CITY OF CAMBRIDGE | CDD Community Development

Welcome to Central Square

Central Square is a Special Place

Central Square is a lively, multi-use district that serves as the city's downtown, its arts and culture heart, and its civic government and social services destination. The area is a hub for multi-modal transportation, including a growing bike lane network, an MBTA subway station, and multiple bus lines.

Central Square, and the study area for this project, touches many neighborhoods including Mid-Cambridge, the Port, Riverside, and Cambridgeport, and is within close walking distance to other commercial squares, institutions, and residential area.

Central Square is well known and loved across the City, and region, for the cultural life and small businesses that give it a strong identity and draw more than 500,000 visitors annually. In 2012, Central Square was designated a cultural district by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, in recognition of its dance, theater, music, visual arts, and multicultural food options. Central Square is also Cambridge's civic and community center, with City Hall, the Senior Center, the Central Square Library Branch, and many human and social services.



What to expect at today's Open House

At this open house you can:

- Learn about the zoning recommendations
- Learn how the zoning recommendations and other City initiatives align with community goals
- Learn more about zoning
- Ask City staff questions

Navigating the Boards

The Boards are color-coded by theme. You can review them all or focus on a few. City staff are happy to answer any questions or talk more about anything you see on the boards.

Intro:
- History of the Project
- What the Community has Shared
- Zoning

Community Goals:
- Relevant Zoning Recommendations
- City Initiatives for Each

Zoning In Practice:
- Urban Design
- The Design Central Project
- Potential Outcomes

What's Next?
- How A Zoning Amendment Moves Forward
- Ways to Stay Involved





Central Square Rezoning

Project introduction



Why

The Community Development Department (CDD) has been leading a community engagement process to update the zoning for Central Square. Through this process, goals were identified. These goals have guided the zoning recommendations to focus on supporting and expanding the following three goals:

What



Housing

Expand housing production, affordability, and diversity



Arts, Culture, Nightlife

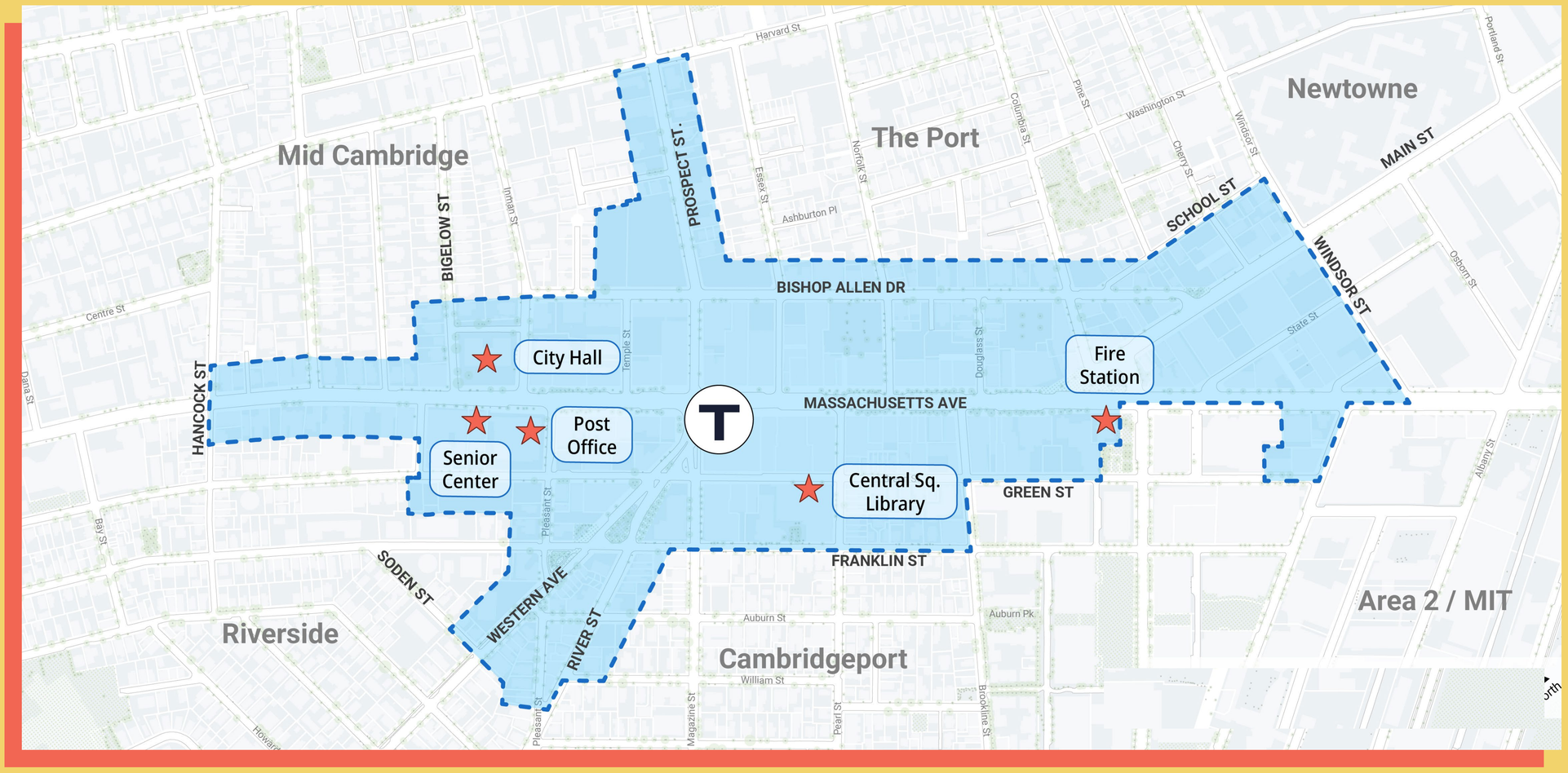
Preserve, support, and expand Arts, Cultural, and Nightlife spaces



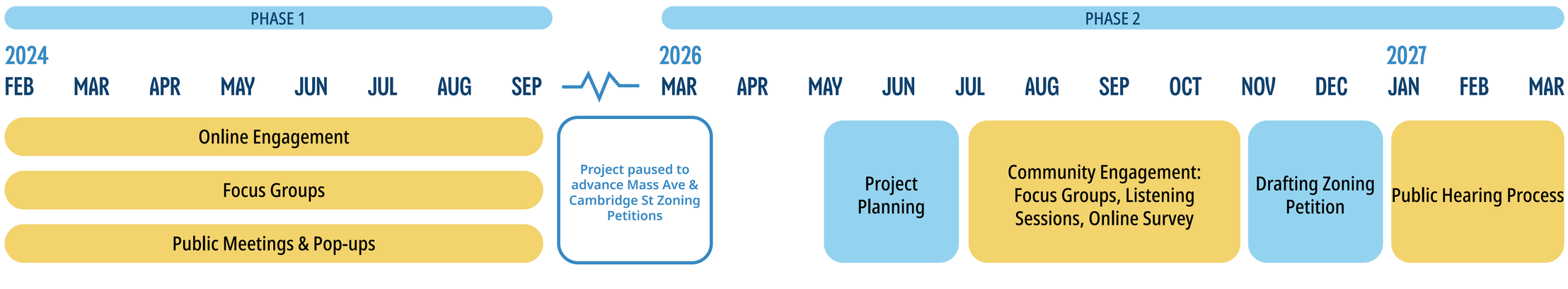
Small Businesses

Support and grow retail and small businesses

Where



When



Planning Context

How community goals are translated into zoning

Previous Studies

Central, Squared/Mayor's Red Ribbon Commission (2011)

A study to understand, accommodate, and shape changes in a manner that balances Central Square's distinct economic forces, its diverse and exciting opportunities, and its unique demographic character.

K2C2 Central Square Report (2013)

The study developed a vision and a set of incentives, recommendations and design guidelines intended to keep future development in Central Square consistent with its civic identity, support sustainability and provide for appropriate density.

Central Square City Lots Study (2023)

The study evaluated ten municipally-owned parking lots and buildings in Central Square for their potential ability to realize community goals and support City operations

2024: Engaging Central Square

Community members provided feedback at meetings, pop-ups, walking tours, and focus groups. This helped identify **community goals** to guide Central Square's rezoning.

Community Goals

1. Expand housing production and diversity
2. Increase affordable (and/or social) housing
3. Preserve, support, and expand Arts & Cultural Spaces
4. Support and grow retail and small businesses
5. Create public spaces to build community
6. Preserve historically significant buildings
7. Ensure a resilient and sustainable future
8. Connect people to the Square through enhanced mobility



3 Community Meetings

11 Focus Groups



8 Pop Ups



2 In-person Events

2026: Refining the Zoning

CDD is refining the zoning approach and incentives to make sure they can best turn community goals into reality!

Online Survey

Open House

4 Focus Groups

5 Listening Sessions

Cultural Roundtable

Carl Barron Ribbon Cutting





Community Highlights 2026

What you've shared (so far)



The survey results support the rezoning goals you shared in 2024!

The feedback gathered from the 2024 engagement helped identify the community goals to guide Central Square's rezoning. In the summer and fall of 2026, an online survey was distributed to check back in with the community on these goals established in 2024 to:

- Understand how the community prioritizes these goals,
- Learn what makes each goal important for Central Square, and
- Hear more thoughts, hopes, and concerns from the community.

Housing Takeaways

More housing, including affordable, is consistently a top goal.

70% want Central Square to remain affordable for all income levels.

Respondents connect more housing with **vibrancy and affordability.**

In prioritizing more housing, many respondents explained how more people living in Central Square means more patrons for retail, arts, and foot traffic generally.

Respondents had **mixed opinions** on achieving affordability and height limits.

"Creating more housing will lead to all the other goals being achieved."

Arts Takeaways

Arts, culture, and entertainment is a **core** part of Central Square.

70% of respondents engage with Arts and Culture in Central Square.

Respondents want to **protect existing arts spaces,** especially after losing many over the years.

