



Western Avenue Corridor Study and Rezoning Community Meeting

March 30, 2021



**boston planning &
development agency**



bit.ly/westerncorridor
[@bostonplans](https://twitter.com/bostonplans)

Agenda

1. Housekeeping
2. Background
3. Where We've Been and Where We're Going
4. What We've Heard
5. Planning Framework & Recommendations
6. Discussion and Q&A



1

Housekeeping

Project Website

bit.ly/westerncorridor

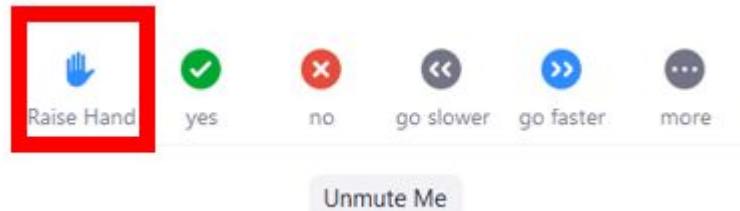
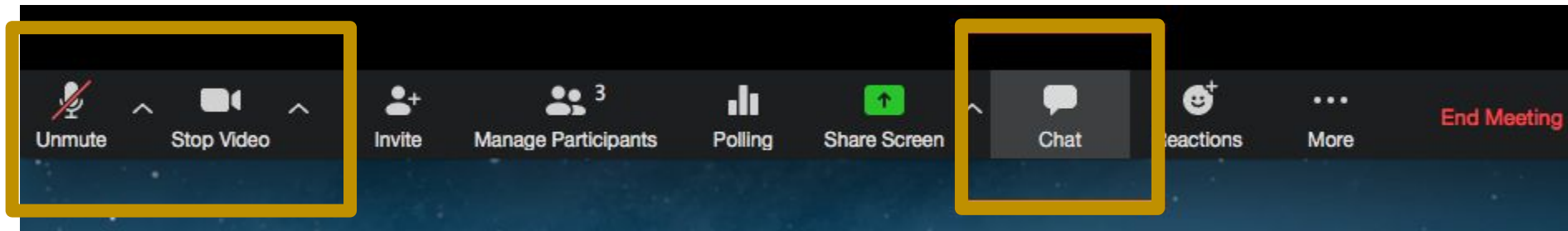
- Presentations (including tonight's!)
- Recordings from virtual meetings
- Zoning Toolkit and Housing Toolkit



Zoom Tips

Your controls should be available at the bottom of the screen.

Clicking on these symbols activates different features:



Virtual Meeting Protocols

- During the presentation you can ask questions through the chat feature. Depending on the question, we will answer it in writing in the chat box, verbally, or wait until the Q&A period.
- During verbal Q&A, please be respectful of each other's time so that all may participate in the discussion.
- You can always set up a conversation with Gerald Autler, Gerald.Autler@boston.gov.



Meeting Recording

- The BPDA will be recording this meeting and posting it on its website at bit.ly/WesternCorridor. The recording will include the presentation, Q&A, and public comments afterwards.
- Also, it is possible that participants may be recording the meeting with their phone cameras or other devices.
- If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.



2

Background

Why This Study?

- Current zoning **doesn't support the changes** envisioned in previous neighborhood planning*:
 - **Housing** is a high priority, but not an allowed use
 - Current zoning doesn't provide **appropriate tools** to achieve desired planning outcomes
 - **Allowed density is insufficient** to support desired development and benefits, e.g., high percentage of affordable housing
- Developers are eager to invest in the neighborhood; we want to create a regulatory framework to **guide development** and leverage it for desired outcomes.

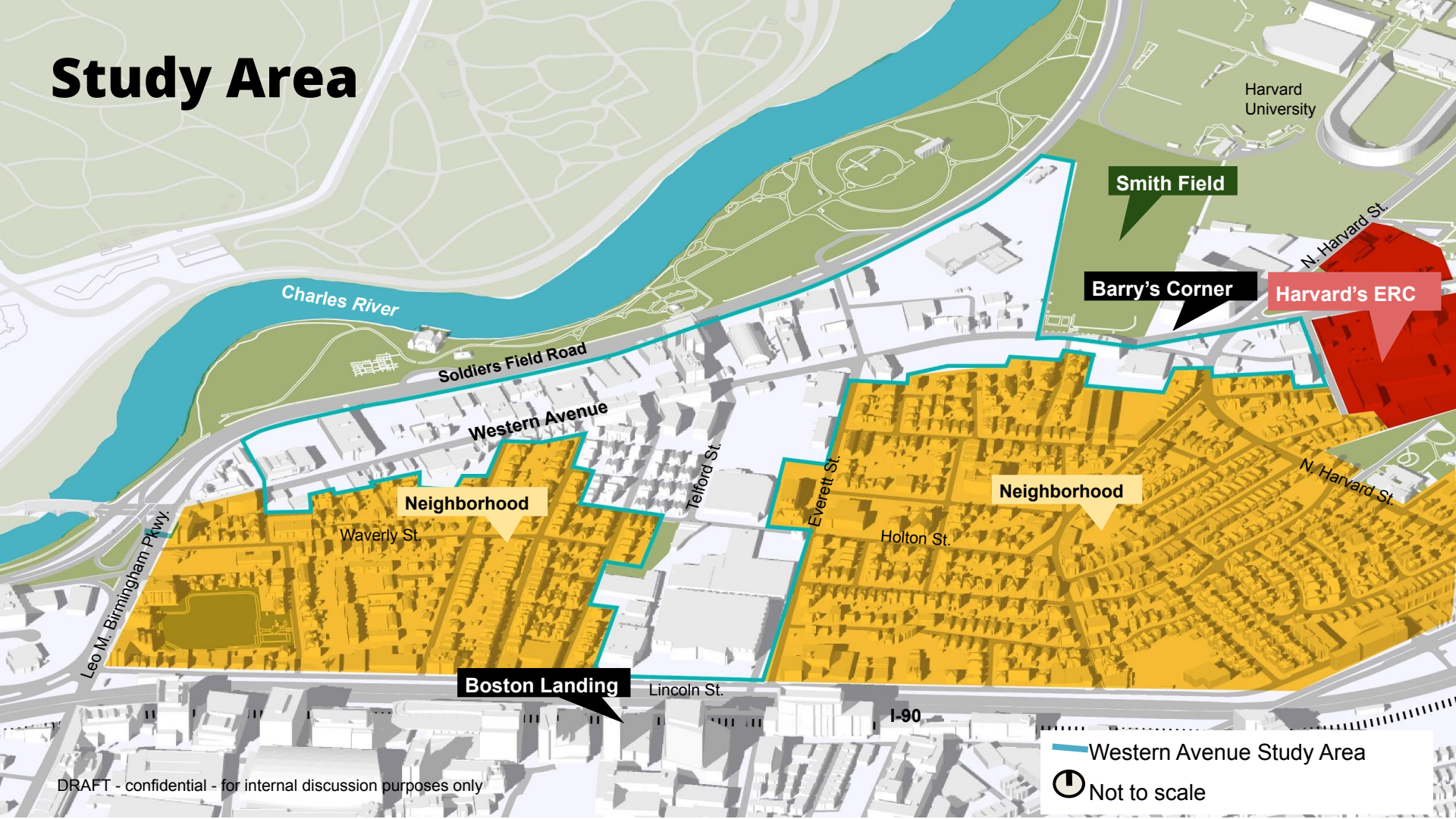


Why This Study?

- The initiative is intended to:
 - Create a **compelling vision** for the Study Area*
 - Recommend **zoning** informed by that vision (and grounded in financial feasibility and transportation modeling)
 - Propose **multimodal improvements** to Western Avenue and other transportation enhancements

As indicated in the map of Study Area, the initiative will NOT propose changes to zoning of the existing residential fabric.

Study Area



Harvard University

Smith Field

Barry's Corner

Harvard's ERC

Charles River

Soldiers Field Road

Western Avenue

Neighborhood

Waverly St.

Telford St.

Neighborhood

Holton St.

Everett St.

N. Harvard St.

Leo M. Birmingham Pkwy.

Boston Landing

Lincoln St.

I-90

Western Avenue Study Area

Not to scale

Team



Gerald Autler
Project Manager



Rosa Herrero
Downtown &
Neighborhood
Planning



Matt Martin
Urban Design



Tad Read
Transportation &
Infrastructure
Planning

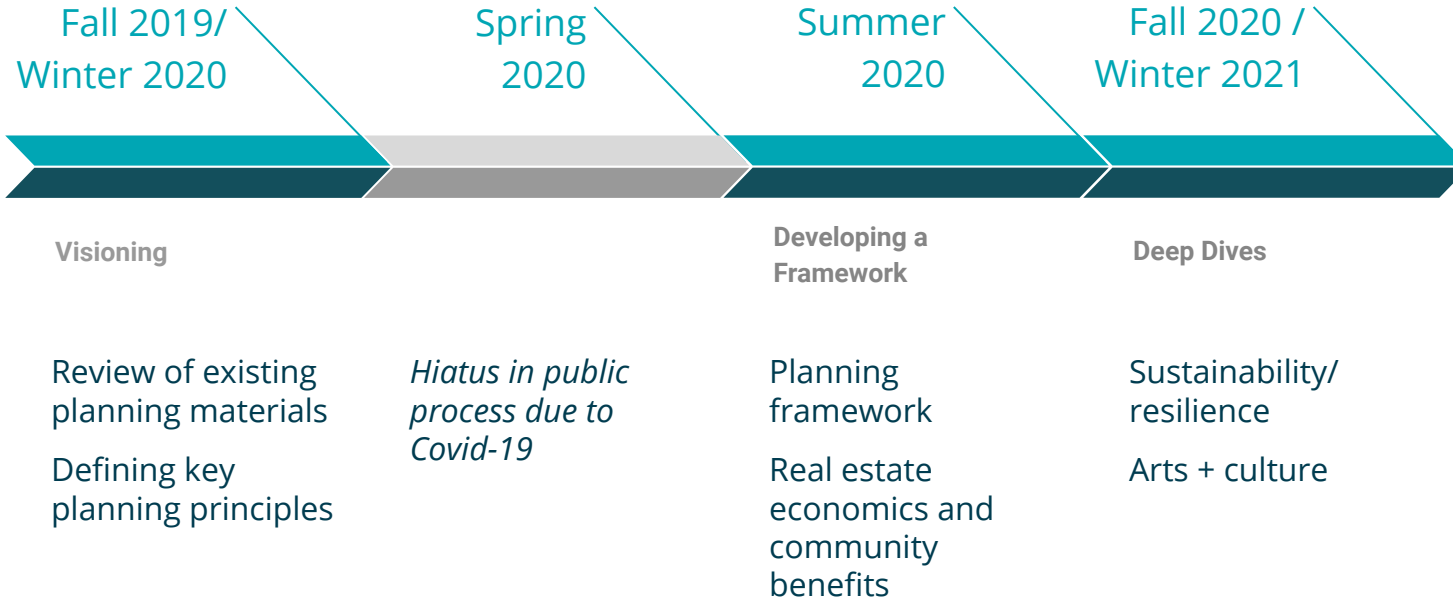
Additional BPDA staff include: Joe Blankenship, Te-Ming Chang, Meera Deean, Jim Fitzgerald, Jack Halverson, Jeong-Jun Ju, Prataap Patrose

Other departments include: BPDA GIS, Graphics, Research; BTD, Parks.

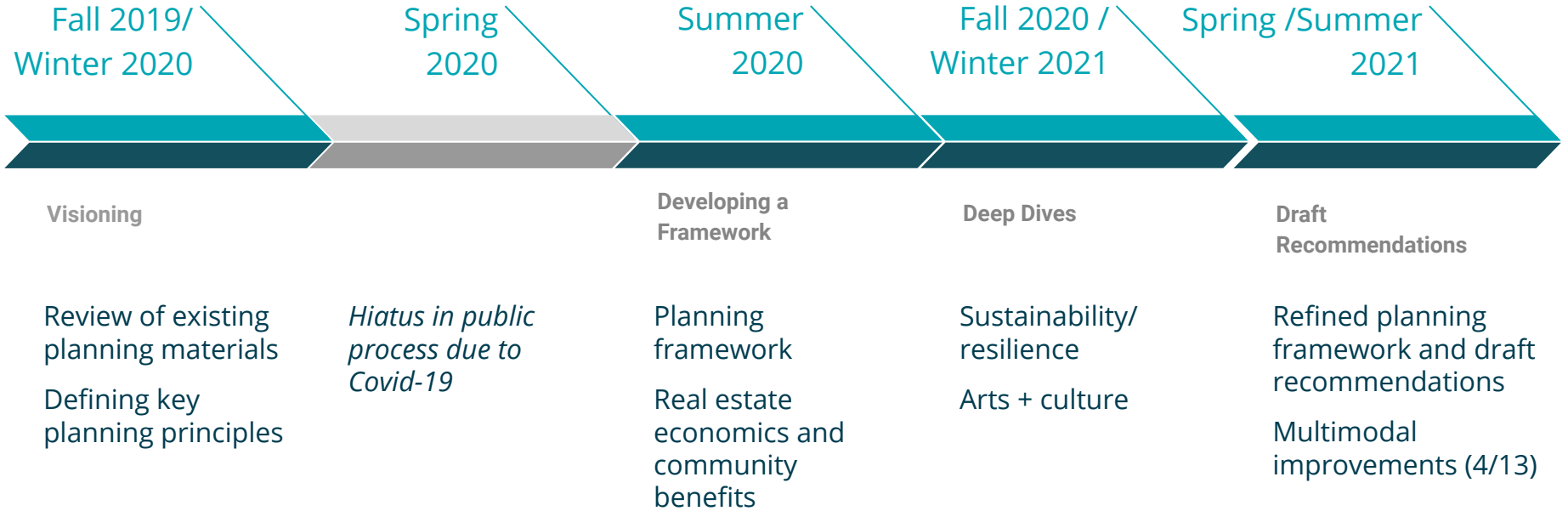
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Where We've Been...and Where We're Going

