

Article 80 Small Project Review Application

Bowdoin St Mixed Use Development

191-195 Bowdoin Street

Dorchester, MA 02122



Viet AID, Inc.

Utile, Inc. Architecture + Planning

Submitted: January 17th, 2017





Vietnamese American Initiative for Development, Inc.

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Mr. Brian Golden, Director
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201

191 Washington Street Project Letter of Intent

Dear Mr. Golden:

The Vietnamese American Initiative for Development, Inc. (VietAID) is pleased to introduce you to our proposed redevelopment of two vacant lots at 191-195 Bowdoin Street in Dorchester's Bowdoin-Geneva neighborhood. The project is designed to implement the community vision put forward in a number of forums over the past few years and also aligns with VietAID's mission to build strong, vibrant and diverse communities in the Fields Corner, Four Corners, and Bowdoin-Geneva neighborhoods, by providing affordable housing, facilitating access to employment opportunities, and strengthening neighborhood businesses.

Viet-AID has built a very competent and committed team for this project, which includes Utile, Inc. as Architect and Henry Joseph & Associates as Development Consultant. Our team has received input on our proposed project from organizations and individuals in the Bowdoin-Geneva neighborhood through the property disposition process conducted by the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) in 2015 and 2016. We will continue to seek input as the project progresses and look forward to the Article 80 community meeting as part of this process.

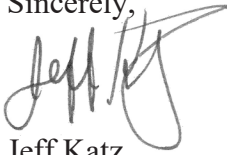
The project site is comprised of two (2) lots. 191 Bowdoin Street is owned by the city and DND recently designated VietAID as the preferred developer for it. 195 Bowdoin Street is owned by Dorchester Bay EDC and VietAID has a Purchase and Sale Agreement for it. The combined lots create a developable area of 36,050 square feet.

We propose to develop a mixed-use project with 41 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, and 3-bedroom apartments, approximately 6,057 square feet of ground floor retail space, 900 square feet of meeting space, 3,500 square feet of open plaza, and 46 off-street parking spaces. All apartments will be affordable to households with incomes at or below 60% of Area Median Income (AMI) and eleven (11) will be affordable to households at or below 30% of AMI.

We are exploring a number of options for layout and tenancy of the approximately 6,057 square feet of retail space and are very pleased to be in communication with the Dorchester Community Food Coop as a potential tenant. The Coop is a grassroots initiative to build a community and worker-owned grocery store that makes healthy food accessible and advances economic opportunity through neighborhood engagement. This use would represent an opportunity to build on the popular “Fresh Fridays” held at 191 Bowdoin Street in recent years and respond to a lack of healthy, affordable food options in the neighborhood. Having the Food Coop as the tenant of this space would enliven the corner of Bowdoin and Topliff Streets and help to strengthen the neighborhood’s existing businesses.

In the following pages, you will find specifics of the proposed project. We look forward to a continued dialog with your staff as we refine the project and work toward approval. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Eric Fellingner of Viet-AID or Matthew Littell of Utile, Inc.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Katz", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Jeff Katz
Interim Executive Director

Contents

Letter of Intent
Project Narrative 6
Public Benefits 8

Neighborhood/Existing Conditions
Neighborhood Photographs 10
Neighborhood Amenities 12
Proximity to Public Transportation 13
Site Survey 14
Existing Site Photographs 15

Development Proposal
Development Team 16
Zoning Analysis 17
Site Plan 18
Access and Parking 19
Proposed Plans: Lower Level Parking Plan 20
Proposed Plans: Ground Floor 21
Proposed Plans: Floors 2 and 3 22
Proposed Plans: Floor 4 23
Typical Units 24
Building Sections 25
Elevations 26

Appendix
Appendix A: (as needed) 30

Project Narrative

Project Overview

With the 191-195 Bowdoin Street project, VietAID proposes adding 41 residential units and 6,057 square feet of commercial space to the Bowdoin / Geneva neighborhood in Dorchester. The project consists of one building at the corner of Bowdoin and Topliff Streets. It will be a four story residential building with retail space at the front of the ground level. The project is in keeping with community goals for strengthening the Bowdoin / Geneva neighborhood.

Design Vision

The overall design of the project responds to community desires for lively, affordable, multi-family residential buildings with street level retail and community uses. At the ground level, the design responds to the community's desire for an active neighborhood, and site's current use as a focal public space. The proposed site plan aspires to maintain public engagement through a permanent open space, anchored by a new building. The site plan and layout is a carefully configured progression from public to private space meant to coordinate the street corner and the residential program.

A variety of landscape and entry thresholds will delineate the various programming areas and neighboring uses. For example, closest to Bowdoin Street, a space that welcomes the public will allow gatherings, such as farmers markets, food trucks and other community events. Furthest from Bowdoin Street, a visible but private plaza might provide overflow space for large Community Room events. A private play space is proposed at the back of the property for use by children of residents and retail patrons.

Flexible open space at the corner of Bowdoin and Topliff Streets is reinforced by the building's location on the site, where there is potential for greater public use and enhanced programming opportunities. This prominent location is preferable to a privatized open space, tucked out of sight behind the development. To amplify the prominence of this open space and increase the physical and visible activity within it, a community room and retail/commercial space are located adjacent to it, just inside the doors. The main residential parking area has been located at the site's lowest point, underneath the building. Access to this parking area is provided from Topliff Street to minimize traffic and turning conflicts on Bowdoin Street. Loading and

servicing of the retail space(s) will be provided via a service driveway from Bowdoin Street, connecting to the rear of the property. A private open space adjacent to the service drive is envisioned for resident gardening and a small children's play area.