"I would like to see micro studio/storefronts to help support more artists in the community"

Respondents seek more **small to medium** spaces.

Respondents want to see and engage with more art **directly.**

"Better use of existing spaces, e.g. empty storefronts, government spaces in the evenings"

Small Business Takeaways

Central Square remains a **hub for shopping**, especially for **dining**.

75% of respondents do some shopping in Central Square.

15% do most of their shopping in Central Square.

Retail gaps existing in grocery, hardware, and apparel.

"Central already has a great variety of local businesses but some additional options for home goods and groceries would be welcome"

Respondents prioritize **small businesses** over big-box stores.

"Clean and Safe" is a top priority.

"Small businesses owned by local people help build community"

Who Took the Survey?

820 survey responses

75% live in Cambridge

70% live in or near Central Square

60% go to Central Square for entertainment or to be social

70 responses from artists/ performers

75% of people do some shopping in Central Square

30 responses from businesses owners



How Can Zoning Help Achieve Community Goals?



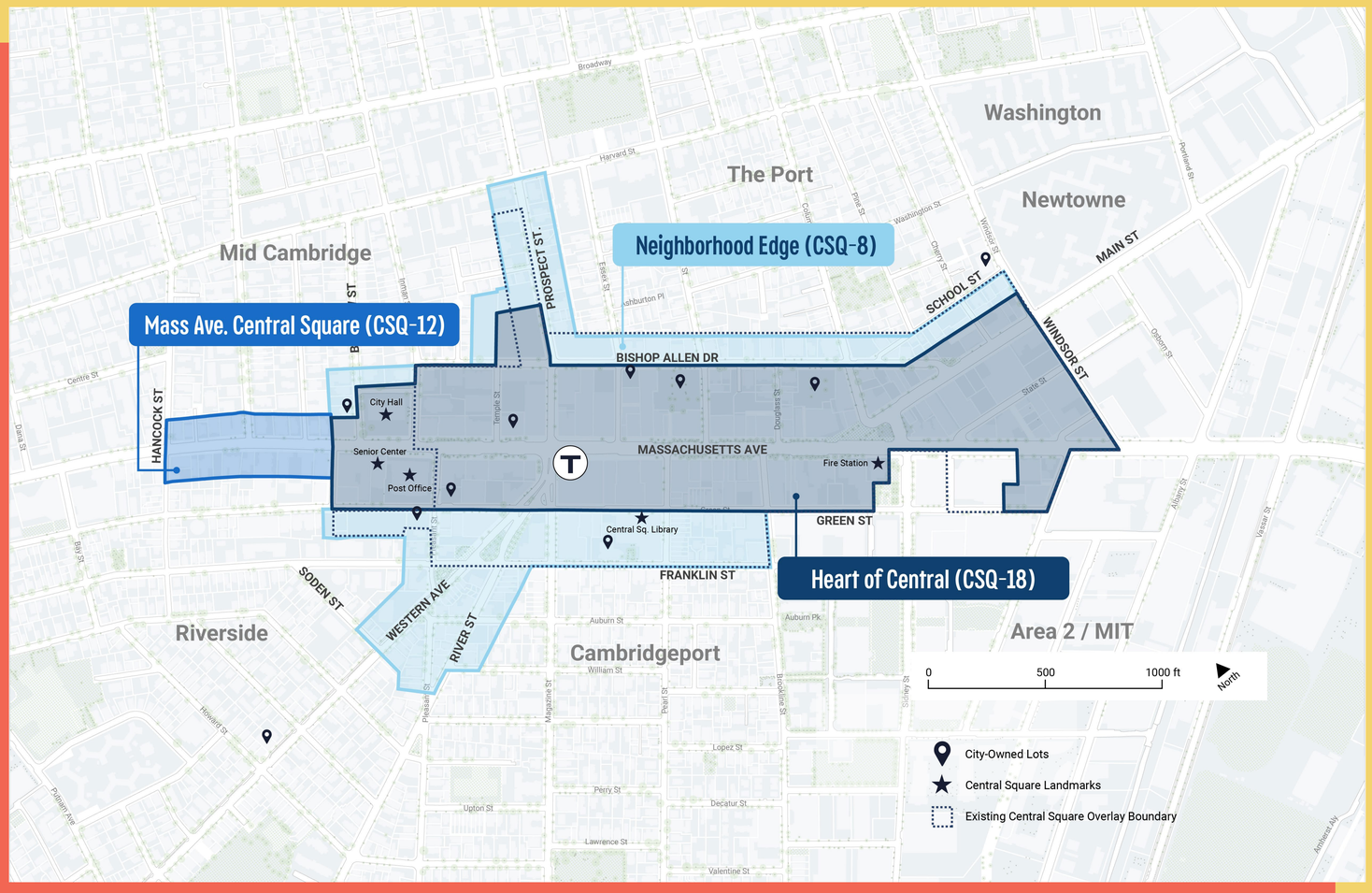


Zoning sets the rules for how land can be used and developed. New zoning in Central Square can help **expand housing** production and affordability, preserve and **support arts and cultural uses**, and **grow small businesses**.

Zoning creates a system of requirements and incentives that new development can utilize to fulfill these community goals.

Updating the Zoning Map

Zoning divides the City into different “districts”, and each district has its own unique set of rules for development. Updating the Zoning Map can ensure that Central Square has its own zoning districts that are catered to its unique identity and charm.

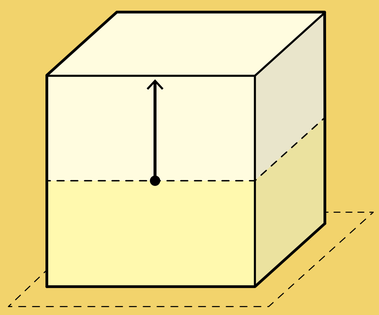


Updating the Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Ordinance is the rule “book” for what can be built. It includes rules about the size and scale of new buildings, the amount of open space required, and other aspects of urban design and development throughout the City. These recommended zoning strategies can be used in Central Square to achieve community goals.

Increase Residential Height

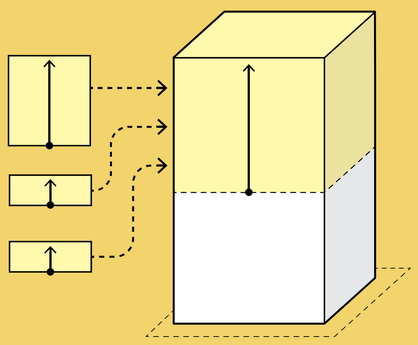
Raise the allowable heights for residential uses to permit more housing to be built



Incentivize Community Benefits

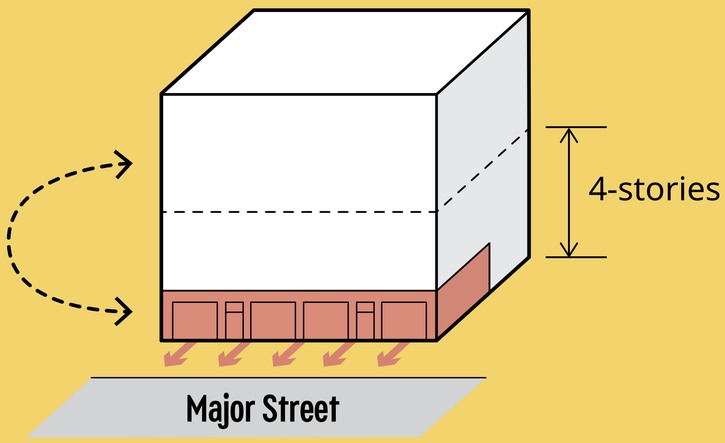
Allow a Larger Residential increase for including Arts & Cultural Use

Allow a Moderate Residential increase for including Public Open Space or Historic Preservation



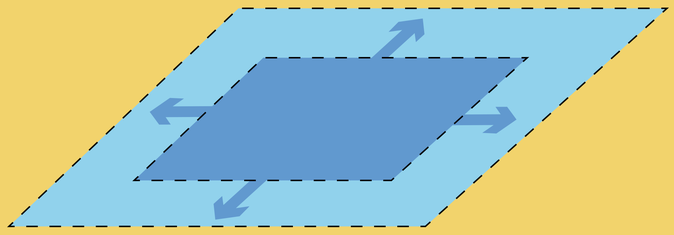
Promote an Active Public Realm

Require Active Ground Floor Uses along major streets for buildings taller than 4 stories



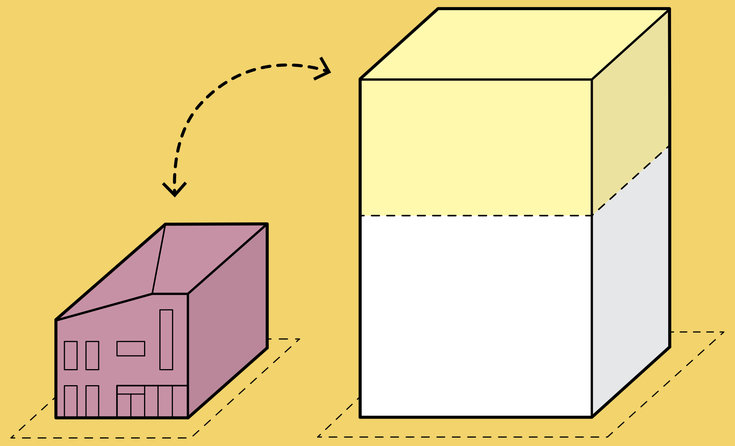
Expand Mixed-Use Opportunities

Increase the area in which mixed-use buildings are allowed to be built



Allow for Creative Outcomes

Permit uses and incentives to be exchanged and shared across multiple sites within Central Square to maximize community benefits



Goal

Expand Housing Production, Affordability, & Diversity

What's this goal about?

Cambridge has a critical housing shortage. One of the main goals of this project is to create more housing. Central Square is uniquely positioned to foster and support new, responsible growth because of its central location, density transit access, and rich neighborhood and cultural amenities. This means that Central Square could provide urgently needed homes for both existing and new residents.

