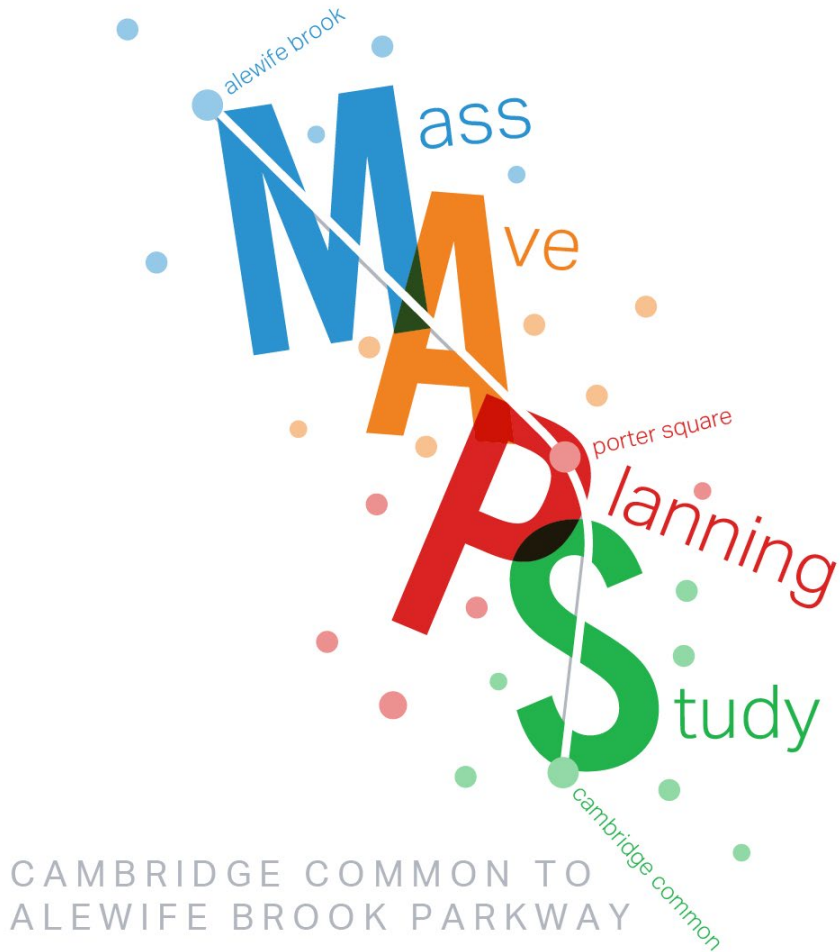




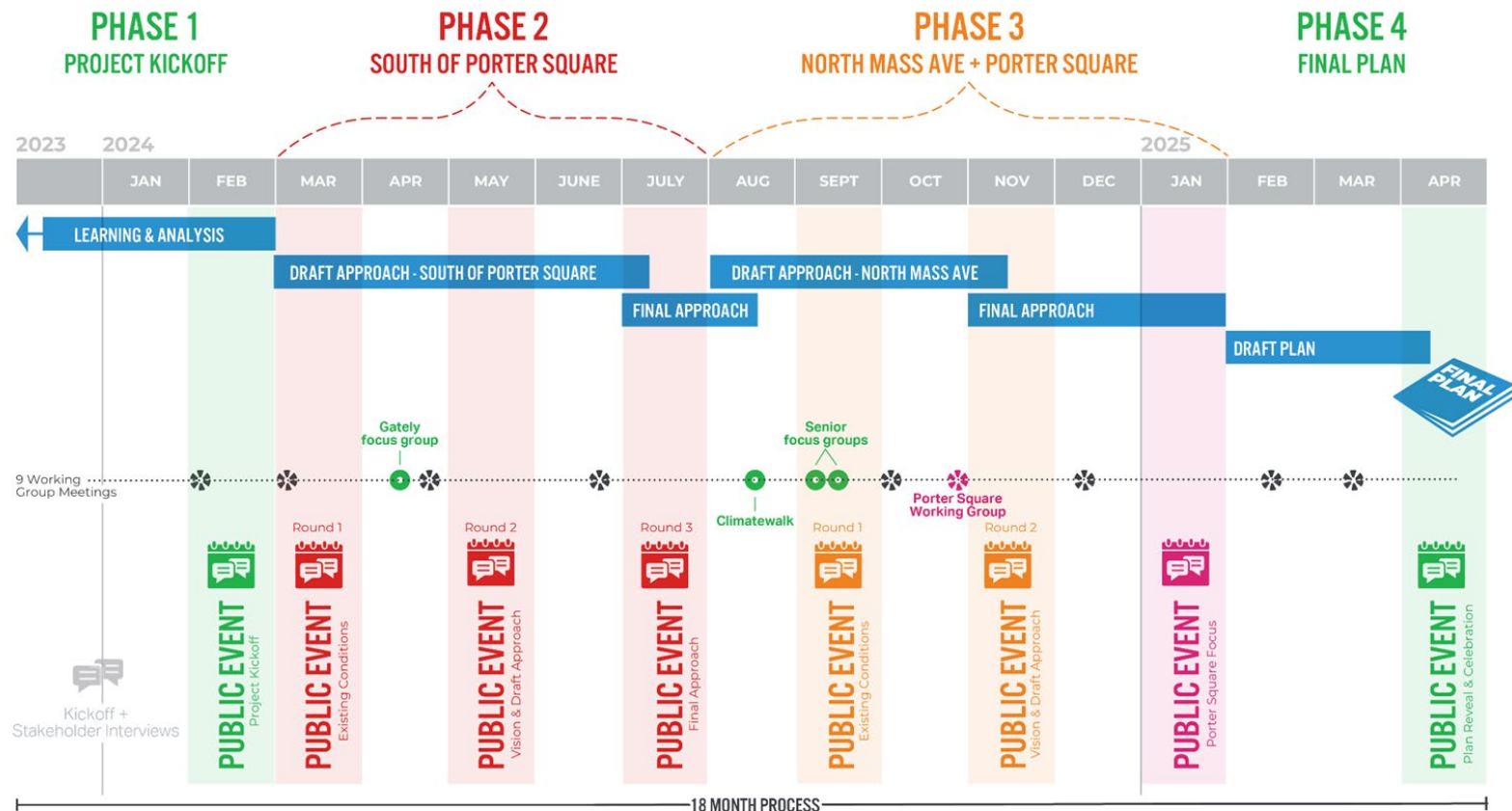
Engagement Summary

Appendix

CAMBRIDGE COMMON TO
ALEWIFE BROOK PARKWAY

PROCESS

PROJECT SCHEDULE



MAPS - ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

9

WORKING
GROUP MEETINGS

6

VIRTUAL PUBLIC
MEETINGS

3

COMMUNITY
EVENTS

7

FOCUS
GROUPS

30

STAKEHOLDER
INTERVIEWS

4,000

CROWDSOURCE MAP INTERACTIONS

10,800

MAILERS SENT



SUMMARY OF OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

BLUE BIKE ADS



WORKING GROUP WALKING TOUR



GATELY FOCUS GROUP



MAILERS



PLAN REVEAL & CELEBRATION



SOUTH OF PORTER OPEN HOUSE



CROWDSOURCE MAP



NORTH MASS AVE OPEN HOUSE

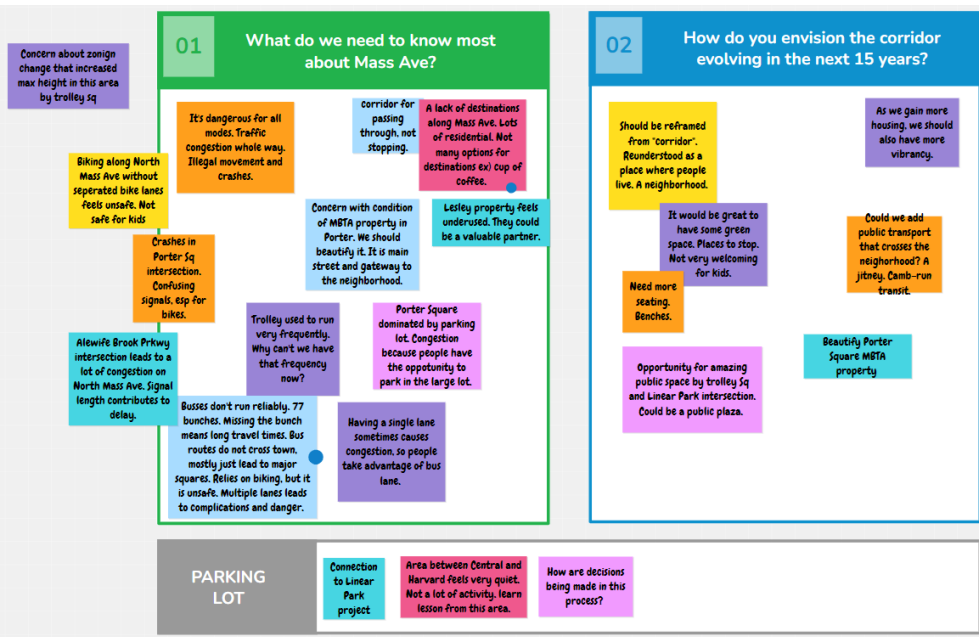


MAPS MAP



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY NEWSPAPERS





PHASE 1: Project Kickoff

WHAT WE DID

The planning team held a project kickoff meeting in February 2024 on Zoom. We solicited feedback from community members about the full Mass Ave Study area today and their vision for the future, resulting in several goals for the corridor. The online collaborative map was also introduced during this meeting and was open for 8 months to collect comments. In addition, this phase included one working group meeting.

WHO WE SPOKE TO

In total, 80 people participated in the public kickoff meeting.

PHASE 2: South of Porter Square

WHAT WE DID

Between March and July 2024, the planning team held three public workshops to develop an approach for the section of Mass Ave South of Porter Square. The first workshop (on Zoom) presented the existing conditions, confirmed initial goals (from the kickoff meeting), and brainstormed initial ideas. The second workshop (in-person) presented the vision and draft recommendations, with activities for feedback. The third workshop (on Zoom) included an overview and discussion of the draft recommendations. In addition, this phase included three working group meetings and a focus group was held with Gately Youth Center.