Building

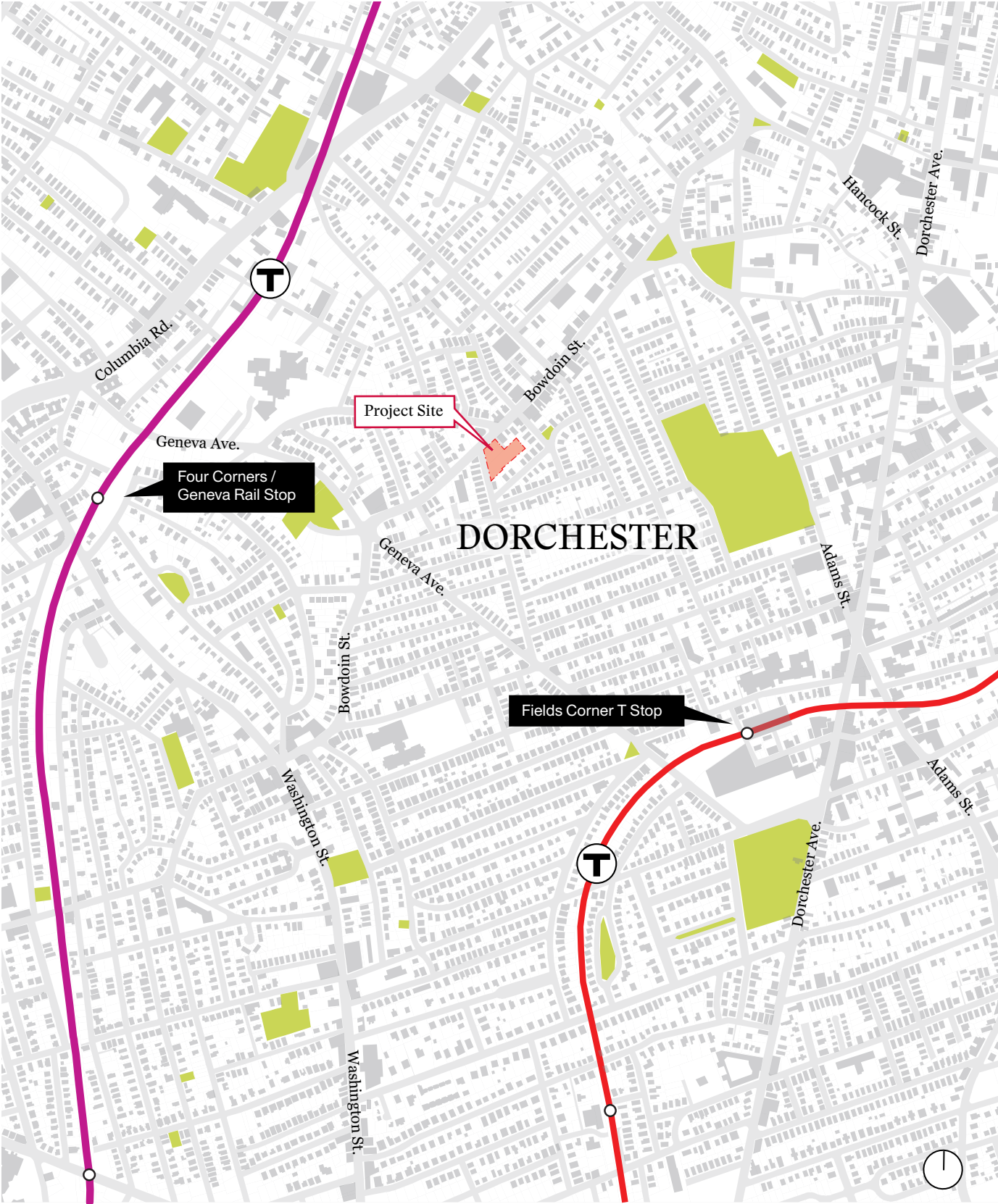
The Proposed building form is imagined as a faceted 'L' that minimizes long edges, and creates façade planes similar in scale to triple deckers and commercial buildings in the surrounding neighborhood. The building steps down in height towards the street, so as to ease the impacts of grade along Topliff Street and reflect the heights of structures across the street from and adjacent to the project. In contrast, the frontage along Bowdoin Street embraces a more Main Street retail character through the use of canopies, storefronts, and signage. These commercial spaces have a distinct and transparent quality to enhance the existing retail along the Bowdoin Street corridor, and encourage sidewalk activity. Within the building, a variety of unit types ranging from one to three bedroom units provide a diverse set of housing options, reflecting the make-up of the community. Through the façade articulation and a variety of exposures, all units will provide unique views into the adjacent public realm, further enhancing the structure's connection to its surrounding neighborhood.

Green Narrative

The Development will strive to be environmentally responsible in both its construction process and eventual operation. Consistent with these goals, the project will pursue a LEED silver rating from the United States Green Building Council. The design and development team will incorporate many best practices from USGBC and Energy Star guidelines. Many of these specification items are now standard practice for sustainable building in general, and include all the basics such as:

- R20 exterior wall insulation with continuous exterior layer
- R38 roof and floor insulation
- High performance exterior and interior air sealing for improved thermal performance and indoor air quality
- 95% AFUE centralized boiler
- Locations and conduit for the future installation of photovoltaic panels
- Energy Star fixtures and appliances throughout
- Energy Star windows
- Low flow toilets, faucets, and shower heads
- Low/No VOC and high recycled content materials

Dorchester Vicinity Map



Public Benefits

a. Affordability – Nine out of the thirty five units will service extremely low-income (30% of AMI) homeless or formerly homeless families. The remaining units will service households earning 60% of AMI and will have tax credit restrictions.

b. Robust retail space – An important element of our development plan is to make the ground floor retail space available to the Dorchester Community Food Coop, as our preferred tenant for this space. We see this as an opportunity to build on the popular “Fresh Fridays” held at 191 Bowdoin in recent years and respond to the lack of healthy, affordable food options in the neighborhood.

c. Community Vision – The project is designed to implement the community vision as outlined in the Mid-Dorchester Action Plan (2010) and the Urban Village Concept Plan (2000) as well as articulated by the Four Corners community members in the community meetings organized by the Greater Four Corners Action Coalition (Fall of 2012) and the Department of Neighborhood Development of the City of Boston (November 2012 and January 2013).

d. Community Space – Community space- The project will include approximately 900 square feet of indoor community space, and 3,500 square feet of outdoor plaza for use by residents and the general public. This will increase daytime use in the building and a place for residents to take part in community activities.

e. Family Units– 14% of the units feature three bedrooms. Amenity space within the building as well as the play structure in the back yard helps to foster a family friendly atmosphere.

f. Parking and Loading off Bowdoin Street – The project will allow retail loading and parking to be served from the rear of the building off-street and out of site from the sidewalk, limiting congestion and improving street parking and access for existing business along the street.

g. Sidewalk Amenities and Street Life – The design of the front retail space as a focal point in the neighborhood will continue to the vitality of the area and enable community activities currently taking place on the vacant land to continue.



Proposed Bowdoin Street Sidewalk

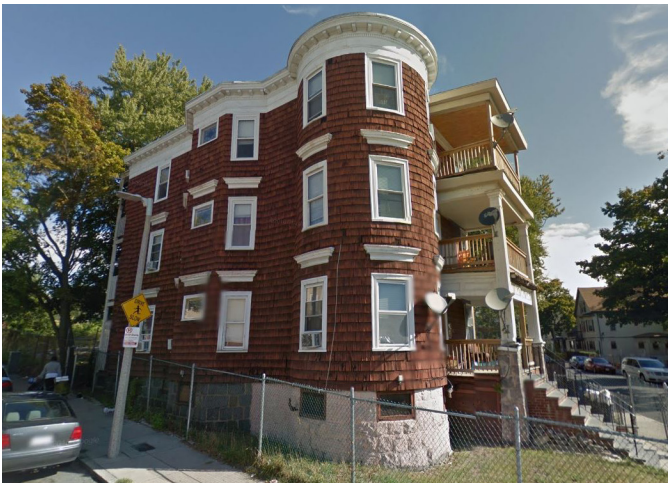
Neighborhood



Bowdoin Street Health Center, 230 Bowdoin Street



Mixed Use Development, 214 Bowdoin Street



Neighborhood Triple-Deckers, 2 Stonehurst Street



The Compass School, 294 Bowdoin Street



Log School, 222 Bowdoin Street



Neighborhood Triple-Deckers, 15 Topliff Street

The site occupies a prominent position along the Bowdoin-Geneva Main Streets District. The corner location bridges between the mixed-used and commercial development typical along Bowdoin Street, and the wood-framed, mutli-family housing that is predominant throughout the surrounding neighborhood and adjacent side streets.



