

Welcome to

# SQUARES + STREETS

Fields Corner: Small Business Workshop

# TODAY'S GOALS



- **Share information about Squares + Streets** and the ongoing Fields Corner community planning process.
- **Record your perspectives and priorities** based on existing conditions business data and existing City of Boston tools.
- **Stay connected** and up to date on draft plan recommendations by subscribing to our newsletter for news about future events



Attendees: Who is in the room today? Please introduce yourself to the group with answers to the following questions, if you are comfortable!

1. Name
2. What is your business and how long have you been there?
3. What is the best thing about owning a business in Fields Corner?
4. What is the most challenging part about owning a business in Fields Corner?

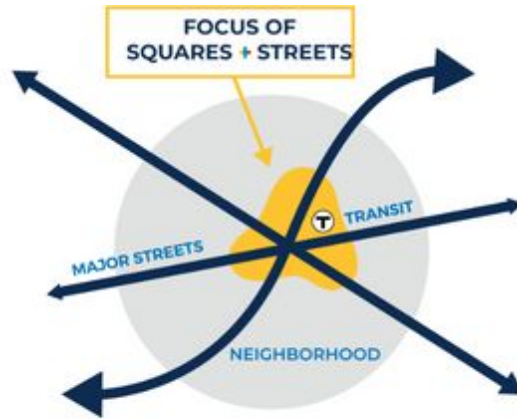
An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood, showing houses, trees, and streets. A large, semi-transparent blue rectangle is overlaid on the image, covering most of the frame. The text "1. What is Squares + Streets?" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the blue overlay.

# 1. What is Squares + Streets?



# WHAT IS SQUARES + STREETS?

Squares + Streets, a new city wide planning and zoning initiative that will focus on housing, public space, arts and culture, and transit in neighborhood centers and along main streets.



# WHAT IS SQUARES + STREETS?



## What is Zoning?

Zoning is a **set of laws that are used to guide development** by telling us the allowed use, shape, and density of development in a given area.

Zoning is also **a reflection of community needs at a certain period of time** and should be regularly updated so that the broader goals of the community and city can be achieved, especially as policy and economic conditions change.

## What is Comprehensive Planning?

Planning is the process of **creating long-term visions for places and communities** as small as an intersection and as large as a region. Planning takes advantage of, and seeks to influence the social, economic, physical, and natural factors affecting a community.

Comprehensive Planning is planning that works to achieve those community visions **in close partnership with other city departments** i.e. mayor's office of housing, department of transportation, and the office of economic opportunity and inclusion

# WHAT ARE SQUARES + STREETS?

**Transit:** T stops, commuter rail stations, key bus routes

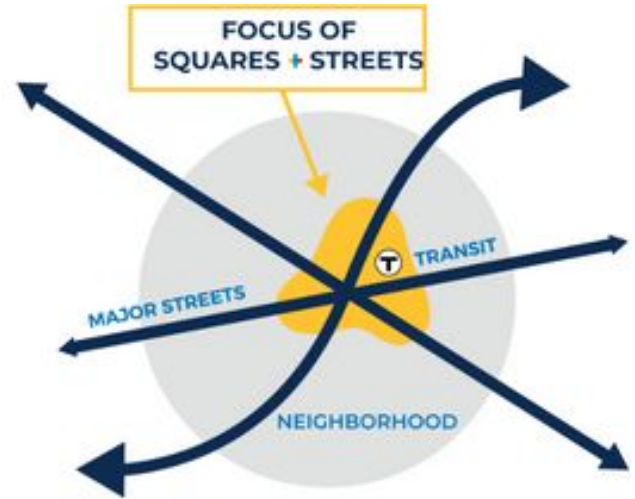
**Commercial activity:** main streets districts, retail along streets, businesses within walking distance of both transit and housing

**Neighborhood centers:** central locations where neighborhood residents access local services to eat, shop, spend time, and run errands

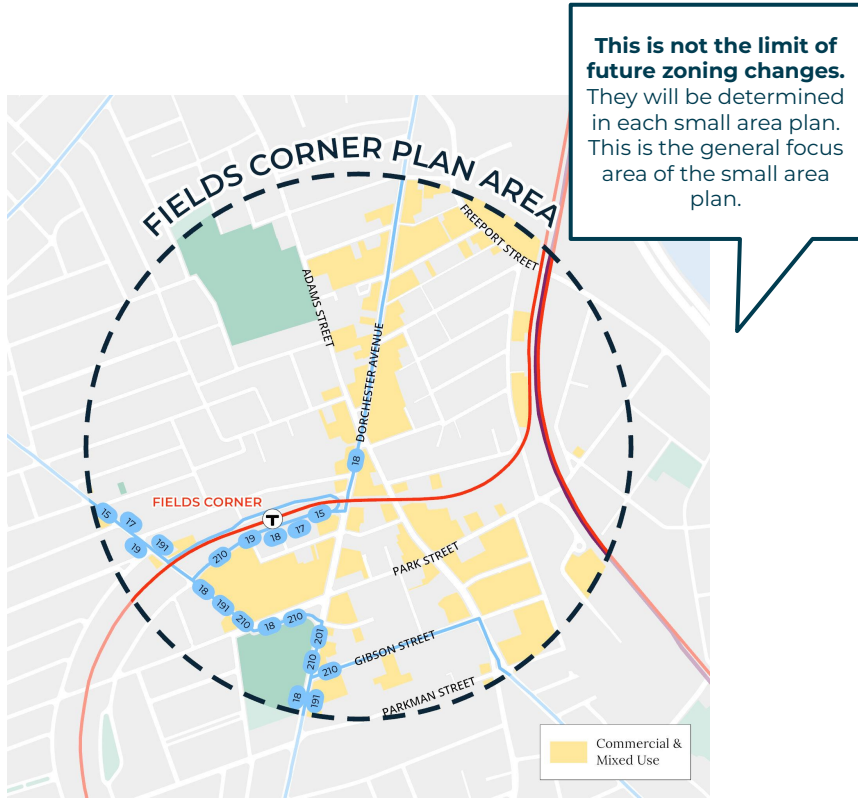
**Mixed use:** either directly above or directly adjacent to these businesses is housing, allowing some residents to get around without requiring a car

**Places for growth:** existing housing and businesses are well-utilized, with context and market conditions that are suited for additional housing and economic growth

**Lack of recent planning:** need for analysis of current neighborhood context, investment needs, and how zoning matches built conditions



