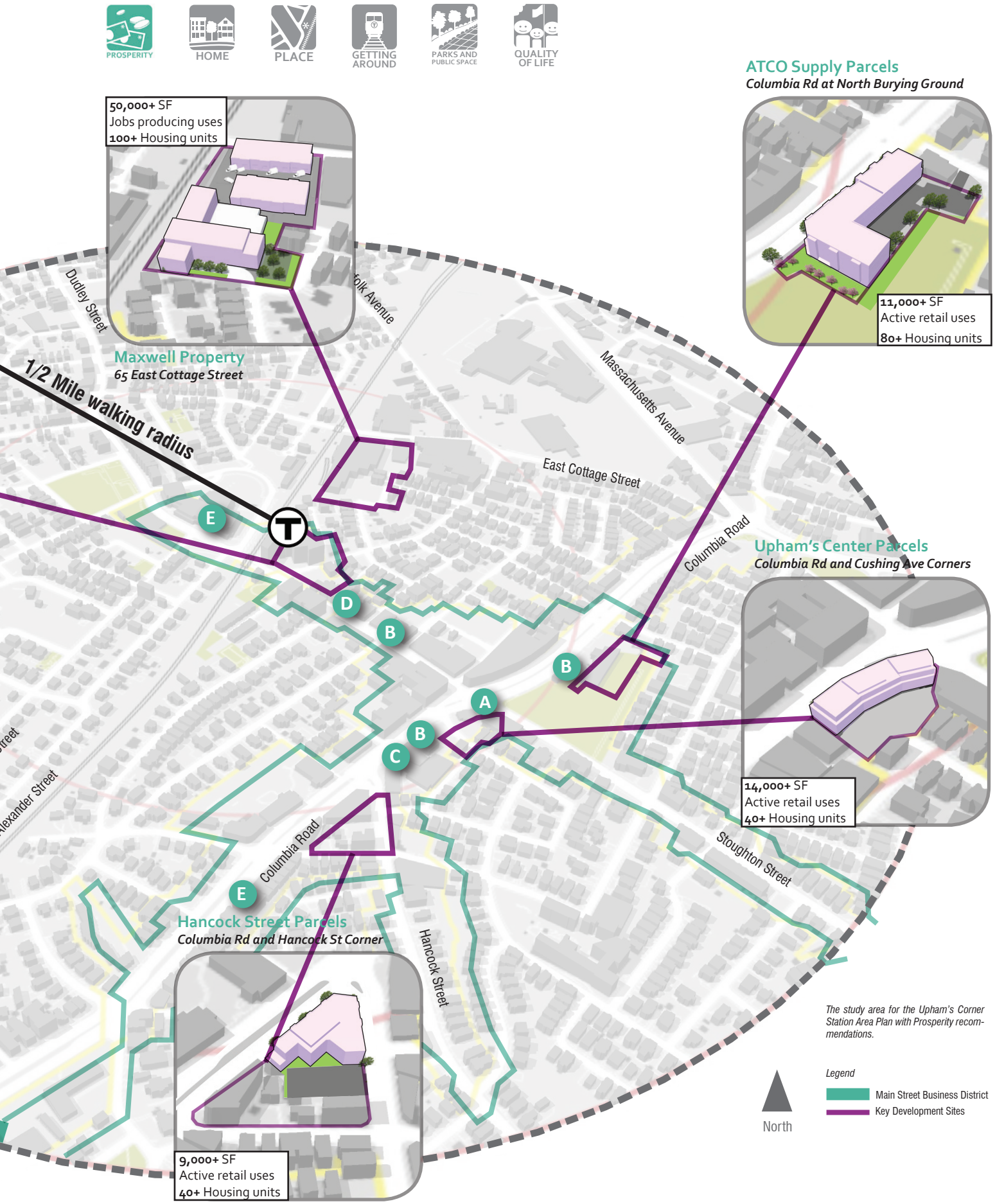

The study area for the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan with Prosperity recommendations.

Prosperity

This section of recommendations is focused on prosperity for the residents and businesses of Upham's Corner with a focus on economic development. From the perspective of the real estate market, Upham's Corner is at a critical point in its revitalization. The long history of disinvestment has turned to stability and a growing collection of successful enterprises and neighborhood amenities is emerging. In general, however, unlike some other neighborhoods in Boston, market forces alone have not been sufficient to support the revitalization in Upham's Corner and much of the recent economic activity has been made possible through a combination of public and private supports including land write downs, private foundation grants, tax credits and low interest loans. The recent and continued improvements of the rail service along the Fairmount Indigo Line further enhances Upham's Corner as a desirable location for new economic activity and a sustained pattern of revitalization in the neighborhood.

The current real estate market context varies by land use type with the greatest potential for new investment lying in the market's ability to deliver new residential uses to Upham's Corner. With current vacancy at a record low 3% and average asking rents at $1,650 per month and growing, adding units in the Station Area seems both prudent and possible as part of the strategy to broaden the residential offerings to meet the evolving neighborhood demand while helping to stabilize rapid price increases. Multi-family housing developments that are of sufficient scale to provide efficient multi-level buildings supported by surface parking appear to be financially feasible today.

Beyond the neighborhood's housing objectives, the strategic addition of market rate housing and an expanded population base within walking distance to Main Street provides additional activity and economic resources to support the retention and renewal of retail uses in Upham's Corner. Market rate housing also reinforces a more diverse income mix in the neighborhood mix and builds upon the diversity of Corridor residents. By leveraging City-owned real estate assets and continuing to focus on strategic infrastructure investments, redevelopment near the rail station can help to activate the neighborhood core and catalyze other revitalization efforts throughout the district.

Close proximity to the Newmarket business district supports demand for light industrial and manufacturing uses at the northern edge of the Upham's Corner Station Area. Retaining and expanding this type of use in Newmarket is important to growing a local employment base for the Corridor. However, as the larger light industrial parcels of Newmarket transition south to Upham's Corner it is also important to respect the residential neighborhood context and the off-site impacts such uses may bring.

The market for commercial office space is not a primary target for redevelopment with options for other more desirable office locations nearby. If new commercial space is to be feasible as a development component, then a commercial tenant for that space must be identified and committed to the location and space, prior to development. The development of speculative commercial space in Upham's Corner is not likely to be successful in the current market context.

As mentioned above, the final redevelopment use to consider is retail. The existing population base supports an active retail district with few vacancies. The types of goods and services provided saturate a market niche of low cost merchandise and restaurants. Members of the community have expressed an interest in attracting other retailers that may provide a broader offering of local goods and services. The expansion of retail activity and growth in Upham's Corner is dependent upon new residential redevelopment. Ideally, this redevelopment

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would occur in or near the Main Streets district and near the rail station.

Strategic Growth in Upham's Corner

The following 10-year growth capacities were identified for Upham's Corner through a build-out analysis that examined the potential for new growth in relation to existing patterns of use, development and susceptibility to change. The following targets represent an average of a range that has been established for each metric based upon an analysis of existing land use patterns.

Population Capacity	Percent Increase
873	6.0%
Employment Capacity	**Percent Increase**
413	7.6%
Building Area Capacity	**Percent Increase**
1.59 M Gross Square Feet	11.8%

This potential capacity will only be redeveloped if Upham's Corner can attract reinvestment. Several opportunities exist in the real estate market for Upham's Corner. The market for new transit-oriented housing is a strength of the area. Commuter and resident serving retail to build upon the vitality of the retail that already exists in Upham's Corner today is another opportunity. Leveraging the Strand Theater, the Salvation Army Kroc Center and attracting other institutional anchors is also an opportunity for the Station Area. Lastly, building upon the strength of existing social services and labor force training is an opportunity for the Station Area to reinforce a cluster of services.

Building upon these potential opportunities, the Station Area Plan includes the following approaches to reinforce the prosperity in Upham's Corner:

A Identifiable and Attractive

In a market context with limited tenants for retail space, it is important to keep the retail district compact and identifiable. New tenants should be directed to vacant or new space that will fill gaps in the existing Main Street District. The Main Street district should be identifiable, compact, walkable and continuous. A cluster of retail stores in a district that is walkable is more likely to attract customers and retain business.

An attractive Main Street district must be identifiable at its entry points and draw in residents and visitors at the rail station and Columbia Road. The continuity of a walkable retail district is very important in this context. The Main Street district of Upham's Corner is not overly large, within that district it is important that there be continuous ground floor storefront activity. Expanding this active retail district down Dudley Street to the rail station is also critically important as the station evolves into a new gateway for the neighborhood.

Another aspect of a well-functioning retail district is convenient and efficient parking with safe, attractive pedestrian connections that does not detract from the compactness or identity of the district. New parking in Upham's Corner should be avoided. A parking management plan for the district is proposed that would prioritize on-street parking in the Main Street district for short term retail trips, with other long term parking options provided to the rear of buildings.

B Mixed-use Activity

Upham's Corner is currently an excellent example of a active mixed-use district with a variety of uses that are immediately adjacent or within the same building. This may include retail, office, residential and light industrial uses that all contribute to an active and vibrant area. New investment and redevelopment in Upham's Corner should reinforce this pattern with mixed-use development programs that add to the vitality of the Station Area. Mixed use in the context of the current real estate market is likely to be residential uses on upper floors combined with another use at the ground level. This type of pattern would be ideal for near and within the Main Street District where renovation and redevelopment should add new residential activity above active ground floor uses to support a vibrant retail district.

Other locations, such as the city-owned Maxwell property provide an opportunity for mixed-use redevelopment that may include light industrial, or other jobs producing uses. In this portion of the Station Area, this would be very appropriate due to its proximity to other similar land uses of Newmarket. One of the important aspects of mixed-use development in the context of transit-oriented neighborhoods is that it drives transit-use by bringing a greater diversity of transit riders to the station. For example, it may bring shoppers or employees to Upham's Corner as a destination, rather than only servicing residents using the station to go to other destinations. The main benefit is a variety of positive activities that are adding to the Station Area economy.

Mixed-use development programs may bring more difficulty from a perspective of project financing and implementation. It is important that local community development corporations, like the Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation (DBEDC) and the City of Boston, provide examples and assistance to possible redevelopment projects to overcome such difficulties and to guide this type of project toward Upham's Corner. Mixed-use development may also require appropriate pairing of spaces with potential tenants. The Upham's Corner Main Street can play an important role in matching and recruiting potential tenants with an appropriate space to be filled.

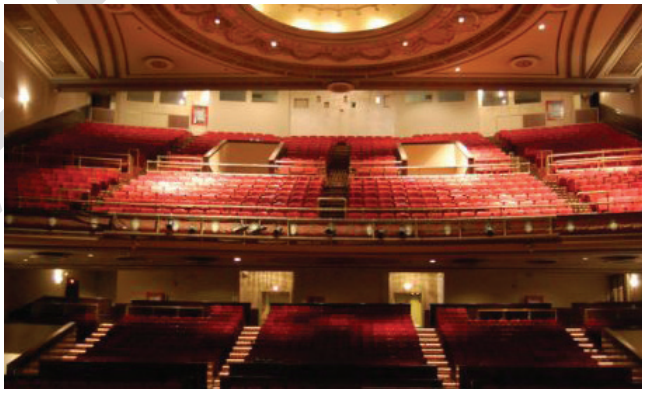

Photo Credit: Strand Theatre

C Cultural Complements

One of the great differentiators for Upham's Corner from many other Station Areas, neighborhoods and main streets districts is the Strand Theatre. This type of cultural venue and destination an unique asset for Upham's Corner. As investment in the theater and improvement in events and programming continue, it is important for Upham's Corner to embrace and support the Strand Theatre by providing complements to the cultural destination. The complements may seem obvious, but would include activities for patrons before or after a show, a place to park, a safe and attractive environment and a pleasant

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and memorable experience. The Station Area plan addresses many of these aspects of Upham's Corner directly.

In terms of prosperity and economic development, new and existing retail and restaurant businesses should cater to the Strand Theatre by being attuned to the calendar of events. Stores, shops and restaurants should be open and inviting during the time of a show at the theater. In addition, event programs and promotions at the Strand Theatre should feature local stores and restaurants and encourage visiting Upham's Corner before or after the event. Another approach would be to add a kiosk near the theatre entry to highlight the locations and menus of Upham's Corner restaurants.

D Local-serving Businesses

The Strand Theatre provides a potential economic driver for Upham's Corner businesses, but does not include a calendar of events frequent enough to support a Main Street district alone. The primary support for the Main Street District will be from the surrounding residential neighborhoods and other city residents that pass through Upham's Corner as part of regular routines. Small businesses need to sustain active patronage from local residents to grow and thrive. Conversely, residents need to drive local spending. Strengthening Upham's Corner as a center of small and local-serving businesses is a key component of the vision for the Station Area.

In this regard the Upham's Corner Main Street can play a vital role in understanding the desire of the community for certain business types and the types of spaces that may be available in the district. This type of match making and recruiting can help to attract the types of businesses that residents want and will support, adding to the success of the district. Through this process residents expressed the desire for a place to get coffee and sit, additional options for sit-down restaurants and other clothing options.

Often, local-serving businesses are successful and most responsive to community needs when created and run by local entrepreneurs. In this regard, a business assistance program that would provide a small revolving start-up fund for such small businesses and provide mentorship, training or partnership with more established businesses could be an excellent program for Upham's Corner. Additionally, if a collection of unique and locally operated small businesses become successful they can help to cultivate an identity for the district that could attract shoppers and visitors throughout the City.

E Training and Connection

Lastly, as highlighted in local-serving businesses, the need for training, mentoring and connections is high in Upham's Corner to ensure that existing residents and businesses are a part of future prosperity and success. Improved transit connections, a thriving Main Street District and availability of great jobs are all meaningless if you are not prepared for or connected to that success.

Upham's Corner has a wealth of existing community, health, and training centers that should be coordinated as a network to serve residents and businesses to connect to new opportunity and partners.

As mentioned for local-serving businesses, a partnership approach should be the focus of enhancing training and connection to opportunities. Bringing together successful small businesses, restaurateurs, or individuals in the area of interest of prospective restaurateurs, employees, or trainees is a personal and effective approach to expanding and extending success throughout the community in Upham's Corner.

Key Development Sites

In testing this market context, five key sites were selected to examine the development potential and feasibility of redevelopment in the Station Area. Key sites were selected based upon the following criteria – sites contributing to and consistent with the community vision, high impact sites that can leverage Station Area change, underutilized sites that are susceptible to change, sites that are currently under public control, a diverse collection of key sites selected, and sites that are effective for the purposes of this study. The economic feasibility of each of the sites was tested and supports the basic conclusion that moderately scaled residential projects that reduce construction and parking costs would be viable.

As highlighted in the implementation section of the plan, the testing of development scenarios on the key sites has been informative in terms of the scale and characteristics of potential development that is seen as desirable in the community. Many important community goals have been formulated and articulated through this planning process. Enabling development guidelines either through zoning or specific development sites would bring this understanding forward toward implementation. Existing urban design guidelines are in effect for the Neighborhood Shopping (NS) subdistrict and Neighborhood Design Overlay District and should be expanded to articulate shared parking arrangements, active ground floor uses, and height stepbacks to reinforce the continuity of the street wall and consistency with historic buildings.

The following considerations have been a part of the analysis of each of the key development sites: Building Height and Massing, Orientation and Street Wall, Building Character and Materials, Access and Parking, Service and Loading, Site Open Space and Landscaping, Sustainable Development, Public Realm and Streetscape Guidelines.

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Key Redevelopment Scenarios

The following key sites were selected with the Working Advisory Group (WAG) and analyzed for potential redevelopment to explore implications relating to land use, urban design, zoning and community benefits. Each of the redevelopment scenarios are consistent with the Community Vision and inform strategic and implementation recommendations.

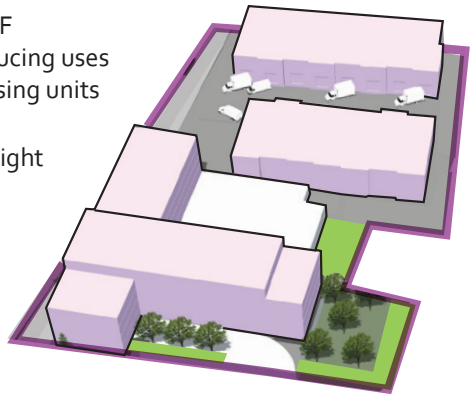
The study area for the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan showing the (5) key redevelopment sites that were tested using hypothetical development scenarios

1 Maxwell Property

65 East Cottage Street

50,000+ SF
Jobs producing uses
100+ Housing units

5-story height
FAR of 1.3



The Maxwell Property is a single contiguous City-owned parcel that includes approximately 120,000 square feet of lot area. The property includes a vacant light industrial building and surface parking and loading areas. The Department of Neighborhood Development is currently leading a community process to establish development guidelines for disposition of this publicly owned property for redevelopment.

Significance to Upham's Corner

This location was determined to be a key site for Upham's Corner due to its direct adjacency to the rail platform and condition as a vacant and underused property adjacent to a residential neighborhood and East Cottage Street. The property has strong potential to expand residential and job producing uses in Upham's Corner while building activity and focus near the rail station gateway.

Potential Redevelopment Program

The scale of the property could accommodate multiple buildings and could support a mixed-use redevelopment program either in connected or separate facilities. The frontage of the parcel on East Cottage Street in close proximity to Newmarket and may be an attractive site for a jobs producing manufacturing or light industrial use. Additionally, housing units at the rear or center of the site would connect it to the surrounding residential neighborhood.

The general approach undertaken in the development scenarios was to combine jobs producing uses with residential uses in separate facilities on the northern and southern halves of the site. Under this approach, the fit studies on the site yielded approximately 50,000 square feet of commercial or light industrial space using the northern half of the site. Additionally, over 100 housing units were developed in a multifamily housing building at the southern half of the site. The residential uses would be supported by parking underneath the building to maintain a parking supply of .5 spaces for every unit.

Feasibility of Redevelopment

The physical features and configuration of the site offer few constraints, but would require removal of existing structures, potential environmental remediation and earthwork to refine site contours. The scale of the property and near rectangular shape offer many possibilities for the redevelopment of the property.