We heard from the community there is a need for market-rate and affordable housing. By allowing greater heights specifically for residential uses, the zoning aims to allow more people to call Central Square their home.







What You Shared!

Among survey respondents...

50% ranked housing as their #1 priority.

70% want Central Square to remain affordable at all income levels

"Housing production is the ***most important thing*** we can do to keep our neighborhoods center vibrant"

"We are in a housing crisis and need more housing. Central is a very easy place to live car-free,"

Aligned Initiatives

These initiatives work also support expand housing production, diversity, and affordable housing.

Policies & Initiatives

Social Housing Task Force
Council-appointed working group

Redevelopment of City-Owned Lots
Community Planning & Design

Programs

Housing Support & Stabilization Program
Housing Department

First-time Homebuyers Program
Housing Department

Guidelines

Design Central (see board titled "Design Central" for more)
Community Planning & Design

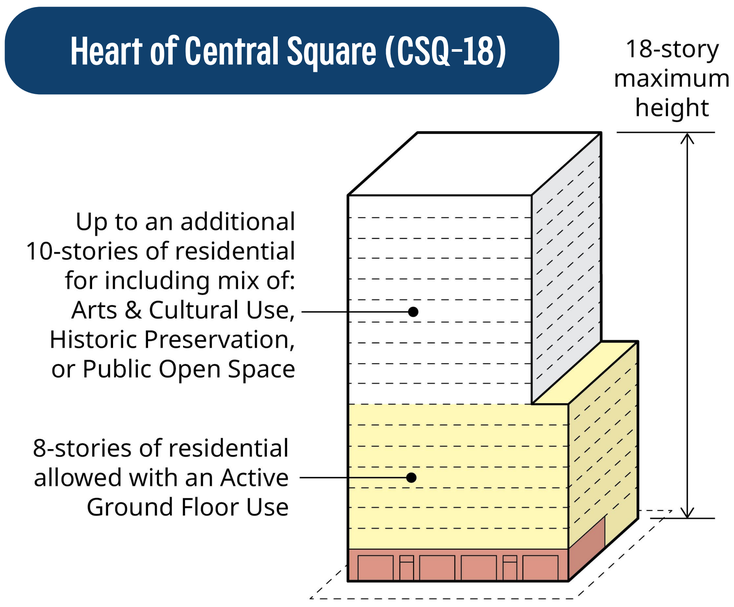
Zoning Recommendations

The **simplest way** zoning can help creating more housing in Central Square is allowing more to be built by **raising the height limits for residential uses**.

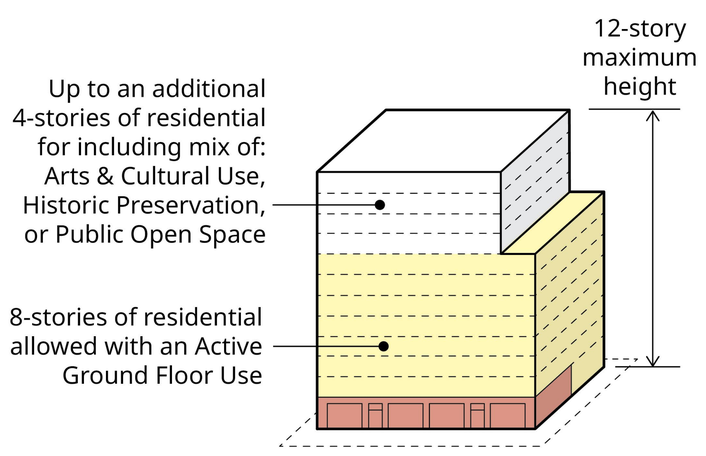
The proposed heights **vary between the three Central Square Districts** and are designed to consider the existing context, urban design approach, zoning precedents, & construction economics.

Recommendations by Each District

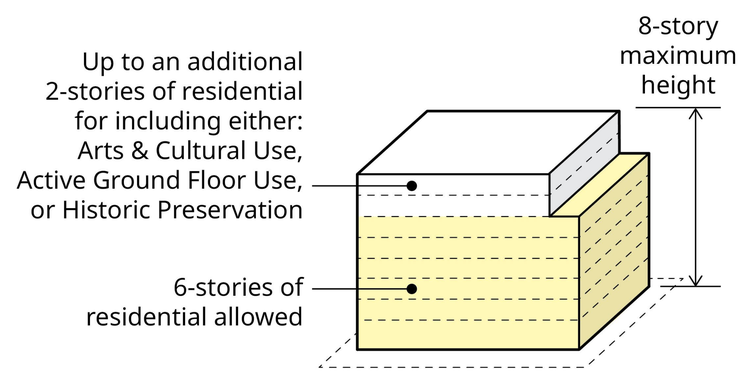
Heart of Central Square (CSQ-18)



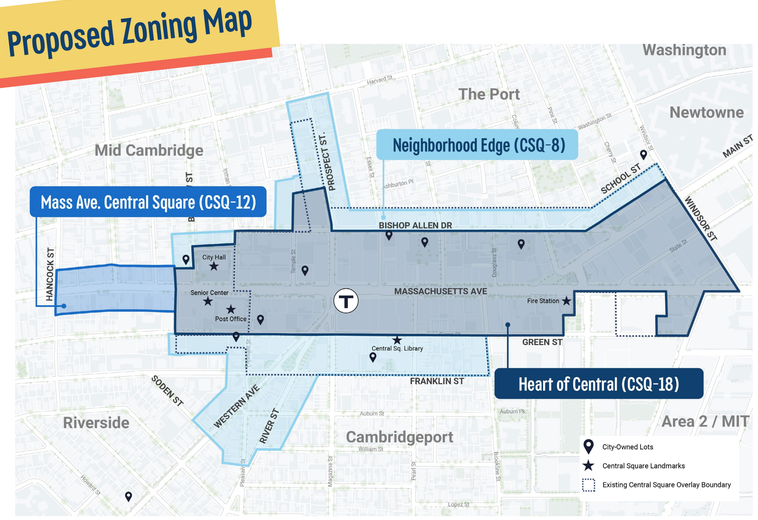
Mass. Ave Central Square (CSQ-12)



Neighborhood Edge (CSQ-8)



Proposed Zoning Map



Recommendations for All Three Districts

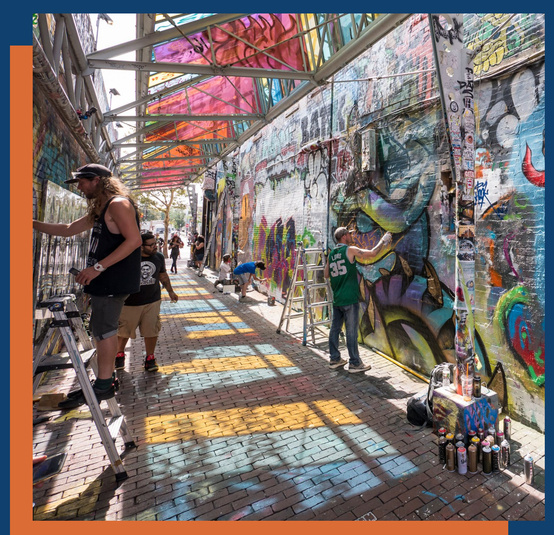
- Allow greater heights for residential uses.
- Require buildings above 4 stories in height along major streets to include active ground floor uses to support a vibrant public realm.
- Remove barriers to artist live/work housing.
- Allow larger residential buildings in exchange for community benefits. These can be in the same building or located on a different site in Central Square.
- New housing development must comply with all affordability requirements.

Goal

Preserve, Support, and Expand Arts, Cultural, & Nightlife

What's This Goal About?

The Community strongly supports preserving and expanding arts, culture, and nightlife uses in Central Square as part of the project. Central Square is Cambridge's "Heart of the Arts"- home to an amazing density of cultural production and performance spaces that enrich the whole City and gather us together as a community. The Square is Cambridge's only Cultural District, a designation by the Massachusetts Cultural Council that acknowledges the rich diversity and concentration of artistic and cultural uses and resources. New growth should be leveraged to both support existing cultural institutions and create new spaces that reinforce Central's identity as the City's cultural hub.





What You Shared!

Among survey respondents ...

70% engage with Arts, Culture, and Nightlife as an audience member or supporter

65% believe arts, culture, and nightlife add to the local economy and a vibrant community

"I love when I happen upon a cool thing going on in Central I didn't know about. It makes the Square feel dynamic, inclusive, and fun."

"Prioritizing more smaller to medium sized spaces makes spaces closer to what people need."

Aligned Initiatives

These initiatives work with zoning to support arts, culture, and nightlife.

Cultural District Re-designation
Arts Council, CSBID, & Arts & Cultural Planning

Space Savers
Arts & Cultural Planning

Cambridge NITES
Economic Opportunity & Development

1% for the Arts
Arts Council

Making Space for Art
Arts Council & Arts & Cultural Planning

Central Square Business Improvement District

Cambridge Redevelopment Authority Demonstration Plan

Zoning Recommendations

Support for arts, culture, and nightlife uses in Central falls into **two main buckets**: (1) create new spaces, and (2) preserve and support existing spaces.

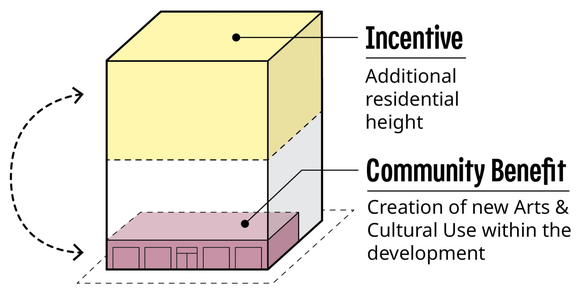
Developers are incentivized to produce these benefits in exchange for:

1. Allowing additional residential height in all three districts.
2. Exempting cultural spaces from density limits to ensure they don't reduce or complete with creating new ground floor retail spaces.

