



# University Place Residences

Dorchester, Massachusetts

CORCORAN  
JENNISON  
*Companies*

DiMella  
Shaffer

Boston Civic Design Commission Briefing Package

April 30, 2013

 **Fort Point Associates, Inc.**  
Urban Planning Environmental Consulting Project Permitting



Project location  
University Place

JFK / UMass MBTA Station

Harbor Point Apartments

**Aerial View of Site**

**University Place Residences**  
140-144 Mt Vernon Street



Boston Civic Design Commission  
Briefing Package

## PROJECT SUMMARY

University Place Residences LLC proposes to construct a 198,603 gsf mixed use Project at 140-144 Mount Vernon Street on the Columbia Point peninsula near the shoreline of Dorchester Bay. In accordance with the 2011 Columbia Point Master Plan, the Project will bring much needed housing to the area to complement the surrounding institutional and office uses.

The proposed six-story building contains 184 rental apartment units, ground floor commercial space, common areas and underground parking. The new building will be constructed on a portion of the existing parking lot toward the southwest corner of the Site. The building's footprint will be approximately 28,000 sf and its height will be 69 feet (75 feet to the mechanical enclosure).

## PROGRAM

University Place Residences proposes the development of a new, six-story residential building with ground floor commercial space on a portion of an existing parking lot. The building will contain 184 rental apartments, 24 of which will be affordable units. The Project has proposed a mix of dwelling units that will attract young, working professionals, including 67 studio apartments, 73 one-bedroom apartments and 44 two-bedroom apartments.

The ground floor of the proposed Project contains approximately 9,700 sf of ground floor commercial space and approximately 6,849 sf of amenity space. Proposed amenities include a central lobby, conference room, an exercise facility, bicycle storage and a new, 30,000 sf landscaped open space behind the new building and in front of the existing office building on the site. The project has also removed 231 surface parking spaces from the Site, which will be replaced by 83 spaces; including 76 sub-surface parking spaces and 7 surface spaces.

Table 1: Project Program

Project Component	Dimensions/Count
Gross Floor Area	168,348 sf
Floor Area Ratio	2.52
Parking	76 garage spaces + 7 surface (including 2 accessible and 2 van accessible) = 83 spaces
Commercial	9,700 sf
Ground Floor Amenities	6,849 sf
Residential	184 units, including: 67 studios 73 one-bedroom 44 two-bedroom

## DESIGN CONCEPT

University Place Residences has been designed to improve the built character of Columbia Point and to foster a greater sense of place in the immediate area. The project is one of the first steps in the realization of the Columbia Point Master Plan.

Buildings in the immediate area are generally large and monolithic and surrounded by parking lots, providing little street-level activation. The poor condition of sidewalks in combination with the large surface parking lots



## Project Description

between existing buildings make for an environment that is generally inhospitable to pedestrians. The Project will be an important first step to break down the existing "superblock" that is currently comprised of the Existing Office Building, the former Bayside Expo Center, and the Boston Teacher's Union Building, all of which are surrounded by a sea of surface parking. As the first building to be seen as one approaches Mount Vernon Street from the west, the Project will serve as a gateway to Columbia Point and a point of reference that will especially help to orient pedestrians traveling by MBTA to the area.

The Project will be built along the southern and western boundaries of the Site, providing street frontage that will be occupied by commercial uses to generate activity along Mount Vernon Street. A front lobby entrance for residents on axis with the JFK/UMass MBTA Station, and a first floor façade that is designed with transparency to the interior gathering spaces, will further activate the public realm.

## MASSING

The Project approach is to use the building mass to mark the northeast edge of the gateway to Columbia Point and to frame the eastern edge of open space surrounding Morrissey Boulevard and Mount Vernon Street. This is achieved by bringing the building as close as possible to the Site's western boundary and creating a façade of sufficient length (approximately 360 feet) facing west to form a defined edge to the space.

Similarly, bringing the building mass up to and along Mount Vernon Street begins to create a street wall that ultimately will extend through future development to Harbor Point. Finally, by aligning with and extending along the former Bayside Expo Center site, the building initiates a new street edge that has been visualized in the Master Plan and ultimately extends into the former Bayside Expo Center site and on to the waterfront. To give importance to Mount Vernon Street, the balconies at the upper levels project in a bay-like form marking the corner and signaling the building entrance. The residential and retail space engage each other here. The joint expressed in color panels along with commercial spaces, amenity areas for residents, including exercise, fitness, and conference space, will be visible along Mount Vernon Street.

Placing the building mass at the edge of the parcel also results in the creation of a new green space within the Site. This space replaces much of the existing parking lot. The new commercial space and lobby will have entrances leading to and from the new green space, providing opportunities for activation. Most of the remainder of the ground level on the north end of the building contains residential units facing green space on both sides of the Site.

The Parking Parcel to the north presents an opportunity for future development when economic conditions allow. This would frame the north edge of the green space and complete a pedestrian link to the Site (through the DCR land to the north) to William J. Day Boulevard, Joe Moakley Park, and Carson Beach.

## OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE

The massing and placement of the new building provides edges and gives form to both large and small open spaces. Internal to the Site, a large green space is created, which is framed by the new building, the Existing Office Building, and ultimately the expanded future development to the north. Sidewalks connect these spaces to each other and to secondary smaller spaces, or pocket parks, that are also given shape by the building. A triangular green space becomes part of the entry experience to the former Bayside Expo Center parcel. A small green space at the south end of the office building is better defined as a "pocket park" by the presence of the new



## Project Description

building at one of its edges. This series of open spaces creates a foundation for linked green spaces that should ultimately lead to the waterfront.

A new, landscaped green space will be created on the east side of the building between the University Place Residences and the University Place Office Center. Parking spaces are laid out to retain the maximum number of mature existing trees. An outdoor courtyard adjacent to the commercial space provides informal gathering and outdoor seating spaces, just a short walk from the JFK/UMass MBTA Station. To the north of this small courtyard, a line of columnar trees and a continuous seatwall separate the commercial and residential areas. A curved walk bisects the continuous seatwall. This walk connects the commercial courtyard to the residential units, dropoff court, subsurface parking vehicular access, existing parking lots to the north and potential future development. The raised dropoff court and adjacent accessible parking spaces provide access for all future users, and are delineated by bollards to create flexible, shaded space near the residential entrance. A continuous bench near the main entry, special paving, and a large specimen tree provide flexible outdoor space for residents.