The proforma test of the development program on this property was positive with the residential uses provid-

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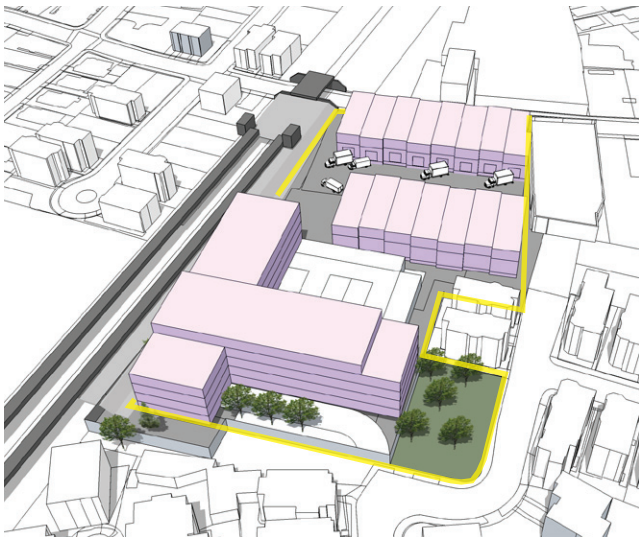
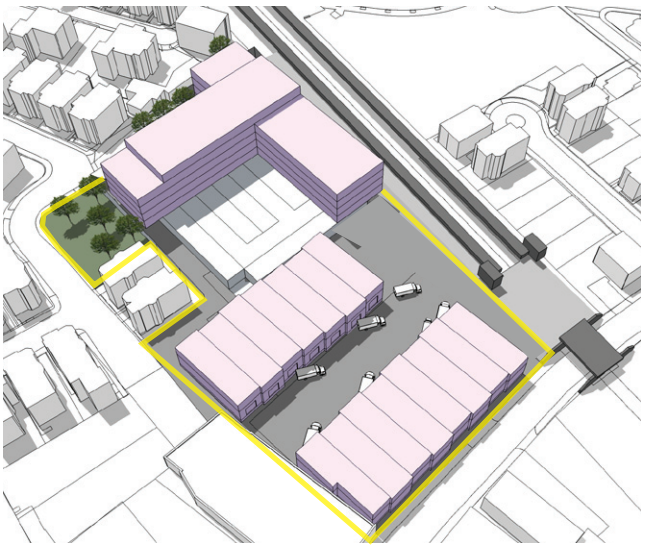
Building massing for hypothetical redevelopment scenarios at the Maxwell Property





ing the most economic viability. The residential units cross-subsidize the light industrial use and support its feasibility. The scale of development allows the use of less expensive stick built construction. The feasibility is made possible by the potential for the City to write-down the cost of the land in disposing the property. Disadvantages to the feasibility are the cost of demolition of the existing structures, site remediation and the cost of structured parking to support a higher density redevelopment.

Use and Design Guidelines

The scale and density of development on this property should balance the transit-oriented location with the context of the existing triple-decker neighborhood to the east and be considerate to the adjacent neighborhood. A sloping topography may provide opportunity to build parking supply into the site grading. Light industrial and jobs producing uses should be oriented to the East Cottage Street frontage. Loading and storage should not be accessed from the neighborhood.

At upper levels the site may offer great views to the downtown skyline. Building massing that is located near the center or south of the site should step down to meet the scale of the adjacent neighborhood. Community benefits of the development should consider including a publicly accessible community and open space. Additionally, the property and residential areas to the north would benefit from the development of a new connection to the Upham's Corner station platform from East Cottage Street. This type of connection would require approval and coordination with the MBTA.

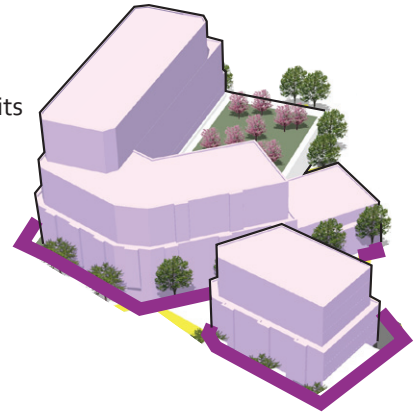
A development scenario of this scale at this location would require zoning modifications to accomplish. The parcels are currently located within a LI Local Industrial Subdistrict. This subdistrict limits the property to a 45' maximum building height and a maximum floor area ratio of 2.0. The redevelopment scenario was designed to a 55' maximum building height and a floor area ratio of 1.31. Additionally, the amount of parking required for the residential units would need to be reduced from the current 1.5 spaces per unit. Zoning recommendations are discussed in greater detail in the Implementation Section of the Station Area Plan.

❷ Leon Electric Building

Corners of Dudley Street and Humphreys Street

25,000+ SF
Active retail uses
200+ Housing units

10-story height
FAR of 3.9



The Leon Electric parcels are directly adjacent to the Upham's Corner rail station. The parcels considered are all privately owned by multiple owners. Four parcels were considered in the analysis with a combined lot area of over 60,000 SF. Three parcels are located to the north of Dudley Street and Humphreys Street. One parcel is located to the south of Humphreys Street with frontage on Dudley Street.

Significance to Upham's Corner

This location was determined to be a key site due to its direct adjacency to the Upham's Corner rail station platform and station entry and critical frontage along Dudley Street. This location and the prominence of the existing building are a landmark that is viewed negatively by most in the community. The properties are a gateway in Upham's Corner and should better reflect the valuable and strategic position they occupy in the district.

Potential Redevelopment Program

At this critical location, the Working Advisory Group (WAG) thought it was appropriate to expand the allowable density and height for future redevelopment to leverage the transit-oriented and gateway aspects of the sites. Accordingly, the preferred development scenario pushed beyond current zoning limitations to propose a new mixed-use multi-family and retail project that could be up to 10-stories with a floor to area ratio (FAR) of just under 4.0. This type of expanded redevelopment would include approximately 200 units and 25,000 SF of active uses on lower levels.

The scale of redevelopment is not dissimilar to the scale of the existing building. The redevelopment scenario involved demolition of the existing building to create a floor plate and building configuration better suited to residential uses. Additionally, the reconfiguration of the new building on the site adds street wall continuity to Dudley Street where activity and a continuation of the Main Street District is needed.

Feasibility of Redevelopment

The scale and density of this type of development would require removal of the existing buildings, construction of structured parking and mid-rise building construction. All of which impose cost burdens that the current market conditions cannot support. Therefore, the evolution of this property is a long term vision that will, in all likelihood, occur after other redevelopment projects build a more tangible momentum for the real estate market in Upham's Corner.

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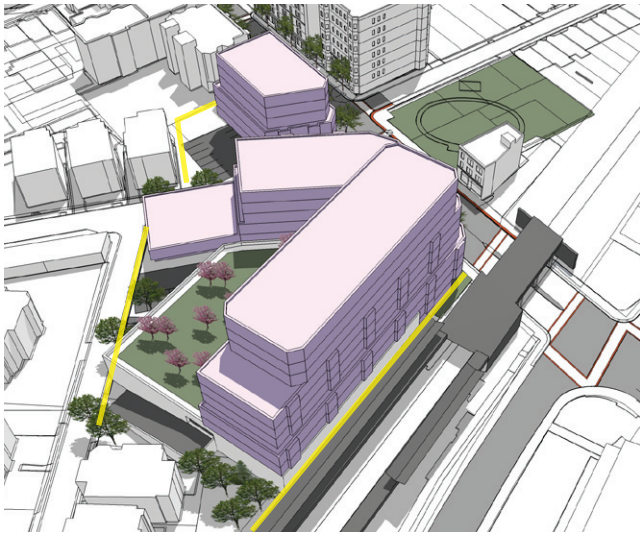
Building massing for hypothetical redevelopment scenarios at the Leon Electric Building and adjacent parcels



Use and Design Guidelines

The use and design of the these key parcels should anchor this gateway into the Main Street district and provide a beacon for the rail station and station entry. A higher building height should be mediated by using facade step backs at heights consistent with adjacent buildings to reduce the overall building massing and to relate to the existing scale of the district.

Bringing an active ground floor use to the sidewalk at Dudley Street is critical to extending the continuity of the Main Street district to the rail station and expanding the walkability of the district. The ground floor should be active and transparent. Parking and loading should be located to the rear and interior of the properties. Community benefits of the development should consider including publicly accessible community and open spaces. The rail station would benefit from a building design and site layout that provided additional public space at the entry to the inbound platform. The current ramp to the platform is very constrained as it meets Dudley Street.

View of the Study Property from Dudley Street

A development scenario of this scale at this location would require zoning modifications to accomplish. The parcels are currently located within a NS Neighborhood Shopping Subdistrict. This subdistrict limits the property to a 40' maximum building height and a maximum floor area ratio of 1.0. The redevelopment scenario was designed to a 100' building height and a floor area ratio of 3.94. Additionally, the amount of parking required for the residential units would need to be reduced from the current 1.5 spaces per unit. Zoning recommendations are discussed in greater detail in the Implementation Section of the Station Area Plan.

❸ ATCO Supply Parcels

Columbia Rd Adjacent to North Burying Ground

The ATCO Supply Parcels are a collection of private and publicly owned adjacent properties with frontage along Columbia Road near the Old North Burying Ground. The majority of the property is privately owned by multiple owners with a small vacant parcel owned by the City. The four parcels have a combined lot area of approximately 42,000 SF.

Significance to Upham's Corner

This location was determined to be a key site due to its location as a gateway into Upham's Corner along Columbia Road. As it is currently configured this portion of frontage along Columbia Road does not provide a strong gateway into the district. Parking is adjacent to the street and a lengthy curb cut exists at this location. Continuity of building frontage along Columbia Road with an active ground floor could expand and anchor a walkable retail district.

Potential Redevelopment Program

In terms of the overall district, the benefit of redevelopment of this site is to create a more continuous and consistent mixed-use and walkable main street character. The types of automotive and service uses currently on the site would better serve the neighborhood in a more similar light industrial area. Accordingly, the development program tested includes an active retail ground floor with residential uses above. The scale of redevelopment was optimized to add residential units, but maintained a parking supply of about .6 spaces per unit in the rear surface parking lot. The 4-stories of residential use yield approximately 80 units of housing.

Feasibility of Redevelopment

The scale and geometry of the properties is of an appropriate size and depth to support a mixed-use multifamily residential project with surface parking in the rear of the building. Of all the development scenarios studied in Upham's Corner, the potential redevelopment of these properties seemed the most straightforward in terms of the configuration and scale of redevelopment. The feasibility would be subject to the actions of the private owners.

The proforma test of the development program on this property is positive. The advantages of this redevelopment include low demolition cost, a site that accommodates inexpensive surface parking and a building scale that can be built conventionally with less expensive stick-built construction. Acquisition cost and process of acquisition would be the main impediment to redevel-

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Building massing for hypothetical redevelopment scenarios at the ATCO Supply Parcels

opment. This scenario illustrates the impact of parking costs on feasibility, the residential market cannot support the cost of structured parking without offsets and where parking can be provided in a surface lot, such as this site, it improves feasibility.

Use and Design Guidelines

At this gateway location into the Main Street District, it is important to visually define Columbia Road and anchor the corner near Annabel Street. This is accomplished primarily through the building massing and creation of new street wall continuity along Columbia Road. The scale of the building, articulation of the facade and materials should complement the adjacent historic structures, such as the Pierce Building. The street frontage along Columbia Road should be occupied by the building and include an active and transparent ground floor.

The redevelopment should relate to the North Burying Ground with a complementary and publicly accessible open space. Access and parking should be provided to the rear of the building and should include a landscape buffer to the cemetery. Community benefits of the development should consider including a publicly accessible open space that is visually connected to the North Burying Ground and includes a portion of frontage on Columbia Road. This area could include the additional of the City-owned "Comfort Station" or could remove the existing structure on this property to contribute to a larger publicly accessible open space.

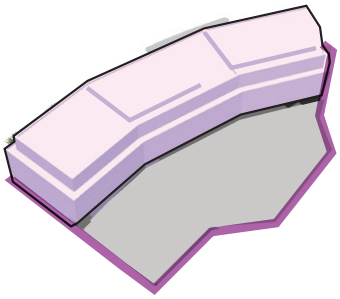
A development scenario of this scale at this location would require zoning modifications to accomplish. The parcels are currently located within a 3F-5000 Three-Family Residential Subdistrict. This subdistrict limits the property to a 35' maximum building height or 2.5 stories. The redevelopment scenario was designed to a 55' building height at 5 stories. Additionally, the amount of parking required for the residential units would need to be reduced from the current 1.5 spaces per unit. Zoning recommendations are discussed in greater detail in the Implementation Section of the Station Area Plan.

❹ Upham's Center Parcels

Columbia Road and Cushing Avenue Corners

14,000+ SF
Active retail uses
40+ Housing units

5-story height
FAR of 2.6



The Upham's Center parcels are two privately owned banking properties at the corner of Columbia Road and Dudley Street. The two privately owned parcels combine to form a lot area of approximately 22,000 SF separated by a public right of way, Mount Cushing Terrace that would require roadway reconfiguration prior to redevelopment. Although this would be a change in the City infrastructure and street network it appears to be a relatively straight forward adaptation for the neighborhoods to the rear of the properties and may simplify circulation at this critical intersection at the center of Upham's Corner.

Significance to Upham's Corner

The corner of Columbia Road and Stoughton Street is the center of Upham's Corner. It is the focus of the district and the most memorable intersection of the area with the historic Pierce Building and Masonic Hall anchoring the other corners of the intersection. The North Burying Ground is the other corner of the intersection and provides a visual void that must be overcome by the building massing at the other three corners. The existing combination of buildings and parking lots at the corner today do not overcome this void to visually anchor the center of the district.

Potential Redevelopment Program

A redevelopment scenario was tested that retained Mount Cushing Terrace is its current configuration. The resulting development program was not substantial enough to be feasible. Therefore this redevelopment program terminates Mount Cushing Terrace and uses the segment that connects to Columbia Road to form a large contiguous development parcel. This type of street reconfiguration connects two parcels together and opens a new opportunity for development at this critical corner for the center of Upham's Corner. The scale of the development should be similar to the historic structures across Columbia Road, 4 to 5 stories and could provide new ground floor retail space and 40 residential units at the center of the district.

Feasibility of Redevelopment

When the two properties studied are redeveloped separately, they are not physically large enough to support a redevelopment program of enough scale to be feasible. A part of the feasibility of this redevelopment scenario is the feasibility of combining the parcels to include a portion of a public street right-of-way and to reconfigure neighborhood traffic patterns. This process did not involve direct outreach to the surrounding residents to

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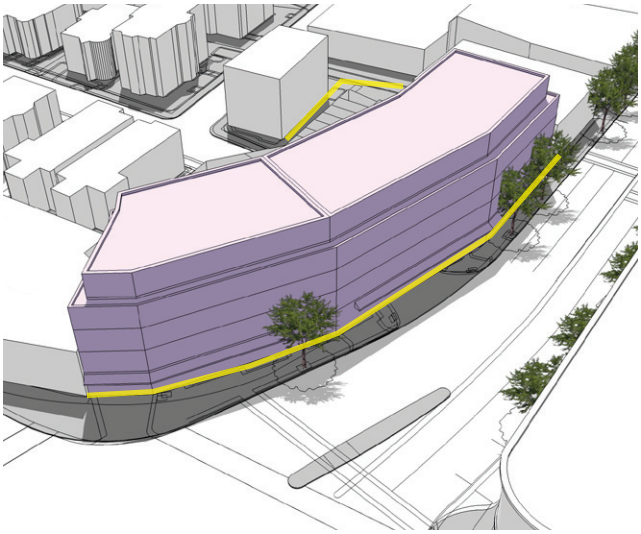
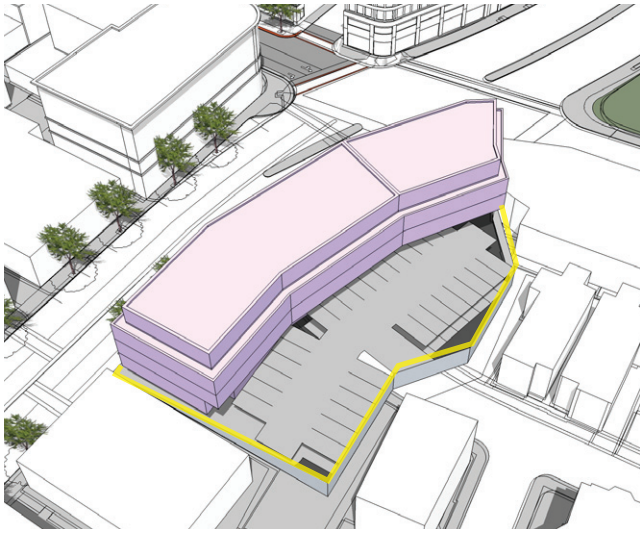
Building massing for hypothetical redevelopment scenarios at the Upham's Center parcels





discuss this specific idea. The corner site is a prominent feature in Upham's Corner and may warrant further investigation within the neighborhood to understand if this type of reconfiguration would be supported.

The proforma test of the development program on this property was positive in terms of financial feasibility as a result of low demolition cost, inexpensive surface parking, and less expensive stick-built construction. As noted, the scale of redevelopment of the combined parcels is required to create enough revenue from the property to recover the other costs of redevelopment. The reconfiguration of the street and acquisition costs of the properties are the impediments to redevelopment for this scenario. The conceptual proformas are near break-even and would depend on the ability to secure a high paying ground floor retail user.

Use and Design Guidelines

As seen in many historic postcards of Upham's Corner, this corner is the identity of the district. While a nice building, the low scale and perimeter parking of the current site layout does not reflect the historic scale, density and activity of a thriving commercial district at Upham's Corner. The building height and massing of a redevelopment project should be deployed to anchor the prominent corner with a similar scale and mass as the historic Masonic Building across Columbia Road. The redevelopment should provide a continuous frontage with an active ground floor facade that contributes to the Main Street District.

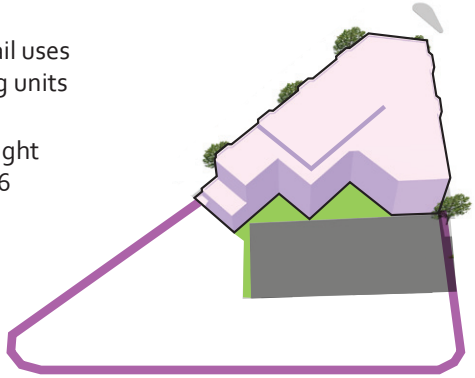
Vehicular access should be provided to the south of the new building with a small access drive from Columbia Road. A tiered parking configuration can be achieved with the grade change between Mount Cushing Terrace and Columbia Road. An upper parking area can add to district parking capacity with access from the rear of the building from Mount Cushing Terrace.

5 Hancock Street Parcels

Columbia Road and Hancock Street Corner

10,000 SF
Active retail uses
40 Housing units

4-story height
FAR of 2.66



The Hancock Street parcels occur at the block between the intersection of Columbia Road and Hancock Street. 3 privately owned parcels that combine to form a land area of approximately 19,000 SF. The parcels are nearly fully developed today, but with some critical vacancies at the intersection of Columbia Road and Hancock Street. Existing parking is accessed from Hancock Street and located near the center of the block.

Significance to Upham's Corner

The intersection of the Columbia Road and Hancock Street provides a visual terminus to the southern edge of the Main Street District and provides a gateway into the district from the south. This gateway location is critical to providing additional positive activity near the Strand Theatre. The sidewalk at the large radius corner between Columbia Road and Hancock Street is generous and provides potential space for outdoor activity which could bring positive activity and street life to the district.

Potential Redevelopment Program

At this critical location, a transparent and active ground floor use is very important. Therefore, a mixed-use redevelopment program with an active use on the ground floor such as retail or a restaurant with residential uses above was tested. This type of development program is consistent with the market context and potential demand. The number of residential stories above the ground floor was determined by the ability to provide off-street parking for at least .5 spaces per unit. This resulted in three-stories of residential uses and yields approximately 40 units.

Feasibility of Redevelopment

The physical configuration and geometry of the site is difficult to resolve for an efficient site and building layout. The geometry constrains internal building circulation and parking layouts on the site. In terms of the financial feasibility, the development scenario on this site showed negative results. The existing build-out of the site is relatively dense and would require a high cost of demolition. The resulting increase in density for the new development is marginal and is not enough to offset costs of acquisition, demolition and construction. This all results in a potential negative return on investment.