# WHY FOCUS ON SQUARES + STREETS



- Ensure every Bostonian has access to **neighborhoods with everyday resources and services**
- Provide **more housing** to support Boston's current and future residents
- Pair housing growth with areas that supply an abundance of commercial, civic, cultural, and transportation resources to **expand benefits beyond access to housing**
- Focus on developing plans for transit-accessible geographic hubs to deliver zoning reform and coordinated, **impactful, and visible investments across City Departments that address a range of needs.**
- The radius of the **Fields Corner plan area is 1/3 of a mile around the main commercial intersection in Fields Corner, Dorchester Avenue and Adams Street**, including the commercial area around Park and Adams Street.
- All Squares + Streets plans focus on small geographies and recommendations for **implementation within 5-10 years.**



# ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

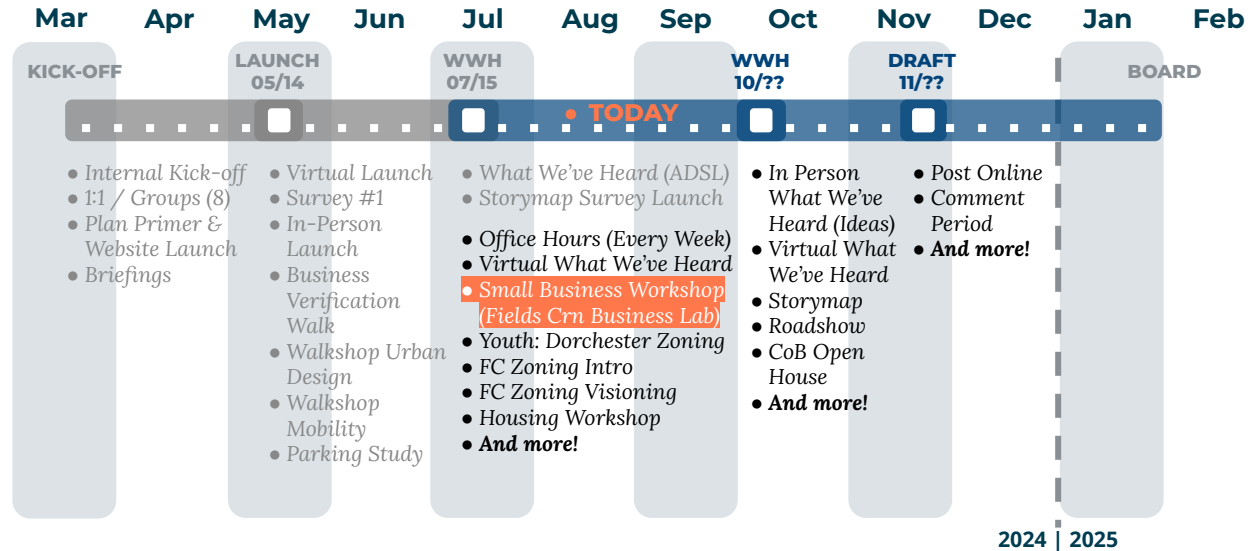


## WHAT ARE WE CREATING?

ASSETS & VISIONS

IDEAS & RECOMMENDATIONS

ACTION STEPS



## MILESTONE MEETINGS

Materials for the project will be posted on our website and presented in multiple formats as well as in additional languages at no cost

### MAY 2024

Listen and Prepare document Fields Corner assets & existing conditions

### JUNE-JULY 2024

Develop Ideas interactive visioning and informational sessions

### JULY-AUGUST 2024

Add, Review, and Refine Ideas workshop opportunities & draft recommendations

### NOVEMBER 2024

Finalize Recommendations publish the draft plan and zoning map of Fields Corner

### JANUARY 2025

AND BEYOND  
Take Action

# NEW ZONING DISTRICTS



These zoning districts will be a set of options that can be assembled to update the zoning rules in these areas.

S0



Transition  
Residential

S1



Main Street  
Living

S2



Main Street  
Mixed Use

S3



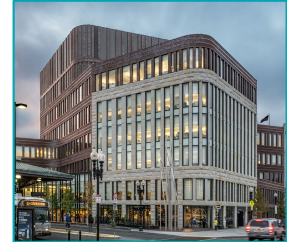
Active Main  
Street

S4



Active Squares

S5



Placemaker

The rezoning of each neighborhood square and main street will be **determined through conversations with the public and an analysis of the context of the area.**

# SQUARES + STREETS ZONING DISTRICTS

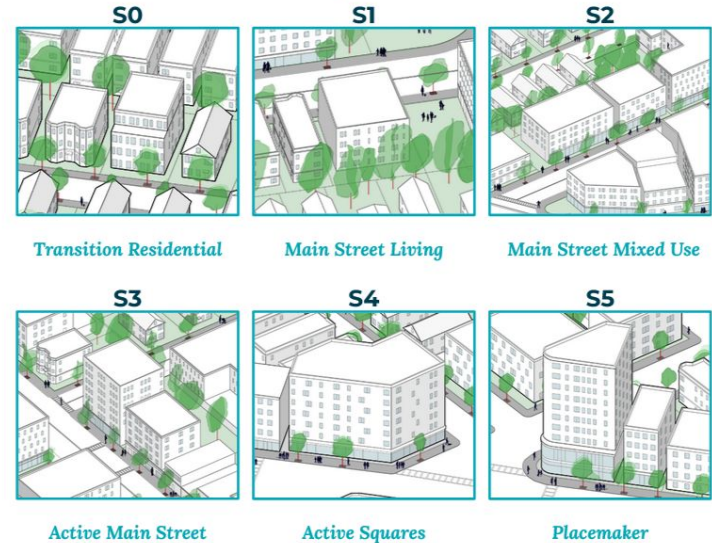


## WHAT IS SQUARES + STREETS (S+S) ZONING?

- **Citywide zoning rules** for neighborhood centers and along main streets (*adopted 04/17/24*)
- A **toolbox of six (6) varying zoning options**
- Zoning rules **aligned with City planning, policy, and programmatic goals** for housing and economic development
- Established as rules in the Zoning Code, but **only implemented after they are mapped to specific geographies**