The proposed landscape plan removes 25 existing trees, and replaces them with 28 new trees, including three large specimen trees, in addition to masses of large shrubs and groundcover plantings. Existing light poles in the surface parking lot will be removed and replaced with pedestrian pole lights along the easternmost walkway paralleling the site access drive. Pedestrian pole lights will also be provided along the curving walkway and integrated wall lights will be installed along the continuous seatwall leading to the main residential entrance.

## VEHICULAR CIRCULATION AND PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

Mount Vernon Street is a major vehicular road that connects Columbia Point to other regional roadways. The Columbia Point Master Plan indicates that the current intersection of Morrissey Boulevard and Mount Vernon Street and the various branch roads around the intersection are at angled geometries creating a confusing vehicular and pedestrian environment. The configuration of the Project mass establishes important new street edges at the entry to Columbia Point. As such, it helps to organize both vehicular and pedestrian movement in an understandable way by reinforcing street direction and beginning to establish a pedestrian-friendly, tree-lined streetscape.

The Mount Vernon Street axis is strengthened by the building mass, regular row of street trees, and sidewalk. The building turns off of Mount Vernon Street to align with the Mount Vernon Street Entrance. Currently serving the existing parking lot on the Site, the Existing Office Building, and adjacent hotel, the Mount Vernon Street Entrance will also serve the Project. The Columbia Point Master Plan recognizes this roadway as an important access to the future development on the former Bayside Expo Center parcel, labeling it a future Central Commercial Street. The Mount Vernon Street Entrance will be improved with sidewalks, lighting, trees and other landscaping to give it a more street-like character in anticipation of this transformation. The pedestrian realm will be activated by visible commercial space and residential gathering spaces located on the ground floor of the building. While access to Boston Harbor from the Site is possible currently, it is anticipated that the future build-out of the former Bayside Expo Center site will provide an opportunity to begin to realize the Central Commercial Street, which will adhere to Boston's Complete Streets Guidelines.

## CHARACTER AND MATERIALS

The new building character and materials will reflect the Site conditions and the building's mixed-use program. Building elements will contain a combination of vertically and horizontally oriented materials, serving to break down the massing of the primary facades. Full height glass on residential floors will be used in key portions of



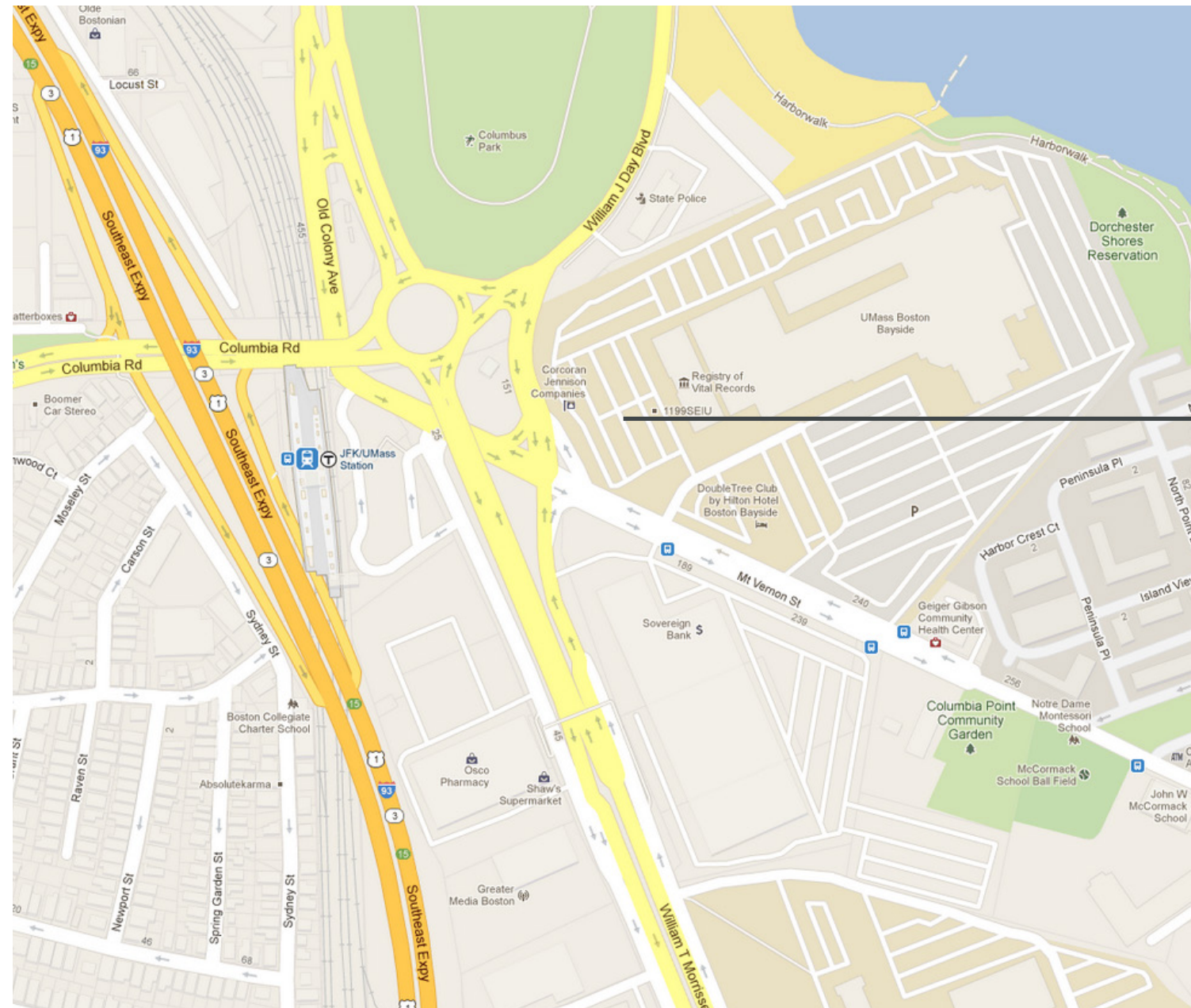
## Project Description

the building to maximize incoming light and views from residential units toward downtown Boston and the waterfront. Architectural details such as bay windows and light shelves will be used to articulate facades and maximize daylight in the interior spaces. Entry canopies on the east and west facades will mark building entrances and provide protection from the elements for pedestrian visitors.