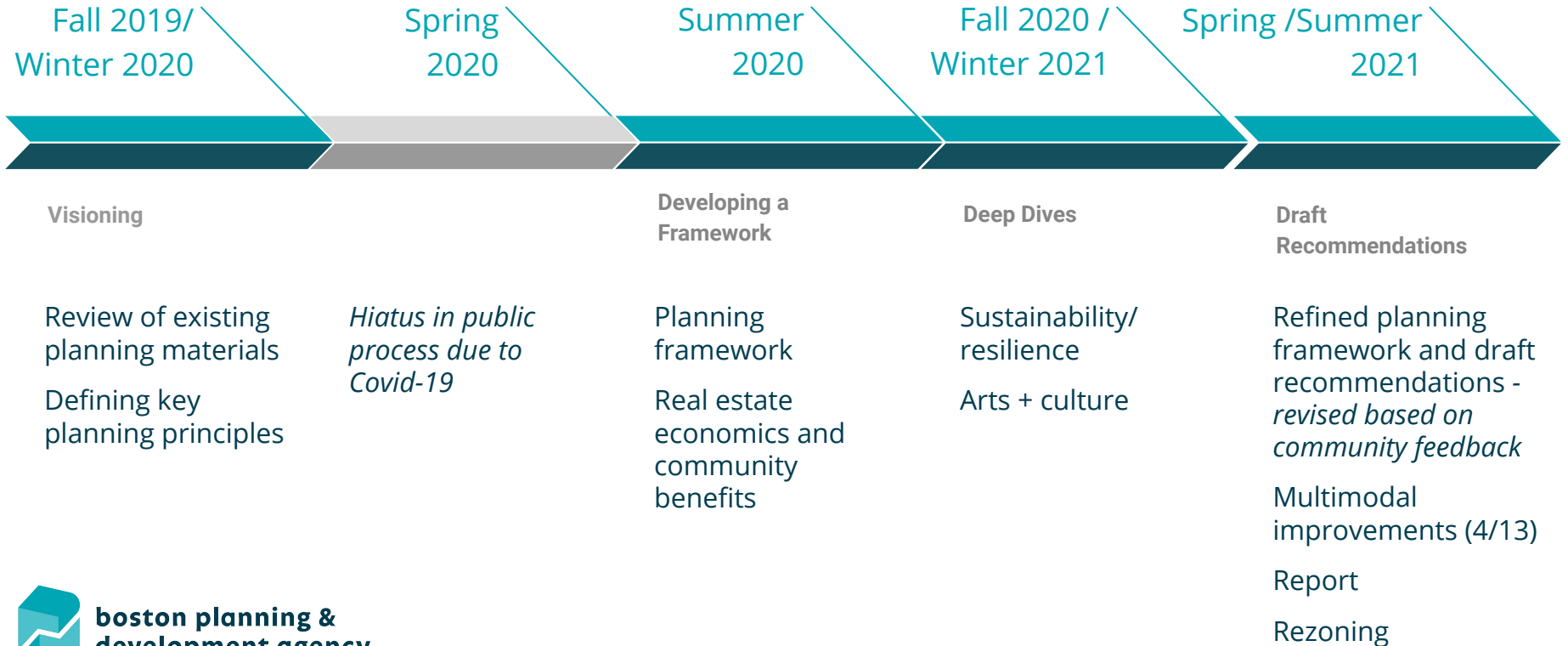
Where We've Been



Where We Are



Where We're Going



Transportation-Focused Meeting April 13

- Registration link:

<http://bit.ly/westernaveapr13>

- Transportation questions and modeling approach
- Potential multi-modal improvements to Western Avenue
 - Short-term: reallocate existing right-of-way
 - Long-term: mandate setbacks in order to widen right-of-way



4

What We've Heard



Planning Principles

- Open Space, Public Realm, and Placekeeping
- Connections
- Western Avenue Character
- Land Use
- Building Dimensions and Character

Western Avenue Corridor Study & Rezoning
Preserve. Enhance. Grow.

WESTERN AVENUE MAIN STREET


- **Zoning [and Implementation] Goals:**
 - Encourage a **mix of land uses** and **enough density** to support an **active streetscape**.
 - Create **affordable retail** spaces that serve the neighborhood.
 - Leverage development to create an **improved public realm**.
- **Possible Precedents:**
 - Allston Village, Brighton Center, Coolidge Corner, Central Square, Jamaica Plain.



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BUILDING DIMENSIONS AND CHARACTER

- **Zoning [and Implementation] Goals:**
 - Generally, place **more height on north side of Western Ave** vs. south
 - **Step back buildings on north side of Western Ave** so that height is massed closer to SFR
 - Within these zones, **determine where greater height is appropriate and where not**
 - Ensure buildings do not turn their backs to Soldiers Field Road.
 - Encourage **appropriate massing of buildings** to widen public realm and ensure variety of character.
- **Possible Precedents:**
 - South End



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OPEN SPACE, PUBLIC REALM, AND PLACEMAKING



Highgate Park, Cambridge
Lyfhour Park, East Boston
Royal Square, Brighton
Green Mt. South Boston

Western Avenue Corridor Study & Rezoning
Preserve. Enhance. Grow.

LAND USE

- **Zoning [and Implementation] Goals:**
 - Encourage **long-term redevelopment** of available properties around Telford and Everett Streets.
 - **Attract a mix of land uses.**
 - Create housing with a **significant affordable component**.
 - Attract diverse, **neighborhood-serving retail uses**.
- **Possible Precedents:**
 - Market Central, Cambridge
 - 20% affordable units
 - Unit types include micro-units, "roommate units," to 3-bedroom affordable family units
 - 17,000 sf retail, mostly smaller spaces geared towards independent retailers



5

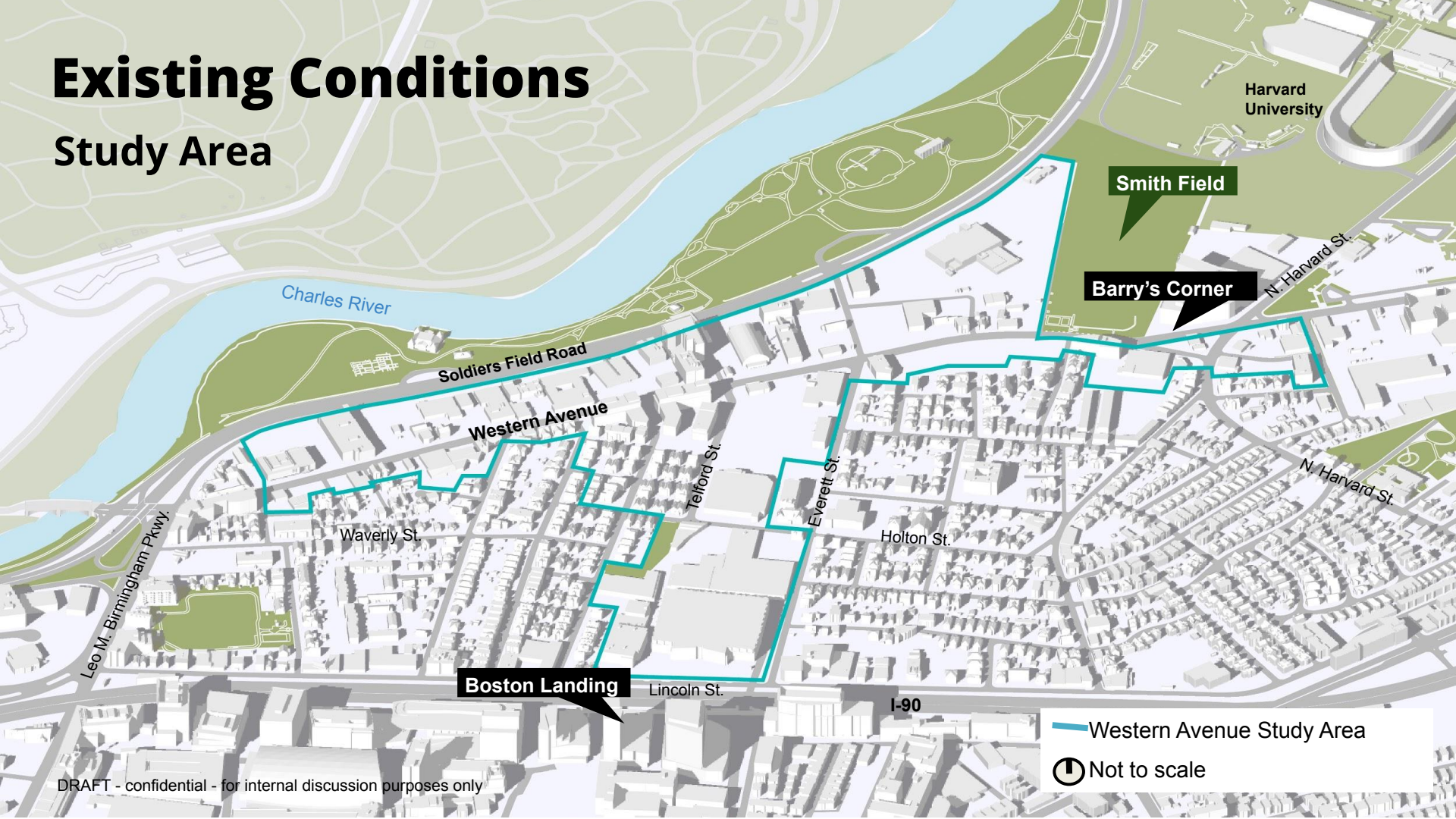
Planning Framework & Recommendations



Workshop, October 30, 2019

Existing Conditions

Study Area



Charles River

Harvard University

Smith Field

Barry's Corner

Soldiers Field Road

Western Avenue

Waverly St.

Telford St.

Everett St.

Holton St.

N. Harvard St.

Leo M. Birmingham Pkwy.

Boston Landing

Lincoln St.