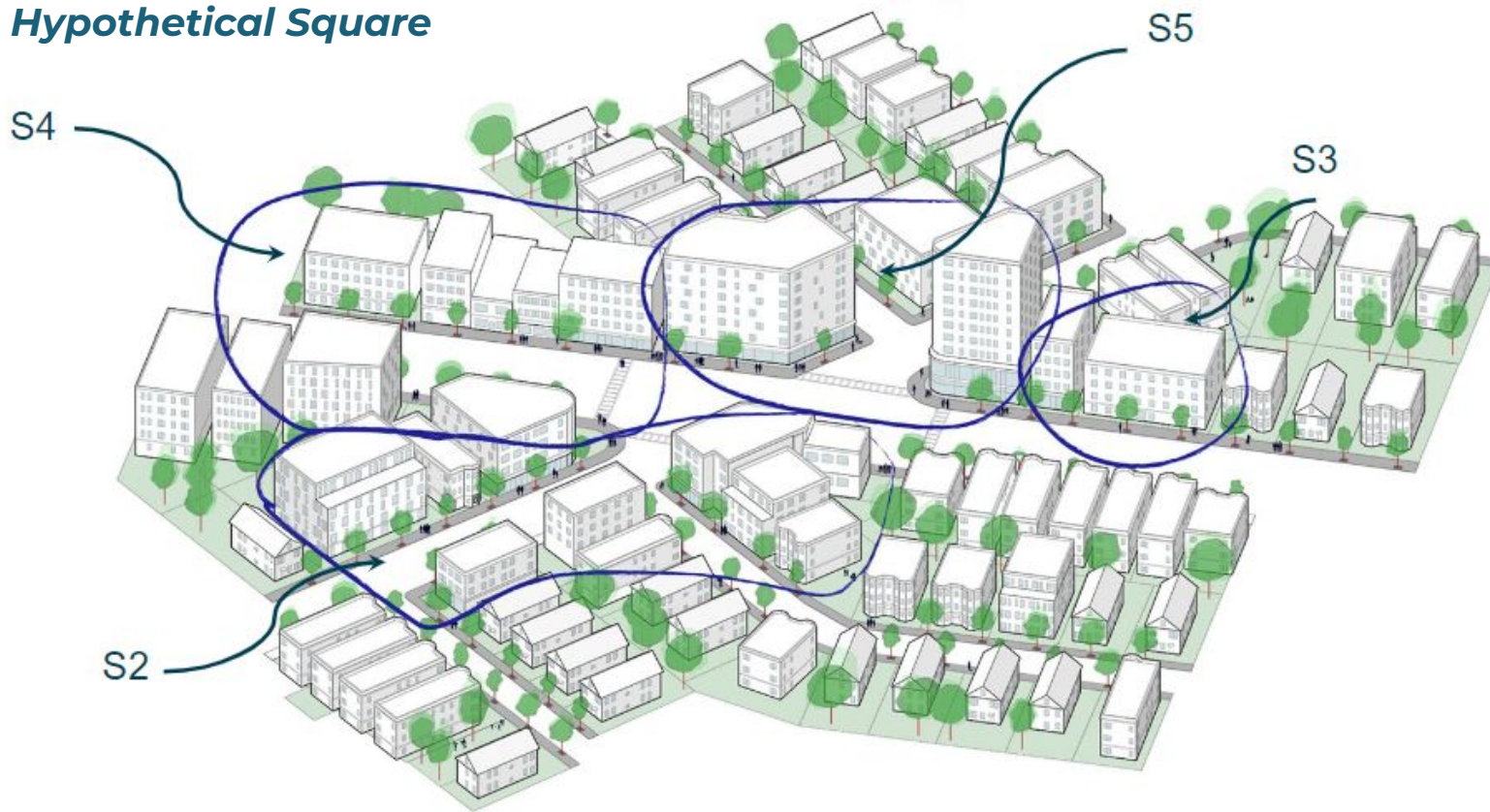
## SQUARES + STREETS

### Zoning Districts



# SQUARES + STREETS ZONING DISTRICTS

## Hypothetical Square



How and which districts are mapped will depend on the Small Area Plan process and engagement

Like existing subdistricts, the zoning would be applied across newly defined segments of an area – not one blanket across the whole



# SQUARES + STREETS ZONING DISTRICTS

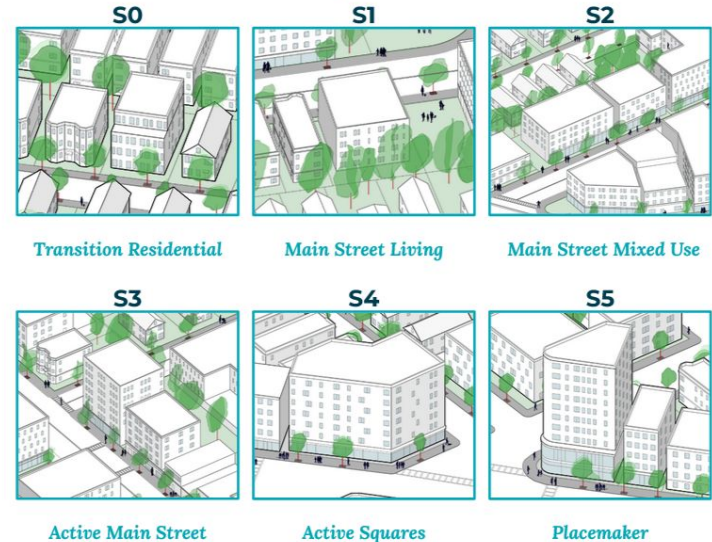


## HOW WERE THEY DEVELOPED?

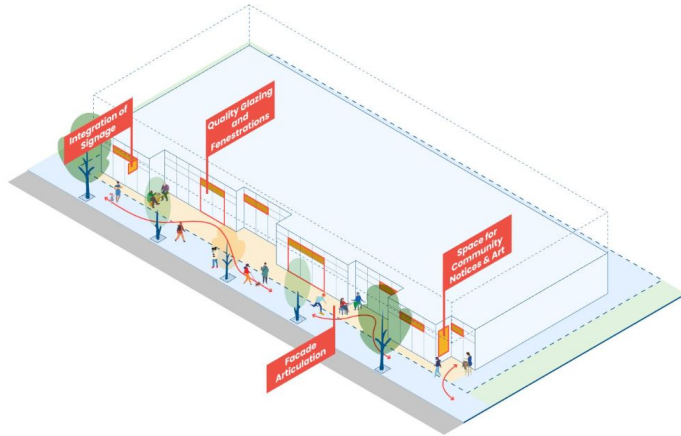
- Based on:
  - citywide public engagement and revision
  - existing zoning analysis across the City
  - Zoning Board of Appeal cases + Article 80 developments
  - Modern building, energy, + accessibility codes
  - Feasibility of use as determined by ISD, local small-scale and affordable housing developers, and designers
  - Review by partner City departments like the Mayor's Office of Housing and OEOI

## SQUARES + STREETS

### Zoning Districts



# S+S ZONING DISTRICTS – “USE”



14

## USES

Uses consolidated to be more intuitive to interpret

### Allowed uses include:

- Most residential uses
- Community uses (i.e., schools, child care, open space)
- Accessory parking, shared parking