It is likely that a more modest approach to revitalizing the existing buildings at this location would be more feasible for the foreseeable future. A more substantial rehabilitation and addition to the existing structure may also be feasible. All future redevelopment possibilities would

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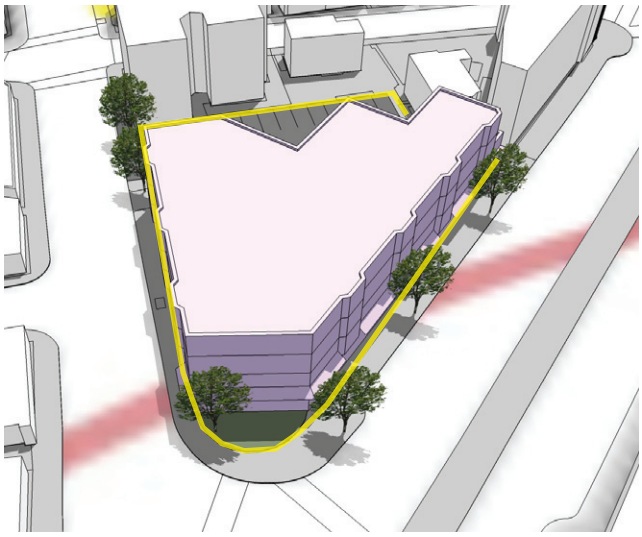
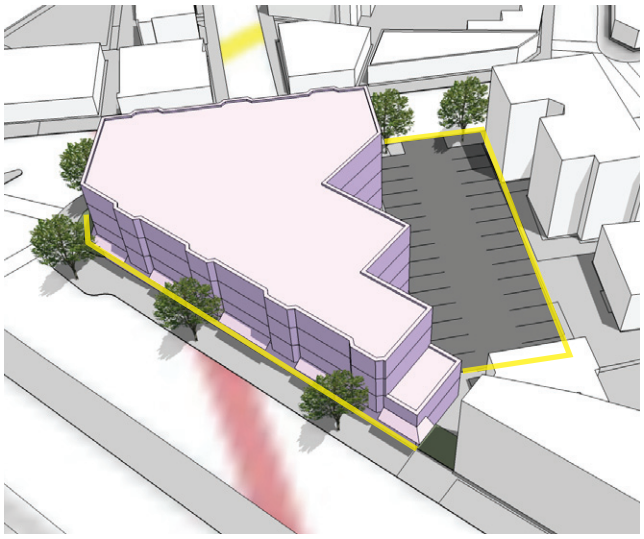
Building massing for hypothetical redevelopment scenarios at the Hancock Street parcels





likely require a reduction in the amount of parking required given the site constraints.

Use and Design Guidelines

In every main street district, several locations stand out as contributors to the image and perception of a place. The property at the corner of Columbia Road and Hancock Street is this type of location. The building massing, character and quality do not complement the main street district as well as they could. The district would benefit from a larger scale building that visually anchors the corner and a ground floor facade that is more active, welcoming and transparent.

While the building massing and scale could increase to anchor the corner, it should not exceed five-stories to remain consistent with the surrounding context. The most important characteristic of the site is the continuity of the street wall at this critical intersection. The building should be oriented to the street edge and provide active uses adjacent to the sidewalk.

A building at this location should be announce a sense of arrival at this gateway location and should provide a visual anchor and collection of ground floor uses that complement the Strand Theatre. Access and parking should be concealed at the center of the block. The public realm, streetscape and landscaping should be expanded at the corner of Columbia Road and Hancock Street. A small pedestrian plaza should be provided with outdoor seating, lighting and other amenities to add to the pedestrian environment at this location.

View of the Study Property from Columbia Road

HOME

The *Home* section addresses the issues and opportunities associated with the supply of and demand for housing in Upham's Corner. Strategies and recommendations focus on reinforcing the neighborhoods of the Station Area as desirable places to live and aligning the characteristics of new housing opportunities with the community needs.

Home

Provide new mixed-income housing opportunities near the station and Upham's Corner Main Streets District to support vitality and prosperity. The approach to housing in focuses on the following characteristics:

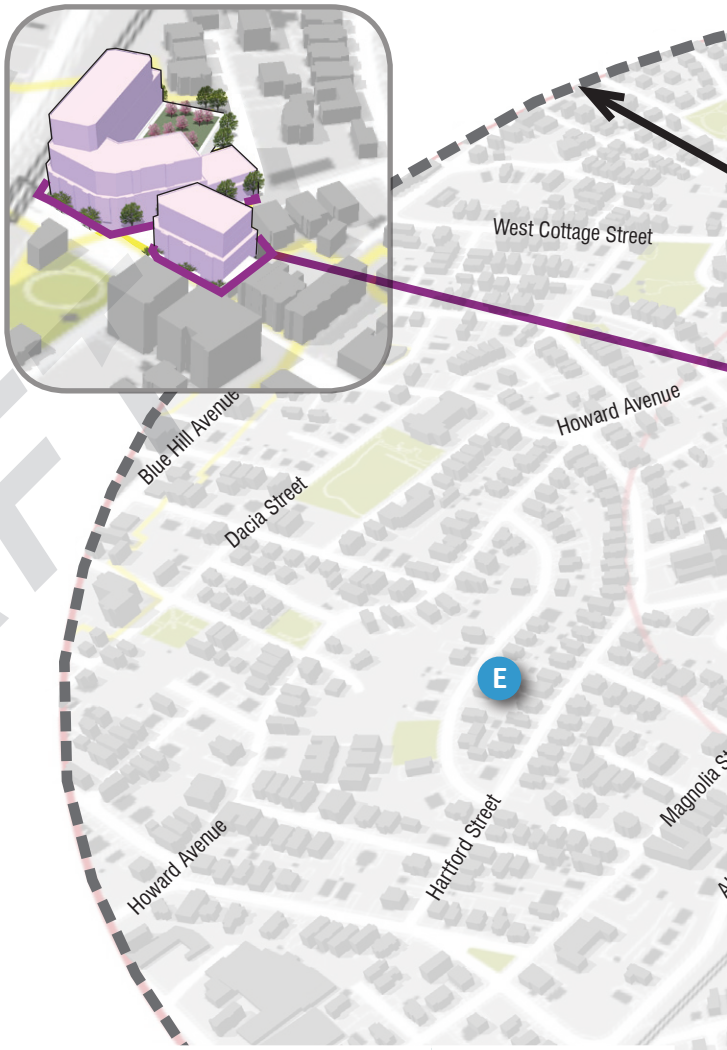
A **Transit Orientation** - underutilized properties directly adjacent to the rail station are an excellent opportunity to provide residential uses that promote transit and walking.

B **Mixed-use Activity** - add new residential units above ground floor retail uses to support a vibrant commercial district through targeted redevelopment.

C **Multi-Family Models** - projects that bring a critical mass of units efficiently with conventional stick-built construction and surface parking are the most economically feasible.

D **Mixed Income** - new housing must provide opportunities for diverse income levels including market rate and workforce units that also bring new opportunities for current residents.

E **Neighborhood Infill** - strengthen blocks and promote infill development using City programs and lands as a model.



Potential Redevelopment of Key Sites	
Commercial/Light Industrial (Gross Square Feet)	50,000
Residential (Units)	460
Retail (Gross Square Feet)	60,000

The following area calculations are based upon hypothetical redevelopment scenarios on (5) sites in Upham's Corner selected by the Upham's Corner Working Advisory Group (WAG). Potential redevelopment would require reinvestment in private property and modification to current zoning regulations to achieve. The scenarios tested the scale and feasibility of potential redevelopment at these key locations.

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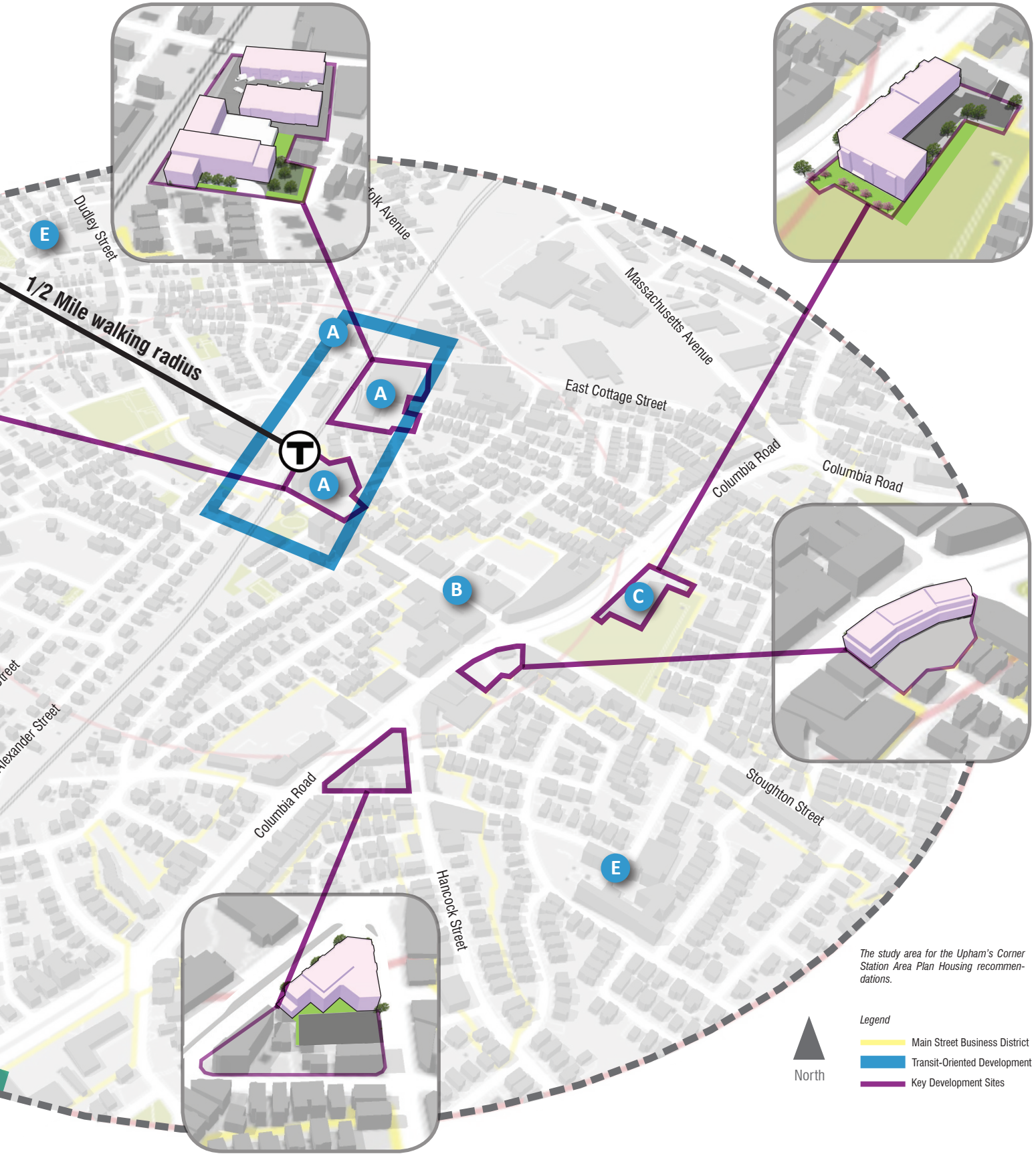

The study area for the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan Housing recommendations.

Home

Many of the recommendations and focus of the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan have been on the Main Street District and area immediately around the rail station. However, it is important to highlight that the majority of the land use within the Station Area is residential. Several high quality neighborhoods comprise the Station Area including Jones Hill, Virginia-Monadnock, Upham's Corner Westside, Nonquit Street, Eastman/Elder and the Anapolis Street area. Reinforcing the Station Area as safe and attractive place to live is critical to supporting many of the other goals and ambitions for Upham's Corner.

Upham's Corner provides a superb location for residential neighborhoods. It is very close to the downtown core of Boston with excellent access by way of the Fairmount Indigo Line and several bus routes and has excellent access to highways. The historic housing stock has been retained and well-maintained creating attractive tree-lined blocks of homes. The main activity corridors of Columbia Road and Dudley Street have been built up with commercial and multi-family residential uses. The Upham's Corner Main Street district provides convenience for goods and services within walking distance of many of the homes. The demand for more housing units with these desirable qualities is high.

Even with all of these advantages, many blocks within the Upham's Corner neighborhoods are interrupted with vacant lots. In many locations these vacant parcels have been put to productive and communal use, such as pocket parks and agricultural plots. In other locations the sites are overgrown or include a vacant building or structure. Several large properties near the rail station are underused or vacant as well. The addition of new housing in these locations is critical to adding supply to the housing needs in this area, but also to stabilize the neighborhoods and to add new residents and activity to the Main Street district. New housing in the Station Area should have certain characteristics to be consistent with the vision for Upham's Corner. New housing units in Upham's Corner should be mixed-income, should provide affordable units to retain diversity in the neighborhoods and should be of a higher density adjacent to the rail station.

The approach to housing in Upham's Corner focuses on the following characteristics:

A Transit Orientation

Underutilized properties directly adjacent to the rail station are an excellent opportunity to provide residential uses that promote transit and walking. Additionally, vacant properties adjacent to the station communicate a negative perception about the Station Area. The vacancies of scale near the station should be a residential redevelopment priority for the City and the community.

The transit-oriented nature of this residential redevelopment should be reinforced by higher allowed building height and density and reduced parking requirements. This redevelopment should be intended to attract transit users and pedestrians to the Station Area.

B Mixed-use Activity

Strong housing demand is indicated by low vacancies and increasing rents, new housing that is well-located and transit-served fills this need and provides residents with new housing choices. The two of these trends together will continue to cause rising prices and could displace

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current residents and businesses. One of the approaches to stabilizing rents and giving new options to existing residents is to build new housing.

The Station Area has many locations near the rail station that are vacant or underused that are excellent locations for residential redevelopment. Near the rail station, a greater height and density of residential uses would allow a greater number of new units to be added to the Station Area. This would have several benefits, including adding a critical mass of housing units that would better address housing demand and needs, adding new housing units near the rail station where new residents would be encouraged to rider the Fairmount Indigo line more frequently, and adding new residents near the Main Street District to support businesses.

C Multi-Family Models

Projects that bring a critical mass of units efficiently with conventional stick-built construction and surface parking are the most economically feasible. Larger residential redevelopment projects, such as shown in the bottom series of diagrams to the left, should be used strategically at station gateway locations or within the station main street district. This type of multi-family development would require zoning modifications. It would bring a concentration of residents to support other components of the community vision including a vibrant and active cultural and retail center.

D Mixed Income

The diversity of the population of Upham's Corner is one of its great strengths. This is a diversity of background, race, ethnicity and income level. The dynamic demographic and cultural mix that defines Upham's Corner is also a defining feature of the Fairmount Indigo Corridor. It is critical that as new development and housing occurs in Upham's Corner that the diversity of the community is retained and even expanded. New housing must provide opportunities for diverse income levels including market rate and workforce units.

Additionally, housing opportunities for current residents should be made available to prevent displacement. If economic patterns of continuously rising rents create affordability issues for existing residents. New residential units should be created to keep the current residents in

Upham's Corner. Building up of workforce housing and affordable housing in new development is the most effective way to retain income diversity in Upham's Corner into the future.

E Neighborhood Infill

Residential infill redevelopment is one straightforward approach to improving and stabilizing the Station Area neighborhoods and adding residents that will use the existing centers of activity. This type of redevelopment does not require a modification to zoning, it does not pose unknown impacts or hardship on existing neighbors, it only replaces what has been lost over time. Infill development strengthen existing residential blocks and can be promoted by using or developing City programs to invite developers and to use publicly owned vacant lots as a pilot for this program. The City owns numerous sites that could be strategically disposed of for private development to advance this process. This may be done through a special City-wide program or specific neighborhood initiative and may require special conditions on the redevelopment of the property in exchange for a reduced or zero-cost land payment.

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The aerial image (below) shows the type and scale of infill redevelopment opportunities in the residential neighborhoods surrounding Upham's Corner

PLACE

The *Place* section deals with the physical environment of Upham's Corner and how the elements of the environment contribute to a positive sense of place. Strategies and recommendations deal with the characteristics and qualities of neighborhoods and places that create desirable places to live, work, and shop.

Place

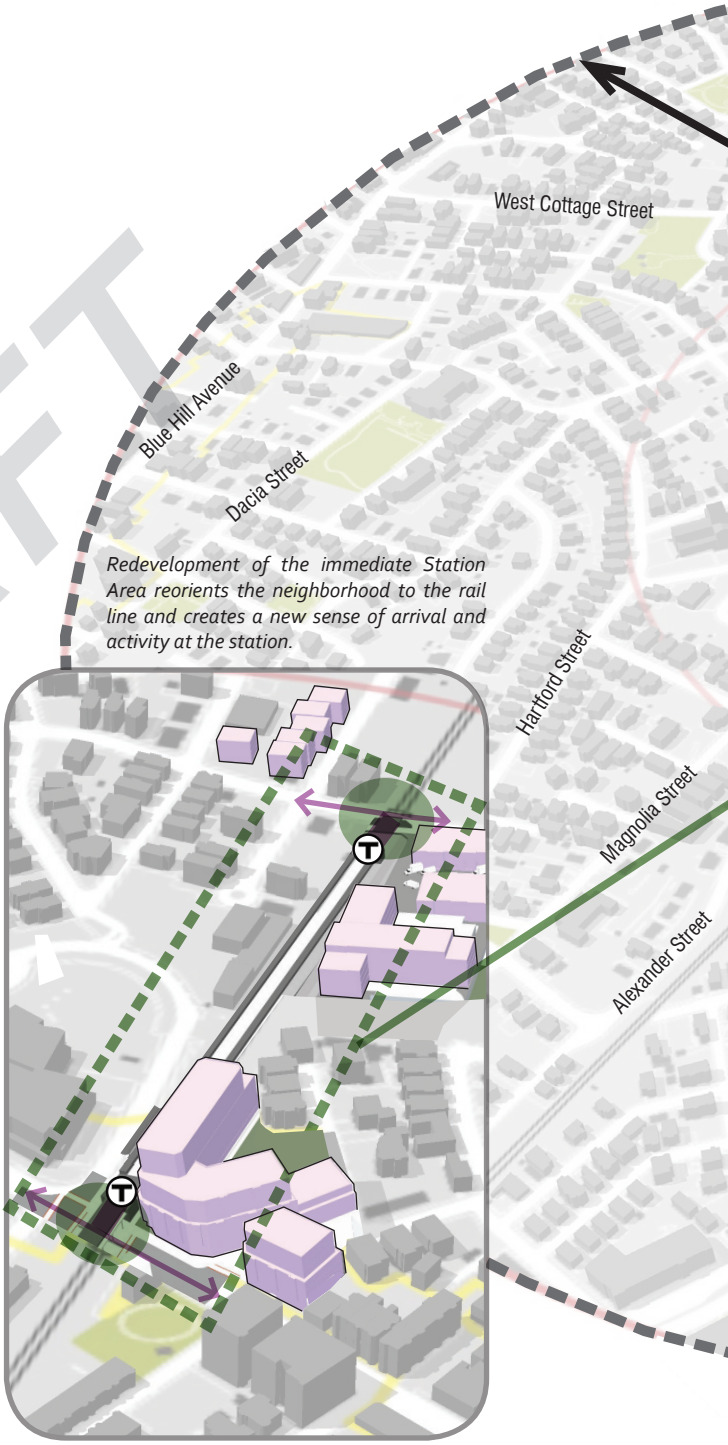
The physical environment of the Station Area should express the distinctiveness and vitality of the heart of the district and provide visual cues for attractive and stable neighborhoods. The following principles have been identified to reinforce the physical environment of the Station Area:

A **Main Street Gateway** - signify entry points into the district through redevelopment and streetscape improvements along primary street connections and at the rail station.