The façades overlooking Mount Vernon Street and the Mount Vernon Street Entrance will address the immediate pedestrian and commercial urban context. On the first floor, commercial frontage comprised of large, glass panels will help to activate the pedestrian realm at the street level. Above bay windows, balconies and large glass openings will overlook the streets below, the small open space to the south of the Existing Office Building, and the water views beyond the former Bayside Expo Center. This taller portion of the building, hiding roof mechanical equipment, will be clad with a mix of light colored irregular vertically corrugated metal panels and metal shingle inserts. The east façade will be predominantly clad in horizontal metal panels accentuating its linearity and undulating form. The mass will be broken by horizontally organized punched openings composed of windows and metal shingle inserts. The top floor will be rendered as an unfolding ribbon of metal and glass that releases from the lower wall to create larger terraces at the corners. The northern end of the building will present oversized glass surfaces to take advantage of the views towards downtown Boston, Joe Moakley Park, and Carson Beach. The façades facing the courtyard will also be clad in horizontal metal panels and metal shingles. The building volume will be articulated with balconies and French doors located at corners facing water views.



## Project Description



Project location  
University Place

### Existing Area Plan

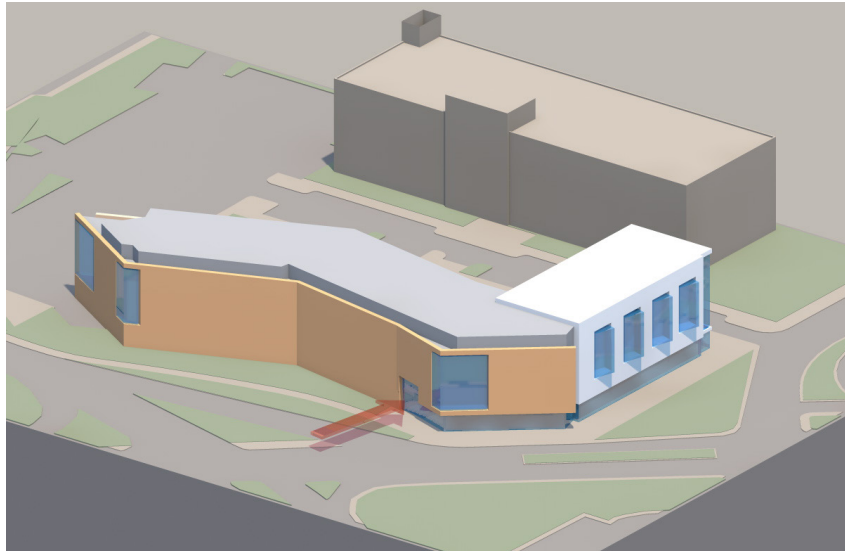




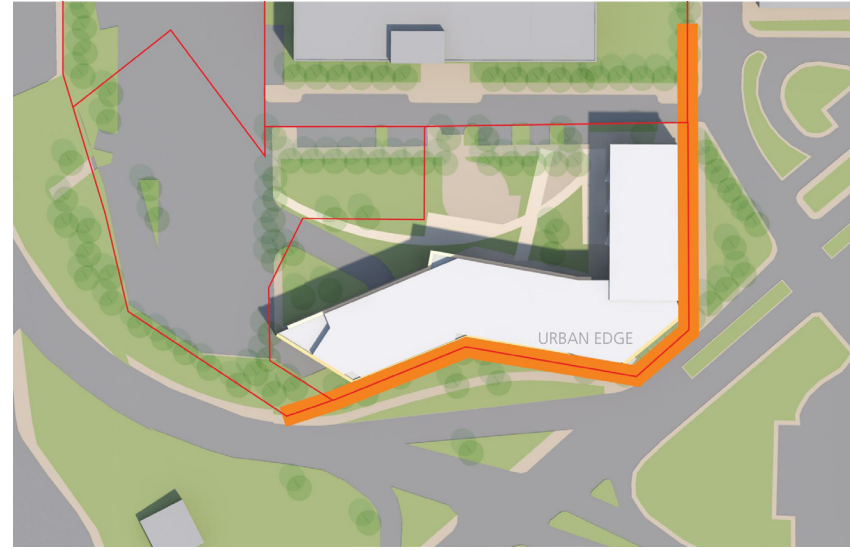
Project location  
University Place

## BRA Masterplan

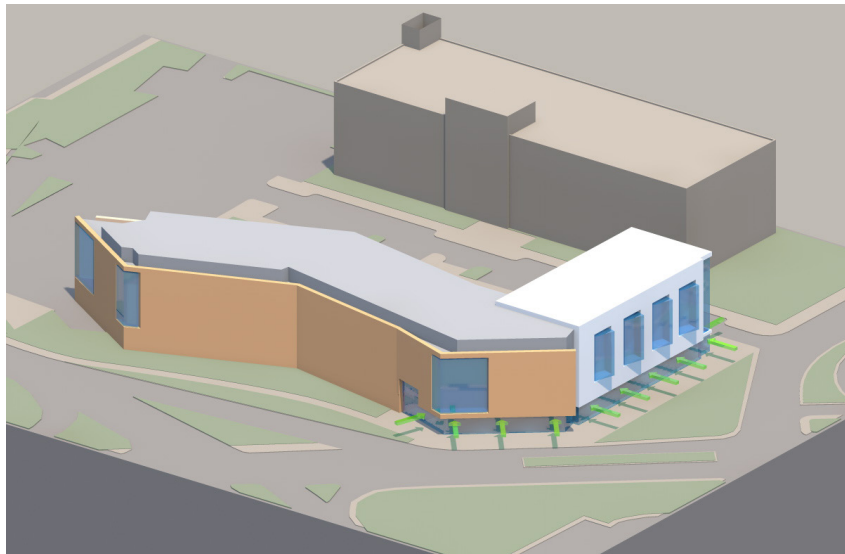




MBTA access



urban edge



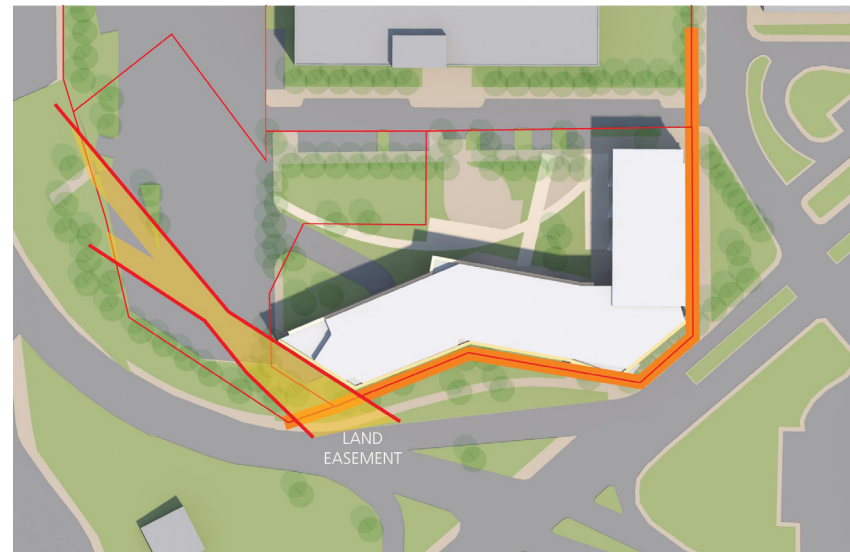
retail frontage on Mt Vernon



protected courtyard

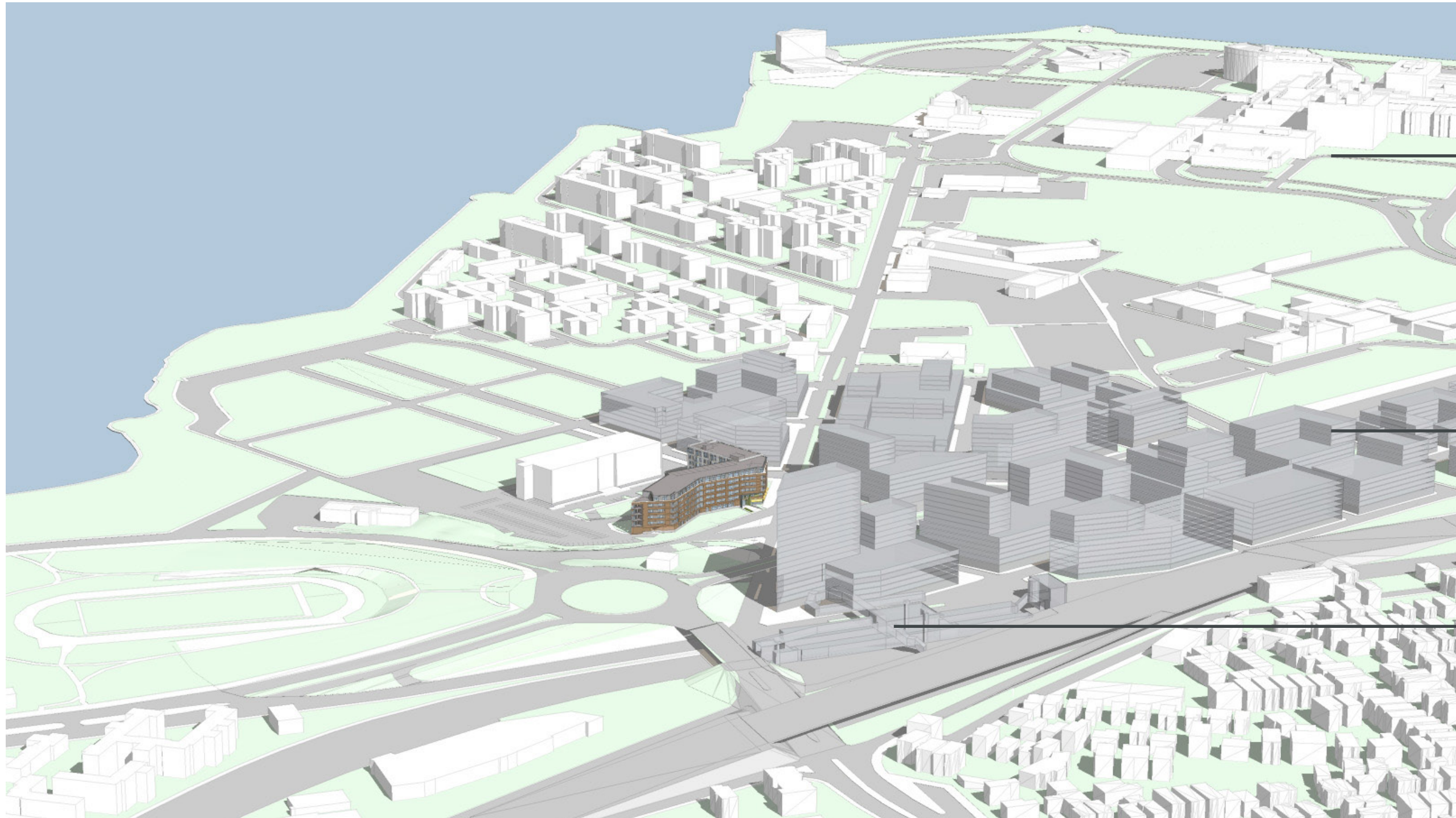


views towards the water