Recommendations for Heart of Central Square (CSQ-18) + Mass. Ave Central Square (CSQ-12)

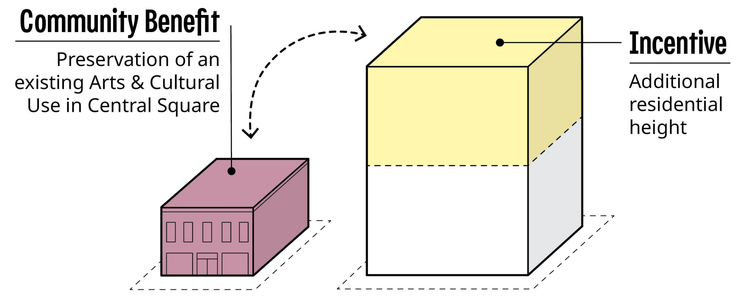
Creating New Space On-site:

Projects happening on one site or adjacent sites can create new cultural spaces within their project. These would need to meet certain spatial and accessibility criteria to qualify.



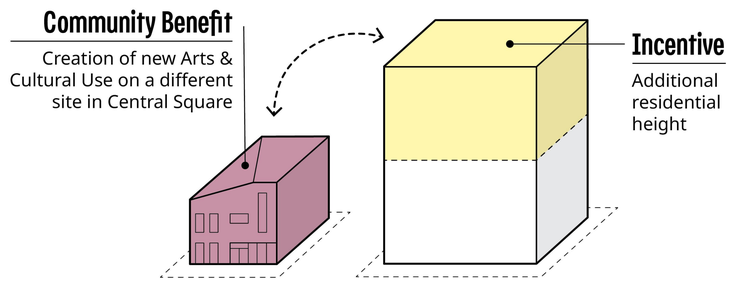
Existing Stabilization:

Projects on one site can acquire and preserve existing cultural spaces on another site in Central Square to ensure they remain and are accessible to the cultural community.



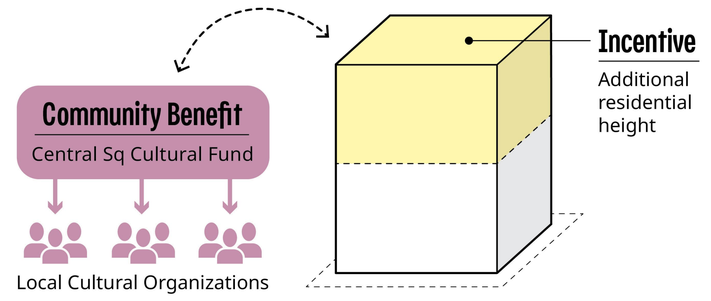
Creating New Space Off-site:

Projects involving multiple sites in Central Square can create cultural space on one site to unlock additional residential density on the other.



Payment in Lieu:

In situations where creating new cultural space wouldn't be beneficial, projects can pay into a Cultural Stabilization Fund which would be accessible to cultural organizations and uses in Central Square.



What These Recommendations Will Help Achieve

- Allow a broad range of uses to encourage a diverse mix of arts & cultural spaces
- Establish clear criteria for qualifying spaces
- Encourage coordination with City staff to identify needs and desired uses

Different Uses are Allowed Based on Location:

- Allow the broadest range of uses in the CSQ-18 and CSQ-12 districts
- Allow less impactful uses in the CSQ-8 district
- Cultural uses can be created on the same site as the project, or another site under the same ownership within Central Square.

Goal

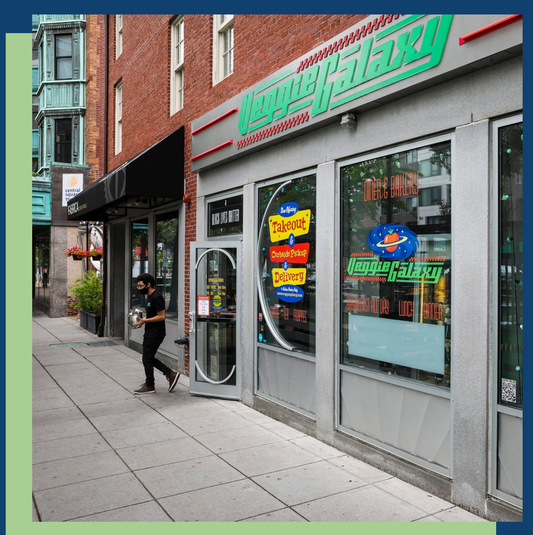
Support & Grow Retail and Small Businesses

What's This Goal About?

Central Square is Cambridge's downtown, the place where community members from nearby neighborhoods and from across the City and region come to meet their daily needs as well as shop, dine, and be entertained.

Small businesses are the backbone of this vibrant district. They create a unique sense of place that activates the sidewalks and brings people together. The Community identified Central Square as an important retail destination. The zoning recommendations reinforce this by encouraging active ground floor uses in new development, especially along prominent streets.





What You Shared!

Among survey respondents ...

75% do some shopping or business in Central Square

60% want more grocery stores in Central Square

"Locally owned and operated is key to preserving and enhancing the character of Central Square."

"We need normal retail clothing alternatives and house goods and specialty food shops AND bring back Daily Table."

Related Initiatives

Financial

Storefront Improvement Program
Economic Opportunity & Development

Small Business Enhancement Program
Economic Opportunity & Development

Retail Interior Accessibility Program
Economic Opportunity & Development

Small Business E-Commerce Program
Economic Opportunity & Development

Educational/Technical

Small Business Coaching Program
Economic Opportunity & Development

Business Development Workshops
Economic Opportunity & Development

Small Business Succession Planning
Economic Opportunity & Development

Site Search and Vacant Storefront Program
Economic Opportunity & Development

Small Business Anti-Displacement Project
Economic Opportunity & Development
Cambridge Redevelopment Authority

Partner Efforts

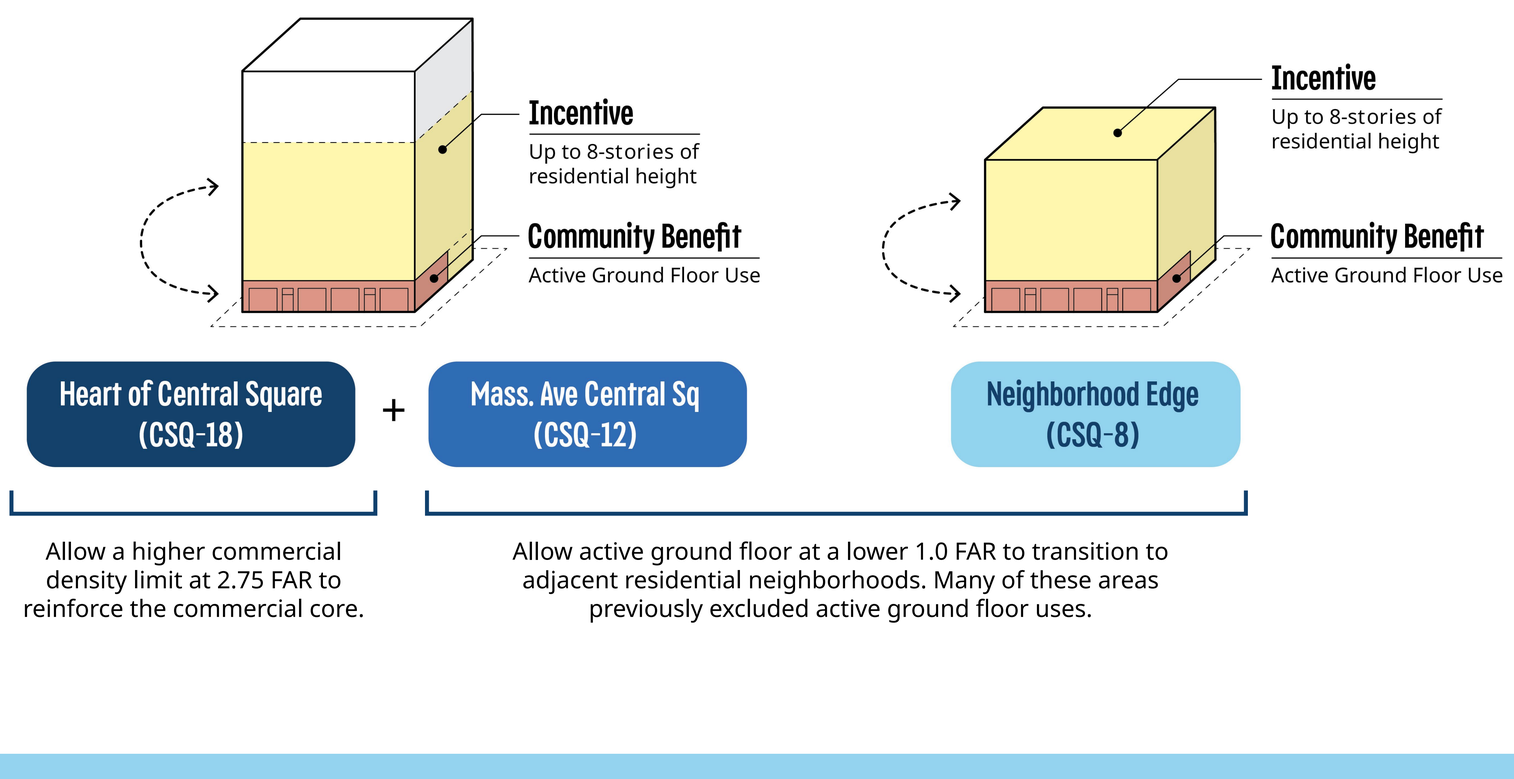
Central Square Business Improvement District

Cambridge Redevelopment Authority Demonstration Plan

Zoning Recommendations

The zoning recommendations aim to increase the number and diversity of retail spaces that activate the public realm. Expanding the areas in which these uses are allowed will create more opportunities for neighborhood-serving businesses in lower-rent locations.

Recommendations by Each District



Recommendations for All Three Districts

- Exclude qualifying active ground floor uses from density limits by special permit.
- Create updated, flexible Signage Standards to allow unique and creative signs.
- Reference "Design Central" visual guide for more information, ideas, and inspiration.