B **Highlight Historic Assets** - the distinctiveness of the Station Area is enhanced by preserving, but also actively reusing historic buildings and sites. New development should respect the historic scale of approximately 5-story buildings.

C **Vitality at the Station** - allowing larger building massing adjacent to the station can transform the sense of arrival at the station and reinforce district continuity.

D **Active Ground Floor** - reinforce continuity of active ground level use with transparency and entries at the street. Active ground floor uses should coordinate with adjacent public realm amenities.



Redevelopment of the immediate Station Area reorients the neighborhood to the rail line and creates a new sense of arrival and activity at the station.

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The study area for the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan with Place recommendations.

Legend

Core of Vitality at Station Area

Key Routes to Station

Place

Place is a category of recommendations that is concerned with the character and quality of the physical environment. The physical environment is the composition of the buildings, streets, and landscape that define the look and feel of Upham's Corner. The configuration of these components can help to contribute to a positive sense of the place or can communicate negative signals about the place. Cultivating a positive sense of place in Upham's Corner is very important to the vitality of the Main Street District and to the safety and walkability of the surrounding neighborhoods. A positive sense of place also benefits the use of the rail station and attracts residents and visitors alike to an attractive and vital place.

Upham's Corner has a larger role to play in the context of the Fairmount Indigo Corridor. For many visitors to Upham's it provides a first impression of the entire corridor, its Main Streets districts and its neighborhoods. Upham's provides a unique opportunity to engage residents and visitors to invite them to visit other locations and points of interest down the line and to provide a sense of the reinvigoration that the Corridor and neighborhoods have underway. Therefore, it is critical that Upham's Corner provide the right type of experience and impression to invite further exploration of the unique places opportunities the entire corridor provides.

In terms of a positive, strong and memorable sense of place, Upham's Corner has several assets that should be highlighted. Historically, Upham's Corner has been a center of commerce and activity, a critical crossroads in the streetcar network. This legacy is important today and it has left a coherent and cohesive Main Street district and commercial center. Another major asset is the landmark and feature that a historic theatre and theatre marquee provide to a district. The Strand Theatre provides a cultural destination in the center of Upham's Corner, but also provides a very positive and memorable visual cue for the district.

The experience of a place is continuous, but a few key locations and moments send a lasting message about how Upham's Corner is perceived. For a rail passenger, the experience of Upham's Corner begins on the platform, down the ramp and onto Dudley Street. For many drivers, the experience of Upham's Corner is along Columbia Road. The critical moments in creating a memorable and positive experience of Upham's Corner is at the gateway moments of entry into the main center of activity. The physical environment of the Station Area should express the distinctiveness and vitality of the heart of Upham's Corner, a big part of this is the active use and preservation of the historic buildings and sites at the center of the district. Additionally, the physical environment should provide visual cues for attractive and stable neighborhoods with well-maintained streetscape, inviting and generous places to walk, and active and attractive storefronts and shops.

These features are the primary recommendations to enhance the sense of place at Upham's Corner:

A Main Street Gateway

The importance of a good first impression is significant for places, districts and neighborhoods. The gateways and points of arrival into Upham's Corner may vary by mode of travel. Arrival points for the train, bus, car or pedestrian may be different and it is important to consider all of the most likely locations of that critical first impression. Acknowledging the district at its entry points can also help to communicate the presence of the district and its history. To achieve an enhanced gateway presence, sev-

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eral locations should be the focus of redevelopment and streetscape improvements.

The first and perhaps most obvious, is the Upham's Corner Station. The focus of this gateway effort should be at Dudley Street where the platform ramps meet the sidewalk and at the rail overpass. A rail passenger entering Upham's Corner at this locations should enter into a generous sidewalk and plaza with clear connections to other transportation options, clear directional signage to the center of Upham's Corner and an immediate impactful and positive impression.

The other gateway locations are for vehicular and pedestrian travelers along the main streets into and out of Upham's Corner, Columbia Road, Stoughton Street and Hancock Street. The intersections that should be treated as gateways mark the point of arrival identifiable as the beginning of the Main Street district. On Columbia Road at the intersection of Annabel Street arriving from Everett Square to the north. On Columbia Road at the intersection of Bird Street arriving from the south. On Stoughton Street at the North Burying Ground arriving from the east and on Hancock Street at Bird Street arriving from the south. Each of these locations should be reinforced with new streetscape and landscape features, strengthened pedestrian crossings and potentially modest gateway signage. The public realm and streetscape is under the control of the public through the City. Gateway treatments could be implemented by the City to reinforce the district as described in this section.

In addition to streetscape enhancements at the gateways, properties adjacent to these locations are important redevelopment locations to convey an active and vibrant commercial center. A vacant lot, parking lot, or derelict building do not promote the district or provide the appropriate first impression of Upham's Corner. Short term efforts with landscaping, public art or facade improvements should be used to improve properties in critical locations. Long term efforts for encouraging redevelopment with new investment in the properties should be pursued by community advocates with property owners.

B Highlight Historic Assets

A part of the distinctiveness of Upham's Corner is its extensive history of as a center of commerce and culture. That history is on display in the historic sites and structures that reinforce a memorable and positive sense of place. These historic assets, the Strand Theatre, the Masonic Hall building, the Pierce building, the Pilgrim Church building, the Old North Burying Ground, should be preserved and highlighted as centers of activity. The distinctiveness and legacy of the Station Area is enhanced by preserving these historic buildings and sites, but the need for active and vital uses must also be recognized such that these historic structures are contributing to the present success of Upham's Corner.

In addition to these specific sites and structures, adjacent redevelopment or new development should respect, complement and highlight the history of the district. The historic scale and height of buildings in Upham's Corner was four to six stories, reinforcing this scale of redevelopment would add to the continuity and vitality of the district. Similarly, the use of high quality materials that complement the brick, stone and decorative cornices of the historic structures should be encouraged in new development to add to the visual coherence and richness of the district while bringing fresh and contemporary elements.

C Vitality at the Station

The sense of place dissipates near the rail station with derelict structures and vacant lots directly adjacent to the platform. In order to form a gateway appropriate to Upham's Corner and to reinforce a positive sense of place for the district, the built environment around the rail station should be built up and embrace this transportation asset as a focal point of the Station Area. The Salvation Army Kroc Center provides a strong community and cultural anchor west of the station, but all properties surrounding the station should contribute to a renewed gateway for Upham's Corner.

Allowing larger building massing adjacent to the station can transform the sense of arrival at the station and reinforce district continuity. An increase in the density of development directly around the station enhances a sense of arrival and activity at the station and provides the potential for more rail ridership from residents, employees and visitors in the future. New development at the station also provides a placemaking opportunity to reinforce a public plaza and center of pedestrian activity near the station entry. Contemporary transit-oriented development could also provide a unique opportunity to create a dialogue with the historic core of Upham's Corner to create a unique sequence of arrival with distinctive buildings.

In addition to the positive physical and economic attributes expanded development near the station would bring, it also provides an opportunity to reorient the neighborhood to the rail station and fill amenity gaps for the community. A coordinated redevelopment effort at station gateways provides an opportunity for policy, planning, place, programming and public engagement to come together physically to manifest positive change in Upham's Corner centered at the rail station.

Upham's Corner has two ready-made sites adjacent to the station platform that reflect the community's readiness for change and are promising locations for this type of redevelopment. One is City-owned, the Maxwell Property on East Cottage Street, and the other privately-owned, the Leon Building on Dudley Street. The Maxwell Property provides a unique short term implementation opportunity for these ideas as the City has initiated a development disposition process that could focus expanded redevelopment at the station that can bring many community benefits along with a renewed sense of place.

D Active Ground Floor

In the context of Upham's Corner the final critical component of placemaking through the permanent components of the physical environment is an active ground floor in a concentrated district. Within the Main Street district in the area previously defined by the gateway locations, it is very important to reinforce continuity of active ground level use with inviting and attractive shops with transparent and interesting storefronts and accessible entries that face the primary street. A memorable and active place, particularly a walkable commercial center must have a critical mass of active ground floor uses to retain interest and sustain repeat visits.

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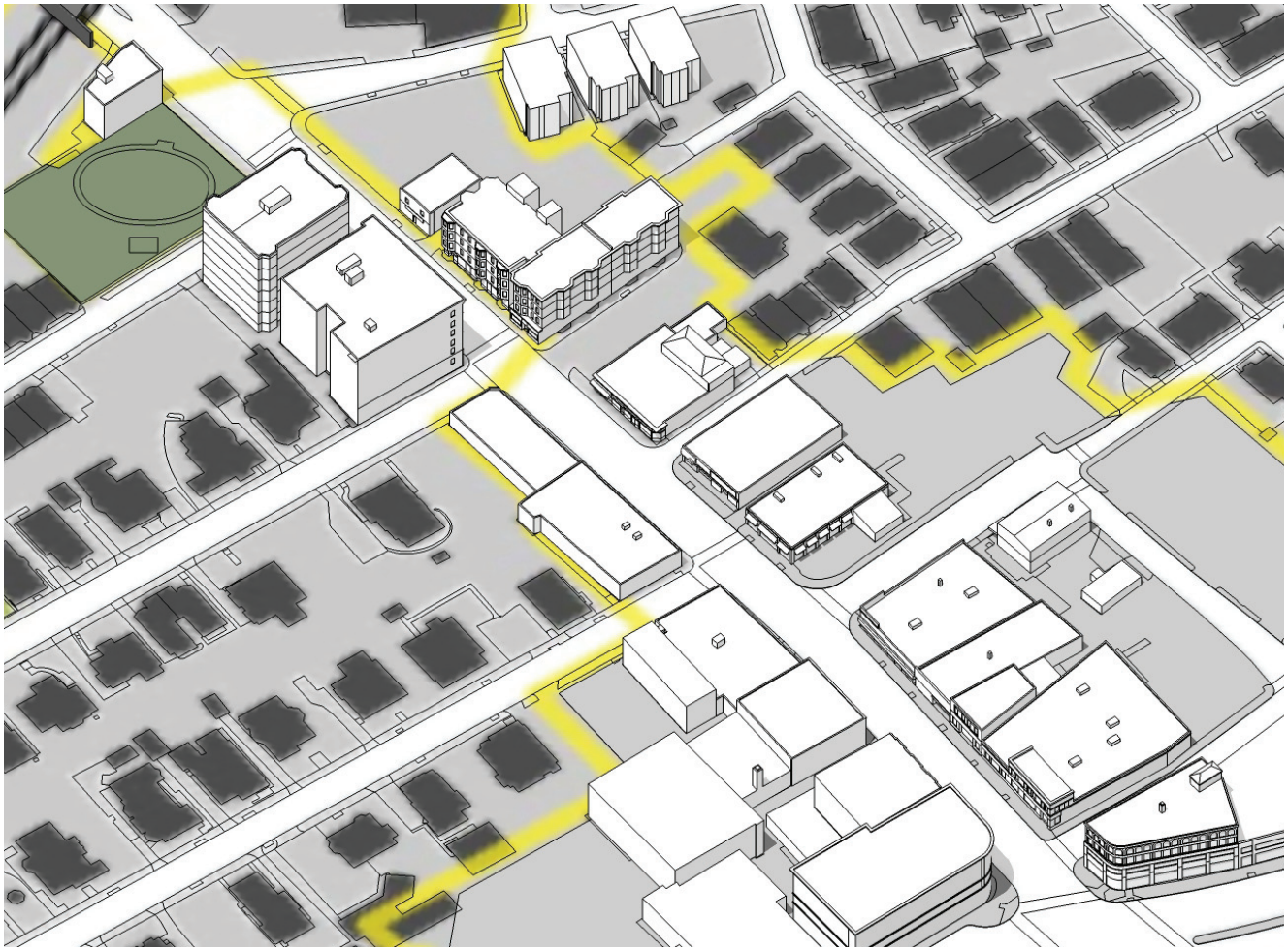

The building frontages connecting Upham's Corner Station to Columbia Road are critical to reinforcing continuity in the district and bringing vitality to the station

In the short term, keeping existing storefronts active with successful businesses may be the focus. As well as, finding creative interim uses for vacant storefronts to avoid gaps in ground floor activity and negative perceptions. In the long term, as existing storefronts are filled with successful businesses, buildings within the district with inactive ground floors should be converted to active ground floors through redevelopment. The long term goal being a well-defined, recognizable and walkable commercial district that has continuity of active ground floor uses adjacent to the sidewalk with minimal gaps in buildings with storefronts.

Active ground floor uses should coordinate with adjacent public realm amenities, with sidewalk seating for a cafe for example. This type of coordination and integration of the streetscape and amenities with the adjacent private uses brings together the entire district into a coherent sense of place. Lastly, businesses and storefronts should actively maintain and improve building facades to retain a perception of care and freshness. The City of Boston facade improvement programs should be used as a resource to renew the appearance of ground floor businesses. Active ground floor uses should be treated sensitively when businesses are not in operation. An entire district closed down with rolling grates, metal doors and security gates does not communicate a positive message about the dis-

trict. Alternative security measures should be encouraged with business owners to reinforce a positive sense of place at all times of the day or night.

E Other Placemaking Features

Other components contribute to a strong sense of place in Upham's Corner, many are identified in other sections of the Station Area Plan. A few notes about other important placemaking features are added here and expanded elsewhere in the report.

First, as a centerpiece the Station Area, this section has focused on the sense of place in or near the Main Street district. However, every area, neighborhood or district within the Station Area has its own sense of place. Each scale of perception, a building on a lot, a segment of a street, a full block, a neighborhood, may have a unique association and identifiable association for people. In all of these contexts, maintenance and cleanliness is one of the biggest signals for positive or negative associations with a place.

Second, public art is a major component of the sense of place in Upham's Corner and is highlighted in the implementation section of the Station Area Plan. Public art should be used as a component to reinforce gateway locations and to contribute to the sense of place in Upham's Corner.

Many of the components of placemaking or directly connected to the dimensional characteristics of zoning ordinances and the qualitative descriptions of design guidelines. The concepts outlined in this section are the focus of recommendations for zoning modifications and de-

Locations of active ground floor, discontinuity in the street wall and building massing in the Main Street District

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sign guidelines included in the implementation section of the Station Area Plan. Zoning and design guidelines are the direct mechanisms controlling the built environment that are under the control of the public through the City. Implementation of redevelopment concepts, active storefront uses, and other investments to benefit the sense of place in Upham's Corner require private action on private property.

GETTING AROUND

The *Getting Around* section focuses on issues and opportunities related to transportation in Upham's Corner. Strategies and recommendations focus on improving all mobility options in and around Upham's Corner.

Getting Around

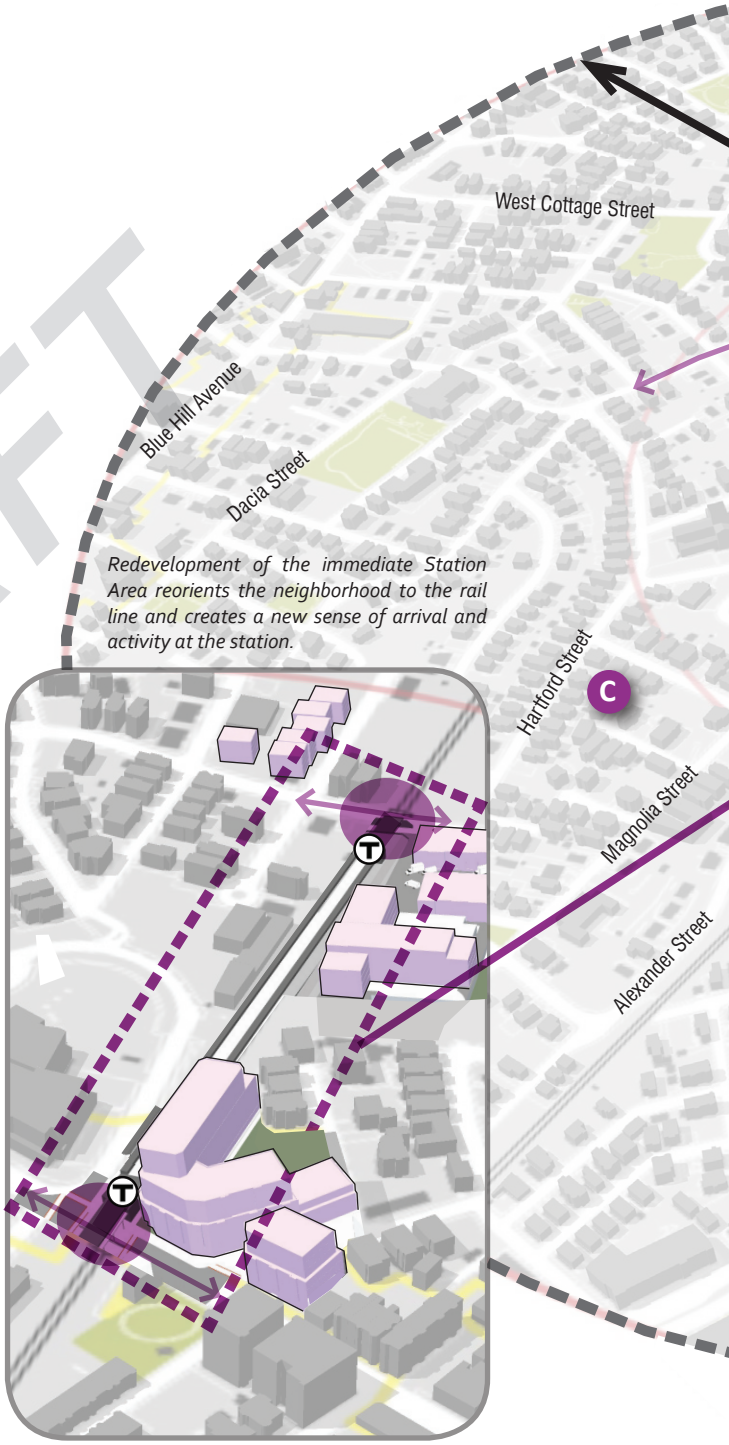
Connections to the rail station and the public street network can be improved to emphasize a sense of place, reinforce walkability, increase bike and vehicle safety and reduce congestion for buses. The following approaches get more out of the Station Area public realm:

A **Dudley Street Gateway** - Columbia Road improvement treatments, landscape, lighting and materials should extend a sense of unity in the district along Dudley Street to create gateways to the district from the rail station.

B **Mobility Hub** - the rail station entry at Dudley Street needs to become a central collection point for accessible mobility options with wayfinding for walking and easy connections to Hubway, bus routes, and car and taxi cab pick-up.

C **Walkable Neighborhoods** - walking is central to promoting rail station access and a vital Main Street District, all surrounding neighborhoods should provide continuous and safe sidewalks and crosswalks to these destinations.

D **Managed Parking** - public and private parking resources require coordination, wayfinding and improvement in visual appeal district-wide to maximize utilization.