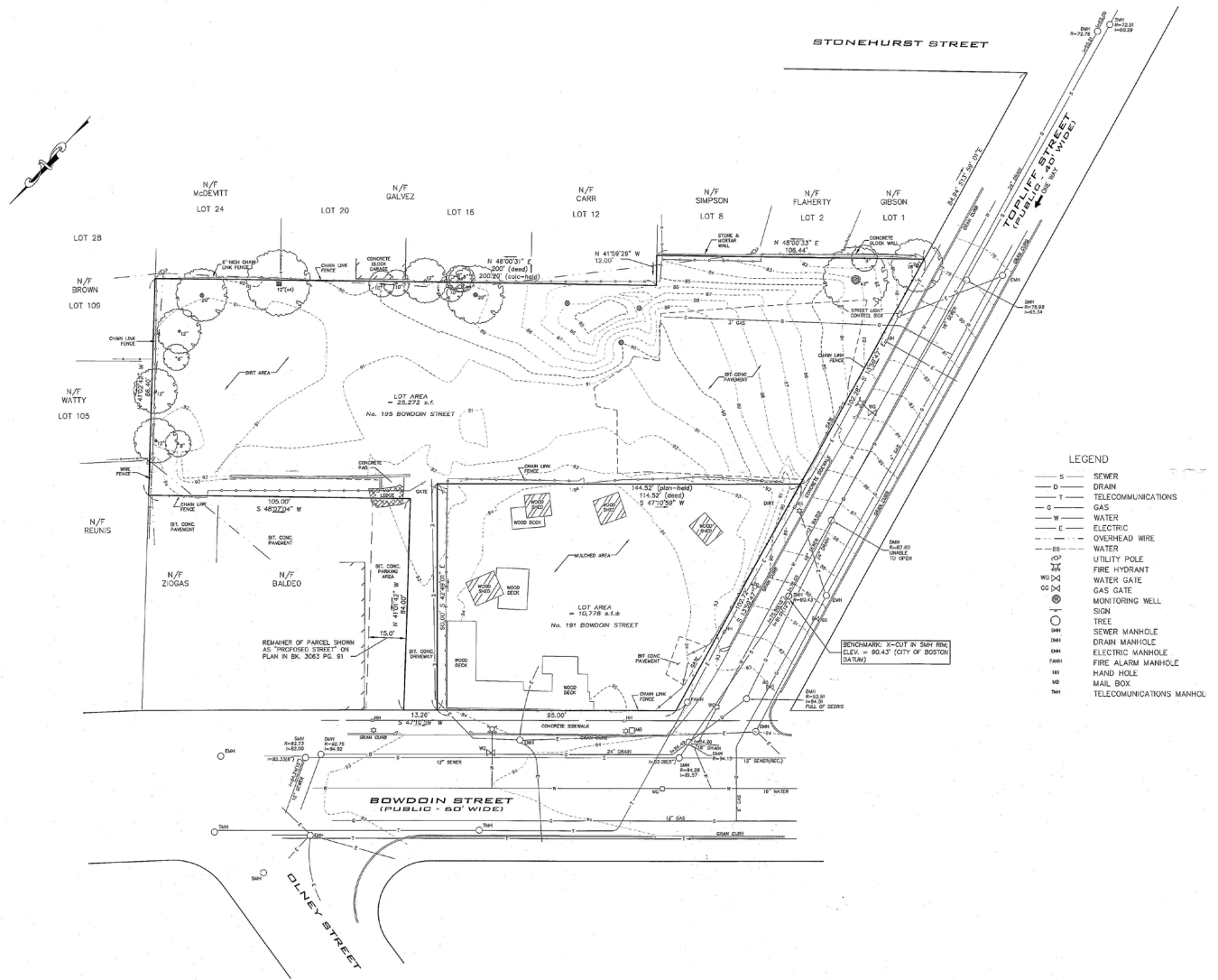
Neighborhood Amenities



Proximity to Public Transportation



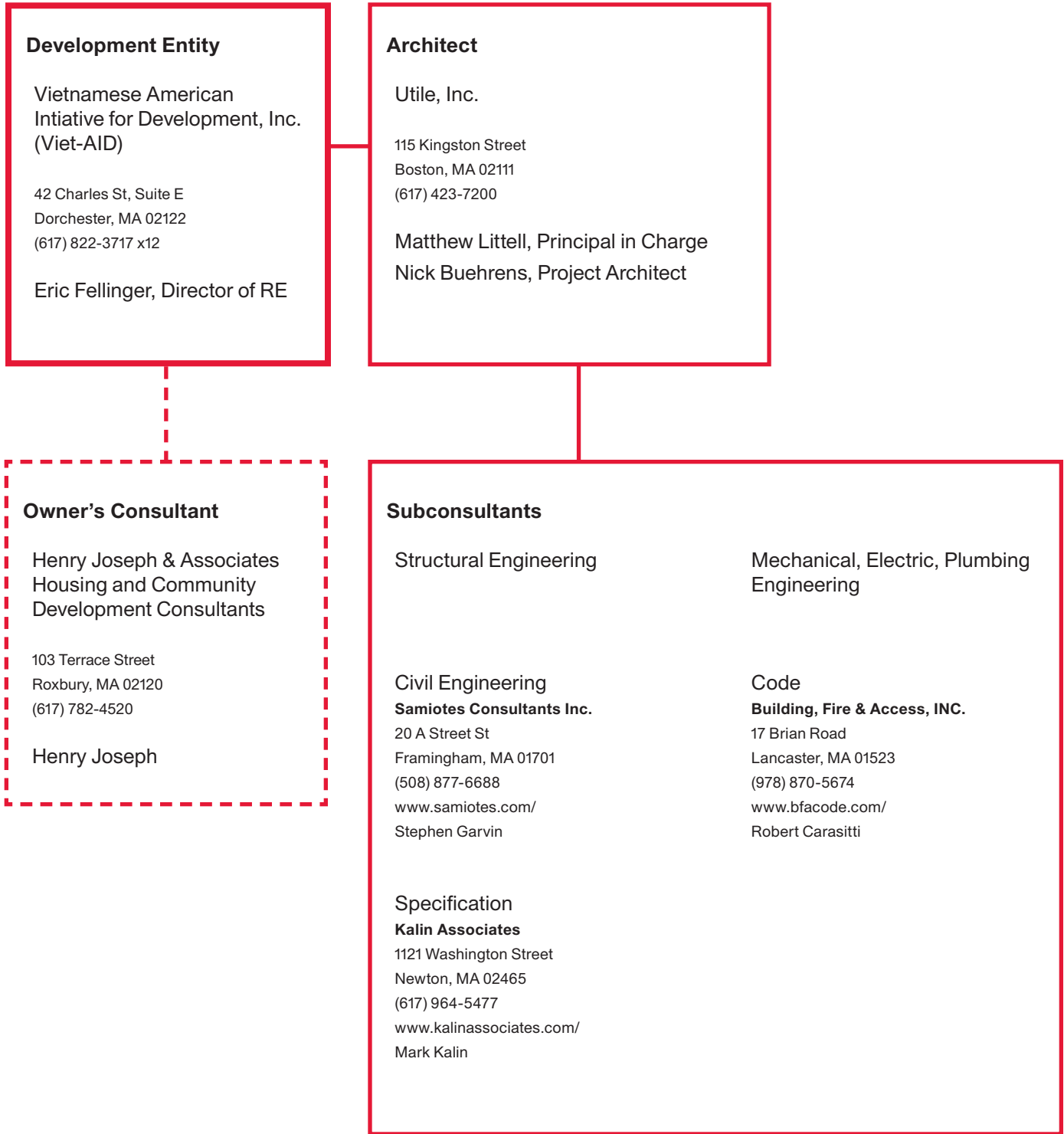
Site Survey



Existing Site



Development Team



Zoning Analysis

The site is comprised of two separate parcels, both of which lay wholly within the Local Convenience Sub-district of the Dorchester Neighborhood District. The proposed retail use on the ground floor of the building is an allowed use, while the proposed residential use is conditional. In keeping with the current use of the site of as a community open space, and reflecting the community feedback gathered through the property disposition process, the project aims to provide a retail experience consistent with other uses along Bowdoin St, while maintaining publically accessible open space, and a separate residential entry setback along Topliff Street. As detailed below, zoning relief is being sought to meet those goals.

Gross Building Area Calculation

Lower Level		Parking Spaces	22 (semi-covered)
Ground Floor	12,189 GSF	Retail	6,057 SF
		Residential	3 Units
		Community Room	907 SF
		Parking Spaces	24 (at grade)
Second Floor	12,521 GSF		
		Residential	13 Units