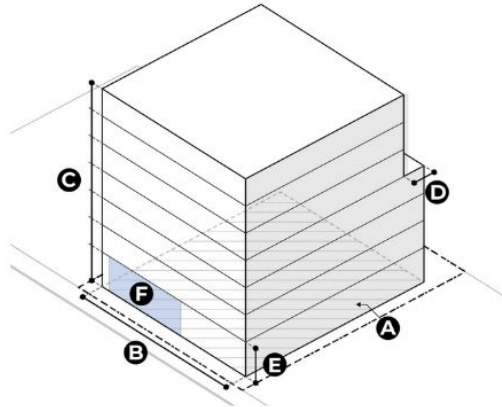
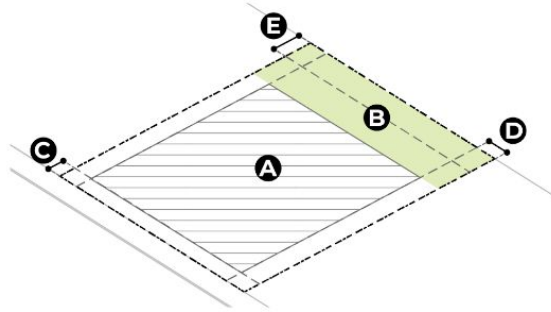
Most **industrial and vehicular uses** are forbidden – similar to what already exists in many zoning subdistricts

Commercial/active uses are **regulated** depending on their **size and impacts**

“Active Uses” category and **ground floor Active Use requirement** in some of the S+S districts to promote business and service activity.

ACTIVE USES						
Community Center	C	A	A	A	A	A
Social Club	C	A	A	A	A	A
Grocery Store - Small	C	A	A	A	A	A
Service Establishment - Small	C-G   F	A	A	A	A	A
Retail Store - Small	C-G   F	A-G   F	A-G   C	A	A	A
Restaurant - Small	C-G   F	A-G   F	A-G   F	A	A	A
Entertainment/Events - Extra Small	C-G   F	A-G   F	A-G   F	A-G   C	A	A
Makerspace	F	A	A	A	A	A
Museum	F	A	A	A	A	A
Restaurant - Large	F	C-G   F	A	A	A	A
Retail Store - Medium	F	C-G   F	A-G   C	A	A	A
Entertainment/Events - Small	F	C-G   F	A-G   F	A-G   C	A-G   C	A
Retail Cannabis Establishment	F	C-G   F	C-G   F	C-G   F	C	C
Entertainment/Events - Medium	F	F	C-G   F	A-G   C	A	A
Service Establishment - Large	F	F	C	A	A	A
Grocery Store - Large	F	F	C	C	A	A
Retail Store - Large	F	F	C	A-G   C	A-G   C	A-G
Indoor Recreation	F	F	F	A-G   C	A	A
Entertainment/Events - Large	F	F	F	C	C	C
Retail Store - Extra Large	F	F	F	F	C	C
Entertainment/Events - Extra Large	F	F	F	F	F	F

# S+S ZONING DISTRICTS – “SCALE”



## SCALE

### New + Updated Dimensional Measurement Tools

Dimensional tools that better reflect existing buildings and the scale needed for new housing that fits within existing parcels of land.

- **Lot Standards**

- Building Lot Coverage (A)
- Permeable Area of Lot Minimum (B)
- Size of front, rear, and side yards (C, D, E)

- **Building Form**

- Building Floor Plate (A)
- Maximum Building Width (B)
- Maximum Building Height + Stories (C)
- Rear Stepbacks (D)
- Ground Floor Ceiling Height (E)
- Ground Floor Active Use Requirement (F)

An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood, showing houses, trees, and streets. A large, semi-transparent blue rectangle is overlaid on the image, covering most of the frame. Inside this rectangle, the text "2. What We've Heard and Who We've Heard From" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is centered horizontally and vertically within the blue area.

## **2. What We've Heard and Who We've Heard From**



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



**1:1 Interviews**  
April

**Online Surveys**  
Ongoing

**Planning Kick-Off (Virtual and In-person)**  
May 14th + 18th

**Urban Design Walkshop + Surveying**  
June 22nd

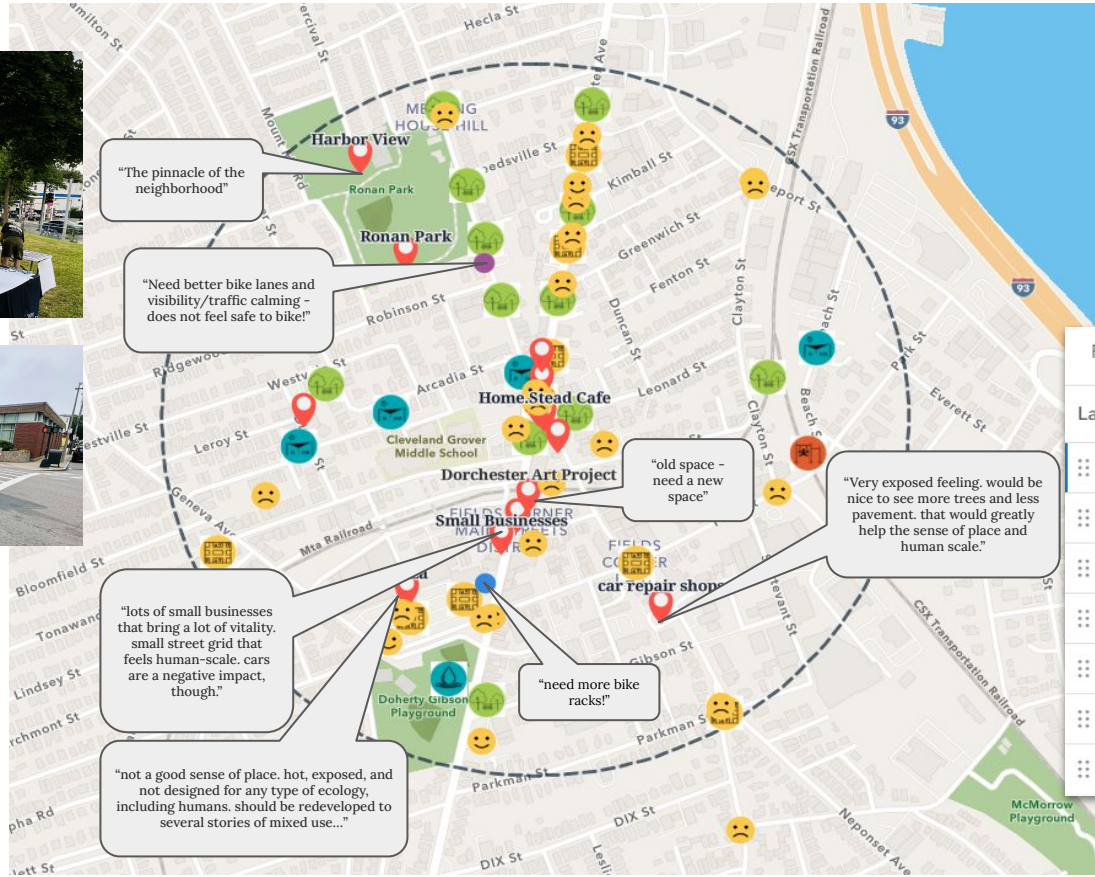
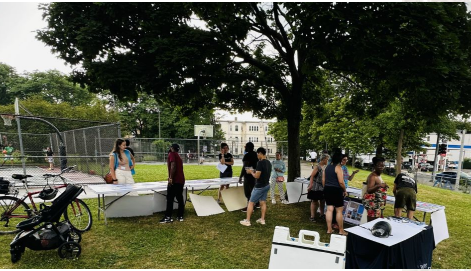
**Transportation Walkshop + Surveying**  
June 24th