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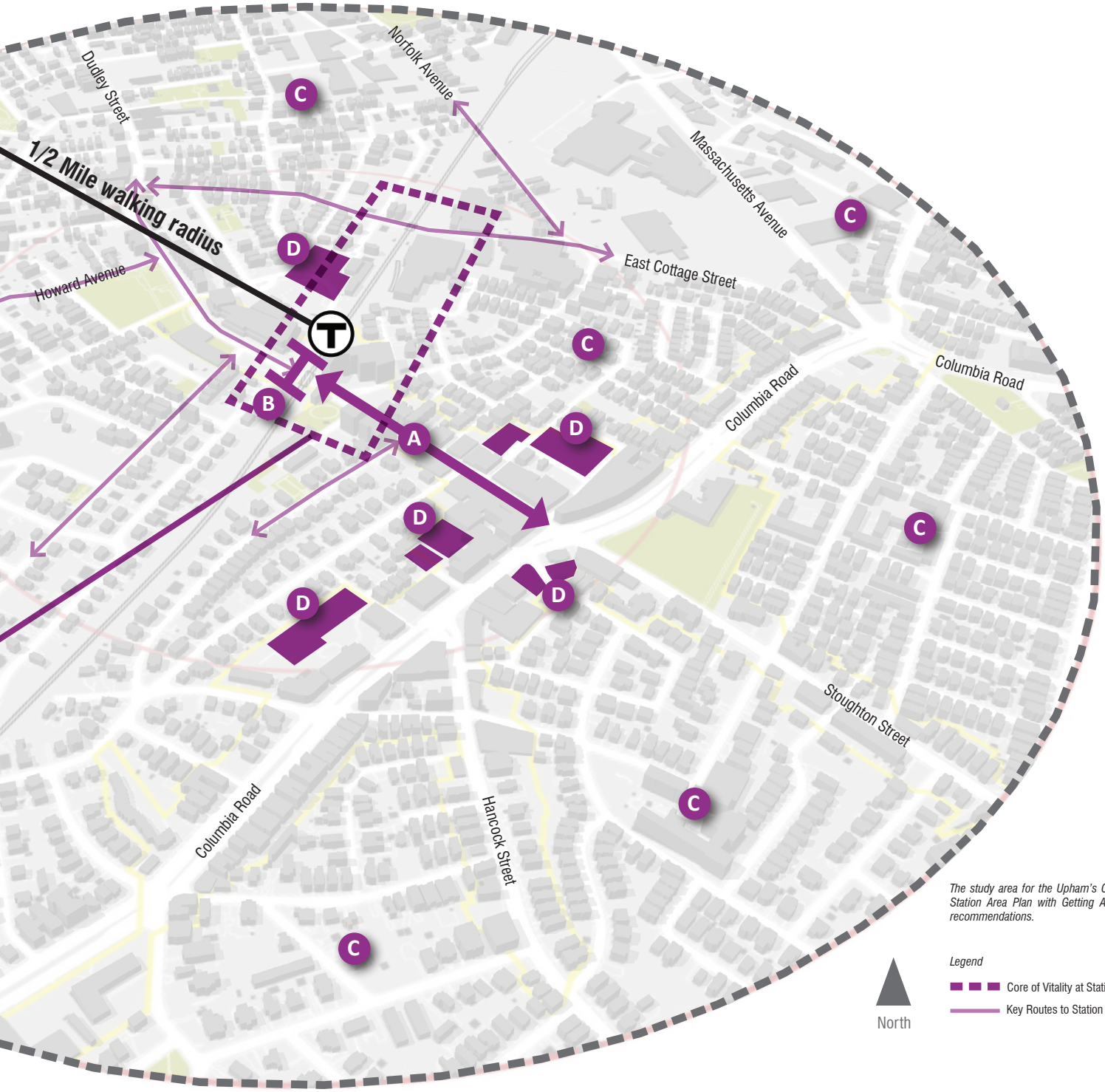

The study area for the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan with Getting Around recommendations.

Getting Around

Getting Around is a category of recommendations that is focused on improving mobility and transportation options in Upham's Corner. This set of recommendations examines improvements across all modes of transportation (rail transit, walking, bus transit, bicycling and driving). It also examines the relationship of each form of travel to the Upham's Corner rail station to improve access and connectivity to the Fairmount Indigo line. The Station Area Plan focuses on the transportation options and network of streets located in the study area within a 1/2 mile radius of the rail station.

The public street network can be improved for all modes of transportation to emphasize a sense of place, reinforce walkability, increase bike and vehicle safety and reduce congestion for buses and cars. In 2009, the City of Boston launched a Complete Streets Initiative to provide both great public spaces and sustainable transportation networks (www.bostoncompletestreets.org). A "Complete Street" is an approach to the allocation and use of the public realm to meet the needs of all users of the street. This approach is consistent with the considerations of this study to optimize mobility within Upham's Corner for all.

Across each mode of transportation, key recommendations are intended to be consistent with a Complete Streets approach to improve connectivity and mobility:

- **Rail** – A key feature to better integrate rail connections is the concept of a "mobility hub" located adjacent to the station. A mobility hub enhances connectivity at the transit station by providing seamless access to the rail system, reinforcing the rail station as an important gateway into Upham's Corner and adding a convenient transfer point for other modes of travel. As rail service on the Fairmount Indigo line continues to improve, in frequency and integration with the subway system, the mobility hub and the emphasis it places on the Station Area will benefit residents, businesses and visitors.

- **Pedestrian** – A safe and walkable environment for pedestrians is critical for connecting to rail station, the Main Street district, and the surrounding neighborhoods. Pedestrian connections are particularly important for Upham's Corner to fulfill ambitions as a walkable commercial center that is a destination for visitors. Walking is combined with nearly every other form of transportation and comprises at least a portion of any trip. The pedestrian environment should be safe, attractive, and accessible to encourage a walkable commercial district in Upham's Corner surrounded by walkable neighborhoods.

- **Bus Transit** – In coordination with the MBTA's Key Bus Route improvement program along the Dudley Street and Columbia Road corridors, the bus stop locations nearest to Upham's Corner Station should be integrated with a mobility hub. The mobility hub would provide a plaza and streetscape treatment to create a physical environment that reinforces easy and convenient transfers between rail and bus. Additionally, bus service and schedules should be optimized to allow for conveniently timed transfers.

- **Vehicular** – Many of the issues highlighted for vehicles include congestion, queuing on Columbia Road and limited parking. Roadway improvements at critical intersections (Dudley Street and Columbia Road) can improve congestion and traffic flow. Vehicular patterns must balance city-wide travel routes with local safety and walkability. The walkable commercial core of Upham's Corner should be marked with recognizable gateways to assist in managing vehicular speeds while enhancing access to parking. Vehicular pick-up and drop-off areas should be integrated with the Mobility Hub near the rail station.

- **Bicycle** – Bicycle accommodations that link the station to existing bicycle network should be added consistent with the Boston Bikes Network. Bicycle amenities should be provided at the rail station including bicycle racks and Hubway stations. In ad-

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dition bicycle amenities should provide adequate short- and long-term bicycle parking facilities at the station, and at appropriate locations along the Dudley Street corridor.

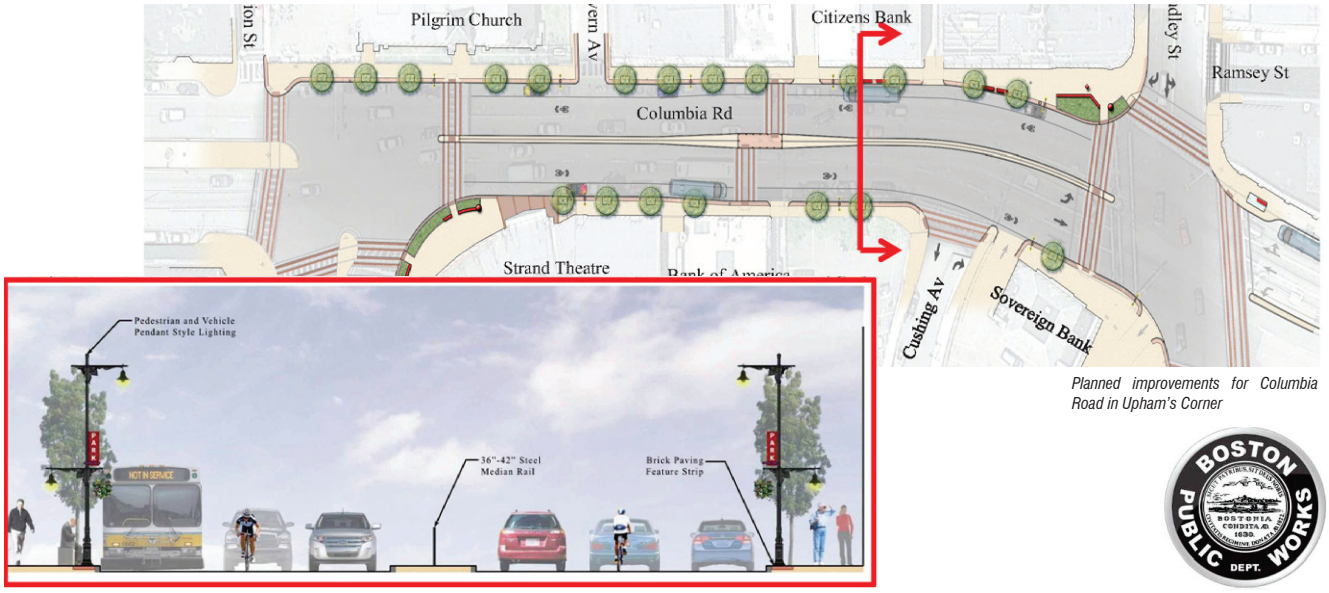
Across improvements to each of the modes of travel, a few areas of emphasis emerged with the community to improve mobility for Upham's Corner. Some priorities have already been highlighted, including the concept of a mobility hub, public realm improvements to key roadways, improved walkability, and better managed parking within the district.

Upham's Corner will benefit from Boston Public Works improvements to the public realm of Columbia Road at the center of the Station Area. This important investment will improve walkability and vehicular travel patterns. It will also enhance the character of the Main Street district. The improvements include establishing a new eastbound right-turn lane for Dudley Street at its intersection with Columbia Road (the existing bus stop will be relocated to Virginia Avenue as part of MBTA's Key Bus Route Improvement Program). The new right-turn lane is anticipated to help alleviate long queues forming on Dudley Street eastbound. This type of public realm improvement should be a model for future investment in Upham's Corner and continue as a series of incremental improvements to the Station Area.

These features are the primary recommendations to improve getting around in Upham's Corner:

A Dudley Street Gateway

Following the Columbia Road improvements, Dudley Street from Columbia Road to the Station entrance should be the next priority for public realm improvements. The pedestrian connection between the station and the center of the Main Street must be an attractive, safe and pleasant walk and this segment of Dudley Street is the connection between the center of Upham's Corner and the station.



Planned improvements for Columbia Road in Upham's Corner

Public realm improvements to Columbia Road and Dudley Street enhance a sense of place in Upham's Corner as an active commercial and retail center. Improvements should reinforce active and pedestrian-friendly streets with traffic calming, consistent materials and treatments. All improvements should address accessibility issues with many of the existing brick sidewalks and tree pits and they should develop a green and sustainable design. The Columbia Road improvements have set a template for improvements to Dudley Street and a consistent palette of materials and character of streetscape would enhance the continuity of the district.

Dudley Street is a key feature of many of the modes of travel in Upham's Corner. It has a constrained curb-to-curb width of approximately 40 feet, with nine foot sidewalks. The existing roadway cross-section allocates all the roadway space to vehicle travel lanes and parking. The bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are not the primary focus of the existing street cross-section and should be emphasized to be consistent with a Complete Streets approach. Through this process, several design alternatives were presented and discussed with the Working Advisory Group. The diagrams below show the existing street conditions and proposed options for use of the public right-of-way for vehicle travel, parking, bicycles, and sidewalk uses that are consistent with a "Neighborhood Main Street" street typology according to the City's Complete Streets design guidelines. Street dimensions are approximate.

The existing cross-section could be maintained with one 13-foot vehicle travel lane in each direction and seven foot parking lanes on both sides of the street. Shared lane markings (SLM or "sharrows") could be installed within the vehicle travel lanes to enhance the visibility of bicyclists. SLM is off-set slightly toward the curb to advise bicyclists of the recommended alignment within the lane.

Alternatively, bicycle lanes could be implemented to provide improved accommodation to bicyclists and to provide better separation between vehicular and bicycle traffic. Parking would need to be removed from one side of the street and the width of the existing travel lanes would be reduced to 10.5 feet, which is consistent with the City's Complete Streets guidelines for "Neighborhood Main Street."

A five foot bicycle lane could be provided in each direction adjacent to the curb. A two foot striped buffer could be implemented between the parking lane and bicycle lane to prevent bicyclist conflict with the "door zone" of parked cars. Bicycle lanes should be dashed adjacent to bus stops to warn bicyclists of frequent crossing of the bike lane by buses.

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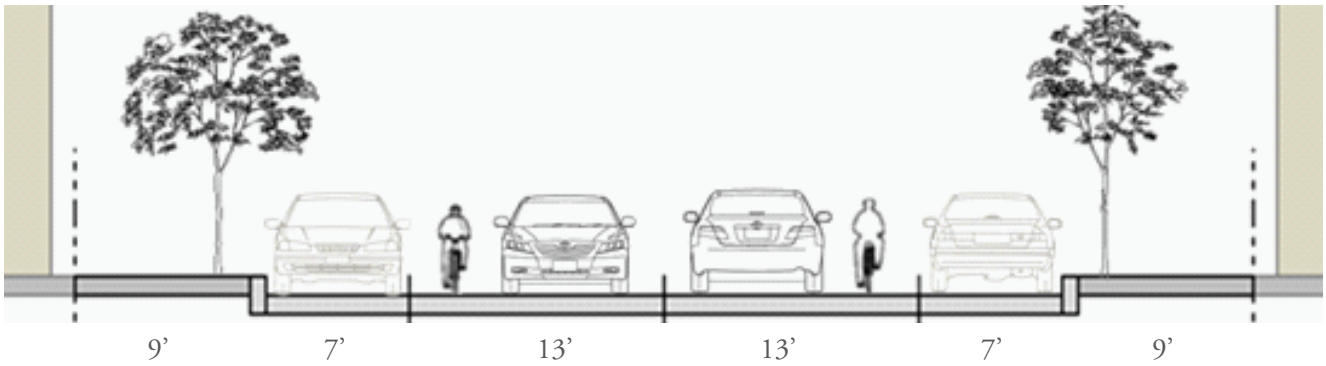
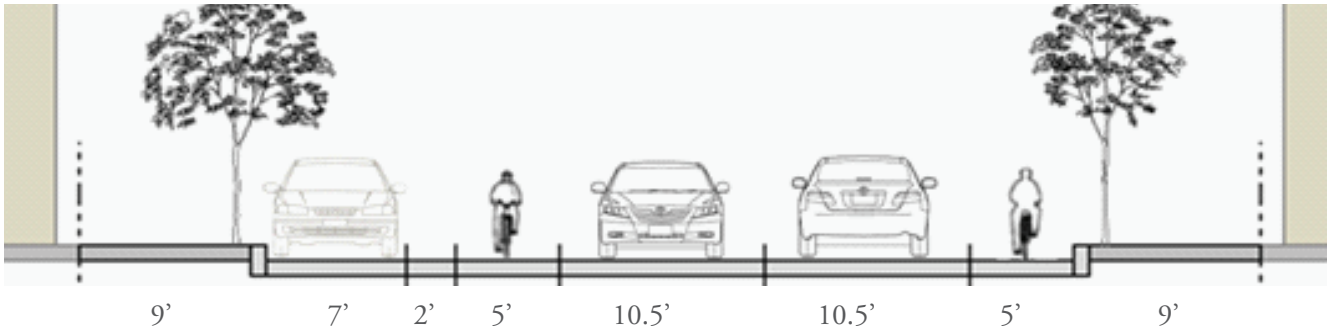


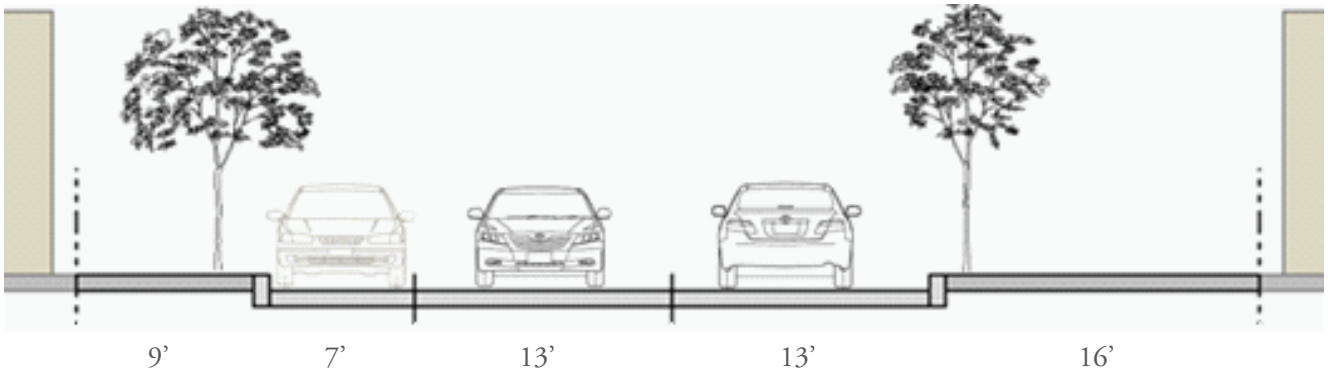
Dudley Street Existing Conditions

On the side of the street without parking, buses would stop partially within the travel lane and bike lane; 15.5 feet from curb to centerline allows vehicles to pass a stopped bus on the left. Encroachment of the bike lane is not ideal but acceptable in most situations and allows bicycles to pass on the left as well. This option may be combined with colored bike lanes or other pavement markings at intersections to further improve the visibility of bicycles.

An interesting trade-off to provide more space for pedestrians and other sidewalk uses, such as café seating, would be to remove on-street parking from the north side of the street to expand the sidewalk. One lane of parking would need to be removed from the north side of the street, and the curb could be expanded by seven feet. Shared lane markings for bicycles could be installed within the vehicle travel lanes to enhance visibility. Any changes to the sidewalk and curb line will require investigation of utilities and drainage considerations. This change would create additional public space and provide a generous connection to from the station to the center of Upham's Corner. The expanded sidewalk would not have to be continuous for the length of Dudley Street, but expand or contract as was sensible with existing curb cuts, bus stops and storefront shops. It is an approach that would create a different look and feel for the Main Street District.