Third Floor	12,521 GSF		
		Residential	13 Units
Fourth Floor	12,366 GSF		
		Residential	12 Units
TOTAL less parking and Mechanical (FAR)			49,597 GSF
		TOTAL Units	41 Units
		1 Bedroom	13 Units
		2 Bedroom	23 Units
		3 Bedroom	5 Units
		TOTAL Parking	46 Spaces

Zoning Summary

	Min. Lot Size	Max. FAR	Max. Height	Max. Lot Size	Min. Useable Open Space	Min. Lot Width	Min. Lot Coverage	Min. Front Yard	Min. Side Yard	Min. Rear Yard	Comm.Park 1 per 500 SF	Resi. Parking 1.5 per unit
Required	None	1.0	40 FT	None	50 SF / Unit	None	None	None	None	20 FT	9 Spaces	62 Spaces
Proposed	36,050 SF	1.4	>40 FT	36,050 SF	60 SF / Unit	>100 FT	36%	3 FT/12 FT	34 FT	14 FT	24 Spaces	22 Spaces
Relief Required	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes*	No	Yes	Yes**	Yes**

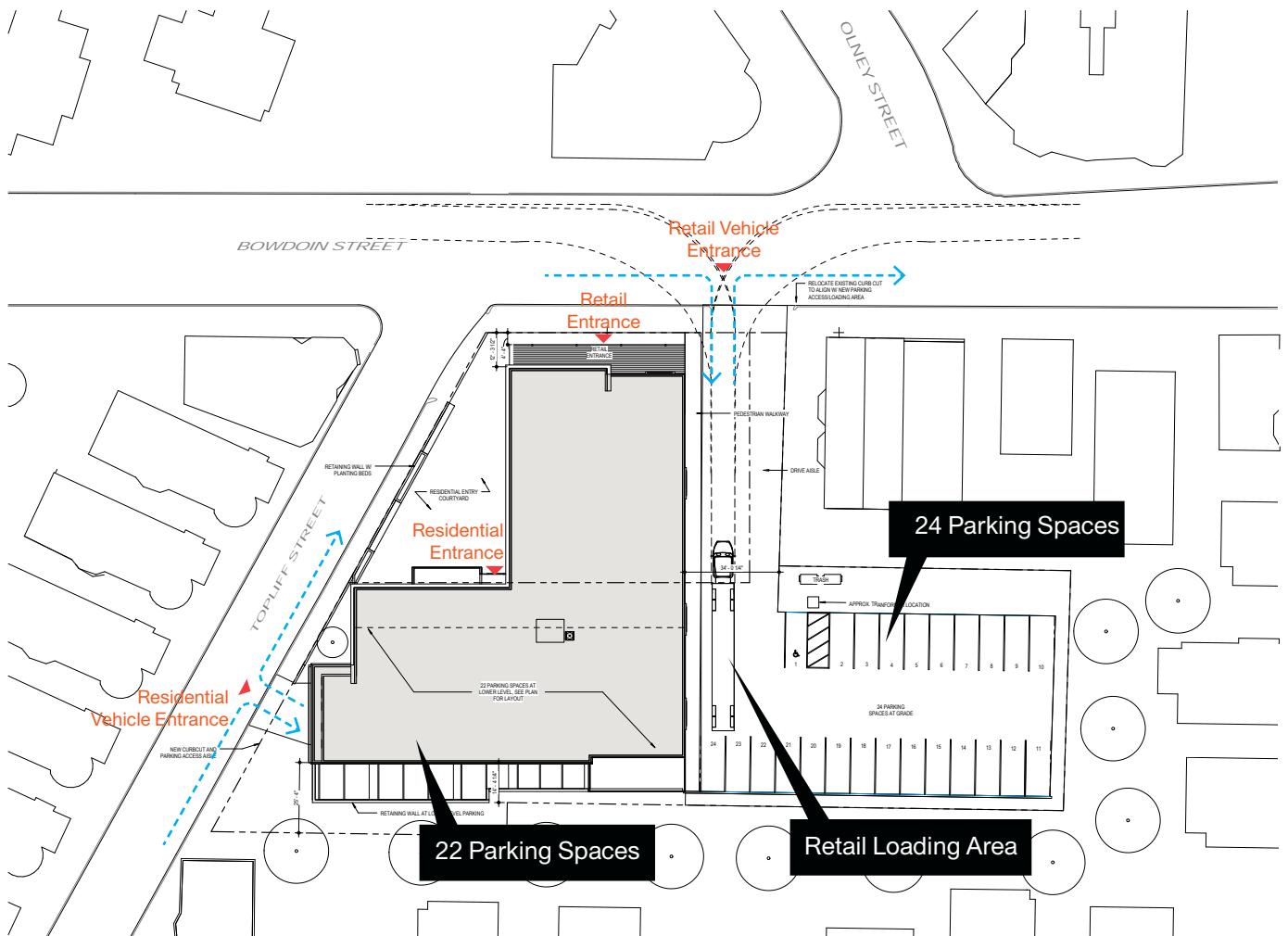
Notes: Dorchester Neighborhood District, LC - Local Convenience zoning Sub-District
 Local Retail Business - Allowed As-of-right
 Multi-family Residential - Conditional Use
 No Loading dock/bay requirements for retail under 15,000 SF
 * Seeking Relief from Street Wall Continuity (Section 65-38.1)
 ** Approximate parking count, Relief required for parking maneuverability