utility easments

### Concept Diagrams

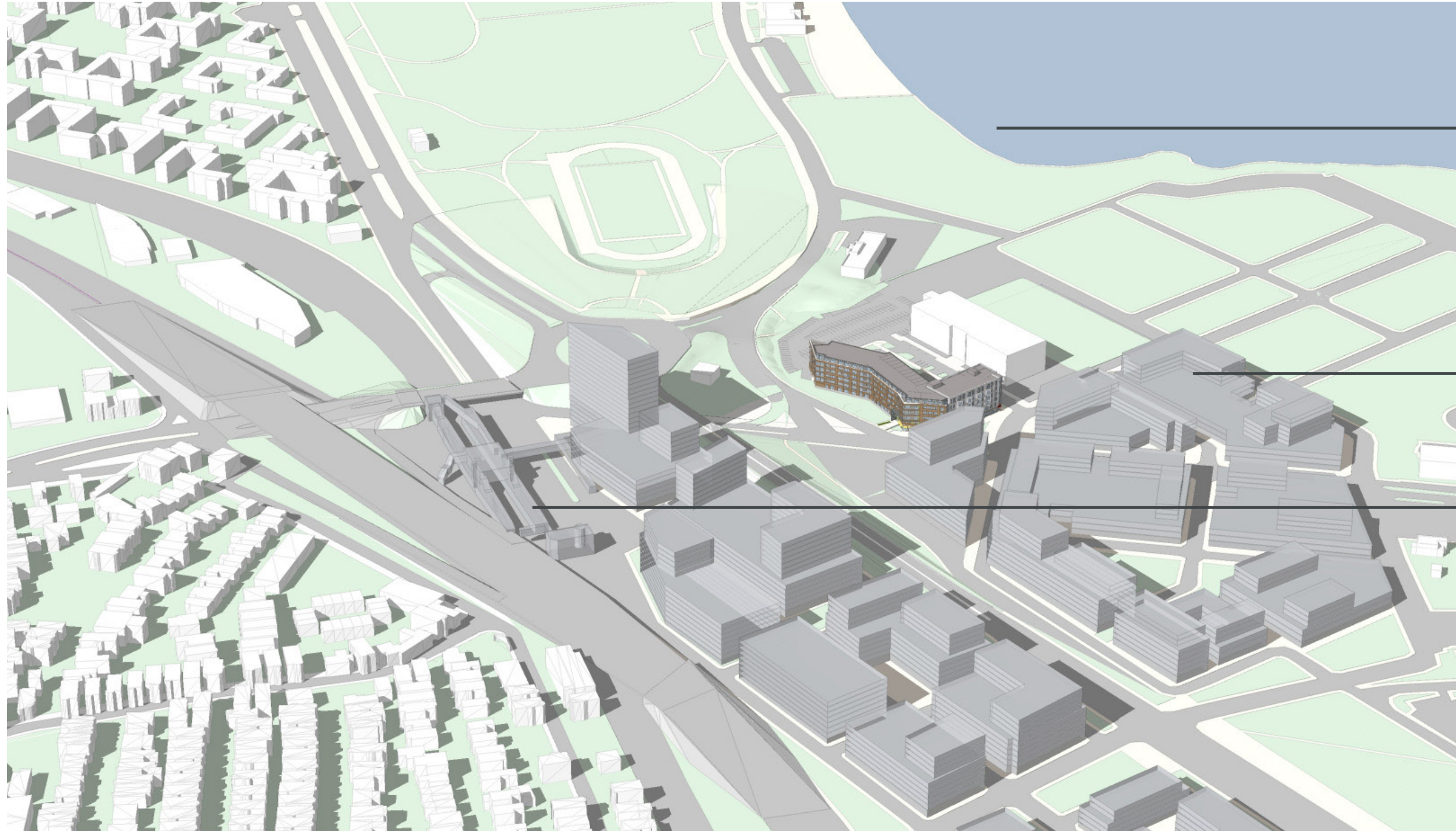


UMass campus

BRA Proposed Masterplan

JFK UMass MBTA

Bird's eye  
Looking South East



Carson beach

BRA Proposed Master Plan

JFK/Umass MBTA

Bird's eye  
**Looking North**

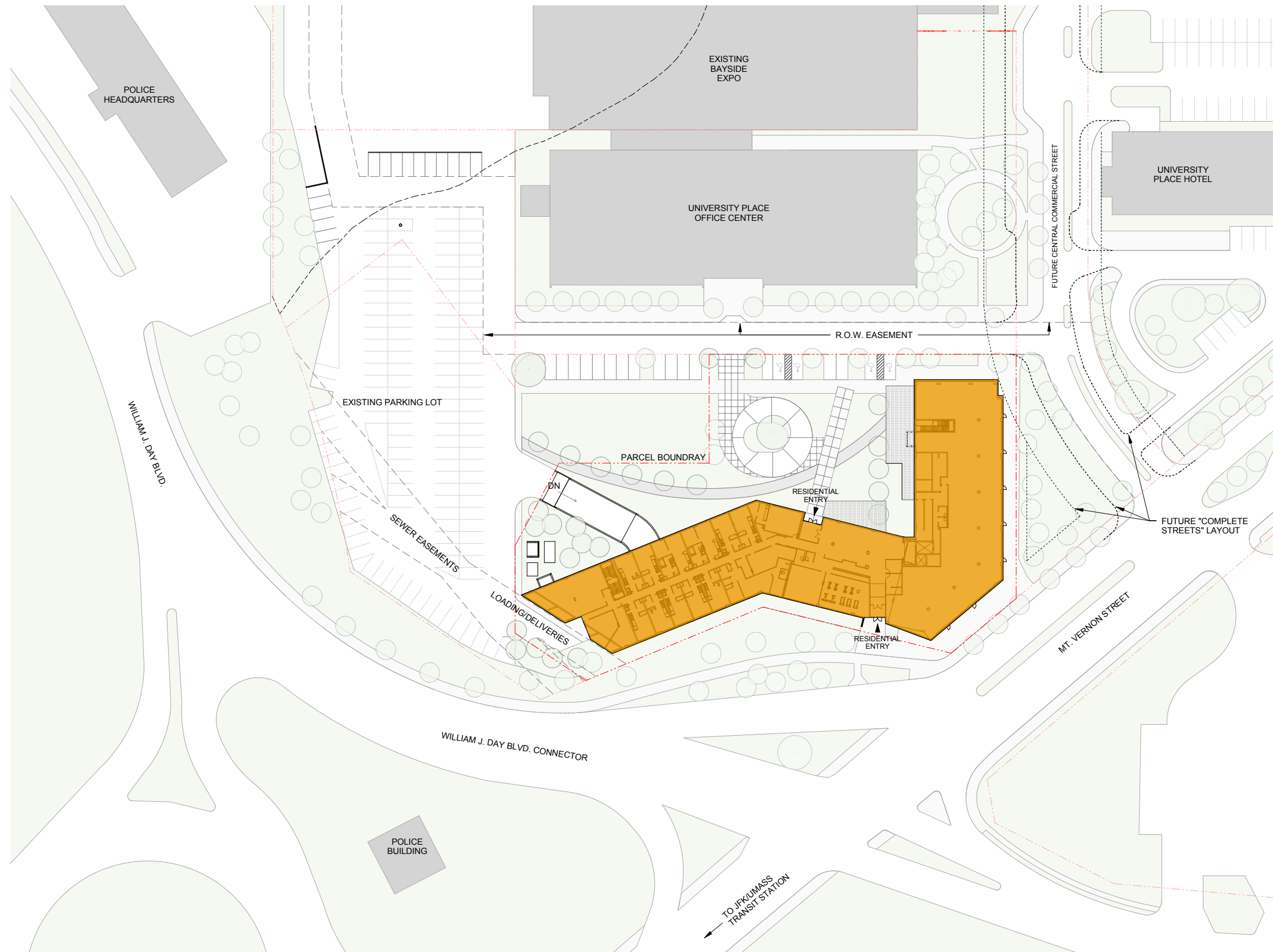


Savin Hill, Dorchester

I93 Interstate

Columbia Road  
JFK/Umass MBTA

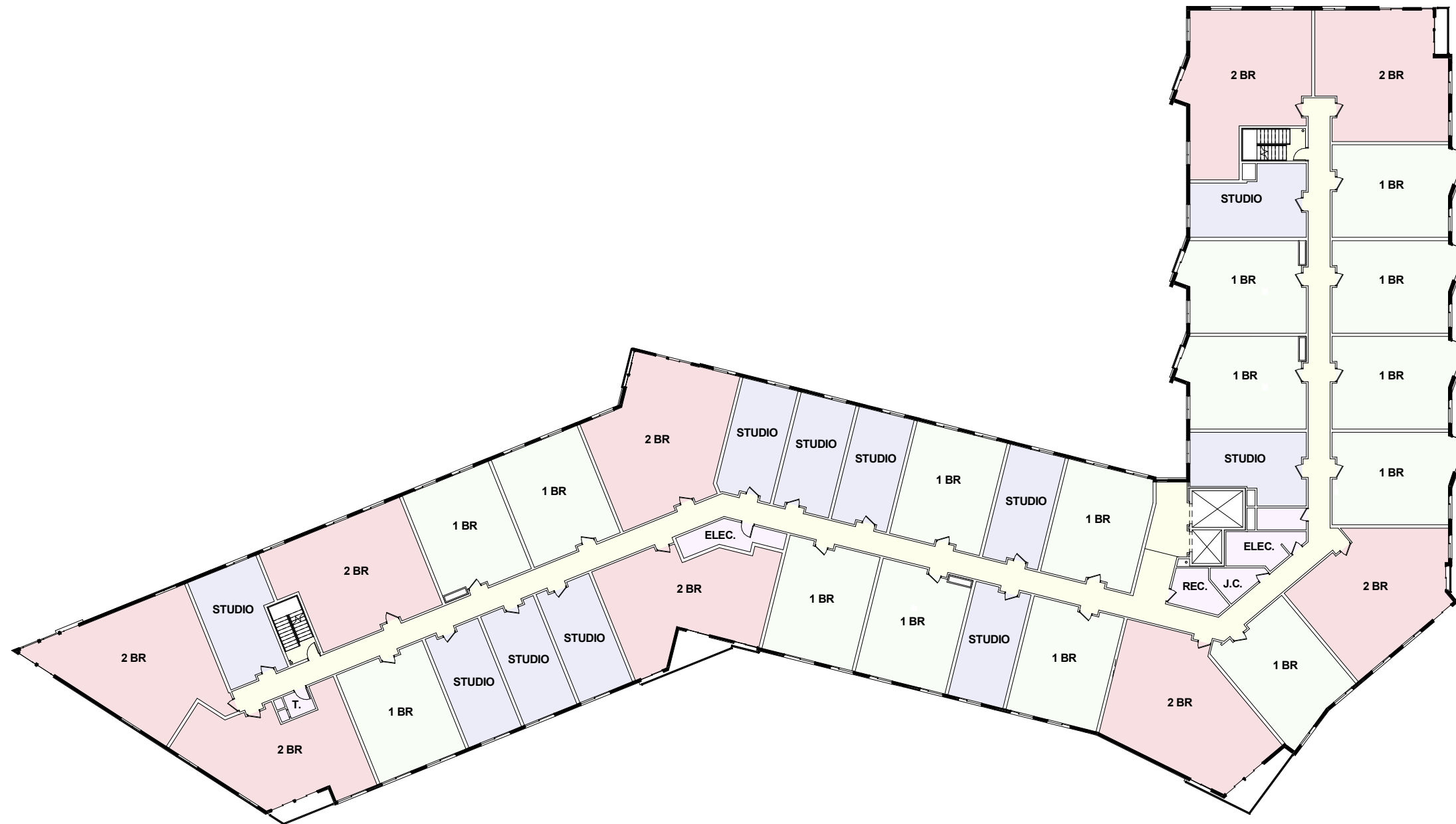
Bird's eye  
Looking South



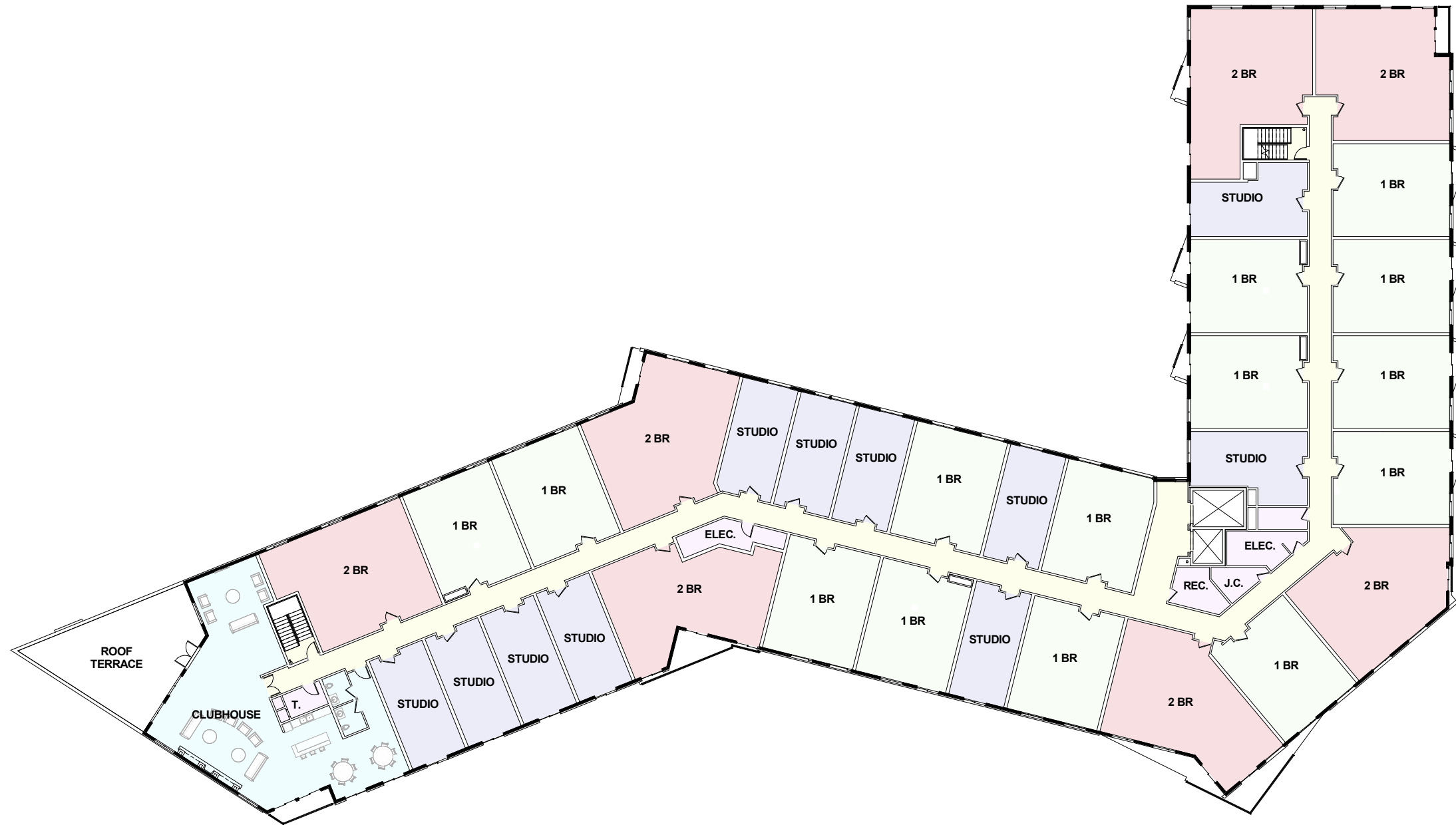