Dudley Street Option - Parking One Side

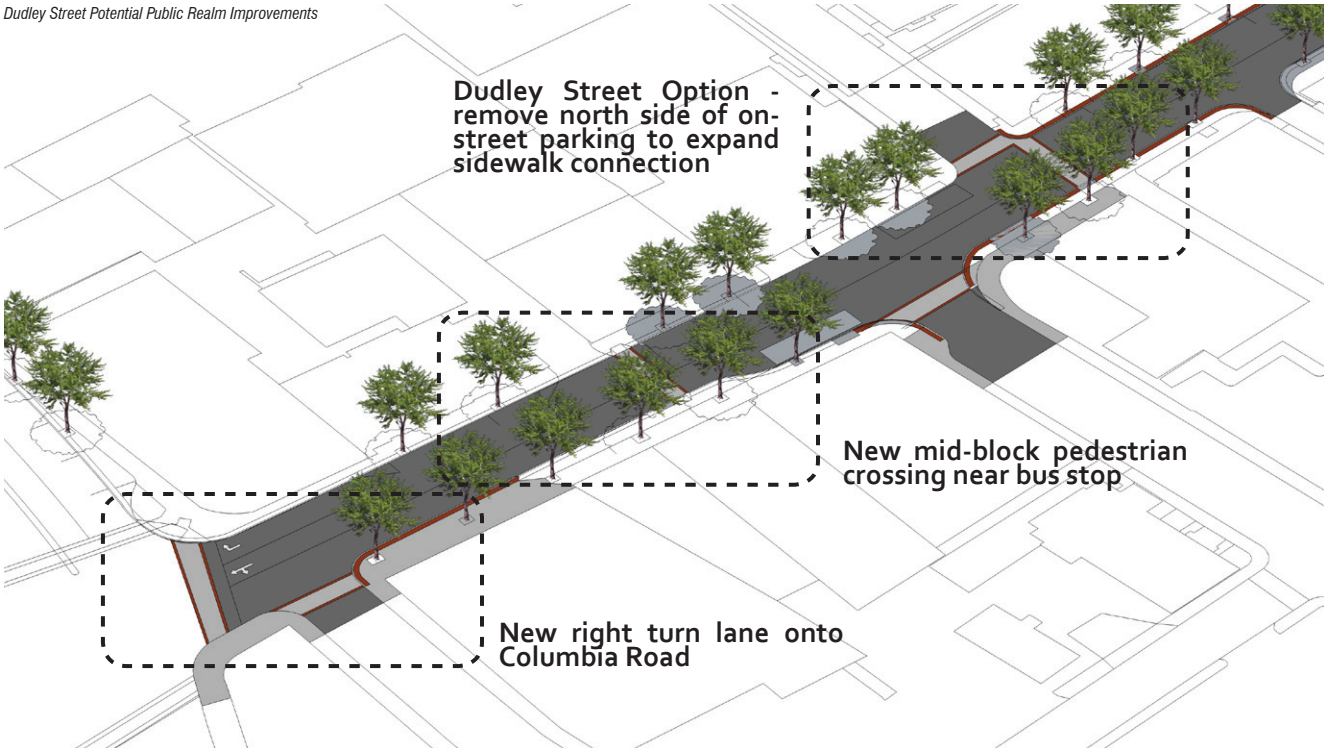


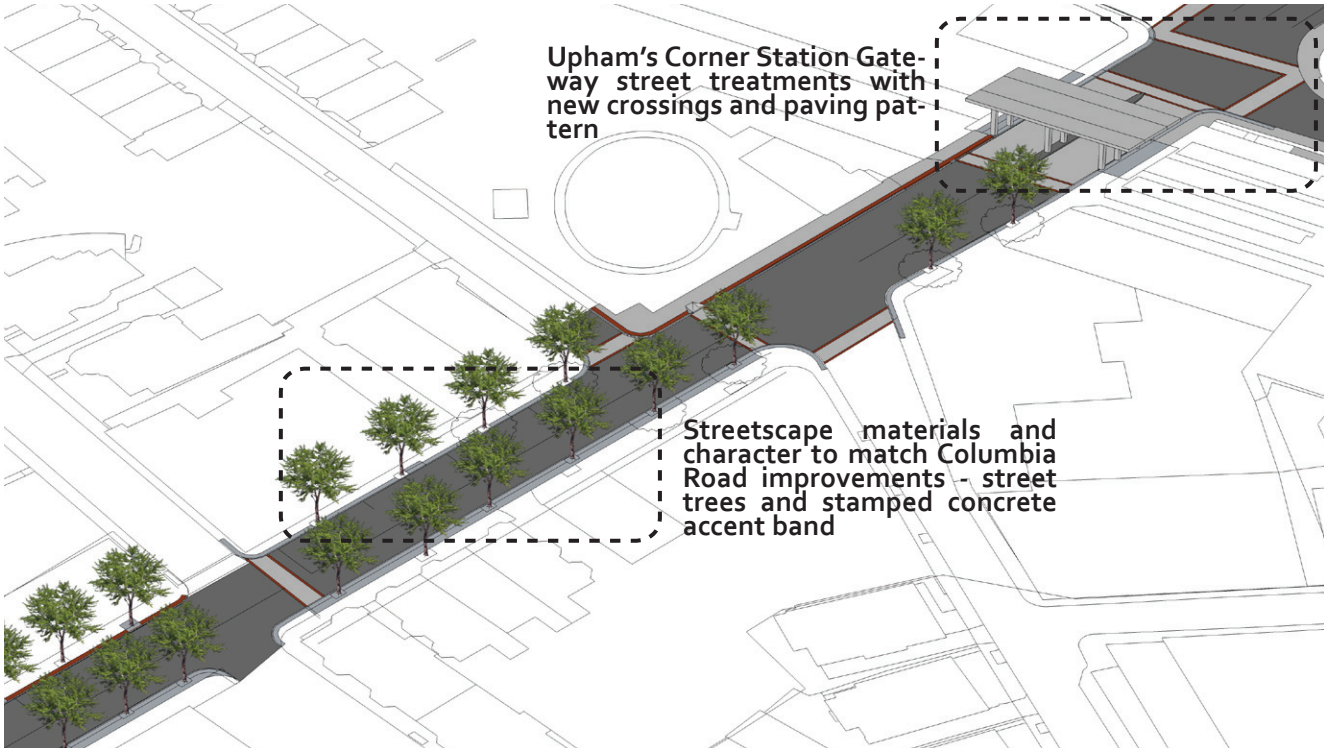
Dudley Street Option - Expanded Sidewalk

Dudley Street Existing Conditions

Dudley Street Option - Expanded Sidewalk

Dudley Street Potential Public Realm Improvements





B Mobility Hub

At the Upham's Corner Station, the current configuration of ramp entries connecting to Dudley Street does little to announce the significance of this gateway into the district. The rail service is a great asset to Upham's Corner and service improvements to the Fairmount Indigo Line, implemented as recently as the summer of 2013, are expected to attract new users to the commuter rail service. Six daily new trips have been added to the schedule and the fare between nearly all stations has been reduced to Zone 1A rates ($2.00 per trip). The improvement and integration of the line with the subway system will continue into the future. Enhanced facilities and amenities at the Upham's rail station would complement these service improvements and maximize the impact of new activity around the station.

The concept of a *Mobility Hub* is a complement to the enhanced service on the Fairmount Indigo Line and a complement to enhanced placemaking in Upham's Corner. A mobility hub is a site immediately adjacent to the rail station entry that provides open space, a gateway and sense of place, bicycle accommodations, bus connections, event information and wayfinding in one location. The benefits of this type of configuration are many, but one of the primary objectives is to improve getting around by creating easy and convenient transfers between the train and other modes of travel.

The mobility hub would provide pedestrian amenity by adding street crossing on Dudley Street at the end of each platform ramp. This would directly connect to a gateway street treatment on Dudley Street to signify entry into the Main Streets District and connect to public realm improvements on Dudley Street leading to the center of Upham's Corner. A sense of place, arrival and a gateway experience are emphasized with wayfinding, information, events, and public art in a new plaza and highlighting the rail overpass at Dudley Street. The mobility hub should also provide curb-side taxi stand for pick-up of passengers, integrated MBTA Route 15 and 16 bus stops, and a vehicle pick-up and drop-off area. A Hubway station should be integrated into the plaza along with bike racks. Renaming the bus stops at Dudley and Clifton and Dudley and Alexander "Upham's Corner Station" would reinforce this connection and transfer.

C Walkable Neighborhoods

Pedestrian improvements on Dudley Street should be the first priority due to the concentration of activity along that corridor and the importance of the street as a gateway. Pedestrian connections and walkability improvements from the surrounding neighborhood should be considered as improvements in the Station Area progress. Improvements should be designed to promote safe and pleasant connections from neighborhoods to the station. This includes safe and sufficient lighting, continuous sidewalks with marked crossings and accessible ramps, and consistent landscaping.

All streets in residential neighborhoods should be reinforced as safe pedestrian and family-oriented places through lane markings, landscape and sidewalk treatments. A series of improvements for direct connections between neighborhoods and the rail station should be implemented to encourage resident use of the Fairmount

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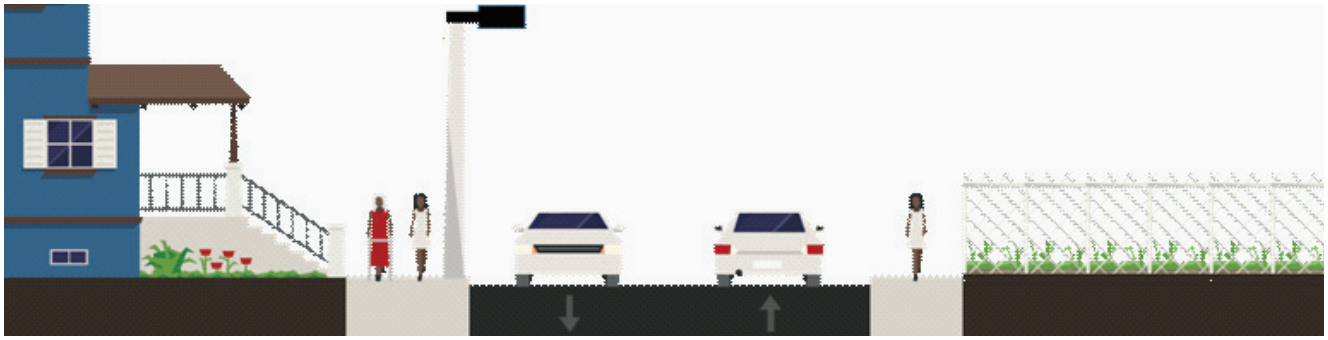
Indigo Line. One improvement that would expand walkable connections to the rail station is a platform entry and connection to East Cottage Street. Currently, the rail platform is only accessible from the Dudley Street entry ramps. This results in a long walk to the station platform from neighborhoods north of Dudley Street.

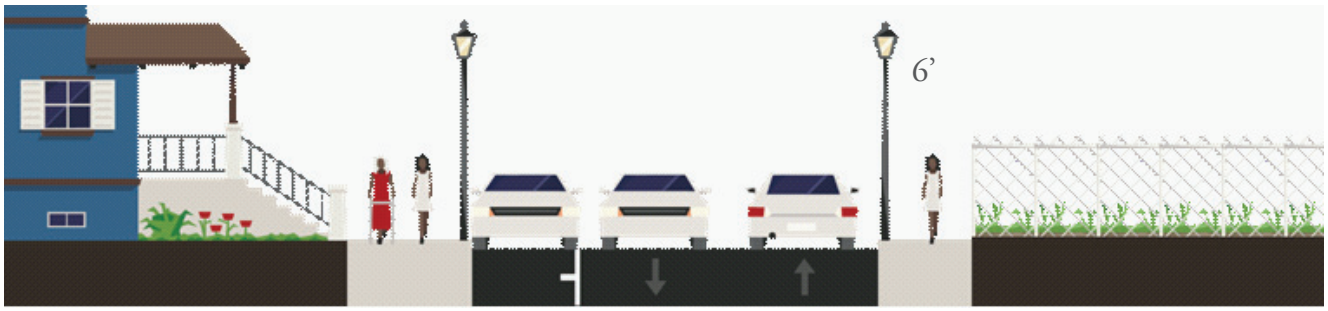
The focus of neighborhood street improvements should be upon streets such as Howard Avenue, East Cottage Street and Norfolk Avenue. Neighborhood streets that can be used to direct residents walking to the station with improved and updated lighting, sidewalks and landscape. Another critical component for many of these streets is adding lane markings and painted crosswalks. Unmarked, many of the existing cross sections of these neighborhood streets are overly generous and may contribute to higher travel speeds or cut through traffic. For example the cross sections below of Howard Avenue could be improved by adding an on-street parking lane and reducing travel lane widths. Street dimensions are approximate.

At some locations, like Howard and Dean Street, new curb ramps have been installed, but crosswalks are not delineated. Along with lane and crosswalk markings, reducing corner radii improves walkability by reducing pedestrian crossing distances. Reductions may be possible while considering truck access requirements for nearby trucking and utility operations. Many of the neighborhood streets would benefit from these types of pedestrian improvements to enhance Station Area walkability.



8’ 27’ curb-to-curb

Howard Street Existing Conditions



8’ 7’ 10’ 10’ 6’

Howard Street Potential Improvements

D Managed Parking

The primary feature of vehicular improvements is focused on managing vehicular traffic, enhancing a sense of place in Upham's Corner and supporting a walkable Station Area. An integrated approach to parking wayfinding and hierarchy should be developed to efficiently guide cars to parking areas and pedestrians to their destinations. Shared parking should also be explored. All in an effort to create a park-once district at Upham's Corner, where visitors feel comfortable walking from destination to destination when they stop in Upham's Corner.

The overall parking management strategy should maximize the available parking supply, which is a limited resource. It's important to recognize that parking strategies are part of an integrated system that should be implemented simultaneously for the most effective outcomes The key goals of this strategy are to: 1. Encourage turnover of on-street spaces in the Main Street district to assist with customer short-term parking, and pick-up/drop-off at the Salvation Army Kroc Center 2. Shift long-term parking to off-street lots 3. Protect neighborhood parking spaces 4. Manage rail station parking

To accomplish these goals, the parking management strategy should consider parking meters or increased enforcement of parking limits on Dudley Street as a means of encouraging turnover and retaining available convenience spaces. It's also crucial to improve wayfinding to public parking lots, including better signage from major routes at Upham's Center for free parking and an improved pedestrian environment with high-quality lighting and landscaping.

The Municipal Parking lots at Belden Square and Belden Street should be enhanced with new lighting and landscaping to overcome fears of safety and lack of attractiveness of the parking areas. The pedestrian environment is markedly more inviting at the Belden Square lot than at Belden Street, due to the presence of trees, landscaping, and attractive lighting.

Two other aspects of parking in Upham's Corner are important to address. First, as the rail station becomes more widely used, it may become necessary to protect resident parking near the station. This may require the creation of a resident permit parking restriction that is defined more narrowly than the neighborhood of Dorchester. Second, with parking space in high demand, more efficient use of the space is often necessary. This can be achieved through shared access and parking agreements between private parking lots. For example, if a use needs its parking during business hours, but is vacant during evenings, a shared use agreement could be formed to benefit events at the Strand Theatre. Additionally, if parking lots on adjacent parcels form a shared use and access agreement, often the two parking lots can be combined to create a more efficient layout resulting in more parking spaces. The general idea is that the parking resources in Upham's Corner should be optimized to realize shared benefits and to reinforce a successful district.

The Upham's Corner Main Street association is an important stakeholder in developing the parking management strategy for Upham's Center. Upham's Corner Main Street interviewed businesses to obtain their opinions on parking on Dudley Street. Key concerns of the businesses include: 1. Adding meters to Dudley Street was basically evenly split between people who support and people who don't support it. However, eliminating one side of parking was not supported by any business interviewed. 2. All agreed that enforcement was really the key issue. One possible compromise for the split opinions is to reduce the parking to one hour and focus on enforcement without adding any new meters. 3. Many of the businesses interviewed mentioned that they or their customers felt unsafe parking in the municipal lot behind CVS, which increases pressure on street parking spaces on Dudley Street.

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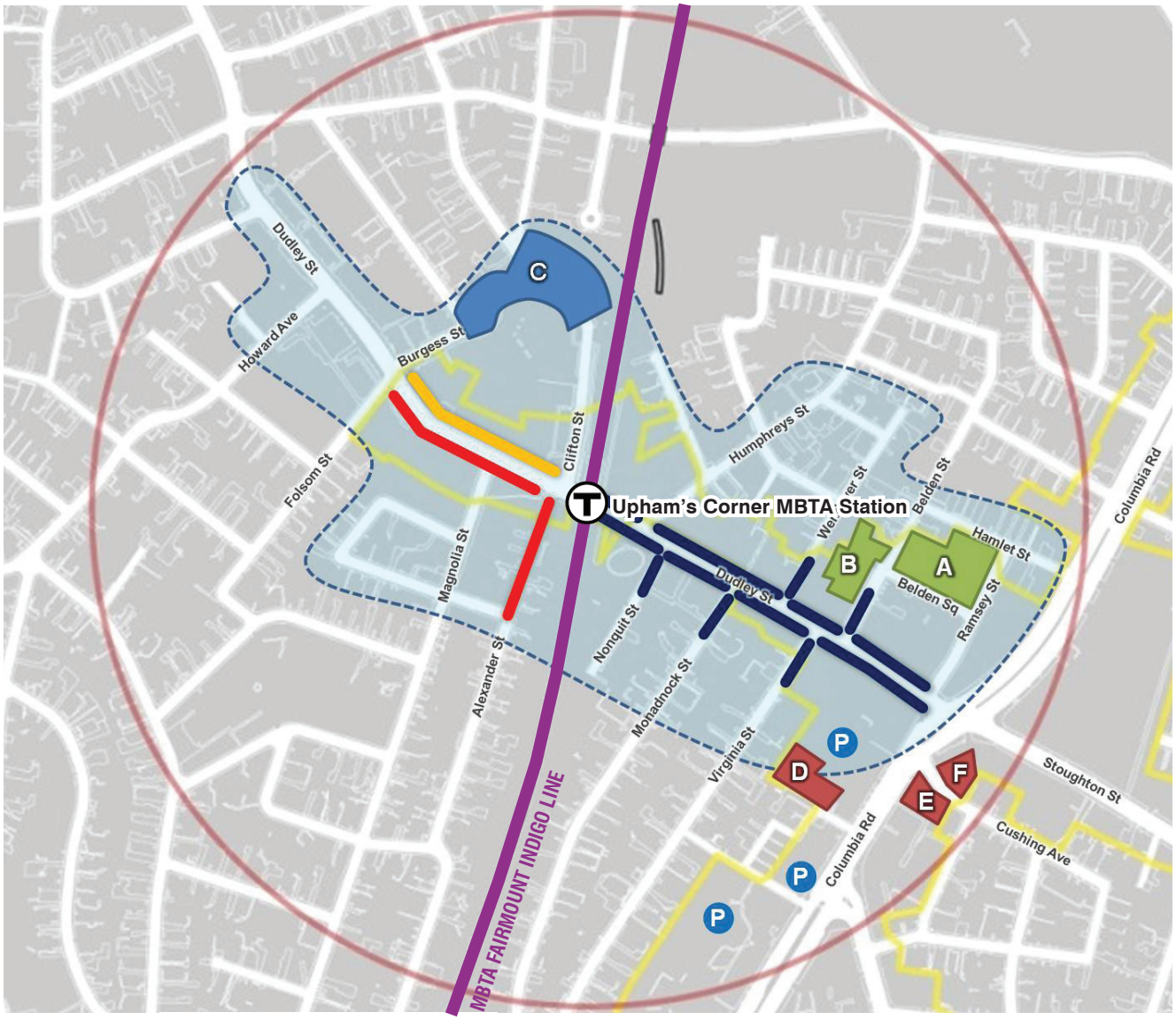
Potential Parking Management Plan



Public Off-Street Parking

- A Belden Square (East) – free
- B Belden Street (West) – free

Private Off-Street Parking

- C Salvation Army Kroc Center
- D Citizens Bank
- E Bank of America
- F Sovereign Bank
- P Additional Private Lots

On-Street Parking

- 2 hour limit metered parking, Mon-Sat 8am-6pm ($1.25 per hour or $0.25 per 12 min)
- 2 hour limit (not metered), Mon-Fri 8am-6pm
- Pick-up/Drop-off, Mon-Fri Xam-Xpm 2 hour limit outside those hours
- Resident Parking permit area

PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACE

The *Parks and Public Space* section deals with issues and opportunities related to parks in Upham's Corner. Strategies and recommendations focus improving access to public open space, increases the frequency of use of public space, and addressing open space needs in Upham's Corner.