Different Uses are Allowed Based on Location:

- Allow the broadest range of uses in the CSQ-18 and CSQ-12 districts.
- Allow less impactful, neighborhood-oriented uses in the CSQ-8 district.

Goal

Create Public Spaces to Build Community

What's This Goal About?

Central Square is home to many vibrant open spaces. Carl Barron Plaza (which recently reopened reinvigorated!) and Jill Brown Rhone Park in Lafayette Square are the main spaces where the community gathers. City Hall Lawn is a third, smaller green oasis at our municipal center. The broad, active sidewalks of Massachusetts Avenue link these spaces, knitting the district together. These places support everyday life in Central Square and form the backdrop to neighborhood and citywide celebrations. In addition to these spaces, there is a desire among some community members for additional public spaces. These could offer additional opportunities to connect, relax, and enjoy Central Square.

What You Shared!

55% attend public events, markets, and festivals in Central Square

45% want a greater diversity of public spaces in Central Square

"I would especially love more winter-friendly and/or kid-friendly public spaces!"

"Shade is critical"

Aligned Initiatives

Carl Barron Plaza Reconstruction
Department of Public Works
Cambridge Department of Transportation
Community Planning & Design

Central Square City Lots Study
Community Planning & Design

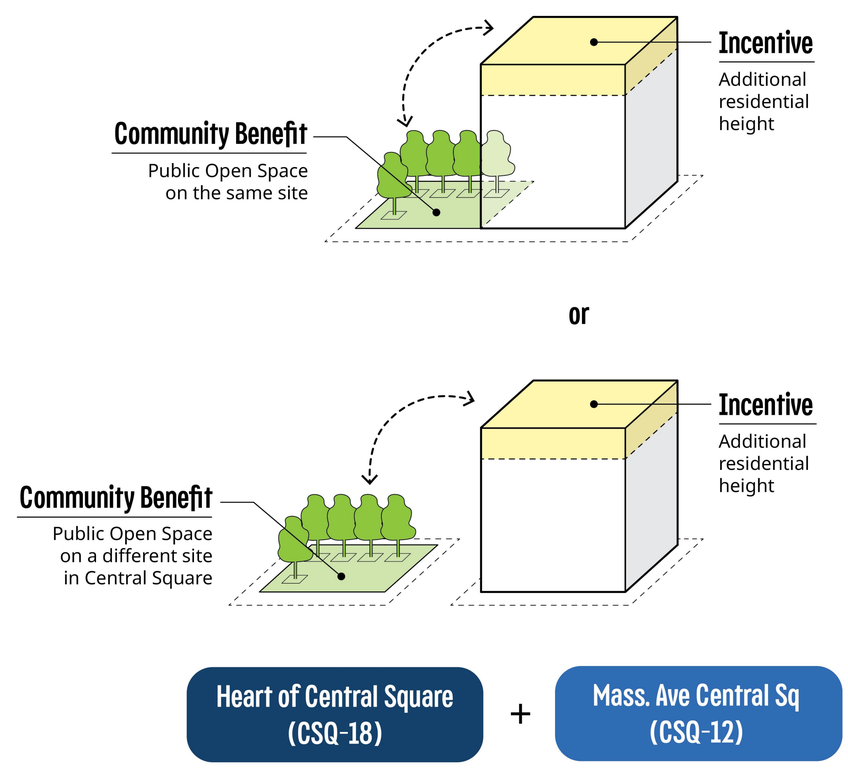
Clement Morgan Park & Anthony Paolillo Tot Lot
Department of Public Works

Public Space Lab
Economic Opportunity & Development

Zoning Recommendations

Larger projects in the heart of the Square are the best opportunities for creating meaningful-sized public open spaces. These will likely be "Privately-Owned Public Spaces" (POPS) that, while privately managed, will be required to be open to the public.

While additional public space is an important goal, locations must be carefully considered to ensure they don't undermine the commercial vitality of the street.



Preserve Historically Significant Buildings

What's This Goal About?

Central Square is Cambridge's Civic Center and the seat of our municipal government. It is the place where we as a community come to gather, celebrate, protest, and debate. The built environment reflects its civic importance and historical significance. This physical cultural heritage is deeply rooted in how Central Square looks.

Preserving important historical buildings provides a connection to Cambridge's past. It also aligns with sustainability goals – preservation allows for adapting and reusing existing materials and spaces. Buildings from different eras and styles make Central Square visually diverse and beautiful civic place.

What You Shared!

50% think preserving the Square's eclectic character is important to its identity

"Protect the street-level character of the buildings but support increasing building heights for more housing/ commercial"

"So many beautiful buildings can be reused for housing with retail or office on the ground floor"

Aligned Initiatives

Central Square National Register District
Cambridge Historical Commission

Demolition Delay Ordinance
Cambridge Historical Commission

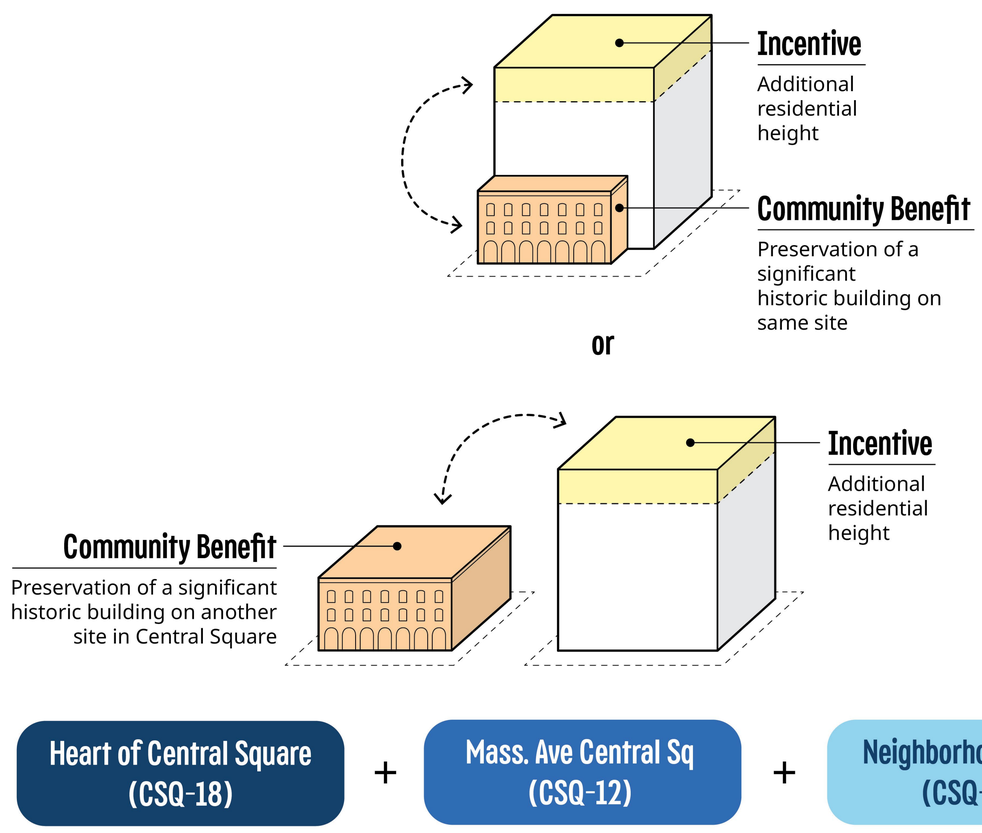
Landmark Building Designation
Cambridge Historical Commission
City Council

Community Preservation Act Funds
CPAC & Cambridge Historical Commission

Historic Tax Credits
State & Federal

Zoning Recommendations

Allowing for additional residential height in exchange for historic preservation of significant buildings acknowledges the cost and complexity involved with successfully incorporating them into a project, and the value that retaining them brings to the community.



Goals

Connect People to the Square

What's This Goal About?

An important goal for urban growth is for it to happen responsibly and sustainably. To accommodate more people, Central Square's already robust transit network will benefit from additional enhancements. No matter how you get there, transportation in Central Square should be accessible and safe! These recommendations create opportunities for more convenient and comfortable ways of getting to and around the Square.





What You Shared!

65% walk, bike, drive, or take public transit in Central Square regularly

60% want safer streets and intersections for people walking and biking

"Safe pedestrian and bike infrastructure is essential for Cambridge and Central"

"You shouldn't need a car to live in Central Square"

Aligned Initiatives

River Street & Carl Barron Plaza Redesign
Cambridge Department of Transportation

Central Square Safety Improvement Project
Cambridge Department of Transportation

Central Square Station Accessibility Improvements (future)
MBTA

Cambridge Zoning Ordinance Bicycle Parking Requirements
Cambridge Department of Transportation

Transportation Demand Management Requirements
Cambridge Department of Transportation

Transportation Impact Study and Mitigation Requirements
Cambridge Department of Transportation

Zoning Recommendations

- Require setbacks for wider sidewalks where needed to ensure adequate accessibility and a better relationship to the size of new development.
- Encourage mid-block connections.
- Set parking maximums to discourage additional vehicular traffic.

Ensure a Resilient and Sustainable Future

What's This Goal About?

Central Square faces increasing climate and environmental challenges. The urban heat island effect causes higher temperatures, and lower-lying areas experience stormwater flooding. Urban growth needs to acknowledge and adapt to these realities and help to mitigate their impact. There are citywide requirements for new projects that improve their sustainability and resiliency. These will help the people who live and work in these buildings as well as the whole neighborhood.





What You Shared!