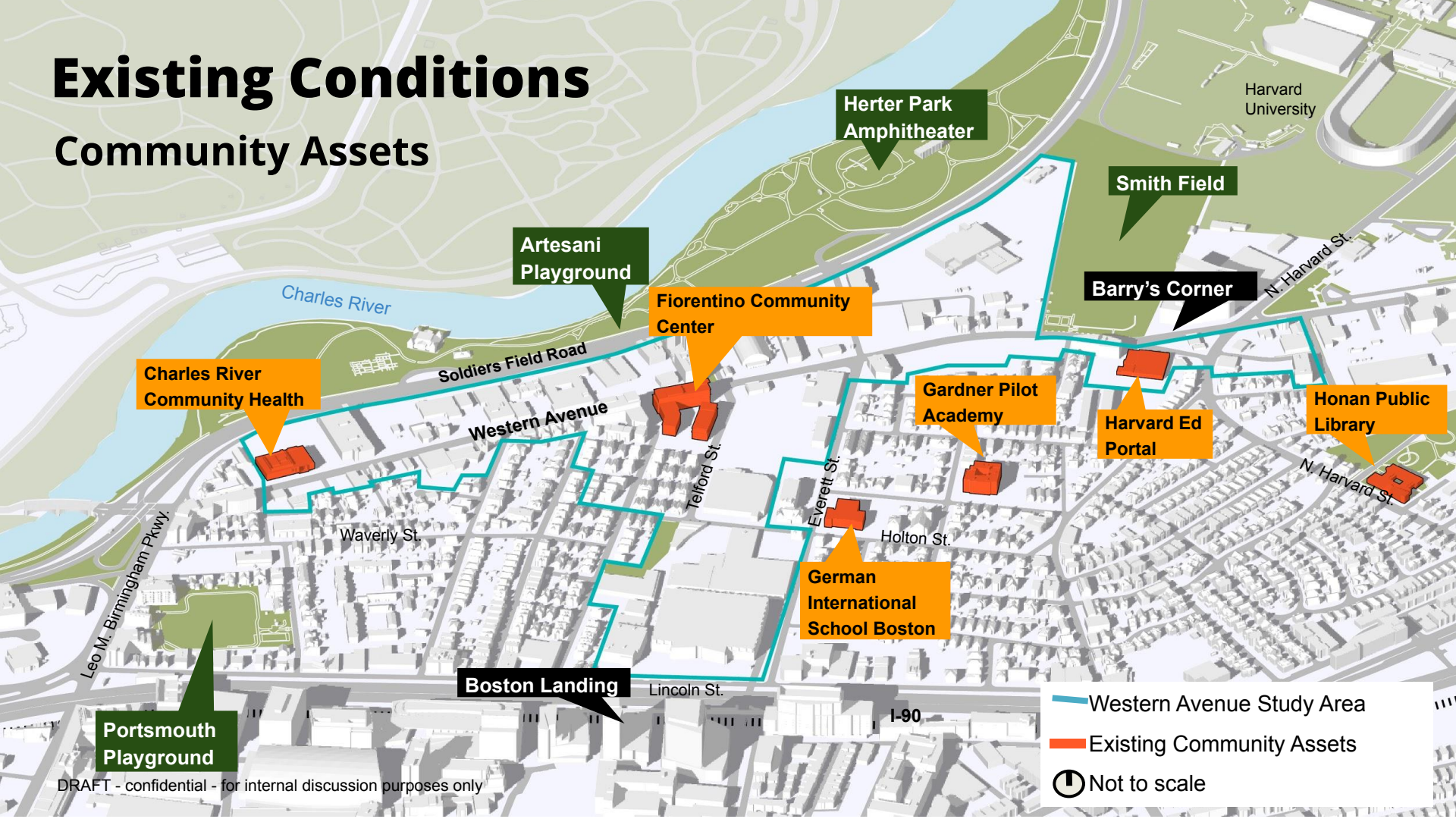
I-90

Western Avenue Study Area

Not to scale

Existing Conditions

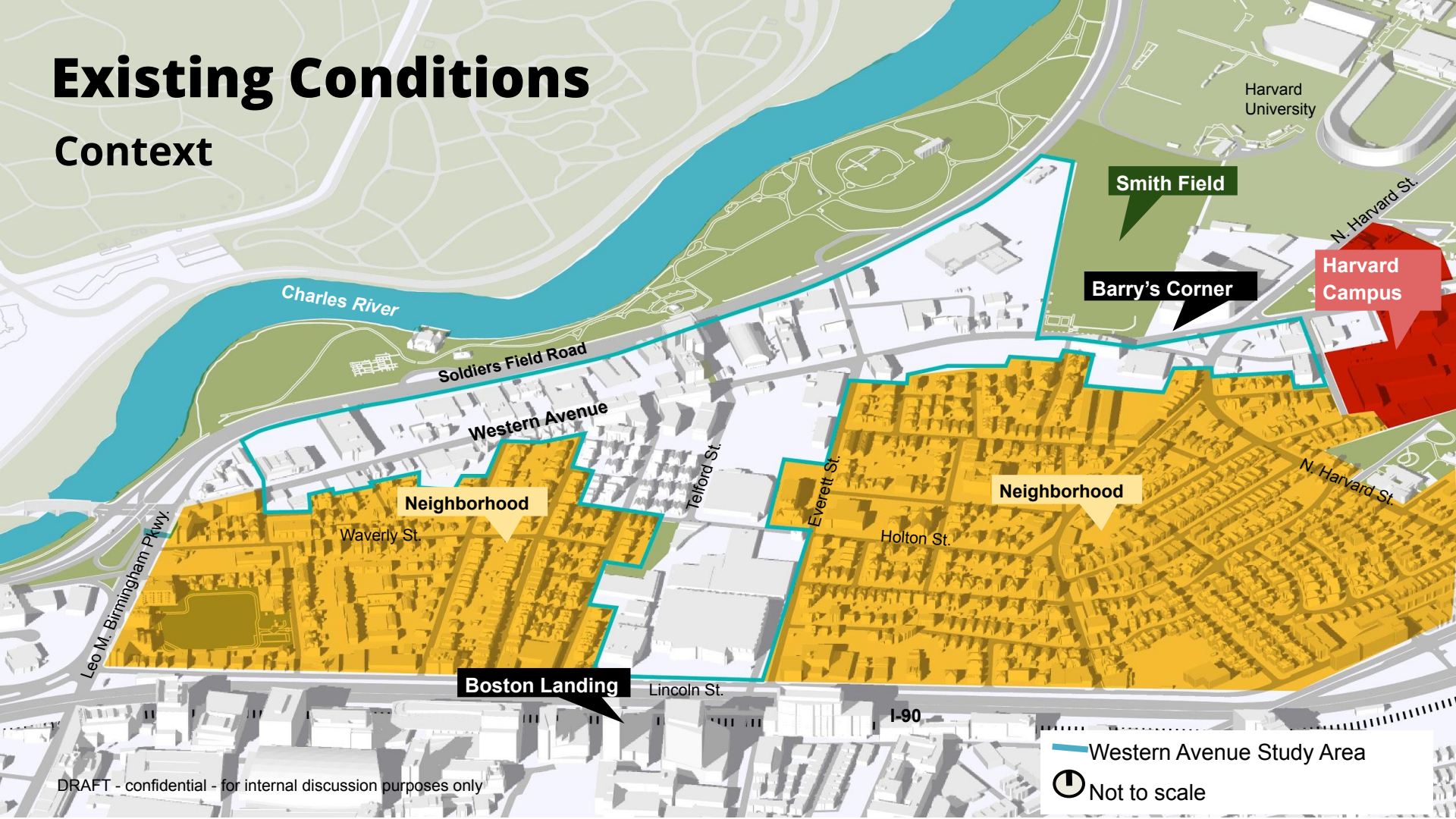
Community Assets



- Western Avenue Study Area
- Existing Community Assets
- Not to scale

Existing Conditions

Context



Charles River

Harvard University

Smith Field

Barry's Corner

Harvard Campus

N. Harvard St.

Soldiers Field Road

Western Avenue

Neighborhood

Waverly St.

Telford St.

Neighborhood

Everett St.

Holton St.

N. Harvard St.

Leo M. Birmingham Pkwy.

Boston Landing

Lincoln St.

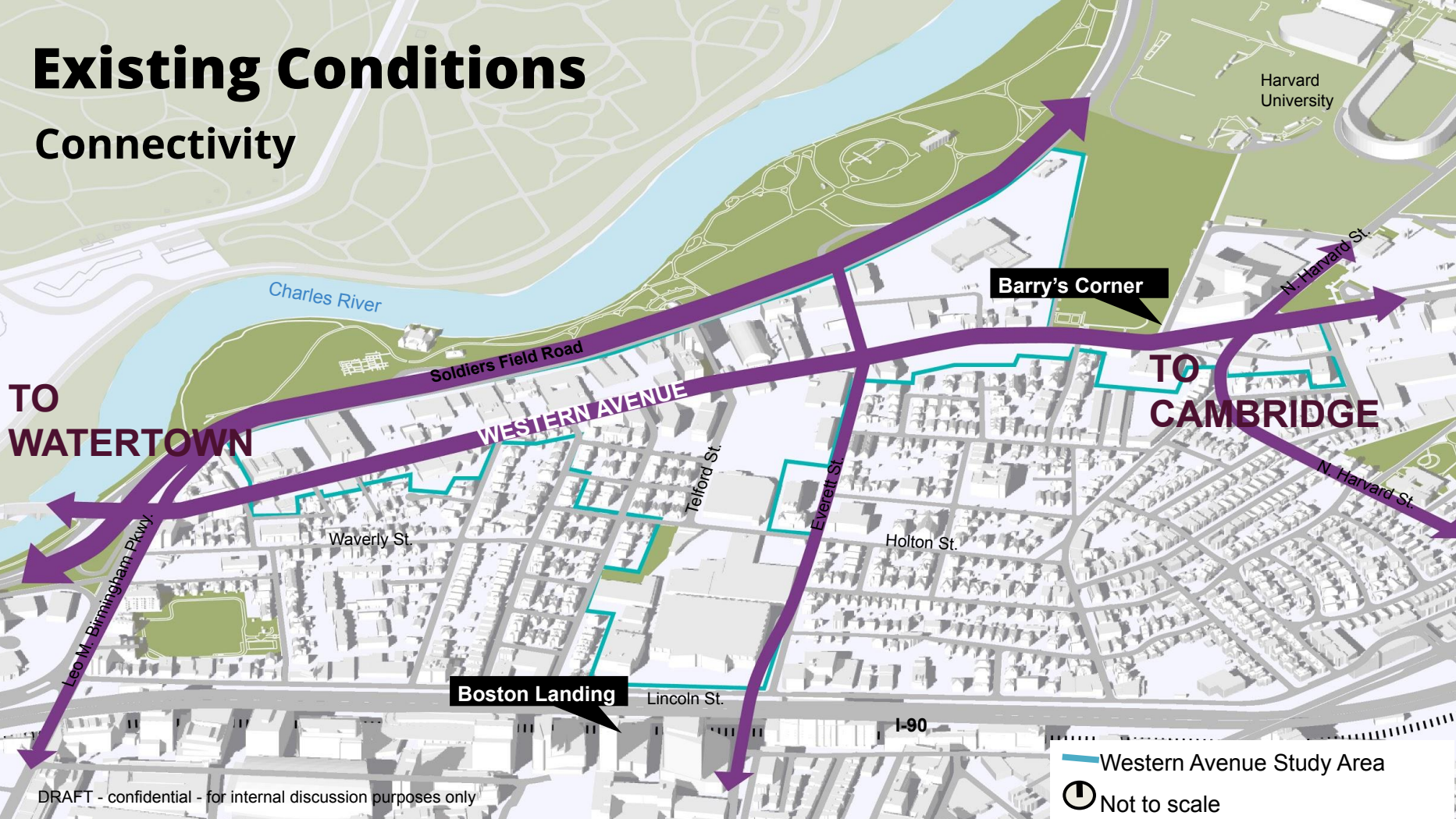
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Western Avenue Study Area

Not to scale

Existing Conditions

Connectivity



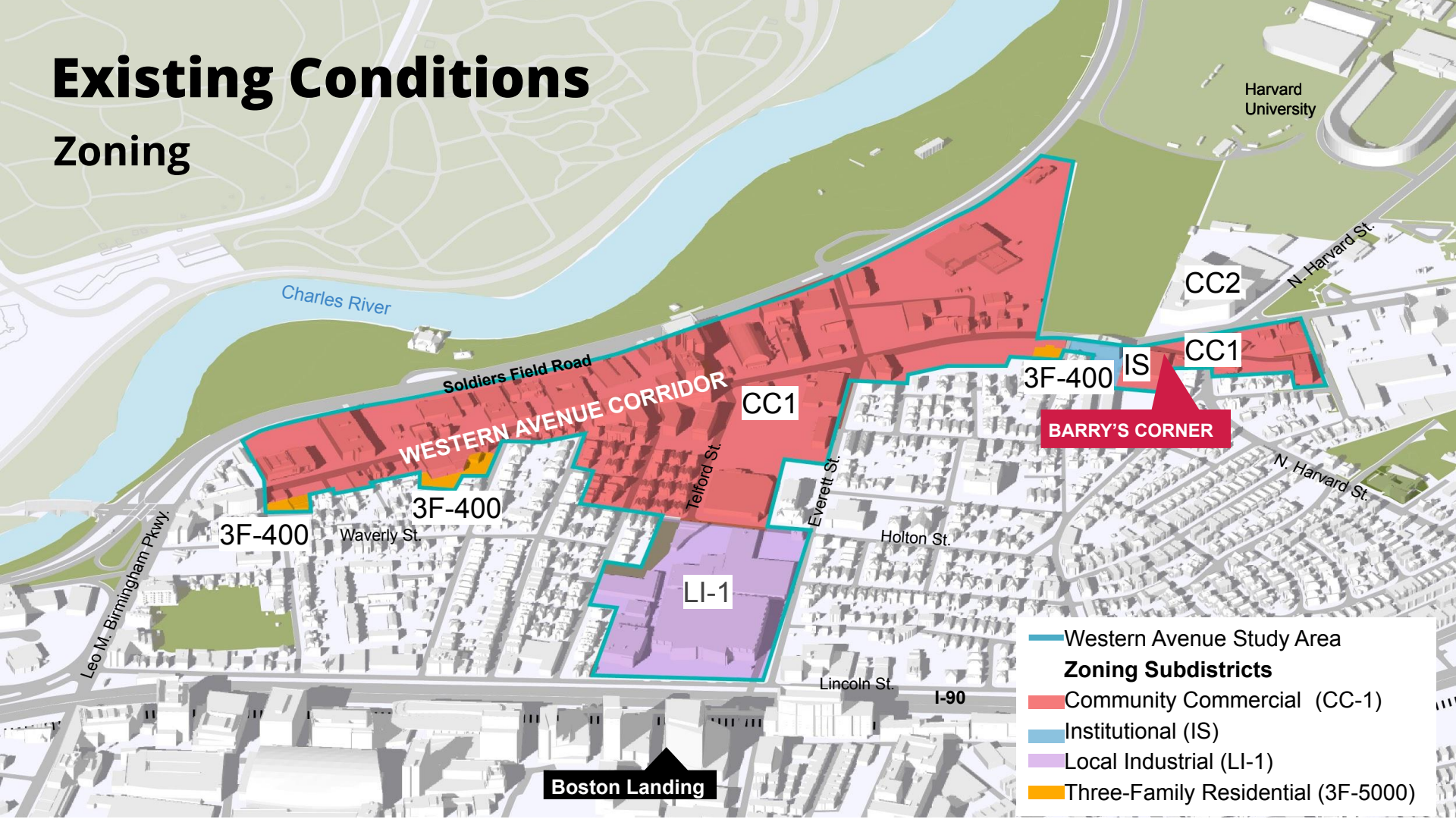
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Western Avenue Study Area