Parks and Public Space

A deficiency of publicly accessible open space around the Station Area (relative to other neighborhood averages) should be addressed. The following approaches have been identified to improve neighborhood access to strategically located open space amenities:

- **A** **Publicly Accessible** - improve openness of existing public or private open spaces including activity along the edges and street frontages of the North Burying Ground.
- **B** **Convert Vacant Parcels** - strategically convert vacancies into amenities including playgrounds and agriculture.
- **C** **Development Requirements** - require new public spaces with large new development projects to a targeted community benefit.
- **D** **Right-of-way Uses -** develop strategic and creative expansion of pedestrian space in public ways.
- **E** **Open Space Networks** - use the Boston bike network and Fairmount Greenway Concept Plan to connect to nearby open space resources.

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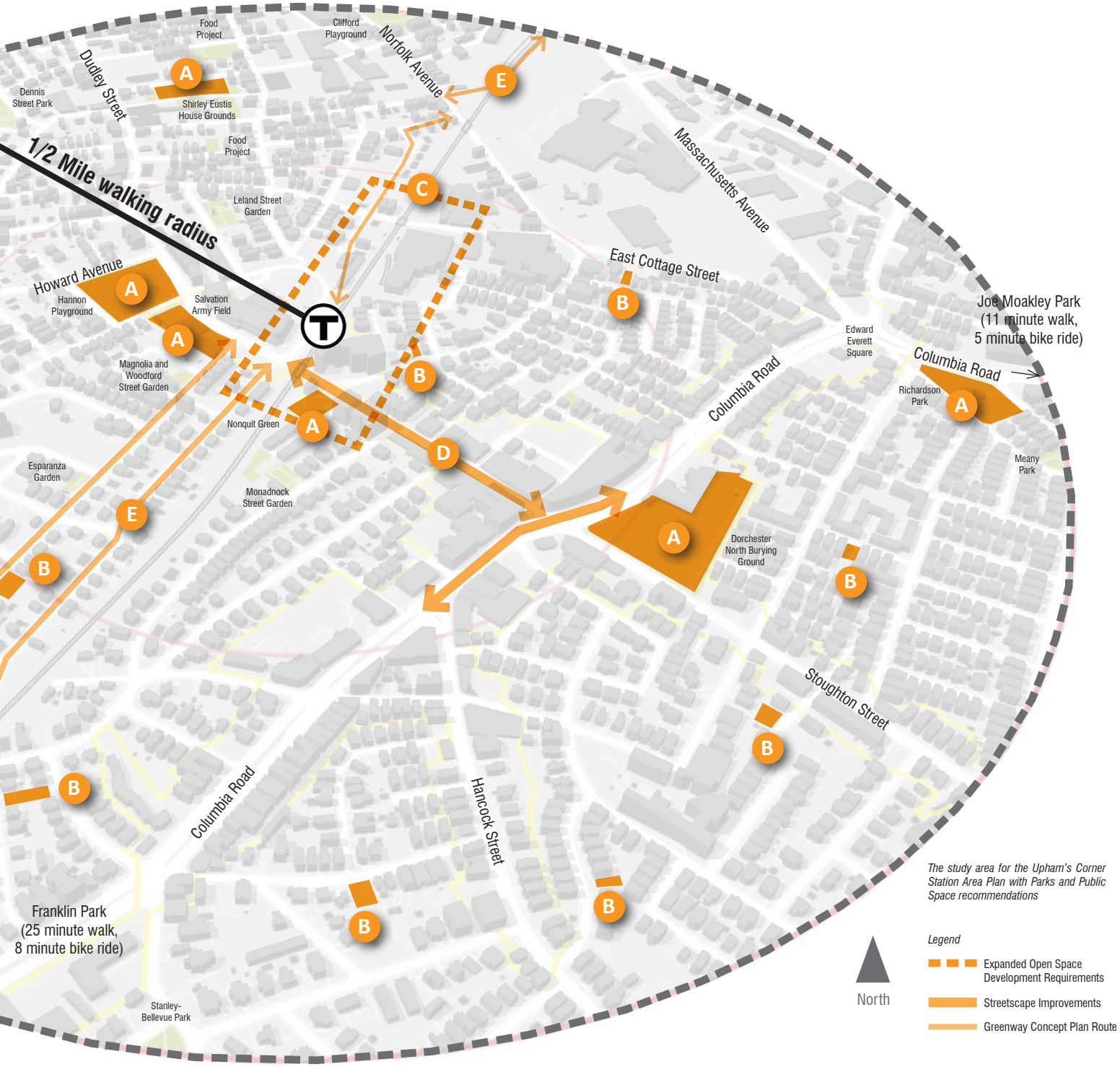

The study area for the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan with Parks and Public Space recommendations

Legend

- Expanded Open Space Development Requirements
- Streetscape Improvements
- Greenway Concept Plan Route

Parks/Public Space

The City of Boston has approximately 15% of its total land area as a percentage of land that is publicly accessible open space. Upham's Corner provides much less publicly accessible open space. The Old North Burying Ground, creates the impression of a large open space at the center of Upham's Corner, but it is a historic site that is not publicly accessible or useful for recreation. The Station Areas deficiency of open space is major opportunity for adding amenity as new development and public realm improvements occur. As redevelopment occurs the preservation and creation of open space will become more precious as a community resource. A portion of the vacant lots within the Station Area that may presently be used as communal open space, may not be dedicated open spaces and could disappear if redeveloped.

Public space in the Station Area fulfills several important functions for the surrounding neighborhoods by providing a community recreation resource, gathering place, green space, amenity and urban agriculture site. New public spaces should fill in the gaps in the existing network of resources and complement broader patterns of open space networks in the City. New public space resources should not duplicate existing amenities, but provide a more comprehensive network of amenities that are responsive to the community's needs. The following approaches have been identified to improve neighborhood access to strategically located open space amenities:

A Publicly Accessible

When viewed from an aerial photograph, Upham's Corner has several well positioned and sizable open spaces distributed near its center. However, several of these are not publicly accessible parks. For example, the historic site of the North Burying Ground is a historic site and park, but is enclosed with a perimeter fence and inaccessible, except for special events. This type of public space resource should be examined for the potential for small portions that may be made publicly accessible or could become useful public open space in Upham's Corner. Other open spaces, both public and private, such as the Nonquit Green, are fenced and gated and have restricted access and hours. These existing open space resources should evolve to provide more equitable access as a shared community amenity.

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B Convert Vacant Parcels

Among the vacant parcels that are available in Upham's Corner. Many of the parcels should be targeted for infill housing as discussed and recommended in the Housing section of the Station Area Plan. A strategic network of parcels should be preserved as part of the parks and open space network in Upham's Corner. This strategic collection of parcels could include a pocket park, playground, or urban agriculture based upon the existing open spaces of the area.

The strategic conversion of vacant lots to useful open spaces or urban agriculture spaces would benefit blocks that do not have open spaces nearby. This type of conversion has been occurring at a grassroots level, but in some cases has not translated to ownership of the land. A community land trust may be a viable mechanism to convert a network of these properties into pocket parks and provide a mechanism by which to maintain them. A model for this type of private, non-profit stewardship of open space resources is the South End Lower Roxbury Open Space Land Trust that preserves and maintains a similar network of modestly scaled community gardens and pockets parks in the South End.

C Development Requirements

The creation of new open spaces can be a part of community benefits that are associated with new development. The City of Boston Zoning Ordinance uses a square foot area per residential unit for such requirements. This type of community benefit requirement can be included in zoning modifications or in specific development guidelines for targeted properties. This type of new open space should also be required to be publicly accessible.

The open space requirement for new development varies by district and subdistrict from 50 to 750 square feet of usable open space per residential unit. The requirement varies based upon the parcel and development type with open space requirement increasing as the number of units provided decreases. In the development scenarios of higher density, transit-oriented, mixed-use projects near the rail station and Main Streets district, an open space requirement of 50 square feet per residential unit is most appropriate.

D Right-of-way Users

The most easily accomplished from the perspective of leveraging a publicly controlled asset is the expansion of the pedestrian portion of the street right-of-way to include small parks. This type of conversion is typically adapting on-street parking spaces into small parks, referred to as parklets. This conversion can be temporary, seasonal or permanent and would benefit the pedestrian environment within a very walkable and active district. The City of Boston has been piloting neighborhood parklet programs. Dudley Street in the Main Street dis-

trict would be an excellent location for added pedestrian space and amenity.

Another right-of-way that could enhance the perception of parks and public space would be the rail right-of-way. A natural vegetated buffer at the rail right-of-way could reinforce the sustainable image of the places along the Corridor, such as Upham's Corner. In some locations, small parklets could be fit into the rail right-of-way near other access points or primary circulation routes. While complications with safety and liability concerns arise for encouraging public access in the rail right-of-way, it could be enhanced as a natural landscape by the strategic addition of trees and other landscape features and amenities.

E Open Space Networks

Upham's Corner is located relatively near to many of the City-wide open space networks and resources. It is located within about a 15 minute walk to the Harborwalk and about 25 minute walk to Franklin Park. Many world-class recreational amenities are even closer by bicycle. For Upham's Corner, safe and enjoyable recreational access to these larger networks would help to alleviate the local deficiency in neighborhood open space. Two current efforts are designed to improve this access and should be supported by the community, the Fairmount Greenway Concept Plan and Boston Bikes Plan both provide suggestions for improved multi-modal connection to broader recreation resources near Upham's Corner.

Bicycle enhancements along Ceylon Street, Magnolia Street, Columbia Road and Massachusetts Avenue would be first steps to unlocking large open space networks. Local bicycle and walking routes to area recreation resources and amenities could be highlighted with community recreation maps that help residents make the connection to these resources. Upham's Corner is uniquely located to offer access to the harbor and the Emerald Necklace.

F Sustainability

The Fairmount Indigo Corridor is composed of healthy neighborhoods and Upham's Corner is an exemplar of that theme. The Station Area approach to sustainability focuses upon three scales of intervention - the Corridor, the District/Neighborhood and the Station.

The economic, social and environmental impacts leveraged by a coordinated effort across many neighborhoods, partners, businesses and residents connected by transit is at its foundation a sustainable endeavor. A sustainable lifestyle along the Corridor is easily attainable and a desirable differentiator in the market for residents and businesses deciding where to locate. At the Corridor scale, the focus is upon creating a community driven sustainable pattern of development that builds upon compact and walkable environments with environmentally friendly infrastructure and community connectivity to open space and healthy food systems.

At the district and neighborhood scale bringing the Corridor level advantages into focus is important with green infrastructure, plantings, and streetscape while reinforcing multi-modal connections and walkability. In terms of green infrastructure this entails retaining and treating stormwater on site, enhanced energy efficiency and conservation, reduction of the urban heat island effect, reduction of light trespass and light pollution and the encourage use of recycled materials. In terms of plant-

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ings and streetscape, this entails native low maintenance species, frequent and abundant street trees, preservation of existing trees, utilization of structural soils and control of invasive species.

Lastly, at the Station scale, the infrastructure of the stations themselves should evolve to be emblematic of the sustainability of the corridor and of the neighborhoods. Showcasing the type of energy, conservation and landscape features described above is important as an icon for healthy and sustainable neighborhoods.

QUALITY OF LIFE

The *Quality of Life* section deals with issues not captured by the other section topics, but also focuses on Arts and Culture in Upham's Corner. Strategies and recommendations focus on the most important aspects of the Station Area that affect the daily life of residents and businesses.

Quality of Life

The Station Area is anchored by the unique cultural asset of the Strand Theatre and a vital collection of community and health centers, historic buildings and residences that provide strong anchors. The following approaches build upon existing amenities to improve quality of life:

A **Art and Culture** - capitalize on the unique district opportunity to showcase public art, artists, and performance.

B **Public Safety** - address resident, business and visitor safety concerns through active and thriving ground floor uses, well-lit pedestrian-oriented streets and a renewed sense of pride.

C **Traffic and Parking** - reduce congestion on Dudley Street and Columbia Road with turn lane improvements, relocated bus stops, and parking management.

D **Community Amenities** - reinforce events and programs at community centers, health centers and training centers through a coordinated network information and displays to connect the community.

E **Sustainability** - become an exemplar of healthy neighborhoods socially, economically and environmentally.

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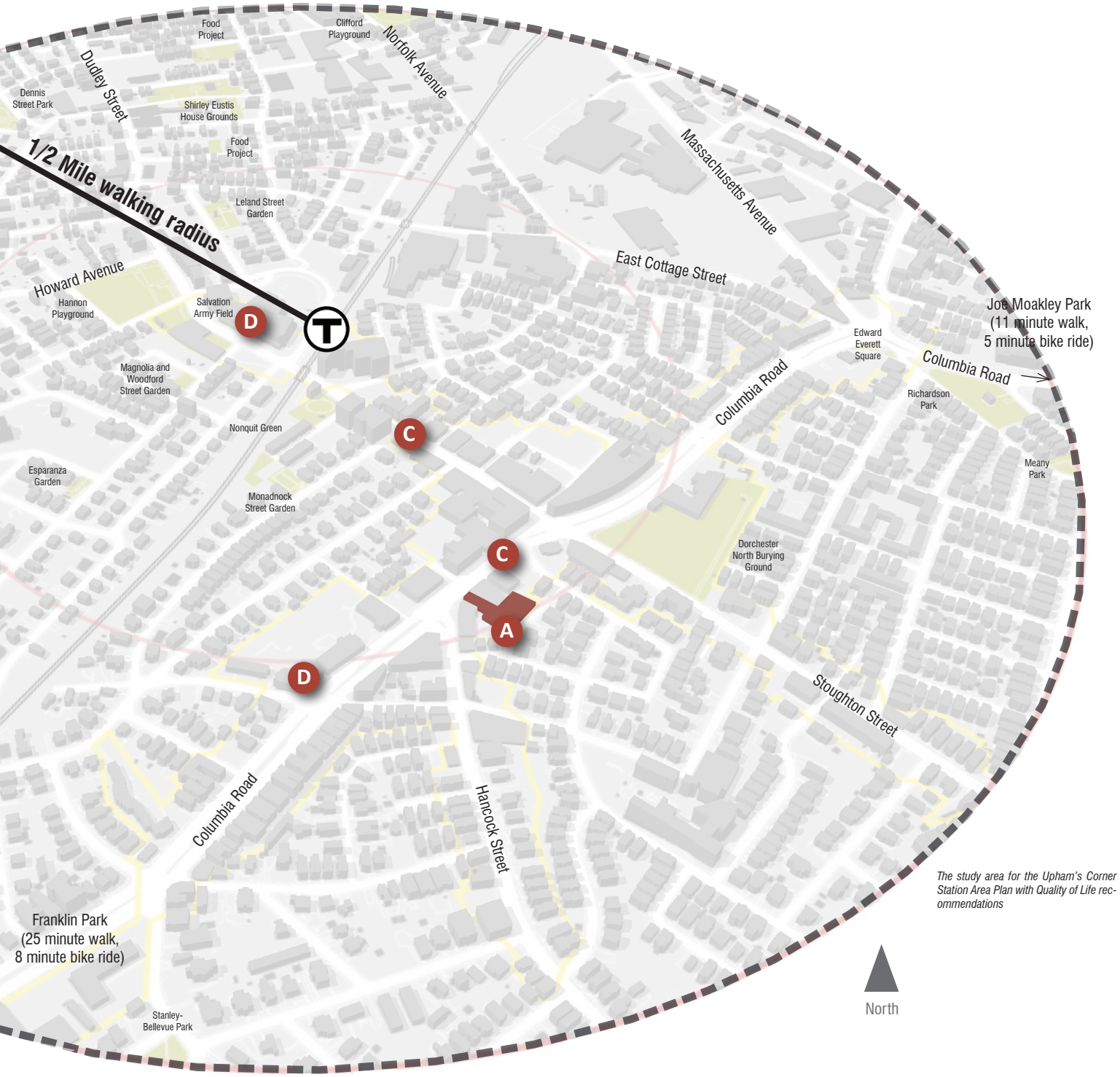

The study area for the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan with Quality of Life recommendations

Quality of Life

Nearly all of the recommendations of the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan directly or indirectly address and improve quality of life in the Station Area. The Quality of Life category of recommendations is intended to address any other specific improvements to quality of life that were not discussed in any of the other categories. The term quality of life may be defined differently in other context, but for this study quality of life refers to the ability of the character, amenity and environment to positively or negatively affect the daily life of residents, businesses and visitors in Upham's Corner.

In general, Upham's Corner is positively contributing to the daily life of its constituents, but improvements could be made to correct some negative issues and to expand the effectiveness of some of the unique opportunities in Upham's Corner to bring a positive impact to the City. One of the opportunities unique to Upham's Corner is a celebration of arts, culture and artists. The Strand Theatre is a unique landmark in the Station Area and its presence in Upham's Corner, and the City could be expanded to bring more positive benefits to residents, businesses and visitors. Other community and cultural assets exist in Upham's Corner that should become a center point for community activity and involvement including a purposeful focus on Station Area sustainability efforts that are underway.

Perhaps more than any other category, negative aspects that cause daily inconvenience, nuisance or safety issues are difficult to look past. If negative quality of life issues persist, other positive aspects or world-class amenities are ineffective. Public safety was a major issue that was raised in many conversations with the community. This must be addressed with the community to create the appropriate context for the other positive elements to flourish. Additionally, traffic and parking were consistently raised as major quality of life issues and is related to public safety and other quality of life issues.

The following approaches build upon existing amenities to improve daily quality of life:

A Art and Culture

Art and culture have a unique ability to improve the daily life of those who see and experience it. As highlighted, Upham's Corner is a unique neighborhood center with arts and culture embedded in its history. The Strand Theatre is a unique arts and culture catalyst that should be the focus of more partnerships and collaboration between the arts community and Upham's Corner. This should be an effort to capitalize on the unique district opportunity to showcase public art, artists, and performance. Additionally, Upham's Corner has a unique history of street art, murals and paintings. This type of expressions should be expanded and highlighted as a tradition in the Station Area. New art should be a distinguishing features of the district and also be a part of district gateways and special entry treatments.

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B Public Safety

All of the strategies and recommendations included in the Station Area Plan could be implemented and positive impact and benefits would all be undermined if public safety is not addressed as well. Throughout the planning process, many residents and businesses expressed safety concerns for Upham's Corner as a major issue. Many of the strategies in other sections would contribute to a safer community, more people on the street is linked to more safety, active and thriving ground floor uses reinforce a safe environment, well-lit pedestrian-oriented streets translate to a sense of safety and comfort. All improvements expand a sense of pride in the community that reinforces safety.

Additionally, direct involvement of the community, City and Police Department in building collaborative partnerships to address public safety and decrease incidents of crime is critical to getting Upham's Corner ready for success and to avoid negative activity that will undermine other positive actions and progress toward the shared community vision.

C Traffic and Parking

Similar to public safety, if a roadway improvement adds attractive sidewalks and trees, but does not reduce congestion on Dudley Street or Columbia Road, residents, visitors and drivers in Upham's Corner will be displeased. The Public Works improvement project to Columbia Road will add a turn lane improvements at Dudley Street and relocated bus stops to improve traffic flow at this critical intersection. Again, many of the strategies and recommendations will directly benefit the amount of traffic and parking availability in Upham's Corner. For example, if more visits to the Main Street district are done on foot or by parking the car once and walking around, less cars will be on the road and less back-ups will occur.