65% think the City has a responsibility to plan now for climate conditions of the future

"Housing and business density directly support climate and sustainability goals"

"Central Square has a ton of resources that will help us adapt to climate change. "

Aligned Initiatives

The Port Infrastructure Improvements Project
Cambridge Department of Public Works (DPW)

Zoning Recommendations

The City has existing policies and regulations in place to address these issues. Projects must meet all Citywide and state requirements for the following subjects:

- Flooding and stormwater resiliency
- Building design and energy use
- Heat resilience and site cooling

Shaping the Square

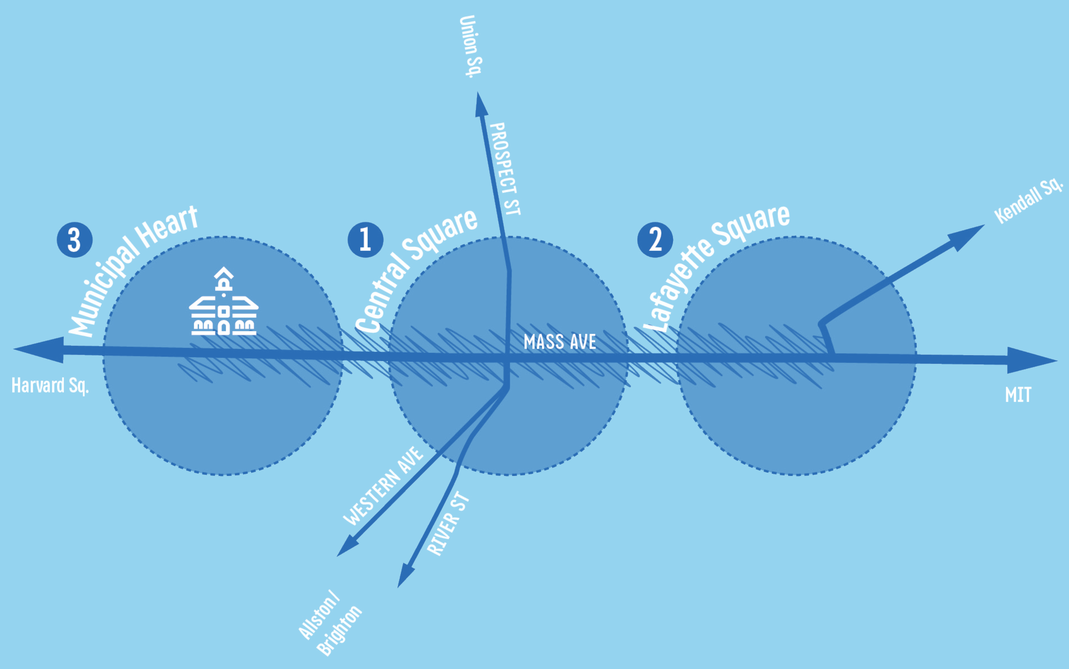
Defining the Central Square District

The Central Square district is defined by three main hubs. In planning and urban design, these are called urban nodes.

The three nodes are:

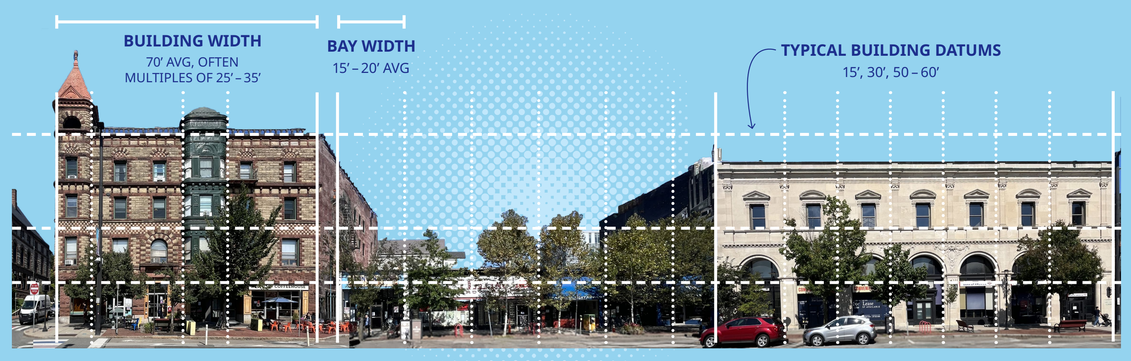
1. **Central Square proper**, at the intersection of Mass. Ave, Western Ave, River St, and Prospect St, and contains the revitalized Carl Barron Plaza.
2. **Lafayette Square** at the intersection of Mass Ave and Main St, containing Jill Brown Rhone Park.
3. **Cambridge's municipal heart**, centered around City Hall.

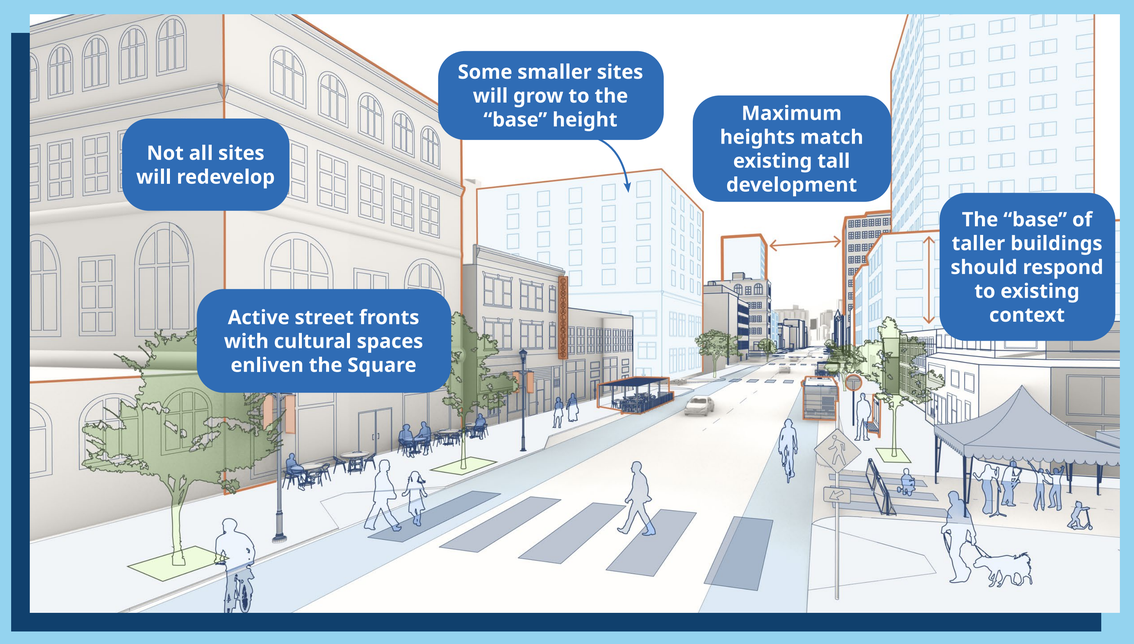
Massachusetts Avenue connects these three nodes into one large district with a distinct identity. The energy and vitality of Central Square extends out along Western Ave, River St, and Prospect St, linking to the surrounding neighborhoods.



Building Blocks

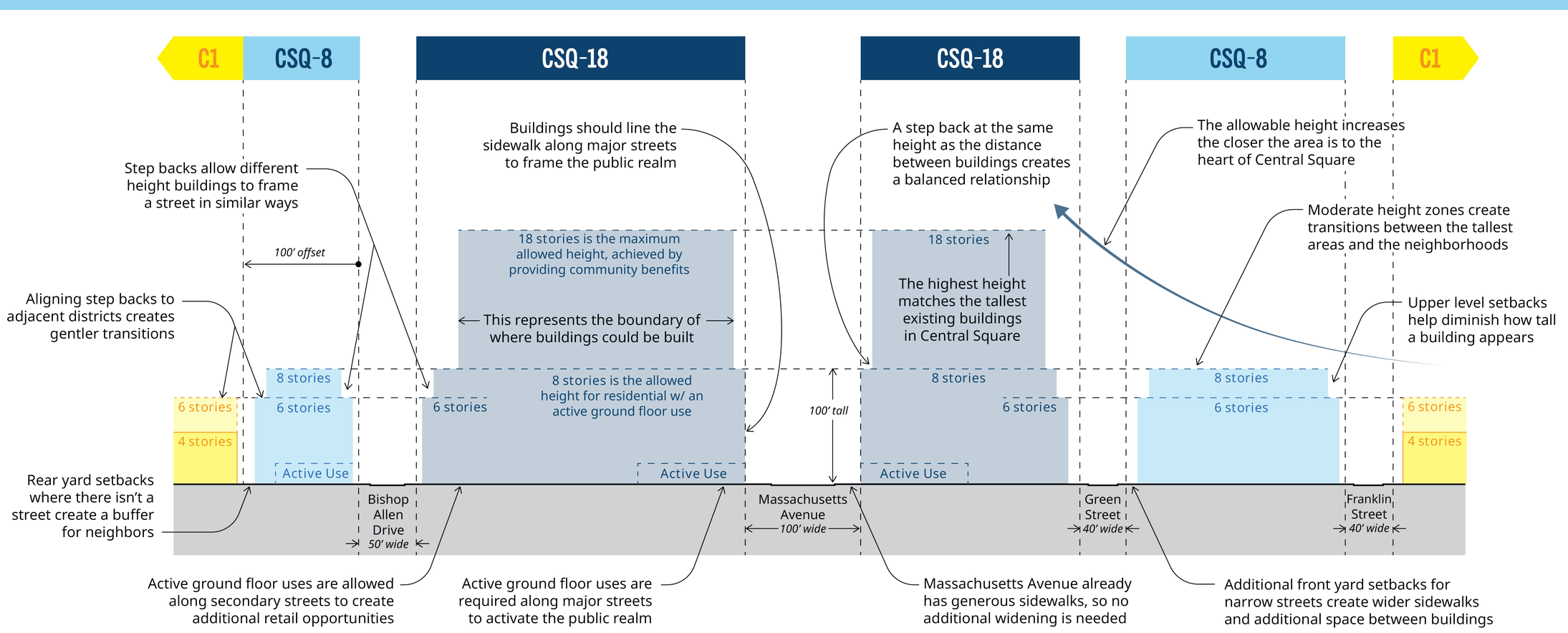
While the architecture of new buildings may be different than existing ones, strong relationships can be made by understanding and replicating the patterns and rhythms of the existing fabric.