# Area Plan



**First Level Plan**

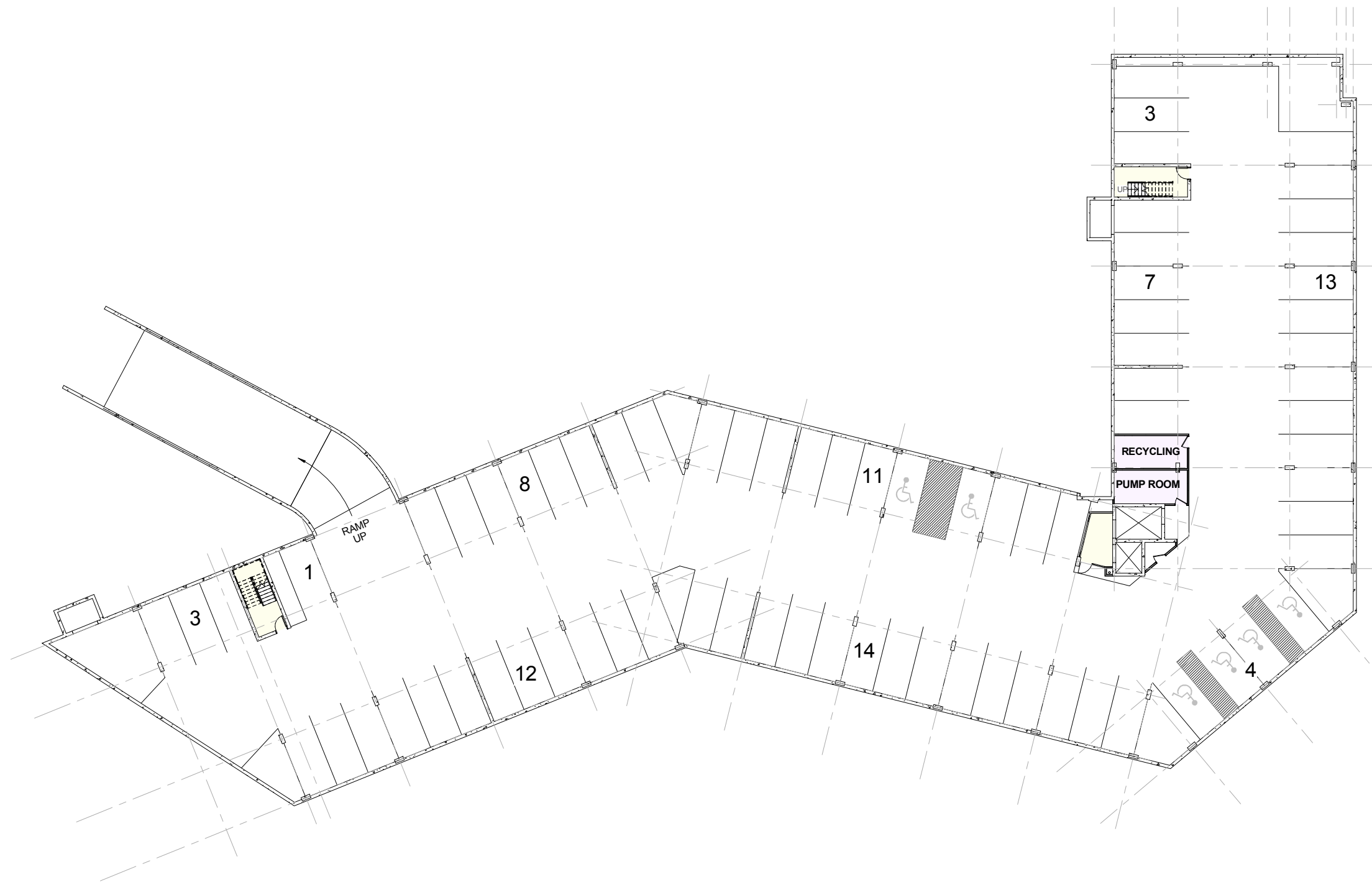


## Typical Level Plan



## Sixth Level Plan





## Garage Level Plan



Street View North  
Mt Vernon Street



Street View West  
Maint Street



Street View  
**Courtyard Entrance**



WEST ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION

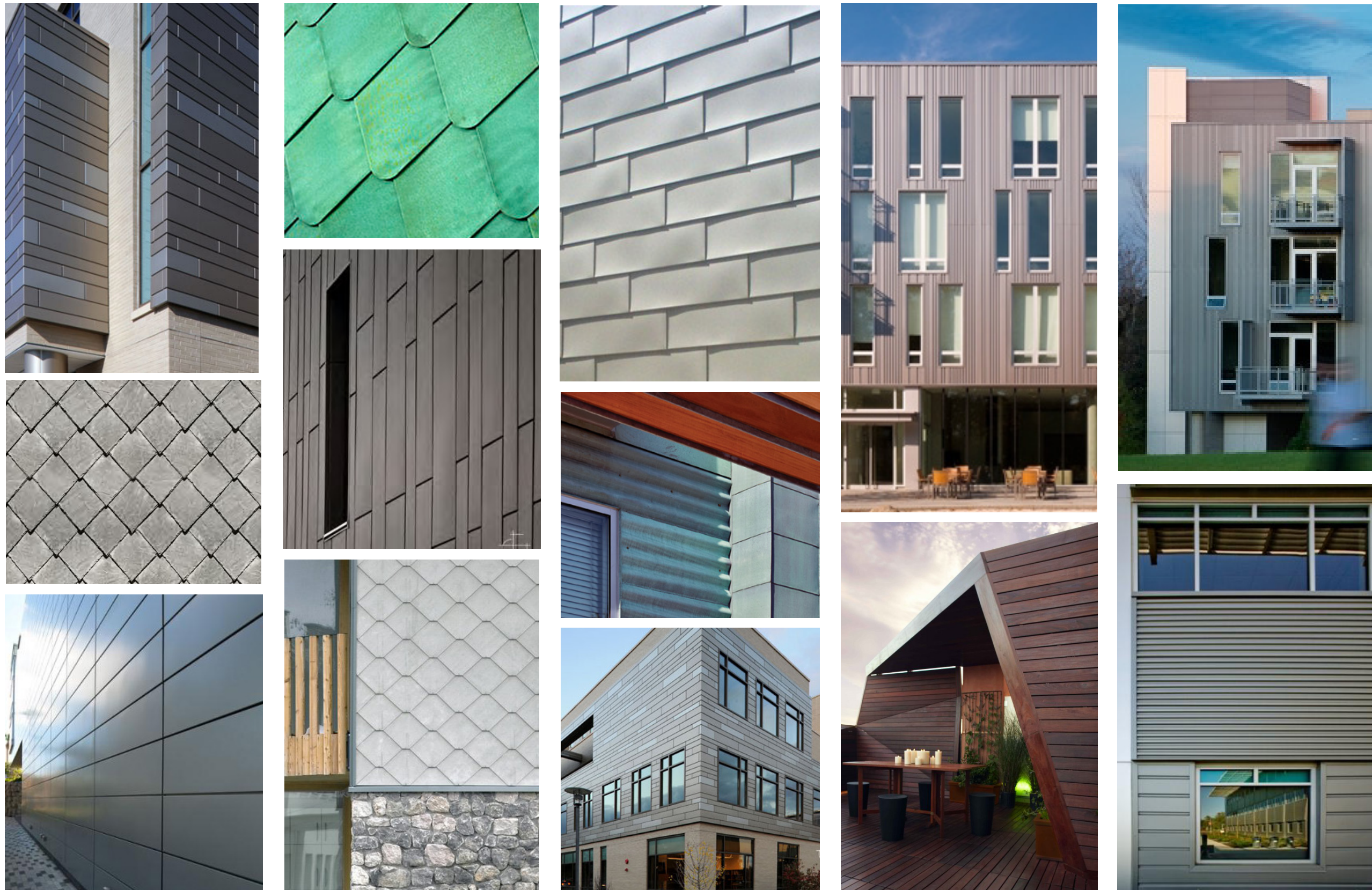


SOUTH ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

## Building Elevations



**Materials**