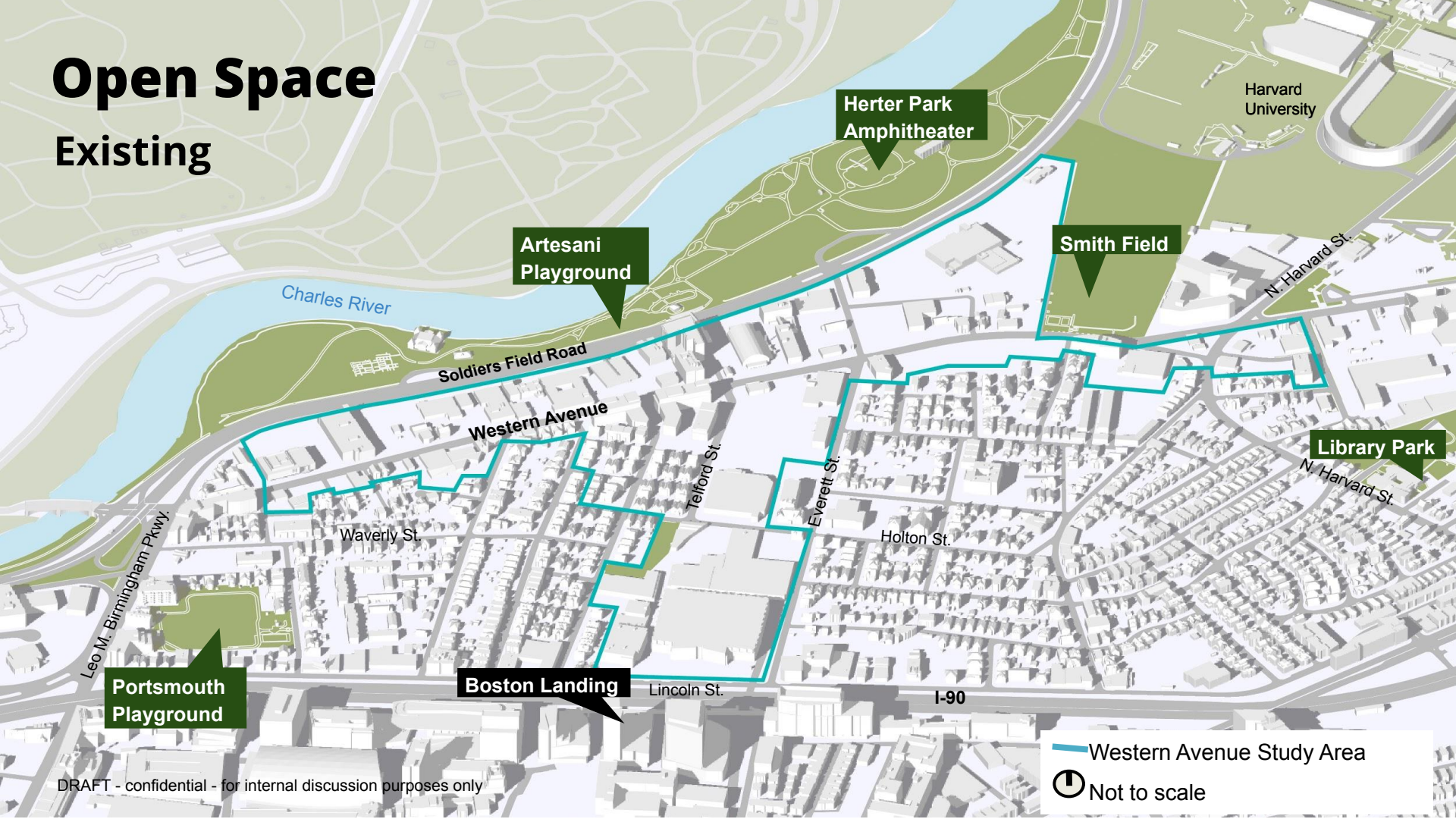
Not to scale

Existing Conditions

Zoning



Open Space Existing



Portsmouth
Playground

Artesani
Playground

Herter Park
Amphitheater

Smith Field

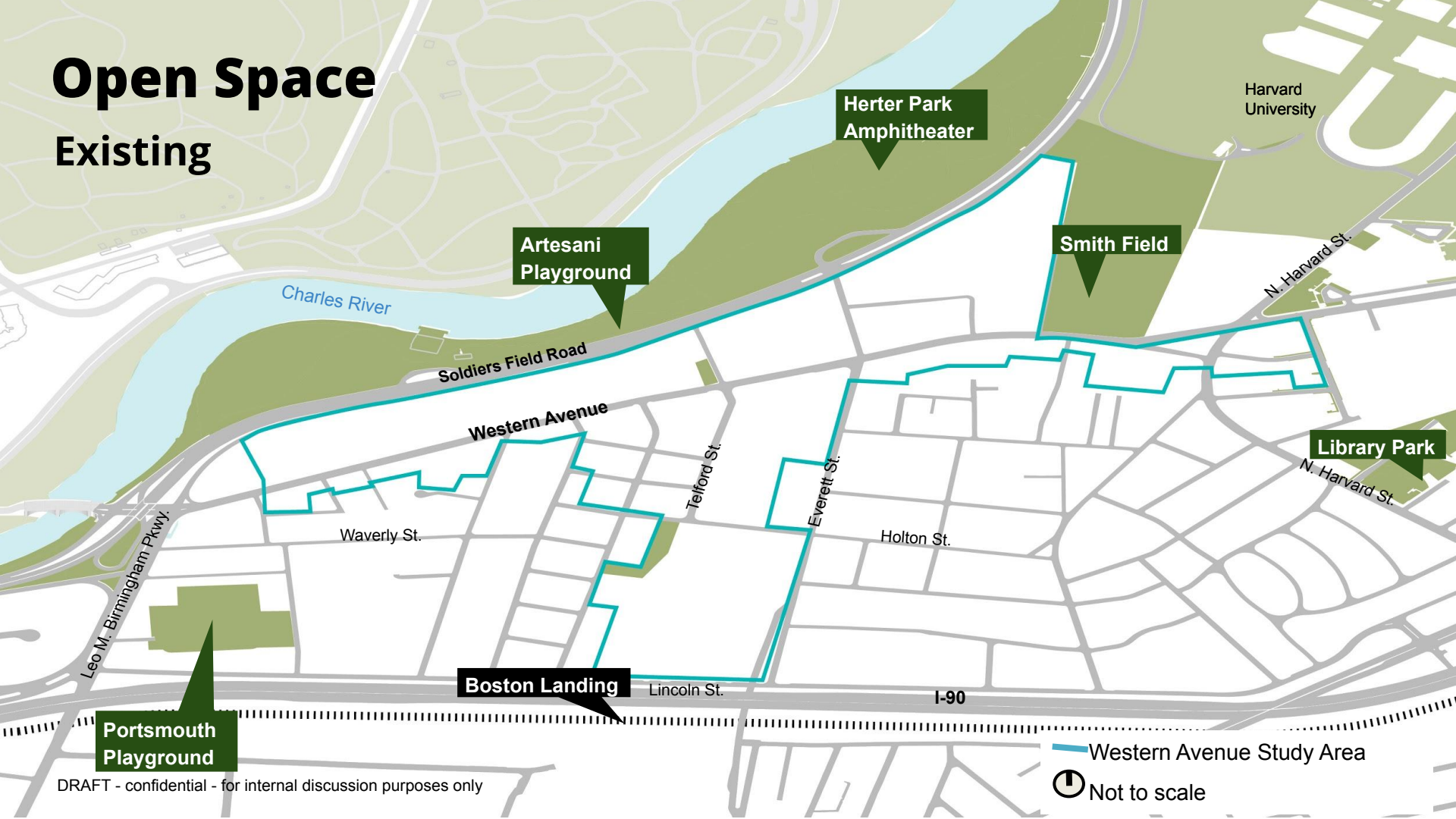
Library Park

Boston Landing

Western Avenue Study Area

Not to scale

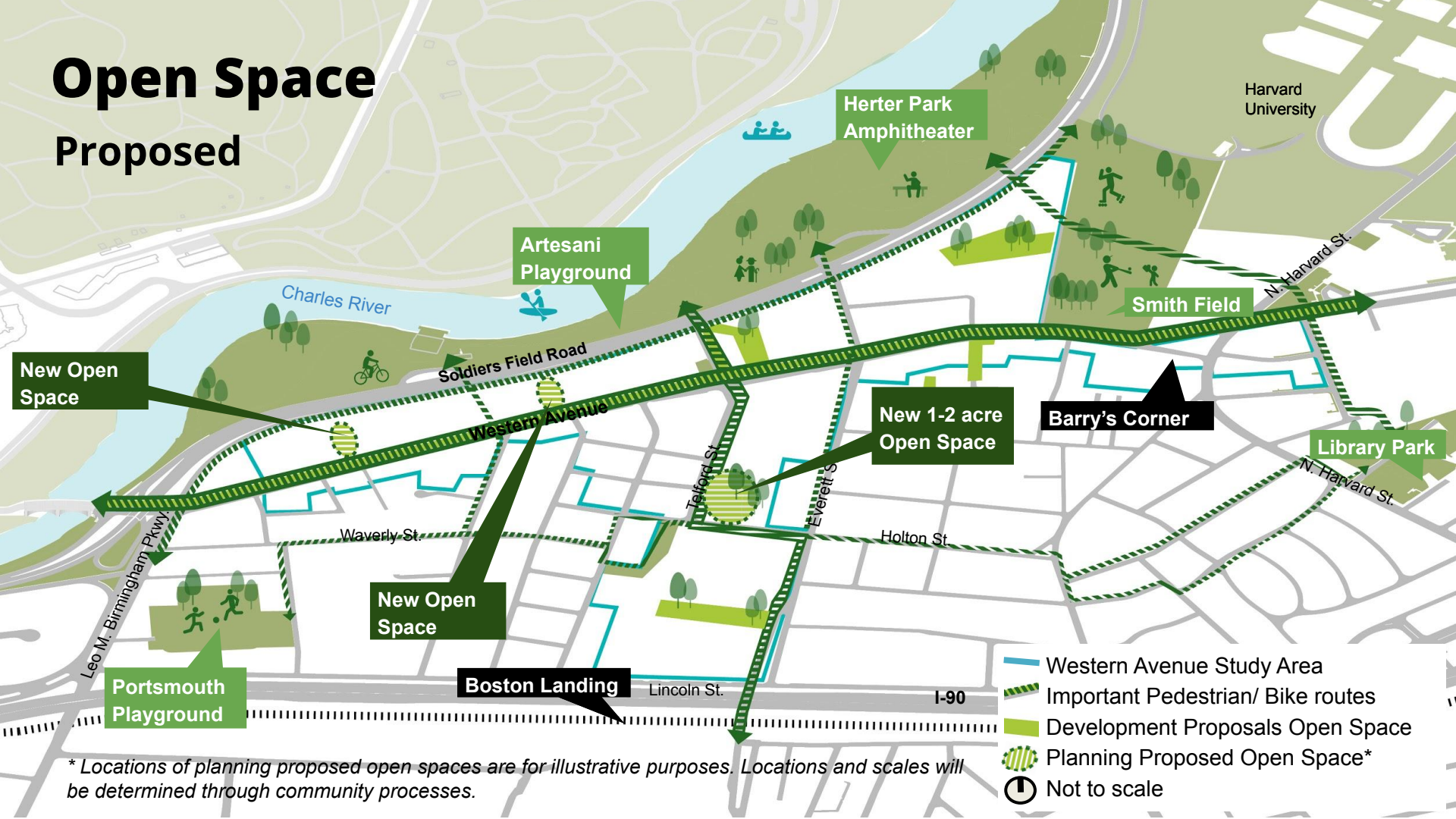
Open Space Existing



DRAFT - confidential - for internal discussion purposes only

Western Avenue Study Area
Not to scale

Open Space Proposed

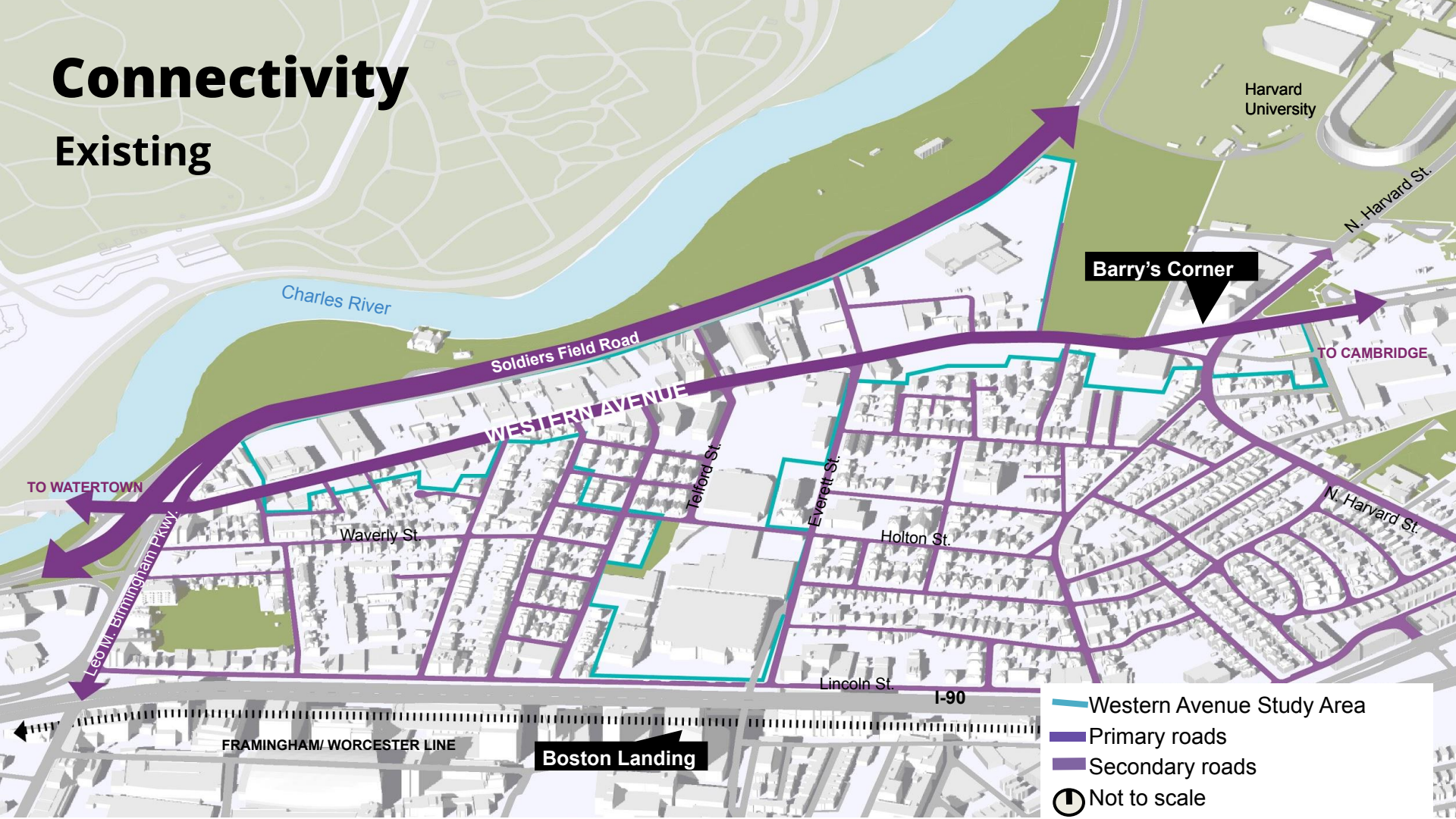


* Locations of planning proposed open spaces are for illustrative purposes. Locations and scales will be determined through community processes.

- Western Avenue Study Area
- Important Pedestrian/ Bike routes
- Development Proposals Open Space
- Planning Proposed Open Space*
- Not to scale

Connectivity

Existing



TO WATERTOWN

Leo W. Birmingham Pkwy.

FRAMINGHAM/ WORCESTER LINE

Boston Landing

Charles River

Soldiers Field Road

WESTERN AVENUE

Waverly St.

Telford St.

Everett St.

Holton St.

Lincoln St.