Parking is directly related to parking, as often cars that are searching for parking or that decide to double park generate a significant amount of local traffic. Enhancing a simple parking system within the district that patrons, businesses and visitors can use easily and comfortably will have a very big impact on the district.

D Community Amenities

Upham's Corner features an existing network of community centers, health centers and training centers. Each of these resources offers programs, events and support for the surrounding community. Each of these resources should be brought together to reinforce events and programs at community centers, health centers and training centers through a coordinated network information and displays to connect the community.

E Sustainability

Many features of sustainability are embodied in the location of Upham's Corner and in the recommendations of this Station Area Plan. The type of urban neighborhoods that are supported by walkability, local commerce and transit are a model for sustainable communities. One of the quality of life goals and a differentiator for Upham's Corner could be to focus on becoming an exemplar of healthy neighborhoods socially, economically and environmentally. This type of focus on sustainability would build upon many of the existing programs and practices within the City of Boston including LEED ND, the Boston Complete Streets Guidelines, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department Sustainable Design Guidelines, the Boston Water and Sewer Commission Stormwater BMP Guidance Document and the Fairmount Greenway Concept Plan.

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Dudley Street, Upham's Corner

Hartford Street, Upham's Corner

UPHAM'S CORNER STATION AREA PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTIONS

Upham's Corner Implementation Actions

The Implementation Actions are the critical components of Station Area strategies highlighted as actionable items.

The community vision outlined for Upham's Corner is not achieved through a single action or solution, but through a series of purposeful and strategic changes that position the Station Area for a positive and incremental evolution over time. This continuum of positive change is already underway and can be expedited with the following key actions. The stewards of this effort include local the City with its authorities, departments and agencies, local economic development corporations, local community advocates, the Fairmount Indigo Collaborative, community businesses and community residents. Each of the following implementation actions have a lead actor and supporting stewards, but all require attention and focus and support from the community.

Attract Redevelopment

The disposition of the Maxwell Property provides a very important opportunity for the City and community to promote Upham's Corner and to engage private investment with enthusiasm and positivity. In strategic locations, adopting a development friendly tone within the community along with several of the actions listed below will be an effective first step to attracting strategic redevelopment to other key properties in the Station Area and attracting investment into the community.

Given the economic and real estate context of the neighborhoods along the Fairmount Indigo Corridor it may be difficult to gain interest in the properties that are currently available for redevelopment. A catalyst is important for the momentum of private investment and redevelopment to become self-sustaining. The initial projects may require some combination of subsidy, write-down of the land value, increased entitlements or other special programs or circumstances to attract redevelopment. The land holdings the City already has under its control may provide enough flexibility to create the types of incentives that are needed. The long term benefit to the City of a successful redevelopment project at critical locations in Upham's Corner may justify a more aggressive disposition of the properties than may be required in other parts of the City.

Modify Zoning

The community vision that has been articulated in the Upham's Corner Station Area Plan would require zoning modifications to be implemented. The recommendations for modifying zoning have been outlined and discussed with the Working Advisory Group (WAG). The WAG expressed support for the community vision and for the zoning modifications that would address implementation of the plan.

The first recommended modification is to the boundary of the Neighborhood Shopping (NS) Subdistrict in Upham's Corner. Several key redevelopment sites at gateway locations into Upham's Corner are not currently included in this district and should be included to reinforce continuity in the district and enable a higher density of redevelopment than would currently be allowed. Similarly the boundary of the Neighborhood Design Overlay

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District (NDOD) should be modified to bring continuity to the application of design guidelines.

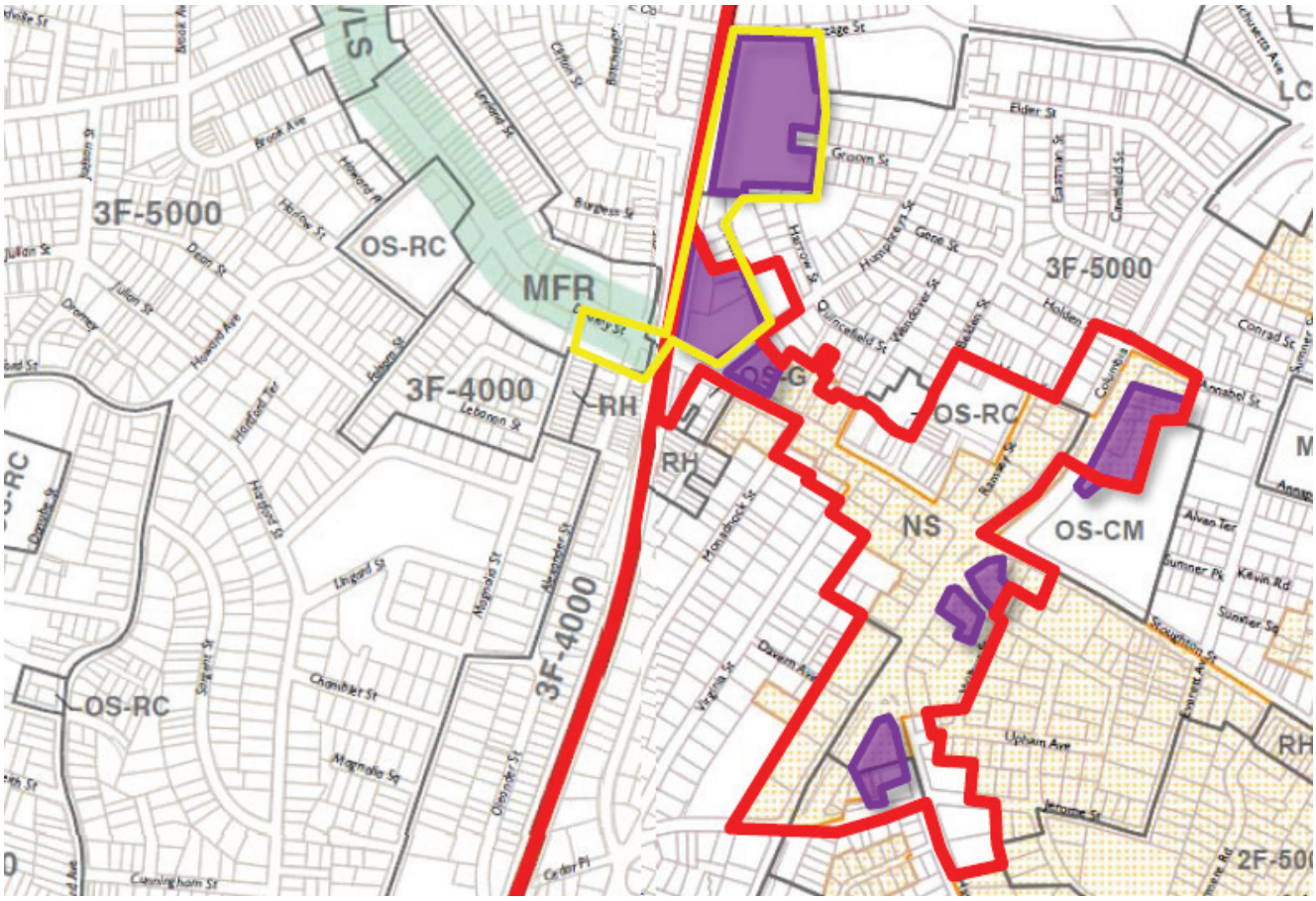
The second recommended modification would also affect the Neighborhood Shopping (NS) Subdistrict in Upham's Corner. To be consistent with the character and scale of potential redevelopment within the Main Street District that the community vision reflects, an increase in dimensional regulations would be required. The current maximum building height is 40 feet. Based upon the conceptual redevelopment and feasibility studies, it is recommended that the maximum building height is increased to 65 feet. The current maximum FAR is 1.0 and it is recommended that the maximum FAR is 2.0.

Changes to NS Subdistrict

	Height	FAR	Parking Ratios
Current	Max 40'	1.0	1.5 per unit; 2/1,000 GSF comm.
Proposed	Max 65'	2.0	0.5 or 0.6 per unit; 1/1,000 GSF comm.

Additionally, a Gateway Subdistrict should be established adjacent to the station that would allow more density for transit-oriented development to reinforce the station gateway and enhance positive activity adjacent to the rail station. The characteristics of this gateway district would be to allow a maximum building height of approximately 100 feet (8 to 10 stories) and a maximum FAR of 4.0.

Proposed expansion of the NS Neighborhood Shopping subdistrict boundary in Upham's Corner (below in red) and a potential Gateway Overlay District boundary (below in yellow)



This type of modification would help to create an incentive for redevelopment adjacent to the station and would allow the type of transit-oriented development that would take advantage of this unique location at Upham's Corner.

Lastly, modifications to parking requirements in Upham's Corner in the Neighborhood Shopping (NS) Subdistrict and proposed Gateway Subdistrict would be consistent with the enhanced transit access and future use in this location. Parking requirements should be decreased to acknowledge the Station Area as a transit-advantaged location and to provide more potential land area for active uses. The redevelopment studies created through this process used parking ratios of 0.5 and 0.6 space per unit and 1 space per 1,000 square feet of retail or commercial space.

In the context of growing Upham's Corner into a more walkable and active district, parking minimums may not be useful. Small businesses should not be penalized for not providing parking due to cost or site constraints. In fact, parking maximums should be explored to maintain a strong sense of place in Upham's Corner with continuity of buildings that conceal district parking areas.

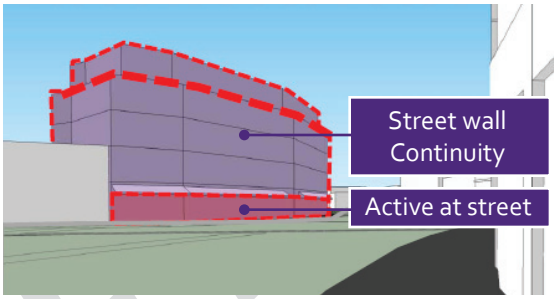
Enable Development Guidelines

Many important community goals have been formulated and articulated through this planning process. Existing urban design guidelines are in effect for the Neighborhood Shopping (NS) subdistrict and Neighborhood Design Overlay District and should be expanded to articulate in more detail the shared community vision that has emerged through this process. The language below provides both the intentions and outline guidelines that can be used for this purpose.

Social and Active - Ground Floor - Redevelop strategically to attract and revitalize main street activity with continuous, active and transparent ground floor uses supported by new upper floor residential uses

- Orientation and street wall - continuity of street wall, building entries oriented to primary street, active and transparent ground floor, anchor active corners and gateway

Development scenarios illustrating development guidelines



Vital and Valuable - Street Wall - Target vacancies and surface parking with prominent street frontage. Preserve and enhance cultural assets with new and redeveloped properties that complement the scale, orientation, street frontage and block perimeter of historic development patterns

- Building height and massing - consistent with historic context, infill gaps in activity and building frontage, create continuity within the Main Street district to the station, respect existing context with building stepbacks, massing and form

Development scenarios illustrating development guidelines

Walkable and Safe - Sidewalks and Crossings - Reinforce district vitality by improving walkability and the quality of the pedestrian environment through public

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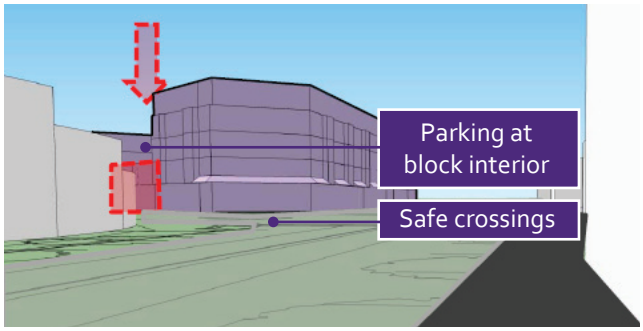
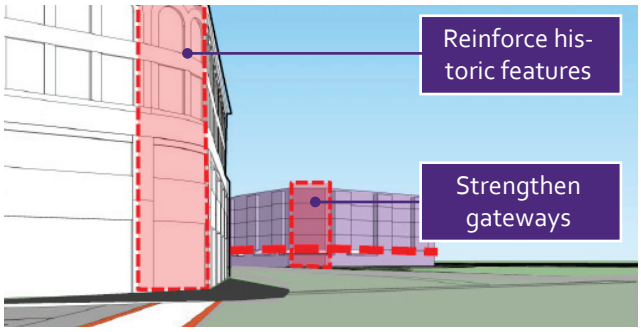
realm enhancements for sidewalks, street crossings and open spaces to create comfortable and inviting places.

- Access and parking - continuity in public realm treatment, safe street crossings, adequate lighting and signage, parking at block interior and rear of building, use on-street parking



Recognizable - Gateway Sites - Reinforce gateway locations as points of entry into Upham's Corner with building orientation, massing and continuity of building frontage at the street combined with concentrated landscape and signage features. **Promote placemaking** through inventive open spaces, integrated public art, diverse architectural assets and sustainable environments.

- Building location and treatment of public realm - sense of arrival and enclosure, reinforce a continuous and comfortable walking district, expanded landscape and signage at gateways, appropriate building scale.



Development guidelines for specific sites may also be created. Similar to the Key Development Sites that were tested in this process. Specific development guidelines should include the following elements: Building Height and Massing, Orientation and Street Wall, Building Character and Materials, Access and Parking, Service and Loading, Site Open Space and Landscaping, Sustainable Development, Public Realm and Streetscape Guidelines

Leverage Publicly-Owned Land

City-owned property should be strategically and sequentially disposed to build momentum for redevelopment. A public disposition and community process should establish development guidelines and potential community benefits for each property. The guidelines should be consistent with the overall vision identified in the Station Area Plan and the specific development guidelines referenced for particular key sites.

The sites should be sequentially disposed as to not compete with each other or packaged together if directly adjacent to invite a variety of development responses. Additionally, the City-owned infill properties on residential streets could be used to expand a City pilot program for new net-zero sustainable construction for residential infill. This type of program could provide financial incentives or land write-downs to attract builders to the program.

Reinforce the Main Street District

Build upon the strength of the existing businesses and vitality of the Main Street District with facade and signage improvements working with the City of Boston Main Streets Program. Consider a special assessment of business improvement district program in which businesses would contribute to an improvement and maintenance fund for the district. The funds could be used for agreed upon improvements or create a revolving loan fund to assist business owners.

The collaboration and agreement between district business owners should be strengthened and expanded to include coordination of events, promotions and parking.

Enhance Walkability and Mobility

Unlocking the benefits of enhanced rail access at Upham's Corner is as much about the characteristics of enhanced access to the station as it is about the characteristics of rail service at the station. The Station Area must be a safe and comfortable walkable environment that provides convenient and accessible connections to other modes of transportation.

Invest in Street Improvements

In a Station Area with many demands upon street network, it is very important that the streets and public realm perform multiple functions. Improved streetscape conditions and traffic signal improvements are critical for traffic and bus transit circulation. The addition of expanded sidewalk and public plaza space is equally as important at the center of the Main Street District. The street network must be viewed as a rich and active public space that is used by cars, transit, pedestrians and bikes.

Promote Main Street Economic Development

Upham's Corner should take a proactive lead in promoting the Fairmount Corridor and building it up as it evolves so that the long term synergy and opportunities that the Corridor brings will return to Upham's in the future. A "match-making" initiative should be undertaken to approach the type of food-oriented tenants the community would like to see in the district, that support the activity at the Strand Theater, and connect them to potential properties or with landlords or developers. These efforts should continue to partner with the City's Office of Business Development and work with the City to support revitalization efforts.

Share and Manage Parking

A concept for parking management in Upham's Corner is outlined in the *Getting Around* section of recommendations. The benefit of a coordinated and managed approach to parking in the Station Area is to reinforce efficient land use, convenience, and high levels of activity near the station and Main Street district resulting in a higher level of utilization of the existing public and private surface parking supply in Upham's Corner.

Several implementation actions are required to advance this concept. First, among the Main Street District businesses and stakeholders, a coordinated approach to shared parking and parking management should be created and agreed to such that parking becomes an asset of the district, not of individual properties. This would include modifying the layout of any private parking lots that may be joined on adjacent lots. This type of layout modification can result in more parking and more efficient circulation if both property owners form an agreement as to use and access.

Additionally, the City of Boston should develop special parking considerations for Upham's Corner that may be associated with the District including mechanisms to allow and support shared parking agreements between property owners in the district. As part of the Subdistrct Zoning amendment, policies could outline that formal agreements for sharing parking between properties could result in reduced parking requirements for both

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properties. This type of parking amendment for the district would create an incentive for shared parking and encourage the adoption by owners. Improvements to the municipal parking lots at Belden Street should also be considered. Improved wayfinding signage to the central parking lots with enhanced landscape and lighting at the lots would promote use of the lots and encourage visitors to park once in this convenient location and walk throughout the district.

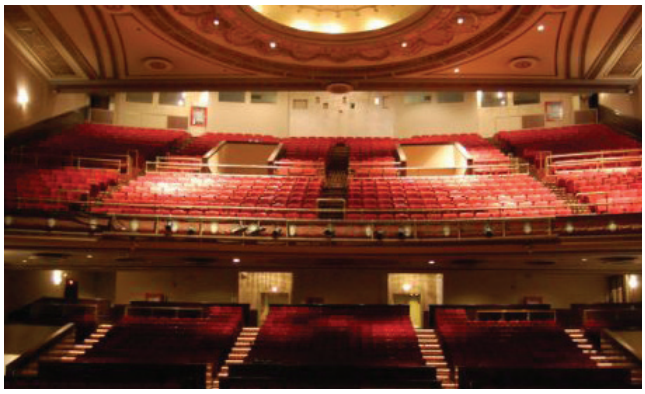

Photo Credit: Strand Theatre

Leverage the Strand Theatre

Several parallel efforts are underway to continue to improve and expand the cultural and event programming at the Strand Theatre including efforts from the City of Boston and grassroots community efforts. Upham's Corner is unique among Boston neighborhoods to have an operational historic landmark theatre. It is also uniquely positioned to be able to work with the City to leverage this asset for the community. The efforts to bring attention to the Strand Theatre and to help revive its prominence in the city should not solely focus on the Strand and its programming.

One path to mutual success is to embrace the Strand's calendar of events outside of the theatre. Each event should be viewed by the Upham's Corner Main Street and business community as a moment to showcase Upham's Corner and to test new ideas and improvements. For example, businesses should adjust hours of operation and cater specials to the event and visiting audience. Specials and local advertisements should be featured on event programs and playbills. Directional signage to parking resources and shared parking relationships should be tested during events to refine and improve implementation and policies.

Expand Public Art Programs

Beyond the Strand Theatre, the cultural and arts activities at Upham's Corner should be cultivated and expanded to build the district into a arts concentration in the City.

The activities, art events, and installations created as part of the ArtPlace initiative are extremely valuable cultural and community building features. The use of public art to promote Upham's Corner as an active, vital and creative place should be expanded and include both temporary and permanent installations.

The art murals that are a part of Upham's Corner should be expanded upon and become a significant feature of positive community expressions. The focus of this effort should be upon the most visible and well-traveled portions of the Station Area and should be designed to maximize impact and public engagement.

Other events in Upham's Corner and at other locations on the Fairmount Indigo Corridor should be promoted during Strand Theatre events.

FAIRMOUNT INDIGO CORRIDOR

CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh
Mayor

Boston
Redevelopment
Authority

UPHAM'S CORNER
STATION AREA PLAN ***DRAFT***
FEBRUARY 2014

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