**What We've Heard (In-person and Online)**  
July 15th + August 7th



To learn more about our engagement events, visit [bit.ly/fields-storymap](https://bit.ly/fields-storymap)

# WHAT WE'VE HEARD: ASSETS & VISIONING



Fields Corner Analysis Map Activity Results

Layers	
☰	Transportation Amenities Survey
☰	Transportation Safety Survey
☰	Gathering Places Survey
☰	Sense of Place Survey
☰	ArtsCulture Survey
☰	Resiliency GI Survey
☰	Squares and Streets Plan Areas

# WHAT HAVE WE HEARD SO FAR ABOUT SMALL BUSINESS IN FIELDS CORNER?



- **Support and preserve the diverse collection of small businesses** in Fields Corner through supports such as the creation of a business innovation district
- Encourage the **growth of small businesses owned by communities of color** while attracting new tourism to **retain local jobs and unique character** of Fields Corner
- Increasing and **supporting places of interest** in Fields Corner that people want to go. In particular, **many residents see cultural, nightlife, and youth centers as important businesses to what makes a thriving neighborhood**





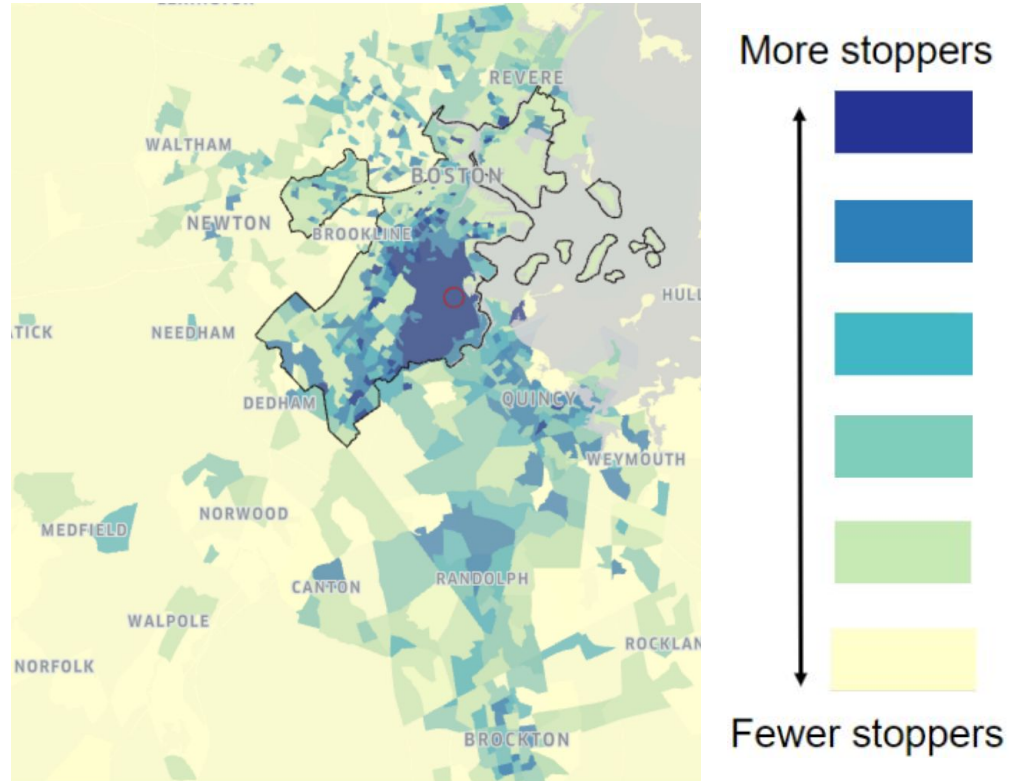
An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood, showing houses, trees, and streets. A semi-transparent blue overlay covers the entire image, with a darker blue rectangular area in the center where the text is located.

# **3. Existing Business Conditions in Fields Corner**

# WHO SPENDS TIME IN FIELDS CORNER



- Fields Corner is a locally-focused community center, but also draws significant shares of people from a wider area.
- More than half (57%) of people spending time in Fields Corner **live within one mile of the square**
- Of people who spend time in Fields Corner, **22.8% speak a language other than English**
- There is a **diversity of household incomes** represented in those who spend time in Cleary Square, low income households (18% earn less than \$25,000) and more affluent households (32% earn more than \$125,000)