I-90

Harvard University

Barry's Corner

TO CAMBRIDGE

N. Harvard St.

Western Avenue Study Area

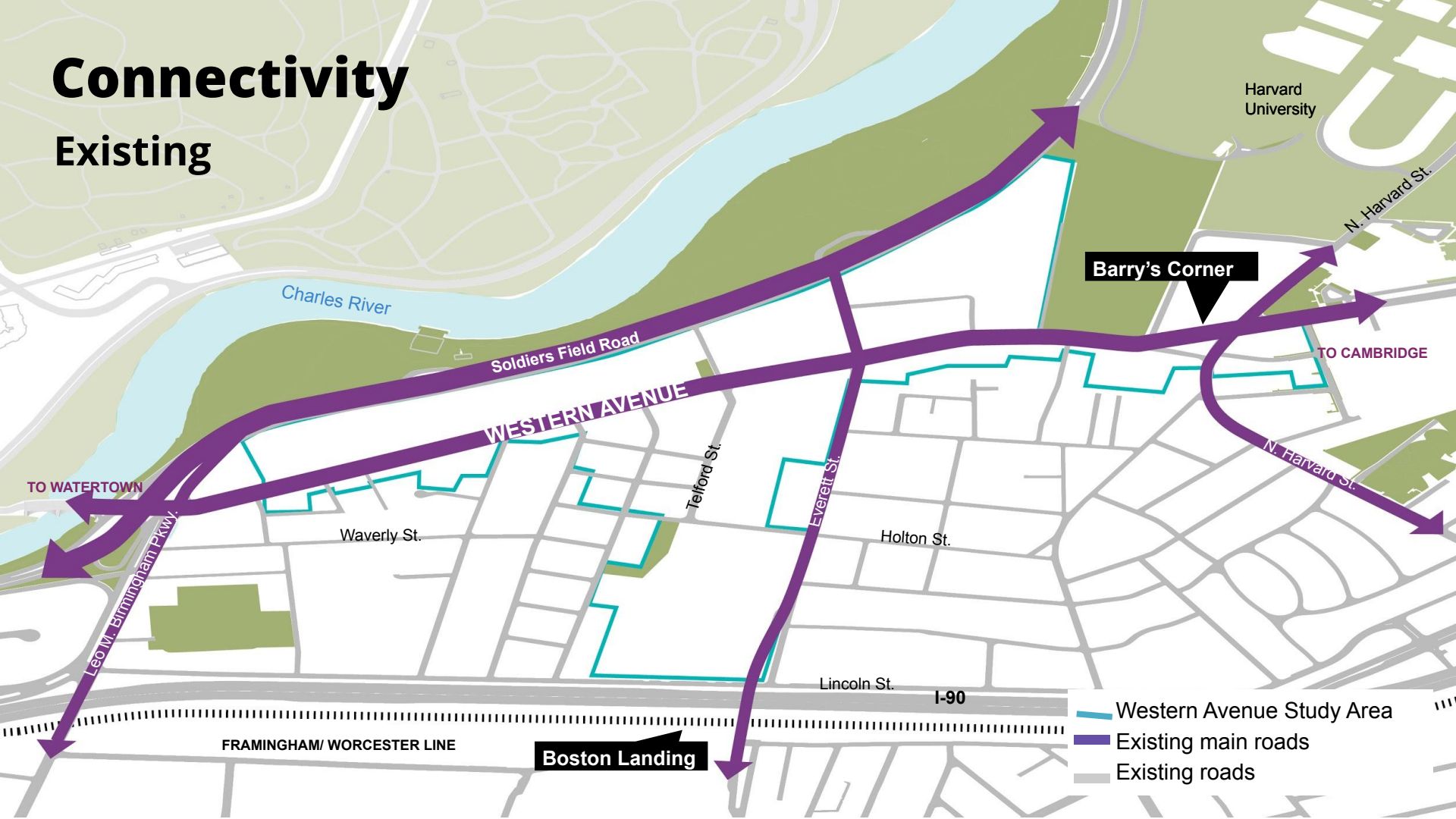
Primary roads

Secondary roads

Not to scale

Connectivity

Existing



TO WATERTOWN

Charles River

Soldiers Field Road

WESTERN AVENUE

Barry's Corner

Harvard University

TO CAMBRIDGE

Leo M. Birmingham Pkwy.

Waverly St.

Telford St.

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FRAMINGHAM/ WORCESTER LINE

Boston Landing

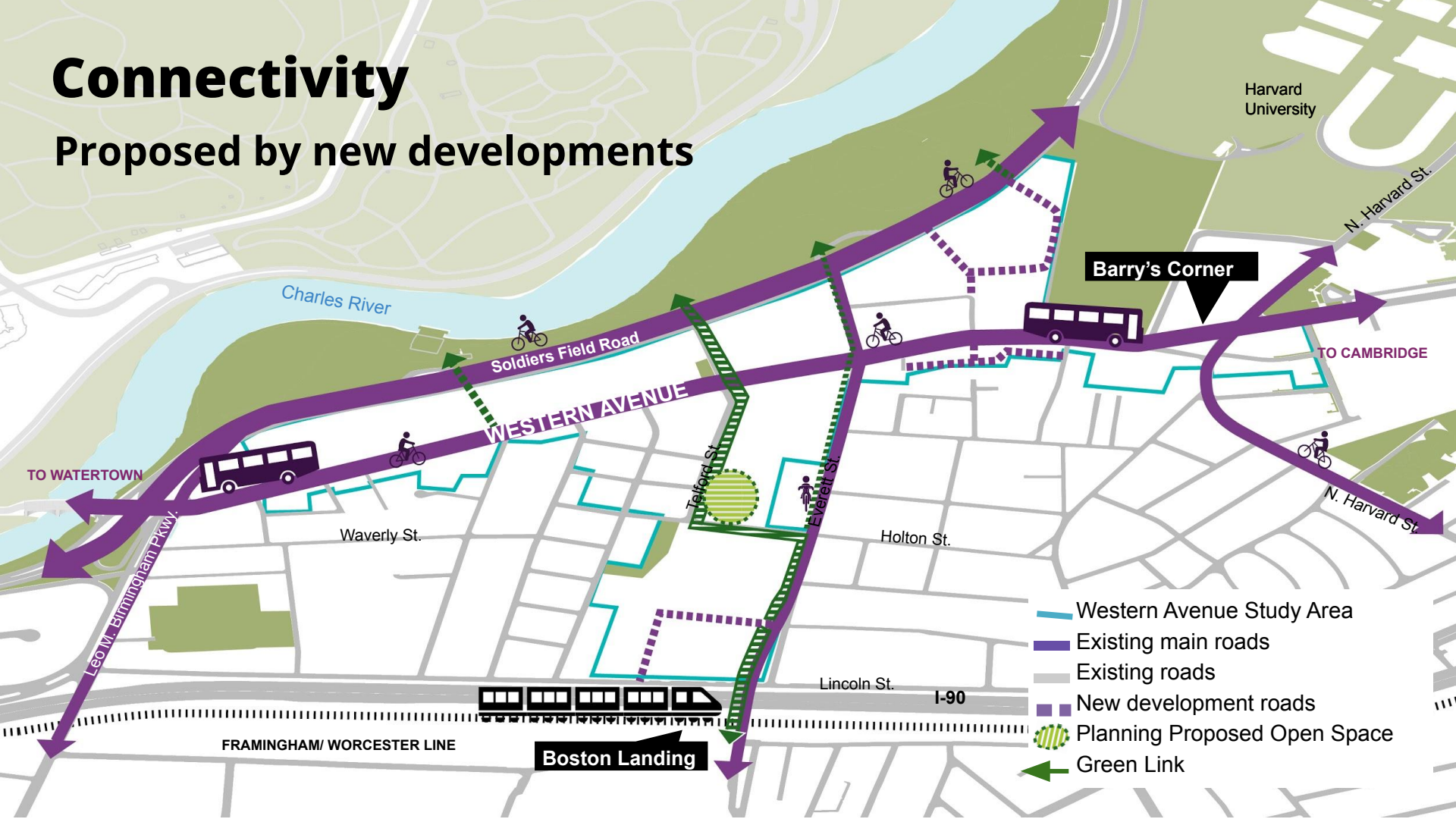
Lincoln St.

I-90

- Western Avenue Study Area
- Existing main roads
- Existing roads

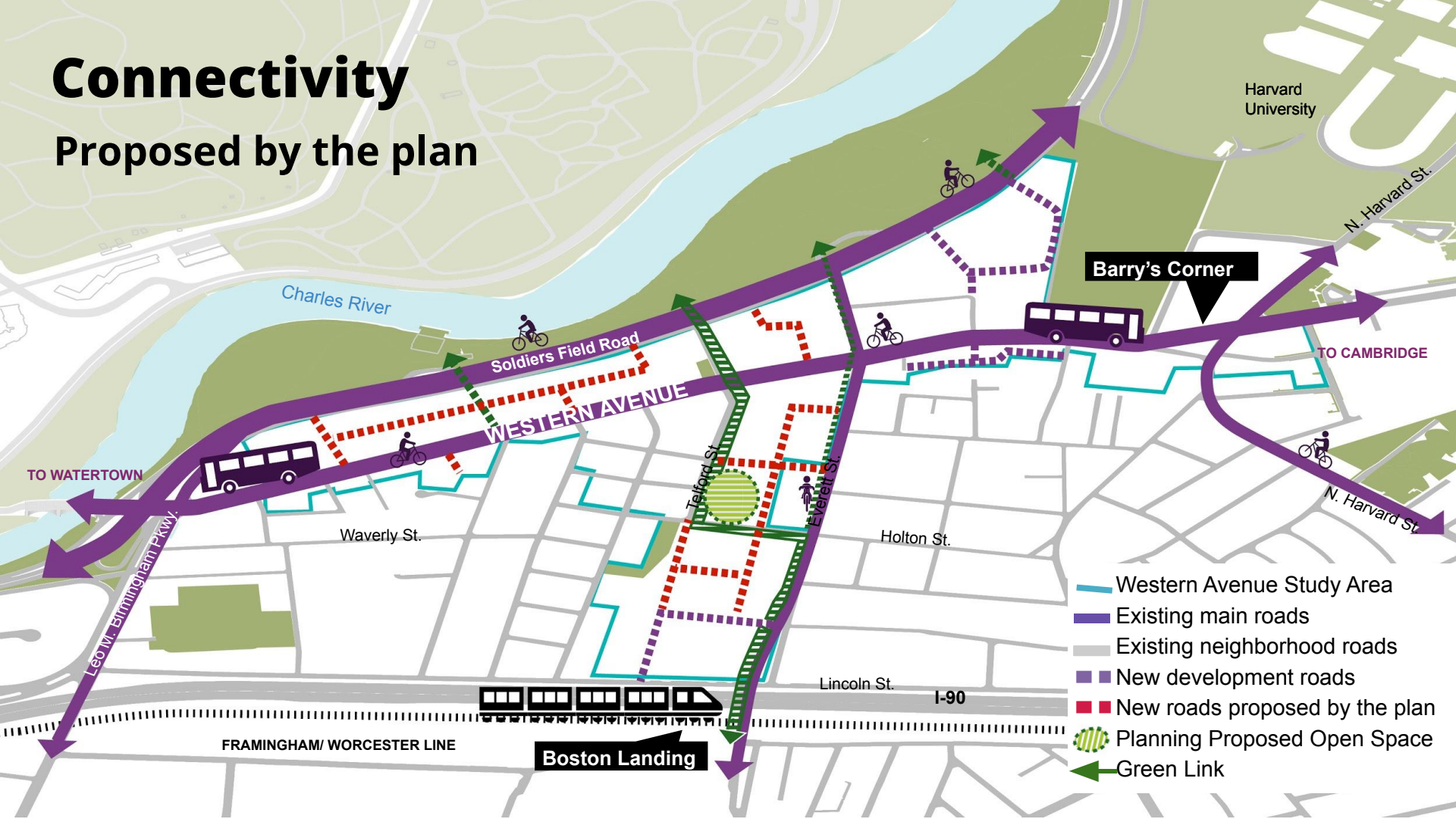
Connectivity

Proposed by new developments



Connectivity

Proposed by the plan



Planning Principles

- Open Space, Public Realm, and Placemaking
- Connections
- Western Avenue Character
- Land Use
- Building Dimensions and Character

Western Avenue Corridor Study & Rezoning
Preserve. Enhance. Grow.

WESTERN AVENUE MAIN STREET


- **Zoning [and Implementation] Goals:**
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Preserve. Enhance. Grow.

OPEN SPACE, PUBLIC REALM, AND PLACEMAKING



Highgate Park, Cambridge
Lafayette Park, East Boston
Royal Square, Brighton

Western Avenue Corridor Study & Rezoning
Preserve. Enhance. Grow.