Shaping Buildings and the Public Realm

Three factors influence the shapes and heights of buildings that are allowed. These are what currently exists in Central Square, the uses and functions in that area, and principles of good urban design. Some important urban design principles that have informed these zoning recommendations can be found in the section below:



Coming Soon

Design Central

Meant to inspire and influence new development, Design Central will function as a companion to the Central Square Zoning. Its goal is to graphically illustrate strategies for how to make projects:

- Fit in with the Square,
- Grounded in an authentic sense of place,
- Reflective of the community, and
- Responsive to community goals.

Central Square is Cambridge's historic downtown, municipal center, and arts, cultural, and entertainment district. Design Central aims to visually translate how the built environment reflects and contributes to these unique identities. It is meant to work in tandem with Cambridge's Citywide Urban Design Guidelines and Multifamily Design Guidelines. Design Central is still in process. These pages give an idea of how it will look and function. There will be more to share about this work in the future, so stay tuned!



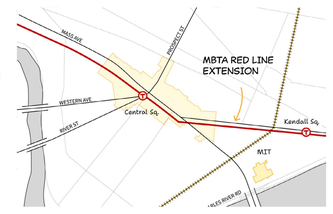


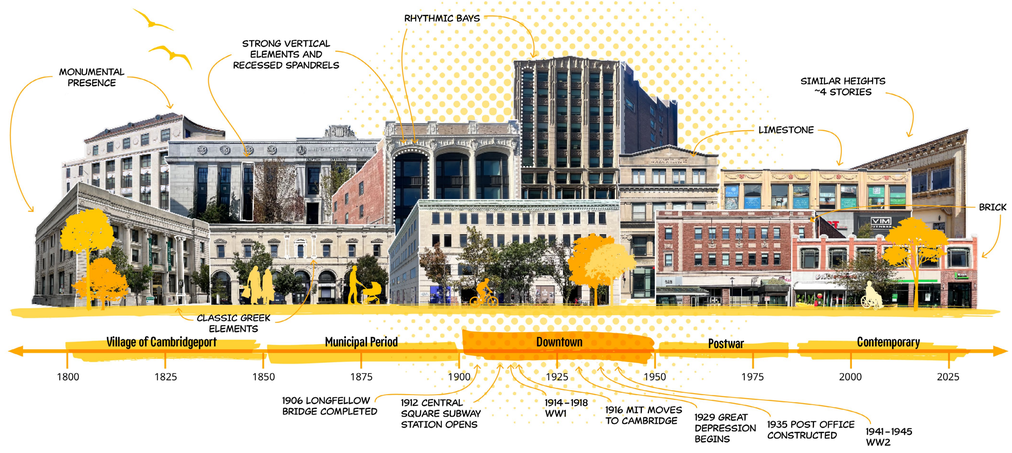
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Downtown Period

The construction of streets and highways following the completion of the West Boston Bridge in 1793 gave Central Square a strong advantage over competing centers in Cambridge. Six decades later, a horse-drawn street railway from Boston to Mount Auburn replaced the omnibuses that ran on a fifteen-minute headway between the two centers. Continued improvements in mass transportation – electrification of the streetcars in 1889, completion of the subway in 1912 – brought faster and cheaper rides, contributing to suburban development and concentration of economic activity around the stations. Anticipating the development of a true downtown, some property owners overbuilt, but Central Square prospered for decades from citizens attracted to its department stores, restaurants, and theaters.

Streetcars and the opening of the subway in 1912 set off a burst of commercial development that positioned Central as Cambridge's downtown district. Department stores and theaters proliferated, capitalizing on strengthened connections to Boston and the wider region. MIT's relation to the riverfront in 1916 placed Central Square between two growing higher education institutions.





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Historic Context
Civic & Municipal
Arts & Entertainment

SHAPING SPACES

Gathering Ingredients

Central Square is a gathering place for all Cantabrigians. Whether for shopping, eating, playing, worshiping, or civic participation, the Square functions as Cambridge's public living room. It's a compelling urban space due to the combination of five important ingredients that make up its public realm:

Places to Linger

Wide sidewalks with benches, street trees, and outdoor dining invite people to stop, relax, and window shop.

Places to Go

Central is home to a diversity of shops, restaurants, and retail destinations that serve both the surrounding neighborhoods and the larger city. Many are local establishments that contribute to the unique character of the Square.

Places to Meet

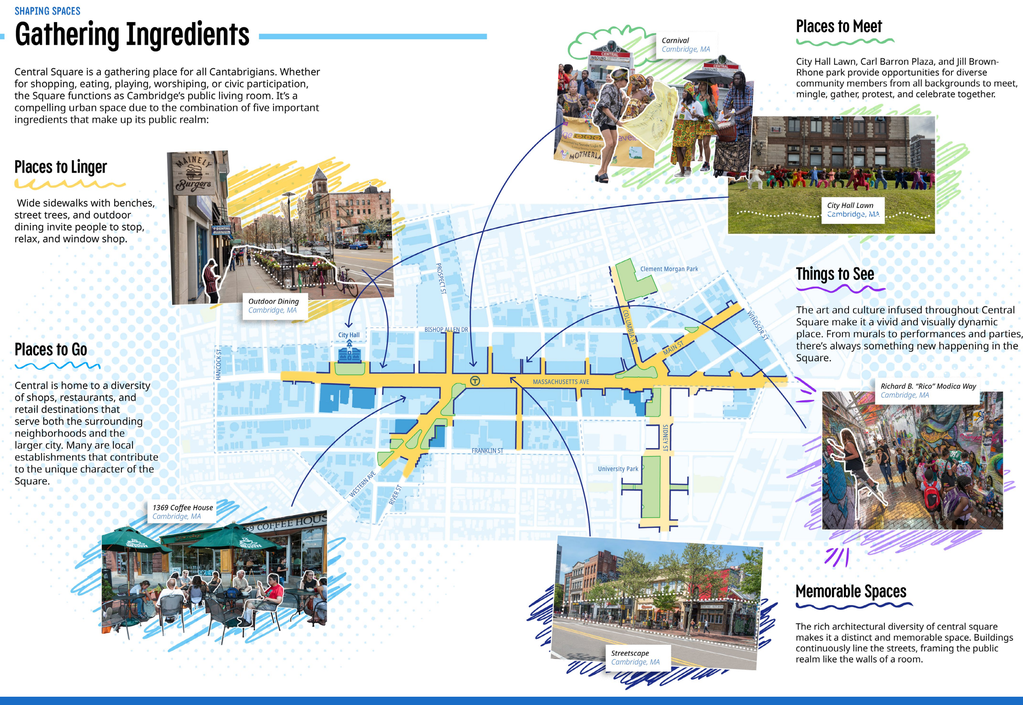
City Hall Lawn, Carl Barron Plaza, and Jill Brown-Rhone park provide opportunities for diverse community members from all backgrounds to meet, mingle, gather, protest, and celebrate together.

Things to See

The art and culture infused throughout Central Square make it a vivid and visually dynamic place. From murals to performances and parties, there's always something new happening in the Square.

Memorable Spaces

The rich architectural diversity of central square makes it a distinct and memorable space. Buildings continuously line the streets, framing the public realm like the walls of a room.



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Historic Context
Urban Form& Public Space
Culture & Community

STRATEGIES & INSPIRATION

Hosting Art

The built environment can become the largest and most accessible public art galleries in the City. From the hallways of new apartment buildings to the brick walls of historic structures, the insides and outsides of buildings can be transformed into canvases and cultural spaces. Coffee shop walls become places where local artists are discovered, sculptures offer glimpses into the past, and murals challenge preconceptions and expand a sense of belonging.

RESOURCES:

- Art for (W)all – A Mural Guide
- 7 Best Practices in Artist/Developer Collaboration: ULI's Art in Place Takes a Deep Dive - Urban Land Magazine

Sculptures

Three-dimensional, site and building specific sculptures are an opportunity to create bold, visual landmarks in the public realm. Big or small, they can lend depth and visual interest to blank surfaces, transform functional building components into unexpected objects, and reveal a building's hidden past life.

BUILDING FACADES ARE A VISIBLE AND ACCESSIBLE CANVAS FOR ART, ACTIVATING THE PUBLIC REALM AND EXPRESSING NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY.



Lobbies and Hallways as Galleries

The interiors of buildings can play an important role in supporting the Cultural District. Third spaces such as cafes, restaurants, and bars can double as rotating galleries. Building lobbies with high transparency become display spaces, especially if lit in the evenings. And apartment hallways can showcase local artists' work.

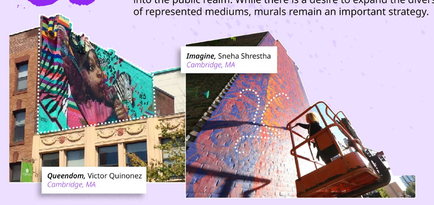
RETAIL SPACES CAN FUNCTION AS INFORMAL GALLERIES THAT SHOWCASE AND SUPPORT LOCAL ART, AND WEAVE CULTURE INTO EVERYDAY LIFE.



BUILDING LOBBIES, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH LARGE GLASS FACADES, CAN SERVE AS HIGHLY VISIBLE VENUES FOR ART, ENGAGING THE PUBLIC FROM BOTH INSIDE AND THE STREET.

Murals

Central Square's murals are one of its defining features, boldly marking it as the City's artistic and cultural heart. They transform walls into city-scale canvases, injecting bold colors and imagery into the public realm. While there is a desire to expand the diversity of represented mediums, murals remain an important strategy.