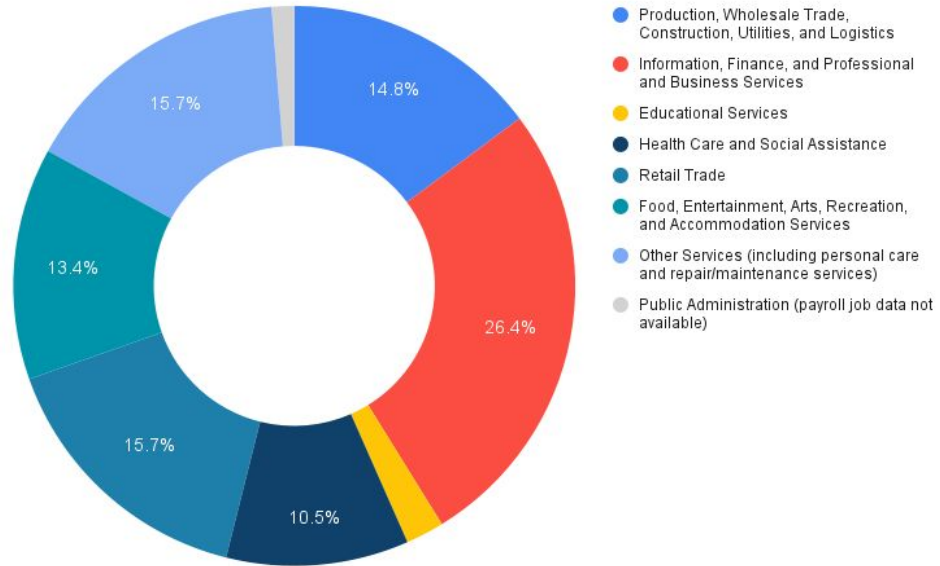


# TYPES OF BUSINESSES IN FIELDS CORNER



- There are a lot of service based businesses in Fields Corner (about 45%)
- The **retail vacancy rate in Fields Corner is low** (2.95 percent in Q4 2023) indicating a possible demand for additional retail space.
- The **largest industry by employment** in Fields Corner is **health care and social assistance**.

Business Composition in Fields Corner

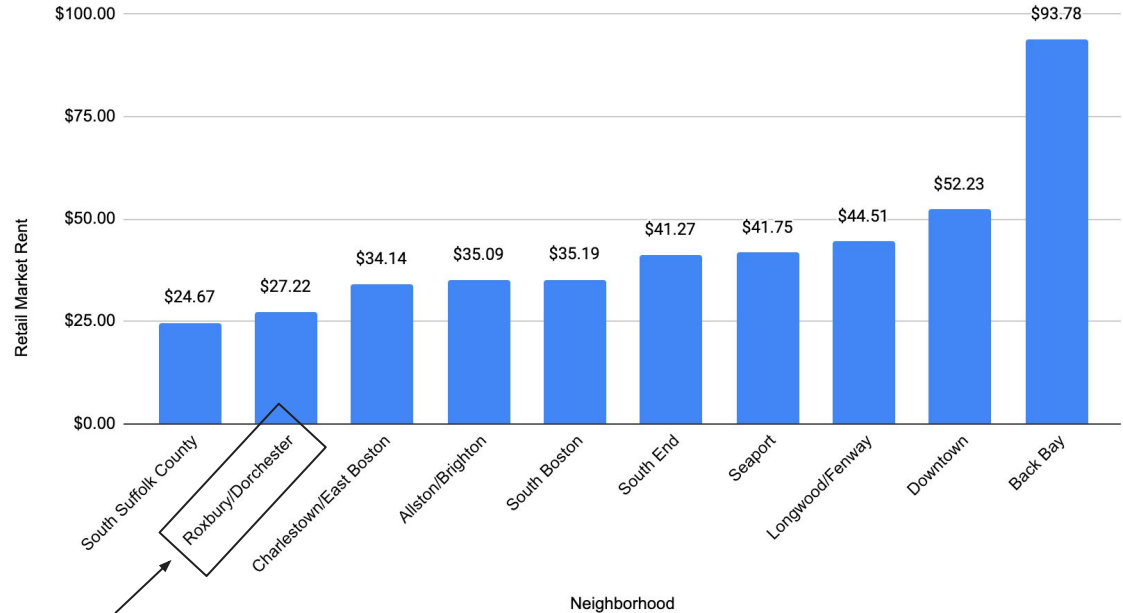


# COMMERCIAL RENTS IN FIELDS CORNER



- Retail market rents, however, remain steady, at \$27.16/sq ft in Q4 2023 compared to \$27.79 sq ft a year earlier
- Retail rents in the area including Dorchester, Roxbury, Hyde Park, and Mattapan are the **lowest across the city**

Retail Market Rents by Neighborhood



Includes Fields Corner

# HOUSEHOLD INCOME OF THOSE WHO SPEND TIME IN FIELDS CORNER



## Household Income

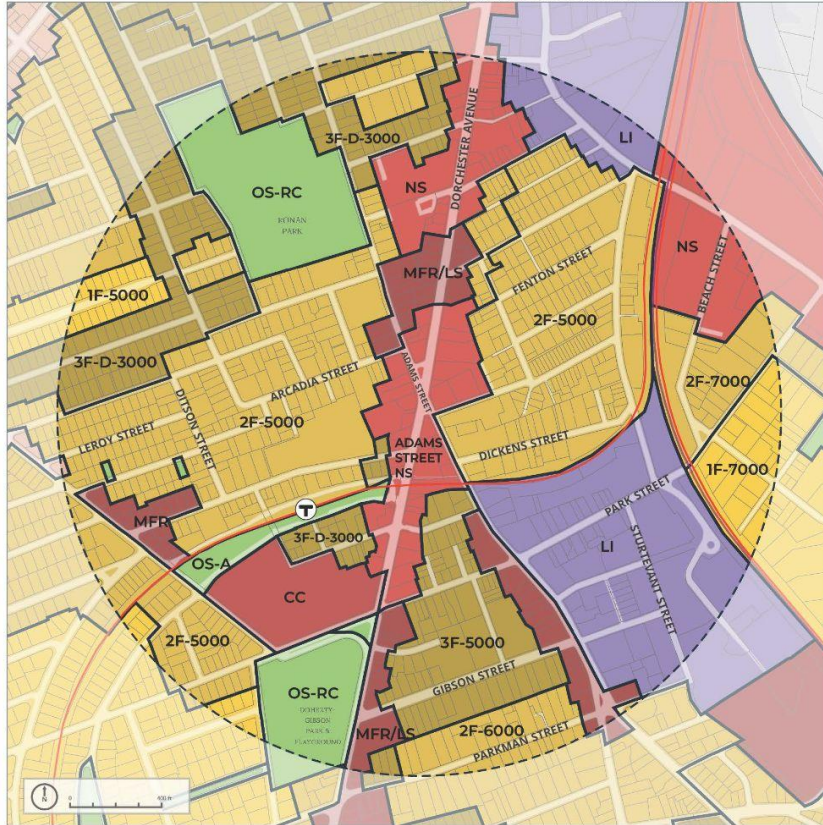
	Fields Corner Trade Area	Residents of Fields Corner (tracts 916, 917, 920, and 921.01)
Less than \$24,999	18.9%	27.3%
\$25,000 to \$49,999	13.5%	14.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	13.1%	17.9%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	11.5%	12.6%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	9.3%	4.8%
More than \$125,000	33.7%	22.7%
Median Household Income	\$83,278	\$58,901

Source: US Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, MasterCard Consumer Journey data, BPDA Research Division. Trade Area is a weighted average of zip codes based on share of spending in Fields Corner.