Site Plan

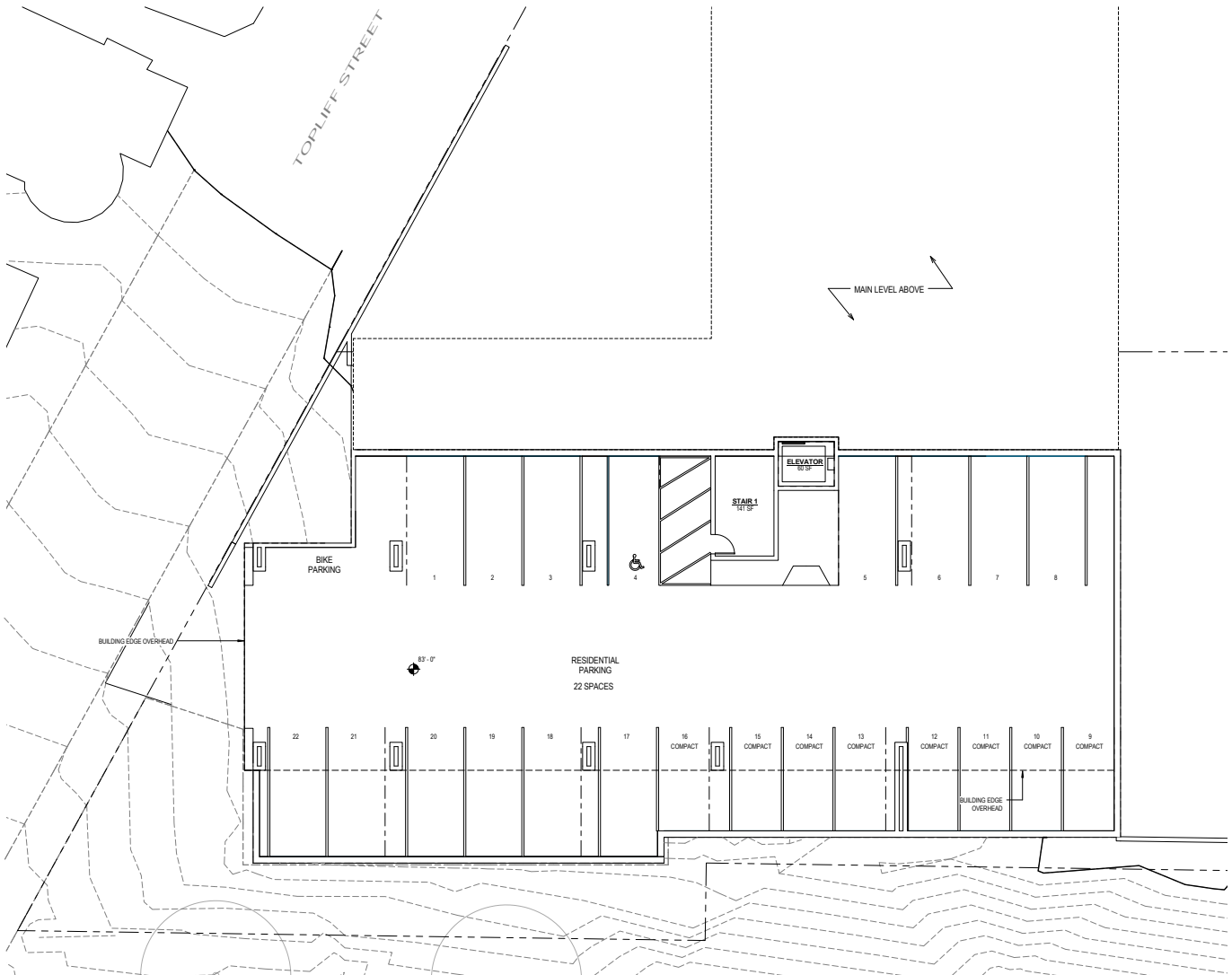


Access and Parking

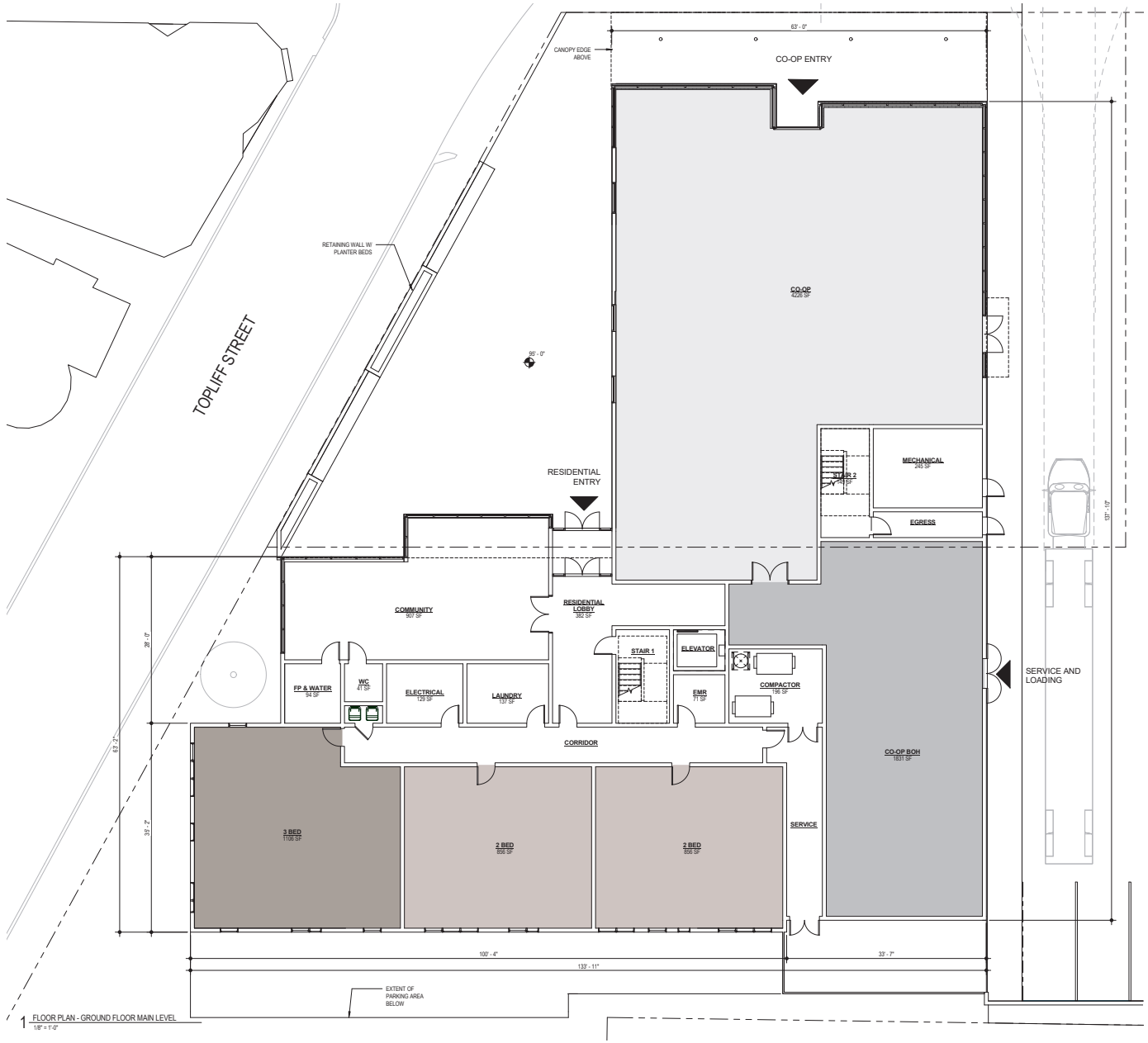
We have allotted **22 parking spaces** for the residents at 191-195 Bowdoin St, accessed from Topliff Street. An additional **24 parking spaces** have been provided for the proposed retail tenant on the ground level, as well as a loading area and truck access to the interior of the lot.