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Potential Outcomes

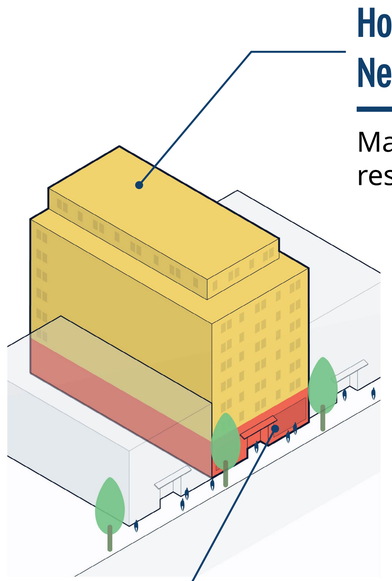
The proposed zoning strategies, all working together, are intended to guide Central Square towards future growth that's inclusive and reflective of the community's goals. New development would emphasize active streets and encourage arts spaces that reinforce Central Square's identity as the city's cultural district and historic downtown. These zoning recommendations would facilitate creative approaches to development, allowing new housing growth while encouraging the preservation of existing historical buildings and cultural spaces across the district. Below are some example outcomes that could be achieved through these recommendations.

Legend

- Residential
- Historic Preservation
- Retail/Small Business
- Arts, Culture, & Nightlife Use

Example 1: Mixed-Use, *8-stories*

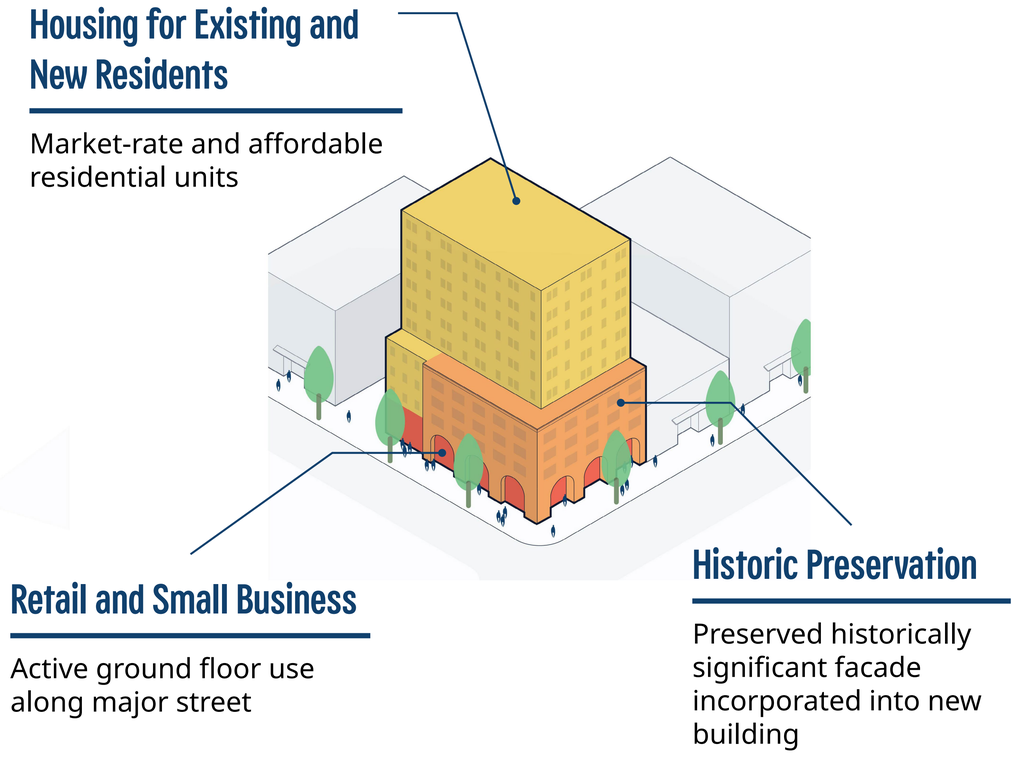
CSQ-8 | CSQ-12 | CSQ-18



Including an active ground floor use contributes to a vibrant public realm and allows for additional residential height.

Example 2: Mixed-Use & Historic Preservation, *10-stories*

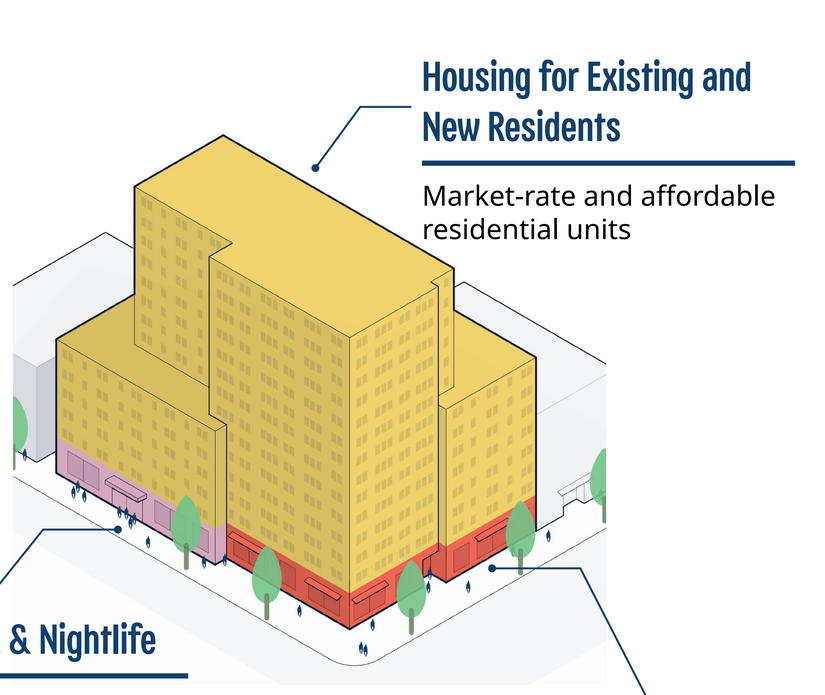
CSQ-12 | CSQ-18



Preserving a historically significant building facade and including active ground floor uses allows further additional residential height.

Example 3: Mixed-Use with Cultural Space, *14-stories*

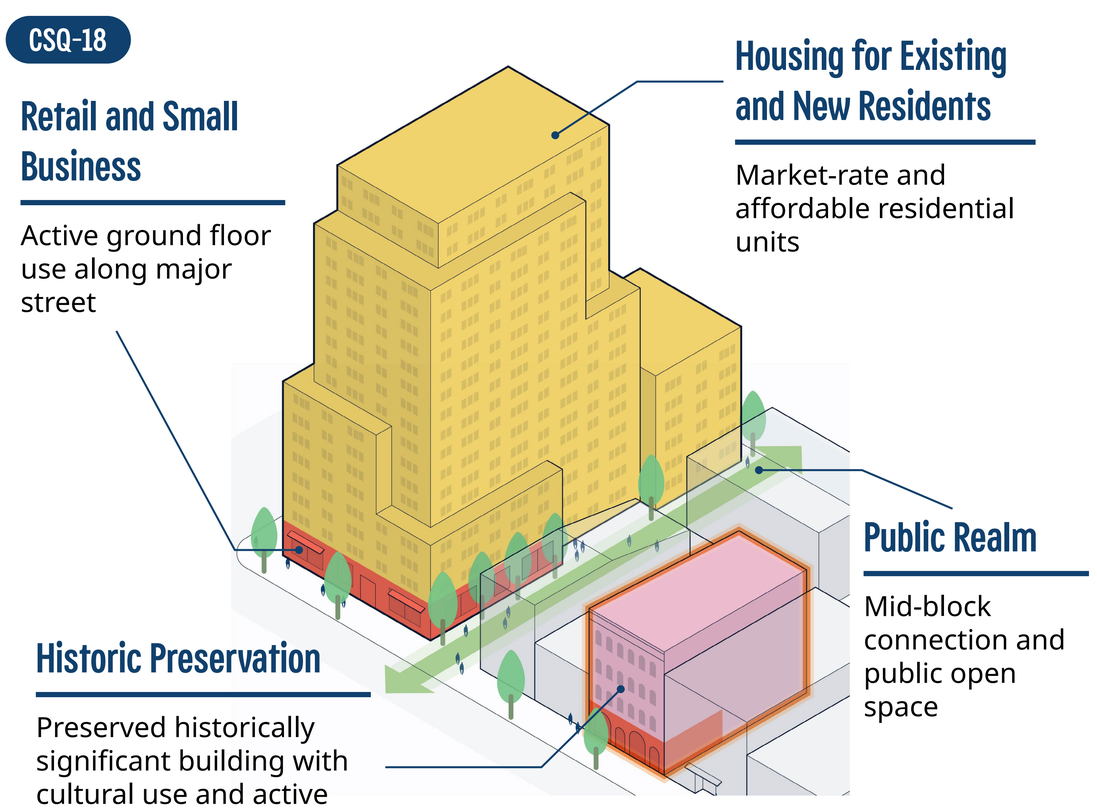
CSQ-18



Creating new cultural space as well as active ground floor uses provides a more substantial increase in residential height.

Example 4: Multi-site Development, *18-stories*

CSQ-18



Creative strategies such as preserving a historically significant building with cultural and active ground floor uses, combined with public open space, unlocks the greatest residential heights.

What's Next?

How Does A Zoning Amendment Move Forward?

1 Draft Zoning Petition

What kind of amendment are you seeking?

Map Change OR Text Change

2 File Zoning Petition with City Clerk

Zoning Petition → City Clerk → City Council

3 City Council sends petition out for review

? City Council → Planning Board; Ordinance Committee

Here's where you plug in!

4 Hold Public Meetings

Planning Board; Ordinance Committee

5 Planning Board & Ordinance Committee send recommendations to City Council

Planning Board ✓ → City Council

Ordinance Committee ✓ → City Council

6 City Council Votes on Zoning Petition

- ✓ **YES:** Amendment Adopted
- ✕ **NO:** Amendment Rejected
- ● **NO CHANGE:** Neither, can be refiled

7 Petitions that pass get enacted into law

- ✓ → Zoning Maps
- ✓ → Zoning Ordinance

Visit the Website

Keep up-to-date with the project!

Scan the QR code with your smartphone
OR
Visit bit.ly/CentralSquareRezoning

Questions? Drop an email to Brian!

bgregory@cambridgema.gov









Thanks for attending the opening of Carl Barron Plaza!