# EXISTING ZONING IN FIELDS CORNER

## Existing Zoning Map

Mapa de la zonificación existente  
 Bản Đồ Phân Vùng Hiện Tại  
 Mapa di Zoniamentu Izistenti  
 Kat jeyografik Dekoupaj Zòn ki egziste deja



## Zoning Subdistricts

- Neighborhood Shopping (NS, Adams Street NS)
- Community Commercial (CC)
- Multifamily Residential / Local Services (MFR/LS)
- One-Family Residential (1F-5000, 1F-7000)
- Two-Family Residential (2F-5000, 2F-6000, 2F-7000)
- Three-Family Residential (3F-5000, 3F-D-3000)
- Local Industrial (LI)
- Open Space (OS-A, OS-RC)

**The Fields Corner area is specifically regulated through zoning that promotes commercial activity along and near Dorchester Ave and residential activity east and west of Dorchester Ave.**

*El área de Fields Corner está específicamente regulada por una zonificación que promueve la actividad comercial a lo largo de Dorchester Ave y en zonas aledañas, y la actividad residencial al este y oeste de Dorchester Ave.*

*Quy định phân vùng cụ thể cho khu vực Fields Corner khuyến khích hoạt động thương mại dọc và gần Dorchester Ave cũng như hoạt động dân cư ở phía đông và phía tây Dorchester Ave.*

*Árta di Fields Corner sta riguladu spisifikamenti através di un zoniamentu ki ta promove atividadi komersial au longu di y pèrtu di Dorchester Ave y atividadi di riziðensial na lada estí y oestí di Dorchester Ave.*

*Yo kontrolole zòn Fields Corner a espesyalman através dekoupaj zòn ki ankouraje aktivite komèsyal nan Dorchester Ave epi toupré Dorchester Ave ak aktivite rezidansyèl ki nan lès ak bòs Dorchester Ave.*

## What types of businesses would you like to see more of in Fields Corner?

*“Keep the small immigrant businesses that are there. They should be guarantee space.”*

*“Most importantly I want the businesses that exist to be able to thrive too”*

*“Restaurants are always great, maybe some specialty shops like an art store.”*

*“Opportunities for women and bipoc owned establishments”*

*“Support for more bipoc-owned businesses”*

*“I would love for a vegan business to be here. I would also love for ethically-made items to be easily available, as well as organic/non-toxic, sustainable items”*

*“very excited for the bookstore. want more outdoor dining!”*

*“Restaurants, coffee shop, grocery store, hardware store”*



An aerial photograph of a city neighborhood, likely Boston, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings, trees, and streets. A semi-transparent blue overlay covers the top and bottom portions of the image, framing the central text.

# **4. Existing City of Boston Tools to Support Small Business**



# How Do We Protect 'Anchor' Small Businesses and Cultural Enterprises?



- ❑ [Boston Main Streets](#) is a network of 20 independent nonprofit Main Streets organizations that exists across Boston. Main Streets use a comprehensive revitalization approach and connects local businesses to services and resources
- ❑ The [Affordable Commercial Assistance Fund](#) helps subsidize commercial rents in affordable housing developments to sustain small businesses and nonprofits in Boston impacted by the pandemic
- ❑ The Office of Economic Opportunity & Inclusion provides technical assistance to support and help **stabilize businesses of historical, cultural or societal significance** through the [Legacy Business Program](#)
- ❑ Subsidize operating costs and connect small business owners to additional or new storefront spaces that are currently vacant with the [S.P.A.C.E Grant Program](#)

## Non-City Supports

- ❑ **The [Uniform Relocation Assistance](#)** is a federal law that establishes minimum standards of care for federally funded programs and projects that require the acquisition of real estate or displaces persons from their homes, businesses, or farms to help **secure meaningful relocation support for tenants**

# How Do We Protect 'Anchor' Small Businesses and Cultural Enterprises?



## BUSINESS TOOLS

Support for Current Businesses and Cultural Enterprises



A network 20 independent nonprofit organizations that use a comprehensive revitalization approach and connects local businesses to services and resources

[SQUARES + STREETS](#)

## BUSINESS TOOLS

Support for Current Businesses and Cultural Enterprises



Provide technical assistance to support and help stabilize businesses of historical, cultural, or societal significance

[SQUARES + STREETS](#)

## BUSINESS TOOLS

Support for Current Businesses and Cultural Enterprises



Subsidize operating costs and connect small business owners to additional or new storefront spaces that are currently vacant

[SQUARES + STREETS](#)

# How do we Preserve and Protect Physical Spaces & Places That are Significant to Community?



- ❑ **Preserve existing commercial uses** through zoning in areas experiencing commercial displacement
- ❑ **Preserve and improve historic facades and storefronts** to increase the vitality of commercial districts and local businesses through [ReStore](#)\*
- ❑ Support **acquisition, preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties** through funding from the [Community Preservation Fund](#) & [Acquisition Opportunity Program](#)
- ❑ Provide grants to cultural organizations to **improve and preserve cultural production, practice and performance space**, or support emergency relocation costs through the [Cultural Space Fund](#)
- ❑ Provide financial and technical assistance to **support historically disadvantaged businesses pursuing City of Boston contracts** like [Contracting Opportunity Fund](#) & [Cultural Space-Readiness Pilot](#)

\*Funds for the Restore program in Roslindale and Hyde Park are sourced from the Neighborhood Development Fund (NDF)

# How do we Preserve and Protect Physical Spaces & Places That are Significant to Community?



## BUSINESS TOOLS

*Preserving and Protecting Physical Spaces and Places*



Preserve and improve historic facades and storefronts to increase the vitality of commercial districts and local businesses

## BUSINESS TOOLS

*Preserving and Protecting Physical Spaces and Places*



Provide grants to cultural organizations to improve and preserve cultural production, practice and performance space, or support emergency relocation costs

## BUSINESS TOOLS

*Preserving and Protecting Physical Spaces and Places*



Support acquisition, preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties

# How Do We Produce New Commercial + Cultural Space at Different Levels of Affordability?

- ❑ Strategic Zoning Code reforms like [Squares + Streets](#) and [Citywide Child Care Zoning](#) to make **more commercial/cultural uses as-of-right**
- ❑ In June 2022 Mayor Wu announced the release of the [Public Land for Public Good: City-wide Land Audit](#) which identified **City-owned land that was vacant or underutilized and presented a high opportunity for redevelopment** to advance citywide goals (affordability, equity, and resilience)
- ❑ **Work with private developers to create new affordable, accessible commercial/cultural spaces** by supporting build-out costs, designated uses, or below market rents through cooperation agreements (i.e. 250 Western Avenue has a local business preference and support for build-out costs; 3743 North Beacon has designated ground floor gallery space with a long-term lease)