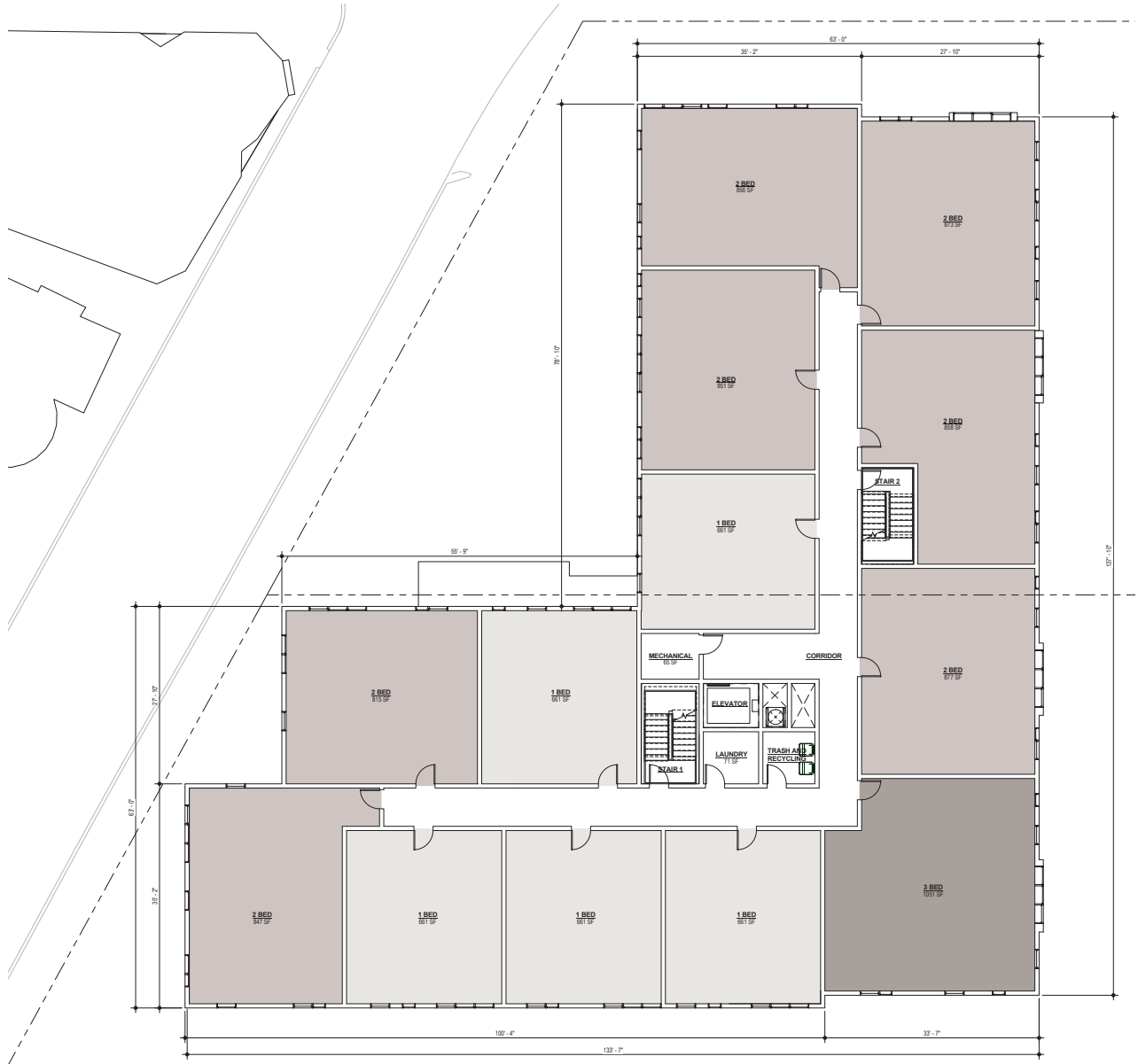
Lower Level Parking Plan



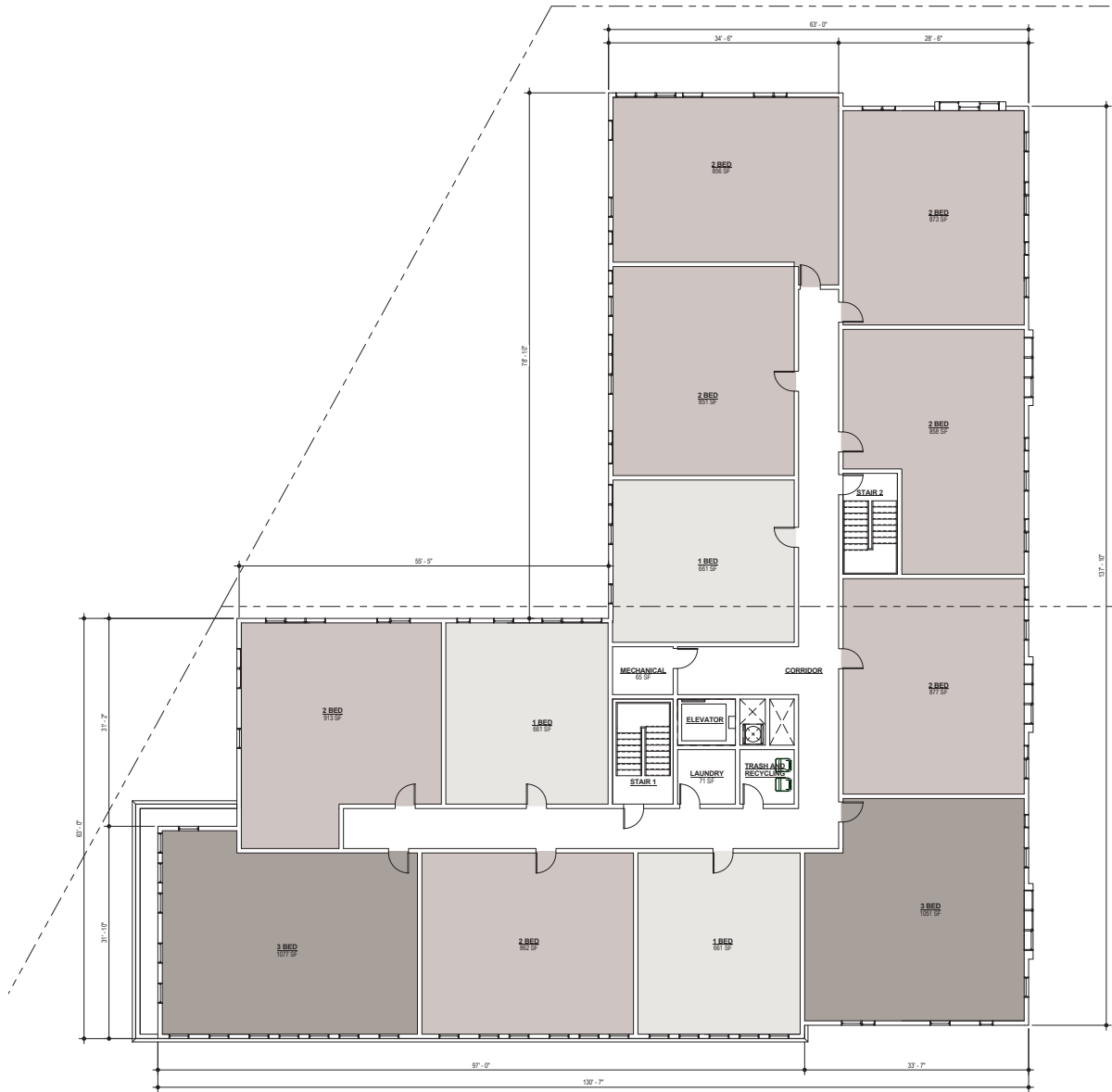
Ground Floor Plan



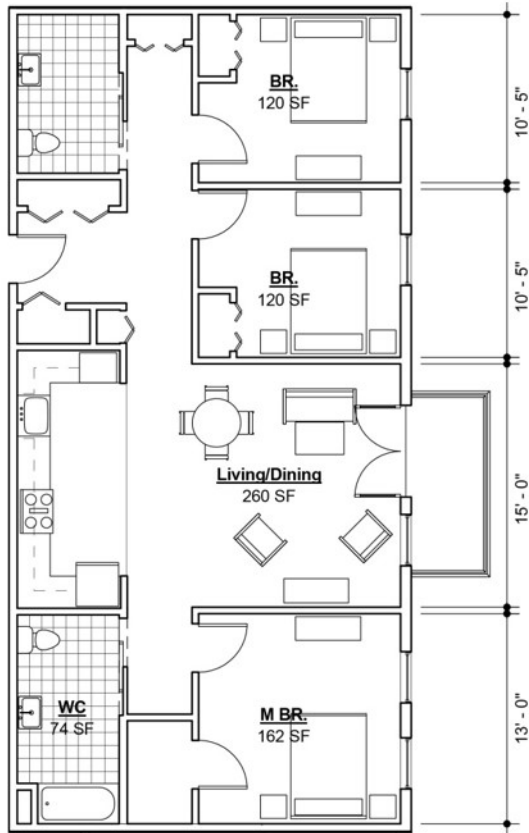
Plan Floors 2 and 3