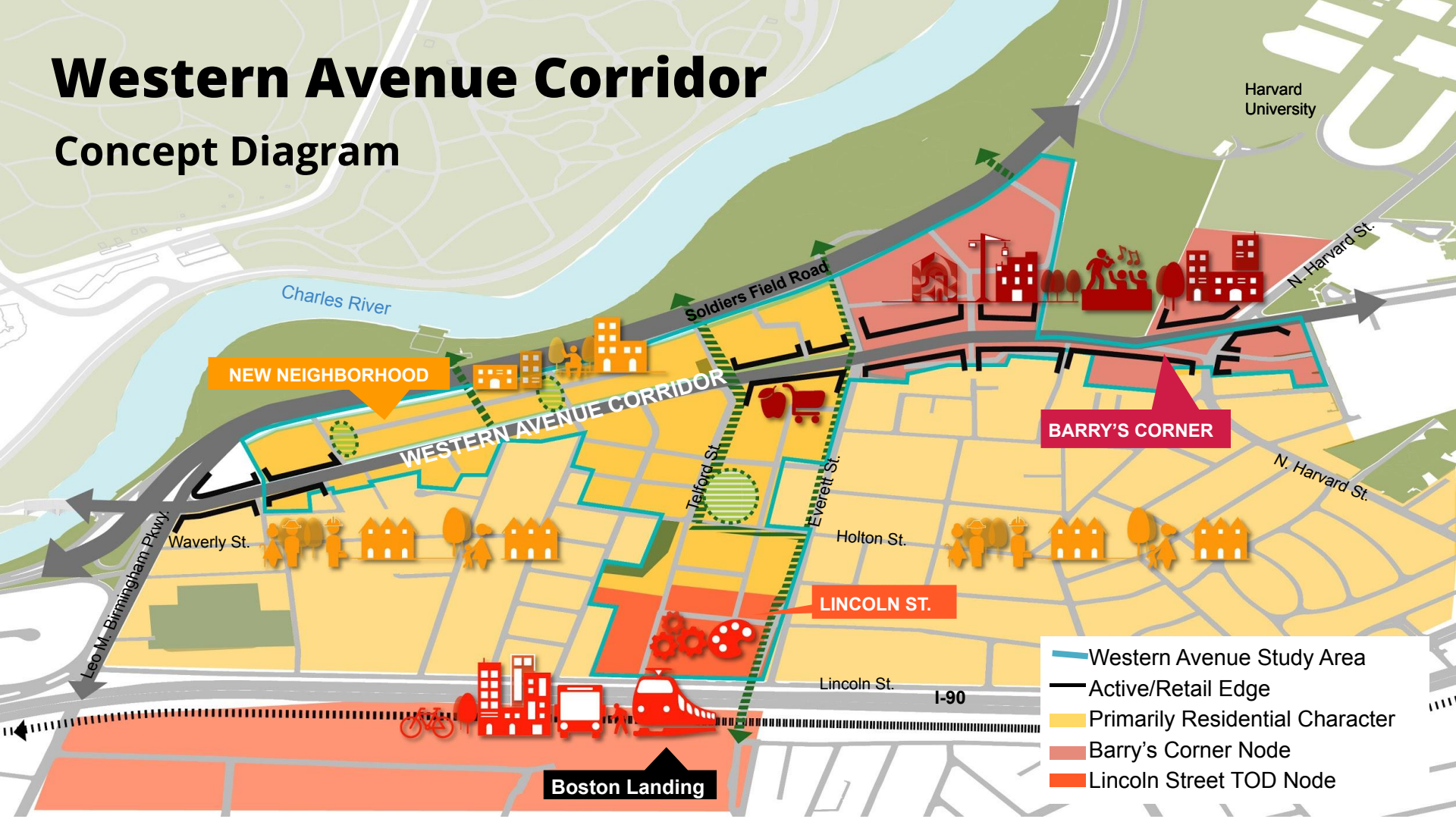
LAND USE

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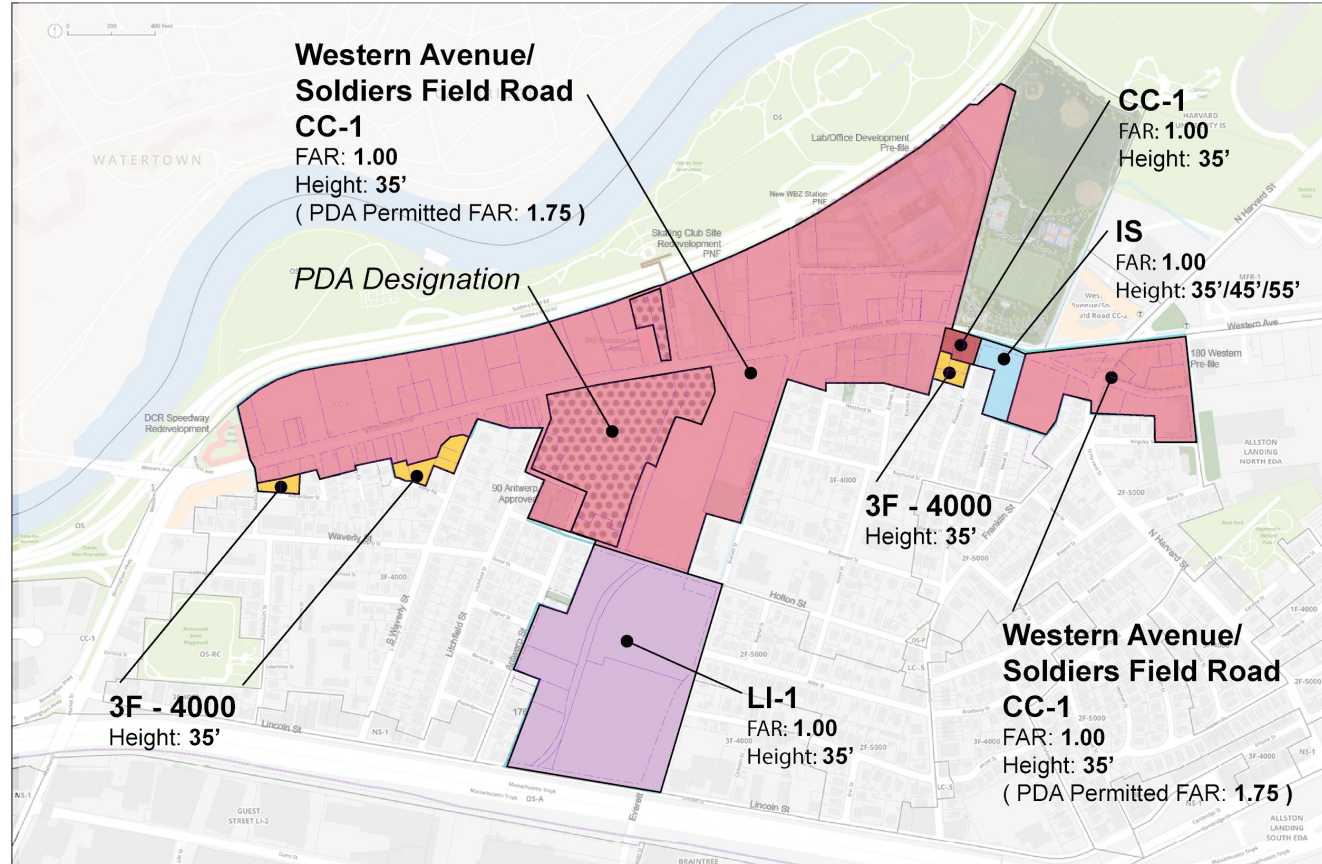
Western Avenue Corridor

Concept Diagram



Zoning Strategy

1. Keep Underlying Zoning
2. Introduce "Density Bonus"



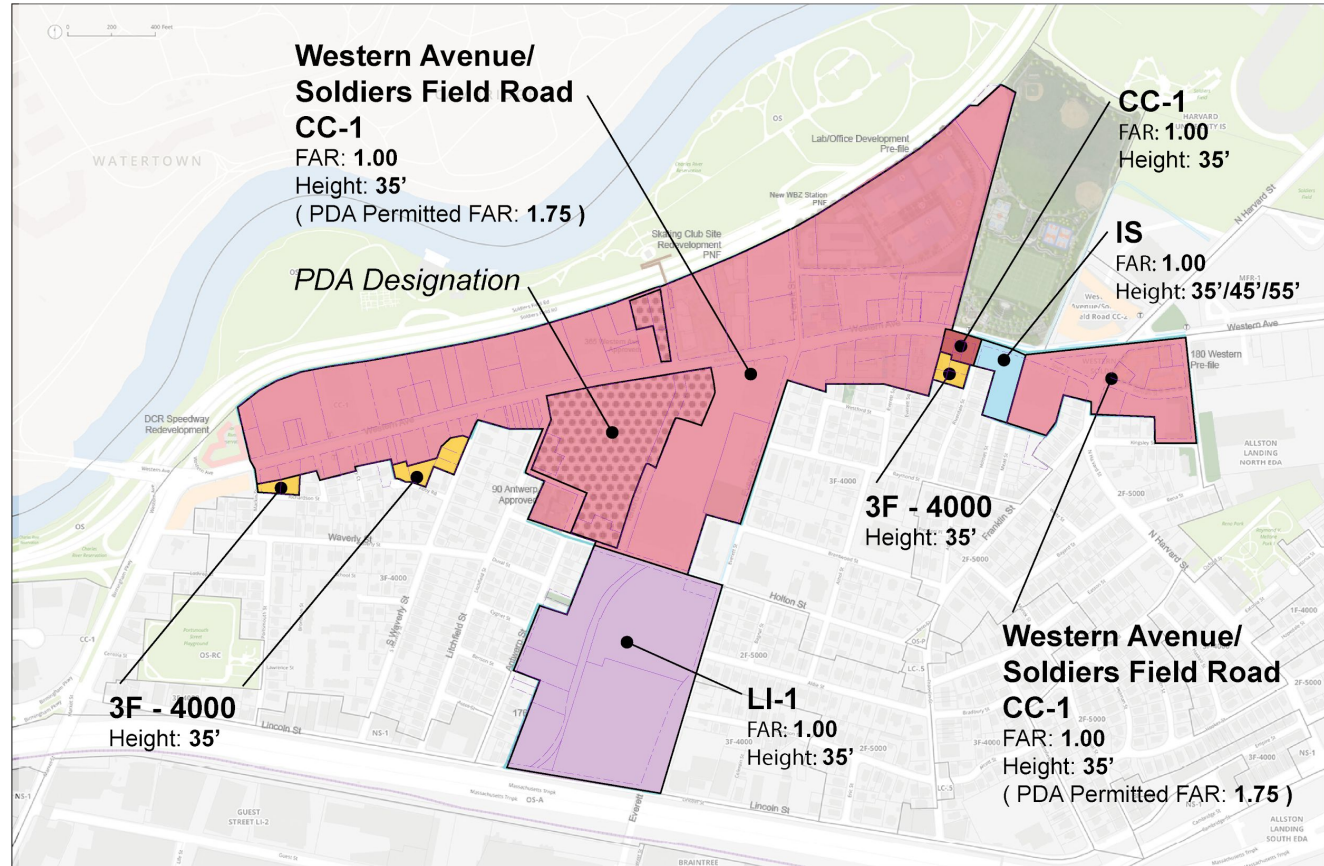
* A Planned Development Area (PDA) is an overlay zoning district that establishes special zoning controls for large or complex project. A site must be at least 1 acre to qualify.

Zoning Strategy: Underlying Zoning

1. Keep Underlying Zoning in place

- Residential is not allowed as-of-right.
- The allowed FAR is 1.
- The allowed height is 35'.
- PDAs* are allowed, with a FAR of 1.75 for commercial uses.

* A Planned Development Area (PDA) is an overlay zoning district that establishes special zoning controls for large or complex project. A site must be at least 1 acre to qualify.



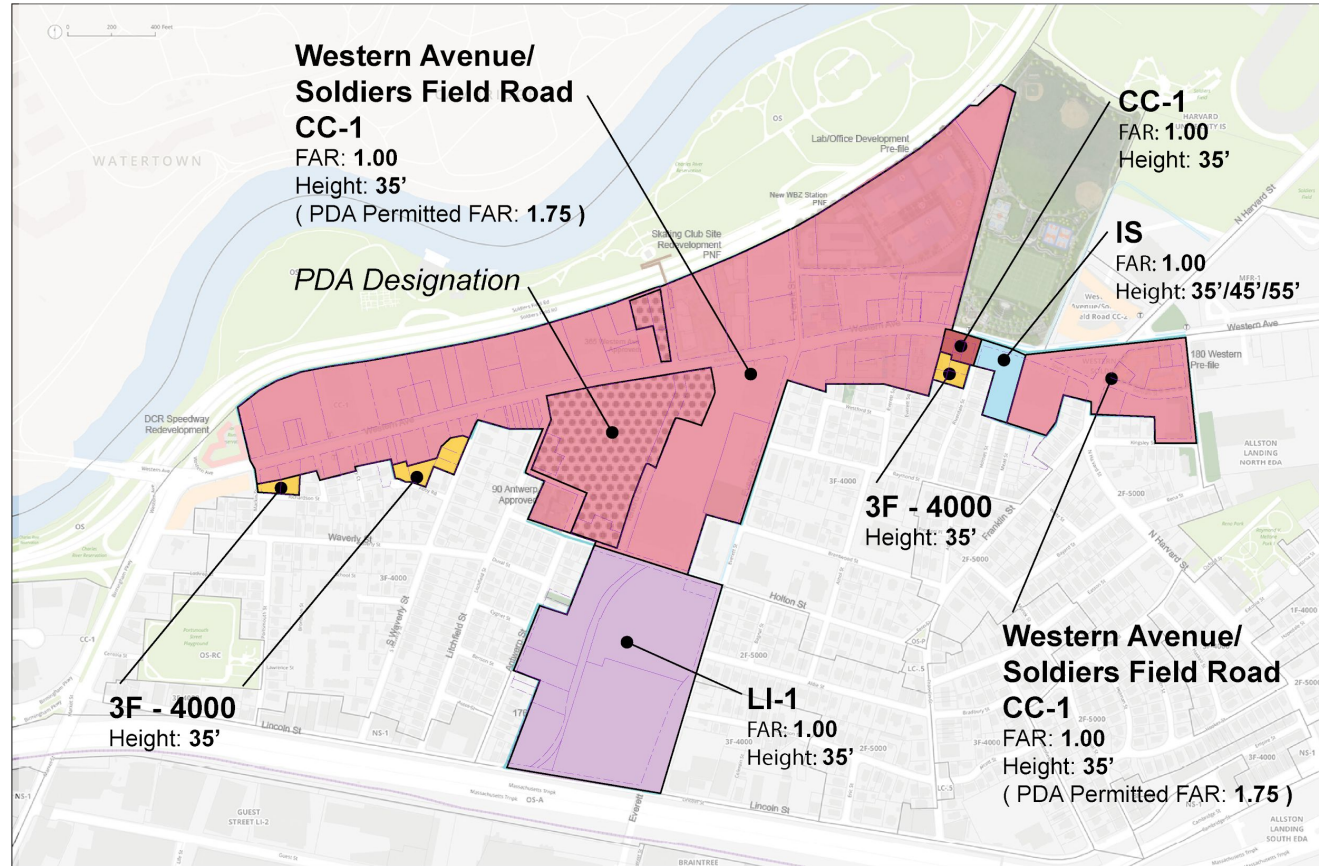
Zoning Strategy: “Density Bonus”

2. Introduce “Density Bonus”

To access “bonus” density and heights, projects must

- be PDA* eligible
- provide additional benefits (affordable housing, etc.)
- adhere to the uses / heights / FARs / lot coverage determined by this planning process.