# How Do We Produce New Commercial + Cultural Space at Different Levels of Affordability?



## BUSINESS TOOLS

*Producing New Commercial and Cultural Space*



Tool

**SQUARES +  
STREETS  
ZONING**

Makes widely used cultural and business uses as-of-right

**SQUARES + STREETS**

## BUSINESS TOOLS

*Producing New Commercial and Cultural Space*



Tool

**CITYWIDE  
CHILD CARE  
ZONING**

Makes child care centers and home-based childcare as of right citywide

**SQUARES + STREETS**

## BUSINESS TOOLS

*Producing New Commercial and Cultural Space*



Tool

**PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT  
SUBSIDY FOR  
AFFORDABLE  
COMMERCIAL/CULTURAL  
SPACES**

Work with developers to create new spaces by supporting build-out costs, designated uses, or below market rents through cooperation agreements

**SQUARES + STREETS**

An aerial photograph of a city, showing various buildings, streets, and green spaces. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A dark blue horizontal band is positioned across the middle of the image, containing the main title text.

# 5. Applying Existing Tools to Your Community Goals



## ACTIVITY:

### BUSINESS + COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

#### CHALLENGE/TASK

In small groups, propose a **community development project** and manage the tradeoffs of making that project possible in the **context of existing businesses, regulations, and resources.**

#### FORMAT

- Participants will work together in small groups
- A Planning Department staff member will serve as a facilitator for each group
- Instructions, written materials, and visual guides will be provided to help move through the activity!

# Discussion Questions



## Here are some of the questions we want to discuss with you!

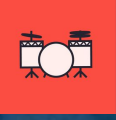
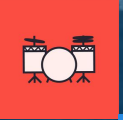
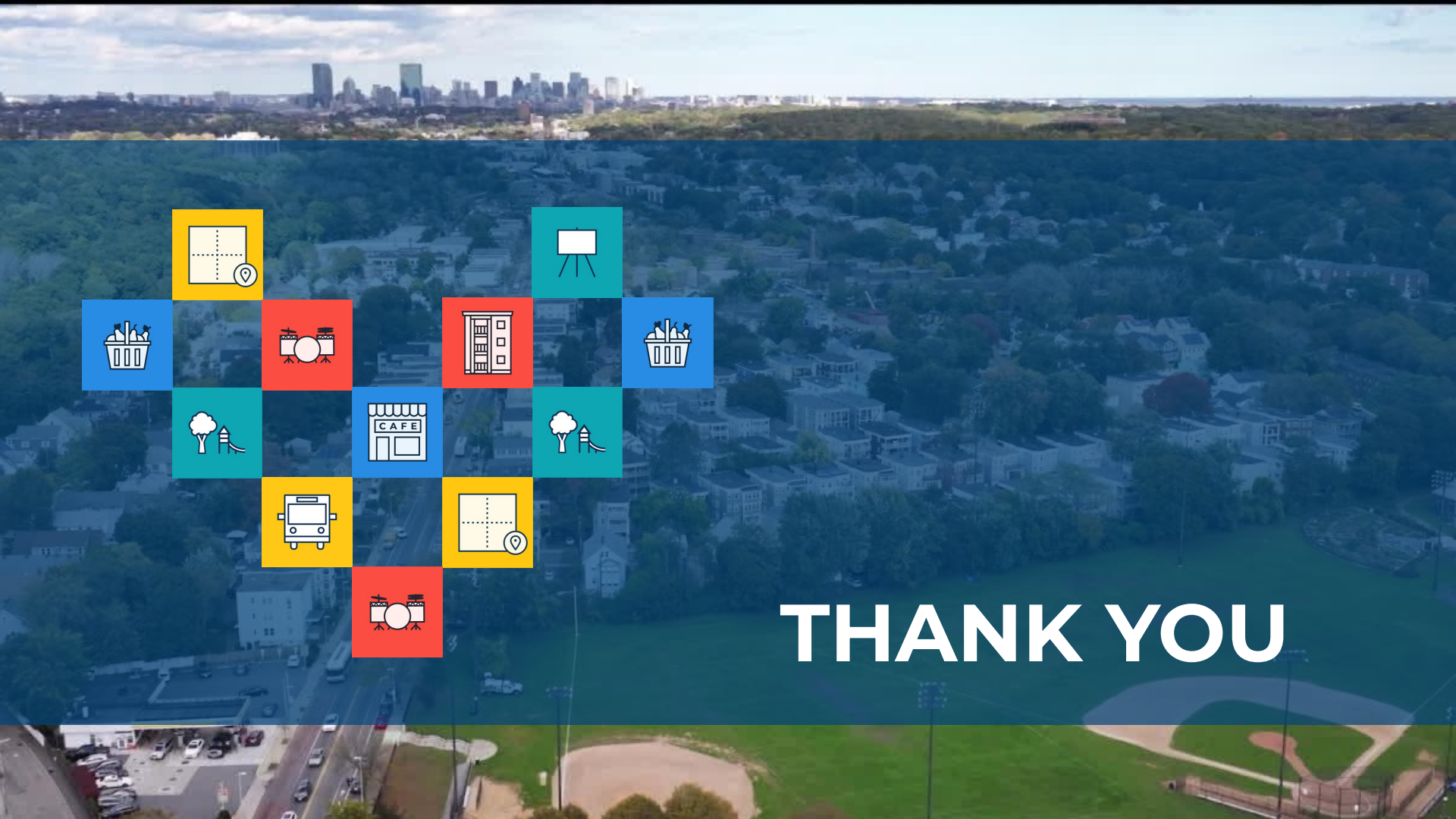
1. If the City had extra money to support small businesses, how would you want us to spend it?
  - a. Help for small businesses to move into vacant storefronts
  - b. Create more below-market rate commercial spaces
  - c. Create rent-to-own pathways for small businesses
  - d. Incubators/shared spaces in neighborhoods to help small retail or food businesses get started
  - e. Other ideas not on this list? Let us know!
2. What things do businesses need from the City to be able to attract and grow a sustainable customer base?
3. What are the most significant barriers to new businesses being able to open and stay open now?
4. How do you expect Squares + Streets planning and zoning will impact your business?

# Group Debrief: What Tools Were Missing?



→





**THANK YOU**