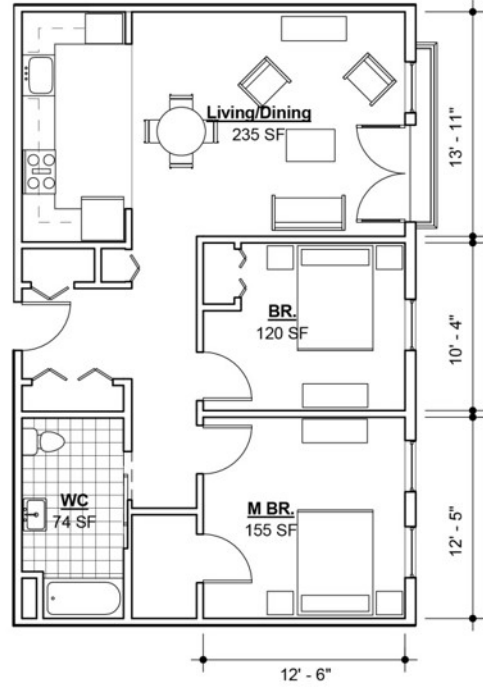
Plan Floor 4



Typical Units



3 Bed - Approx. 1,100 SF

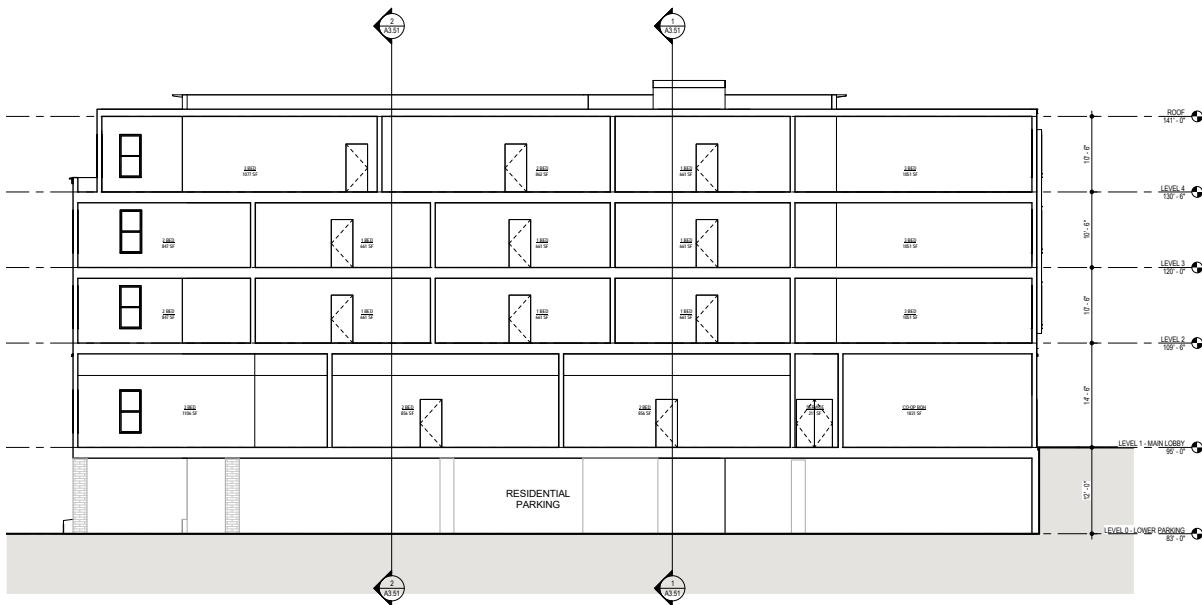
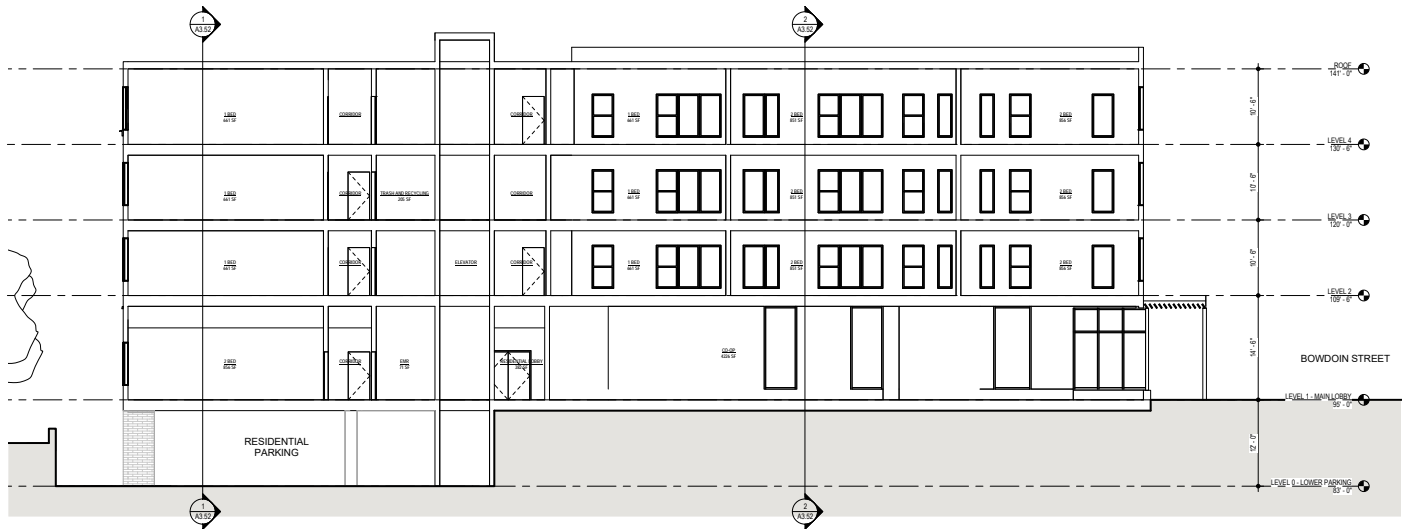