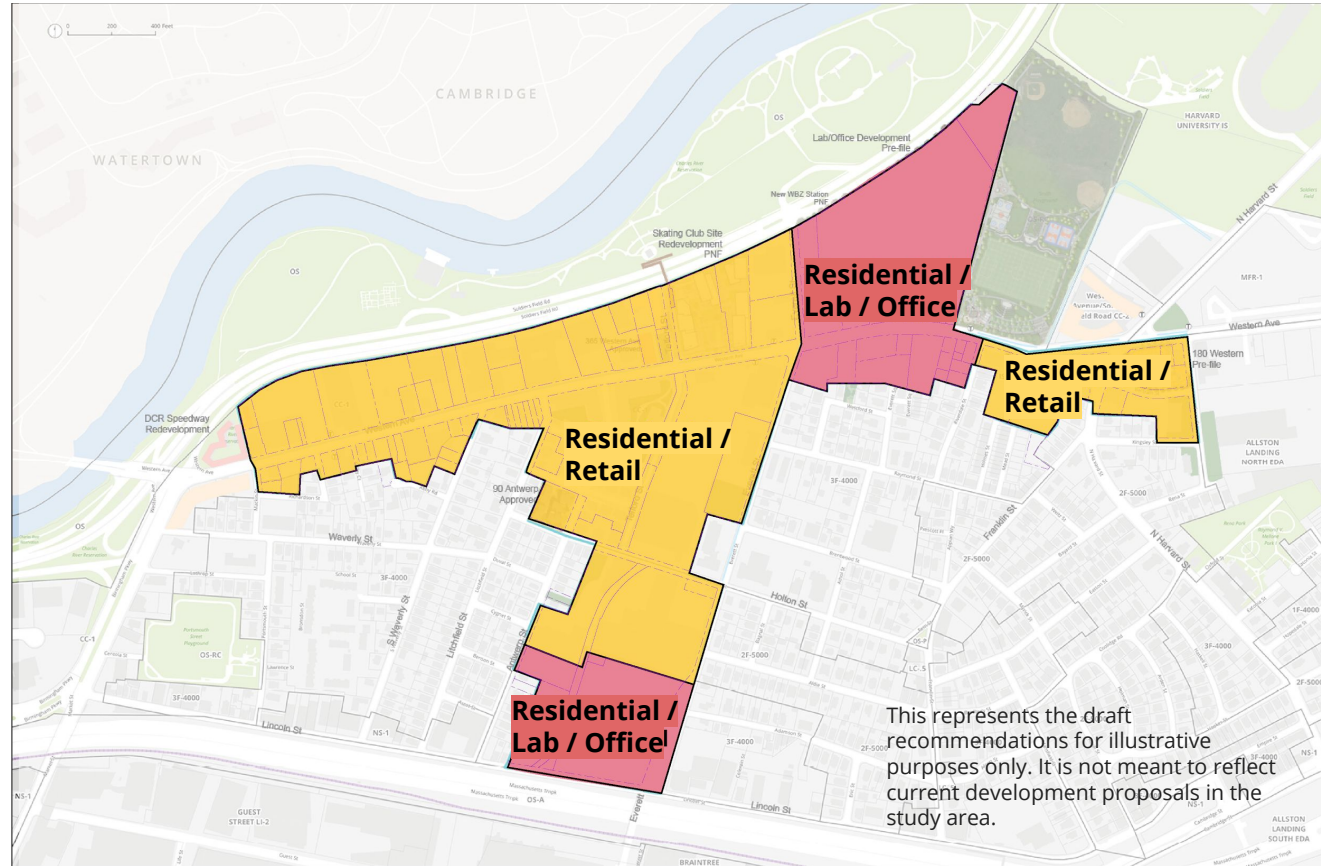
* A Planned Development Area (PDA) is an overlay zoning district that establishes special zoning controls for large or complex project. A site must be at least 1 acre to qualify.



Zoning Strategy: Land Use

Encourage residential and retail throughout the study area.

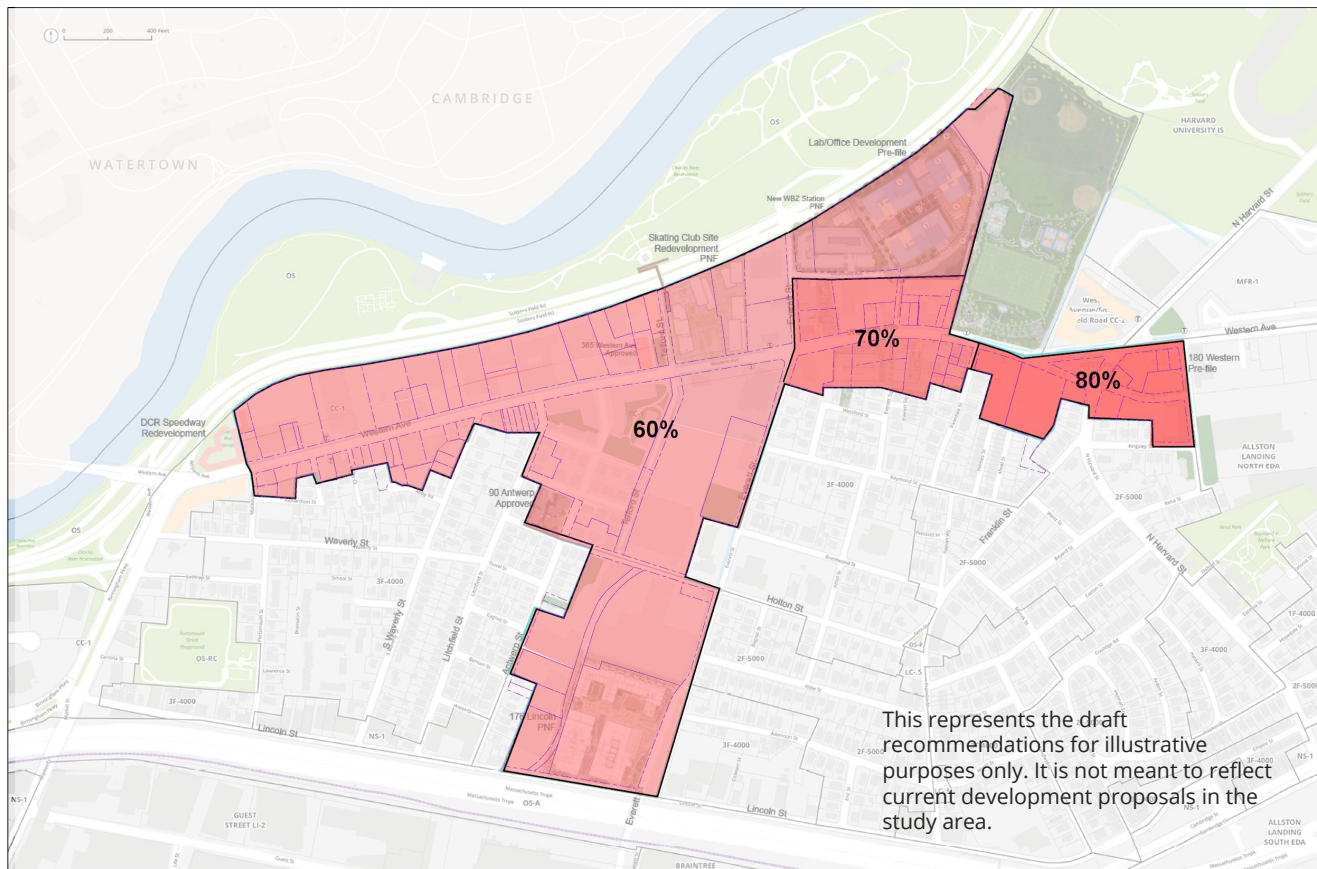
Concentrate lab/office uses and height to Barry's Corner and closer to Lincoln Street.



Zoning Strategy: Lot Coverage

Limit lot coverage to ensure that streets and open spaces can be built through new developments.

Allow greater lot coverage near Barry's Corner, where parcels are smaller and greater intensity of activity is desired.

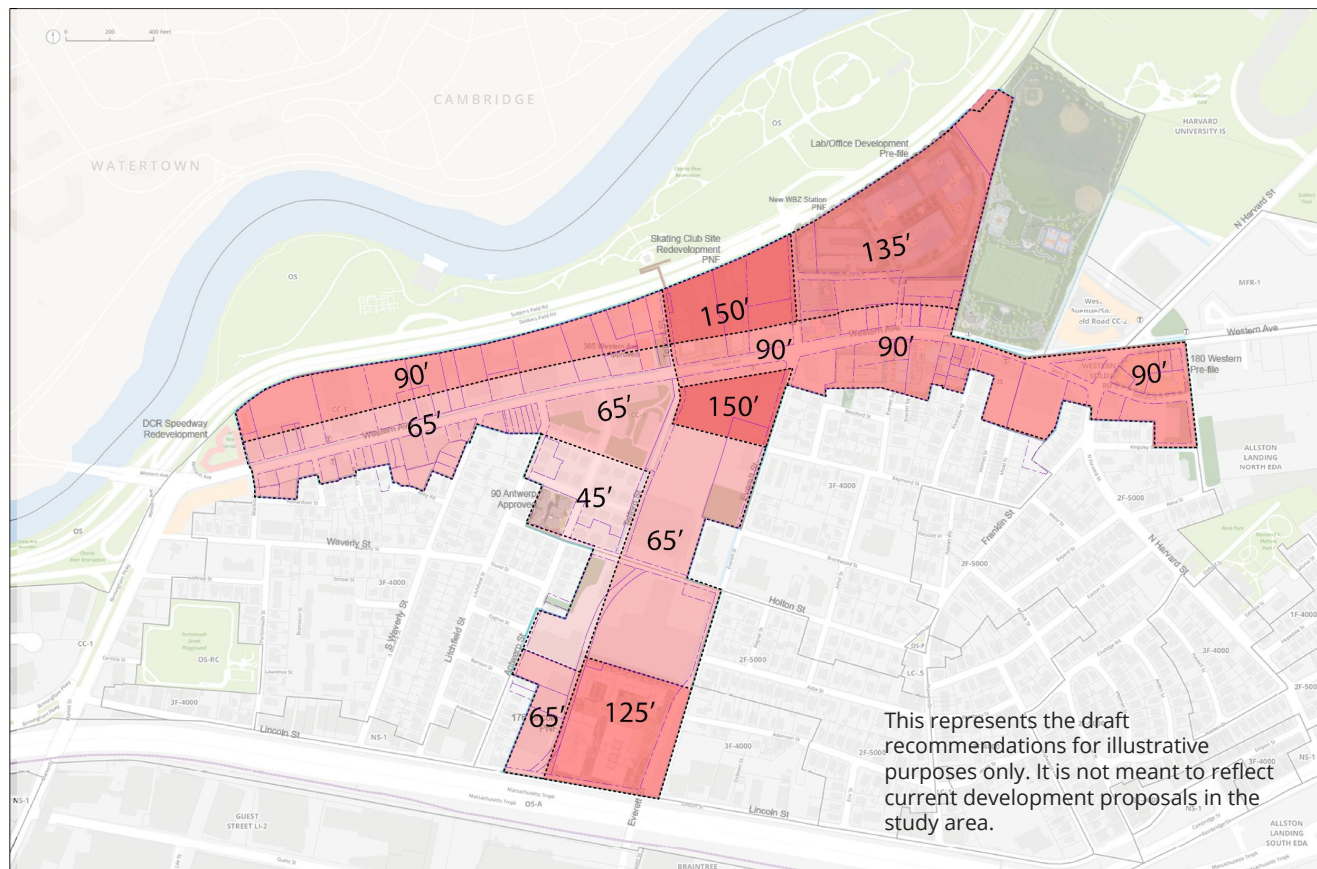


Zoning Strategy: Heights

Allow greater heights toward the river, Barry's Corner, and Lincoln Street.

Limit heights closer to existing residential fabric.

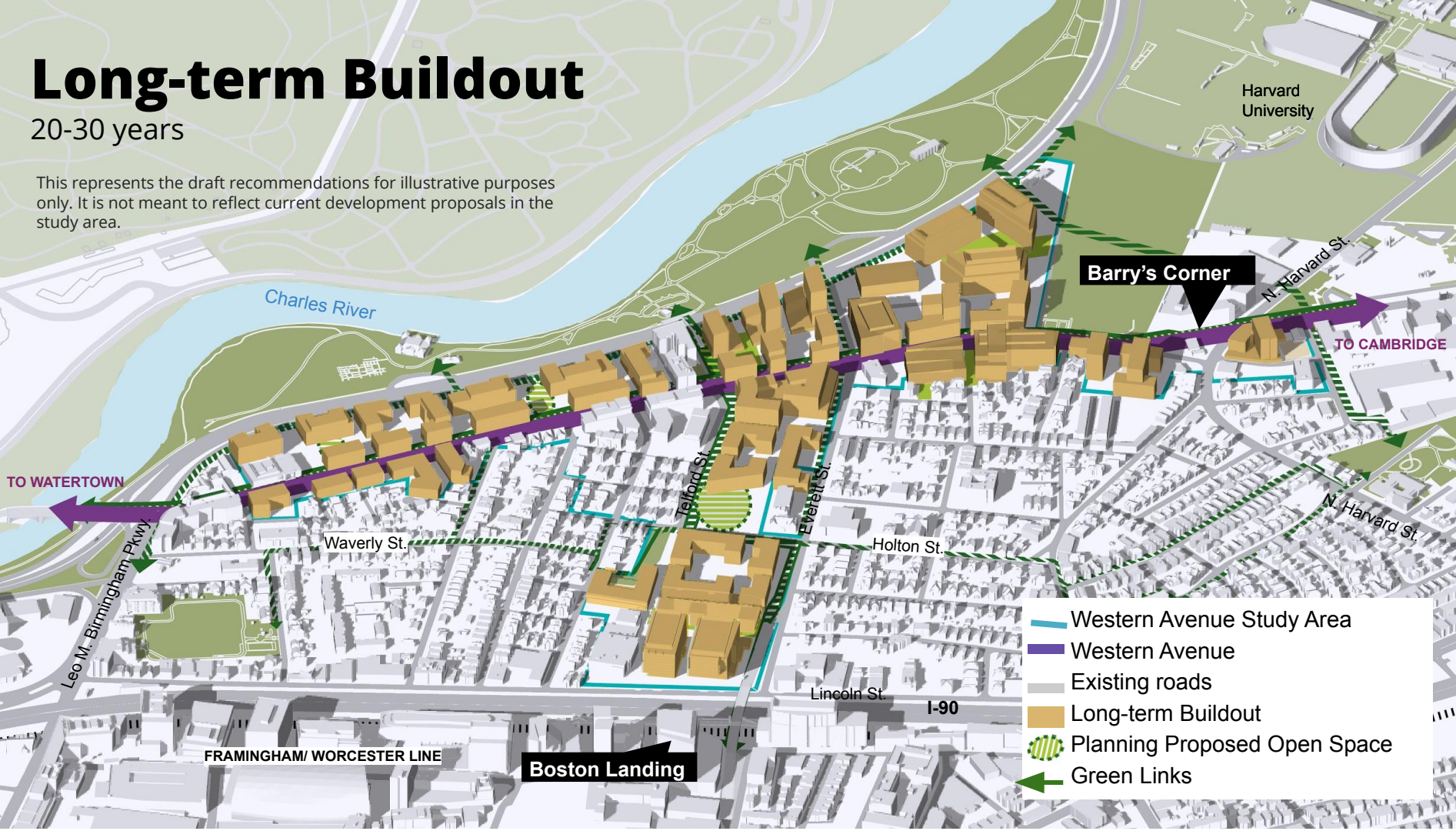
Limit heights in the Holton Street corridor to connect the residential neighborhoods east to west.