2 Bed - Approx. 875 SF



1 Bed - Approx. 675 SF

Building Sections



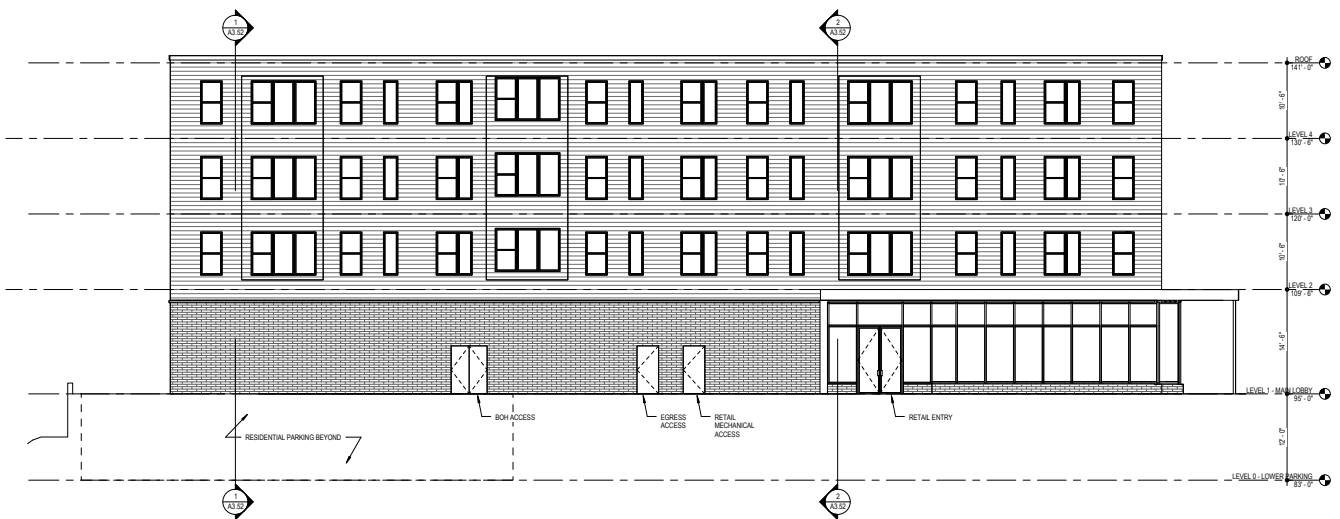
Elevations



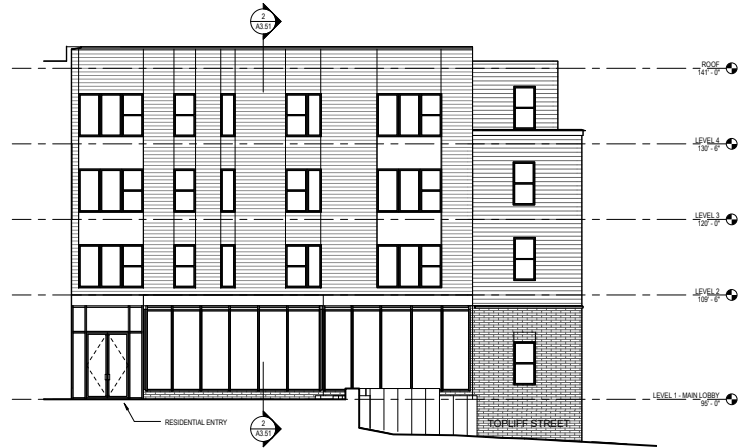
Northwest Elevation - Bowdoin St



Southwest Elevation - Residential Entrance



Northeast Elevation - Retail Parking



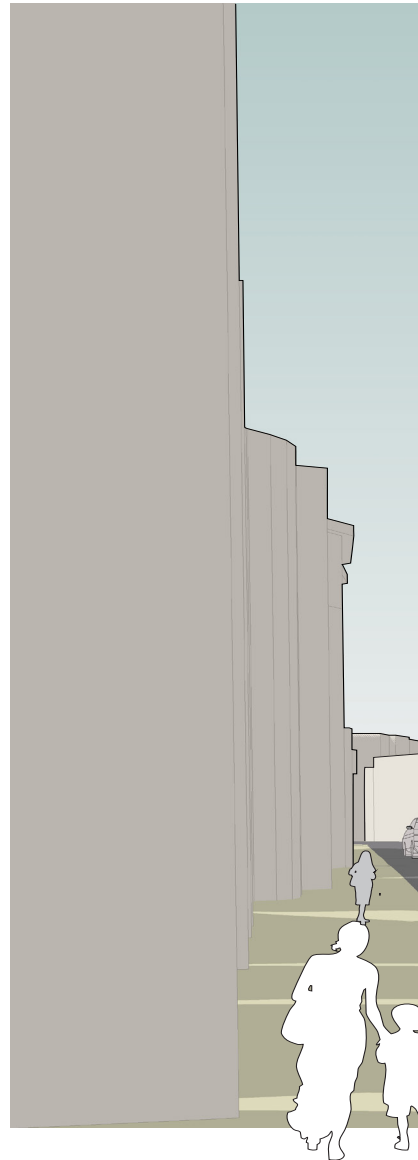
Northwest Elevation - Residential Entrance



Southwest Elevation - Topliff St



Southeast Elevation - Stonehurst St

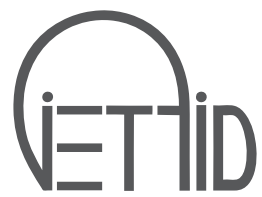




Proposed Topliff Street Sidewalk



Appendix A As Needed



utile