Long-term Buildout

20-30 years

This represents the draft recommendations for illustrative purposes only. It is not meant to reflect current development proposals in the study area.



Barry's Corner

TO CAMBRIDGE

TO WATERTOWN

- Western Avenue Study Area
- Western Avenue
- Existing roads
- Long-term Buildout
- Planning Proposed Open Space
- Green Links

FRAMINGHAM/ WORCESTER LINE

Boston Landing

Lincoln St. I-90

Waverly St.

Telford St.

Everett St.

Holton St.

N. Harvard St.

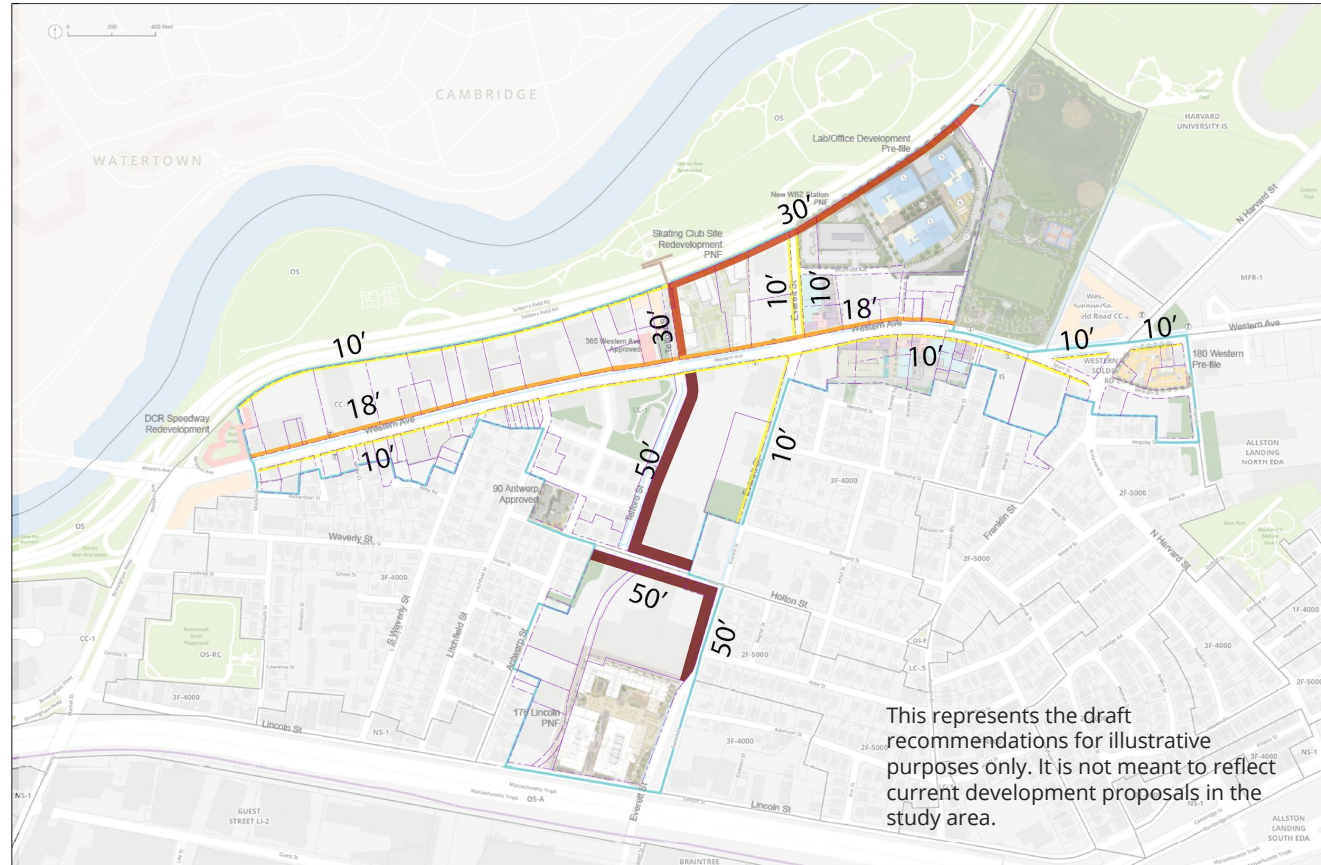
Harvard University

Leo M. Birmingham Pkwy

Zoning Strategy: Setbacks

Create setbacks along Western Avenue to allow multiple modes of transportation and generous sidewalks and public realm.

Create a generous path for people walking and biking from the river to the neighborhood, with setbacks along Telford Street to Holton to Everett to the commuter rail station.





Western Ave. Looking East - Existing



65'

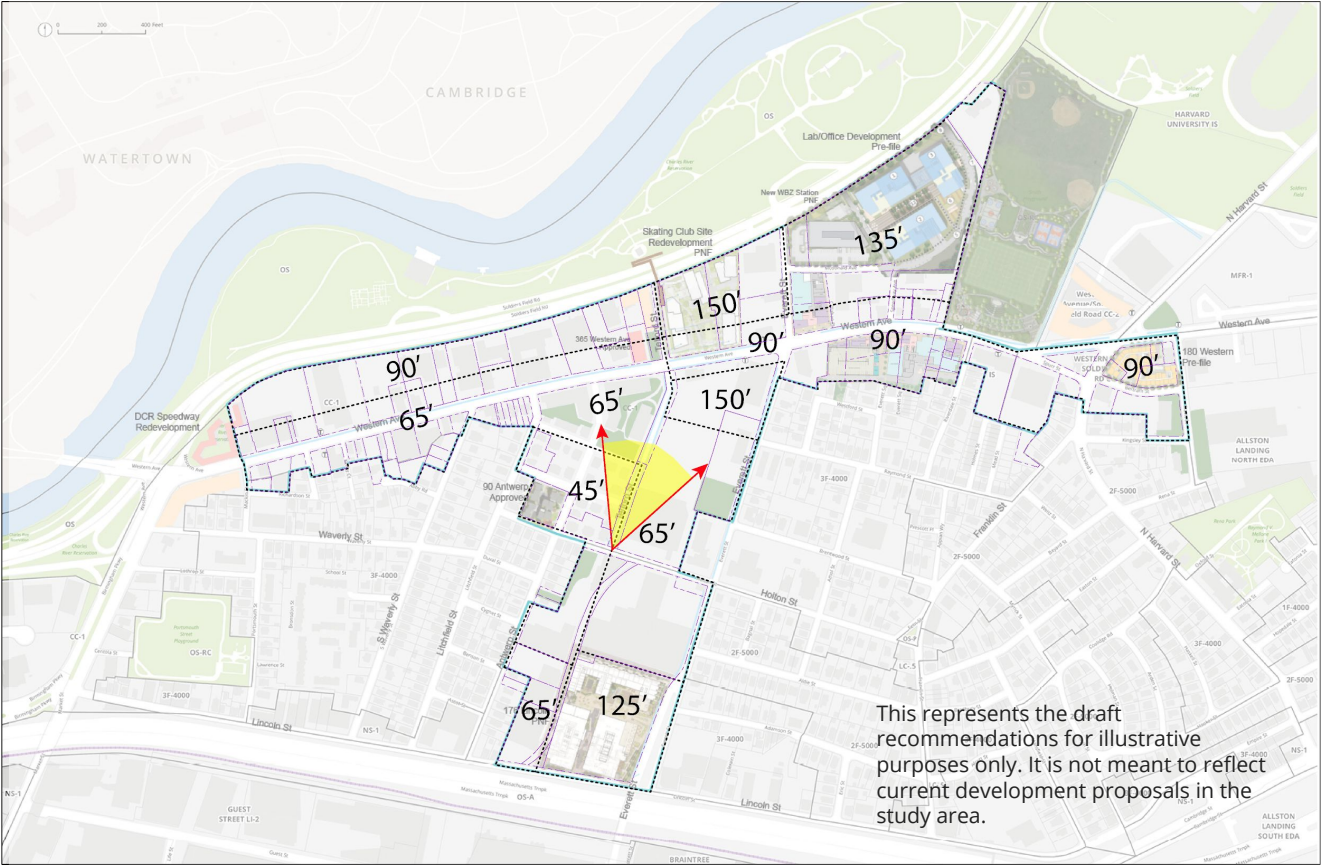
65'

Note: This is a sketch; the final vision for Western Avenue is as a Complete Street, to be determined through community process

Western Ave. Looking East - Buildout

Street View

Holton Street @ Telford St, looking north



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Telford St.

ONE WAY

Holton St. @ Telford St. Looking North - Existing

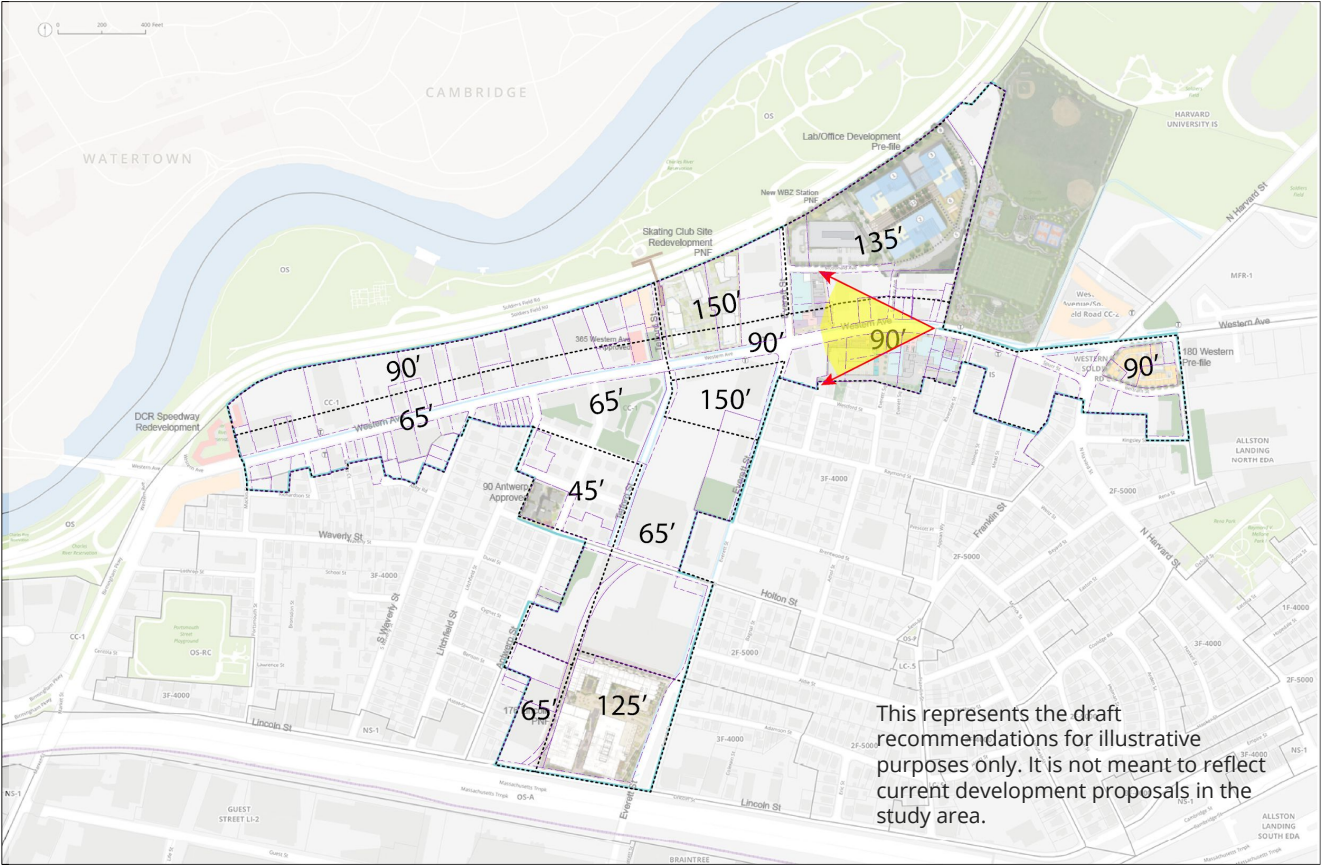


65'

Holton St. @ Telford St. Looking North - Long-term

Street View

Western Ave., looking west





BUS STOP PUB
FOOD & SPIRIT

SUBWAY

Parking
4 Hour Limit
No Overnight

Western Ave. Looking West - Existing



90

90'

90'

Note: This is a sketch; the final vision for Western Avenue is as a Complete Street, to be determined through community process

Western Ave. Looking West - Long-term



APARTMENTS
FOR RENT
866
635 5579

N. HARVARD ST

ROCK TOP'S

WWW.MBTA.COM

0723

70A

More
Light
ISA

CAUTION

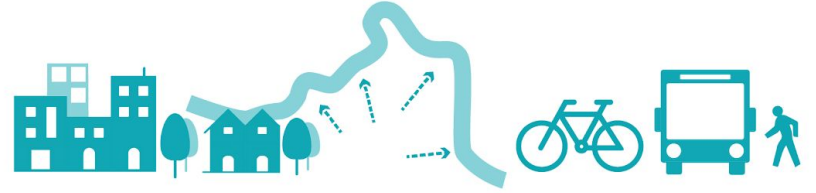
Western Avenue Corridor

BREATHE & ADAPT



Create new open spaces and public realm. Connect the neighborhood east-west and to the river.

CONNECT & MOVE



Introduce a finer grain network of streets to connect the neighborhood. Increase mobility options, especially on Western Avenue.

LIVE & WORK



Encourage residential and retail throughout the study area. Concentrate lab/office uses and height to Barry's Corner and closer to Lincoln Street.

CREATE



Encourage the arts and innovation and placekeeping.

6

Discussion and Q&A