WHO WE SPOKE TO

Participation at each of the public meetings ranged between 50 to over 100.





PHASE 3: North Mass Ave and Porter Square

WHAT WE DID

Between August and January, the planning team transitioned to focus on North Mass Ave and Porter Square. The first workshop (on Zoom) presented the existing conditions, reintroduced the initial goals (from the kickoff meeting), and brainstormed initial ideas for North Mass Ave. The second workshop (in-person) presented the vision and draft recommendations for North Mass Ave, with activities for feedback. The third workshop (on Zoom) focused on Porter Square and included presentation and discussion of the draft urban design principles and zoning recommendations. In addition, this phase included three working group meetings, senior focus groups and a Climatewalk.



WHO WE SPOKE TO

Participation at each of the public meetings ranged between 70 to over 100.



PHASE 4: FINAL PLAN

WHAT WE DID

The final phase of the process was capped by an in-person community event in April 2025. The planning team presented the final recommendations for the full Mass Ave study area, covering:

- More of a Neighborhood and Destination
- More Inviting
- Easier to Get Around
- More Housing
- Urban Form and Zoning



The draft plan was announced and summaries of the recommendations (in newspaper form) were provided. In addition, this phase included two working group meetings.

WHO WE SPOKE TO

In total, over 100 people participated in the final meeting.

COMMUNITY MEETING 1

Project kick off 2/29/24

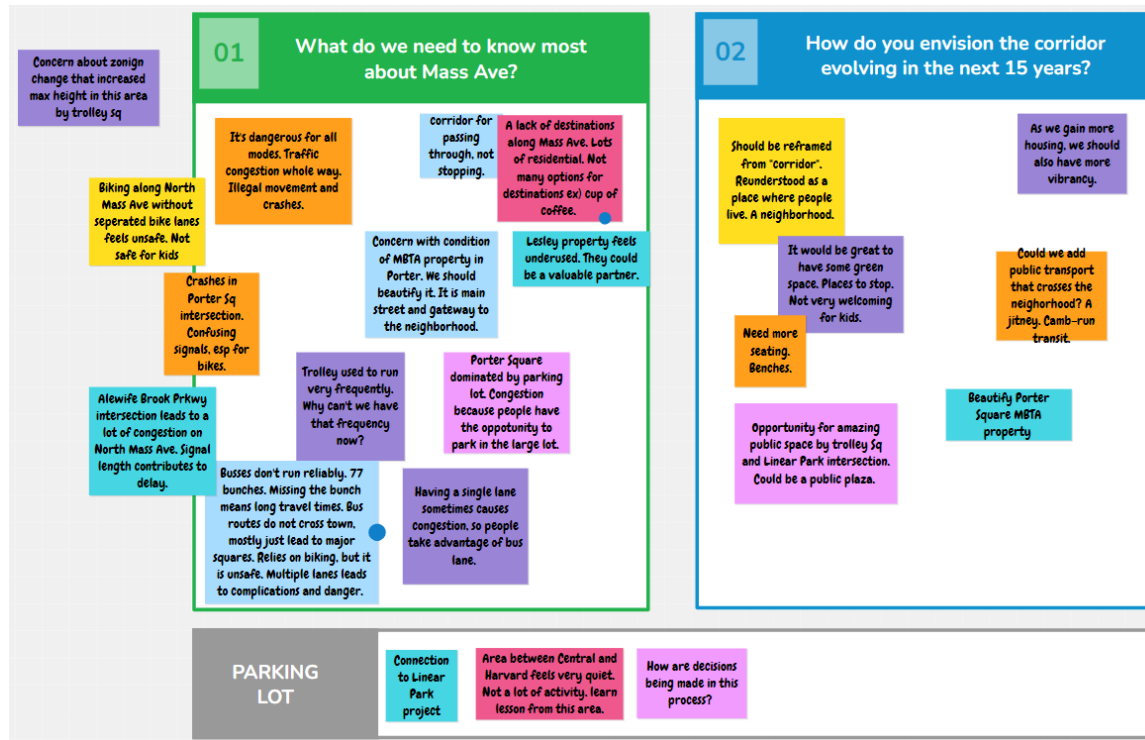
VIRTUAL MEETING: FEB 29, 2024

Attendees

80 Participants, including 11
City/Consultant Facilitators and 1 CART
Professional

Agenda

1. Project introductions and background
2. Evolution of Mass Ave
3. Discussion included a brief Q+A and then 30 minute breakout rooms to discuss Mass Ave today and in the future
4. Demonstration of collaborative map



WHAT WE HEARD - KEY TAKEAWAYS

How do you envision the corridor evolving in the next 15 years?

- **More of a Neighborhood:** Reframe the corridor as a livable walkable neighborhood with improved amenities, including green spaces and places for children.
- **Continues to be a Destination:** Mass Ave is more of a destination with a mix of institutions, commercial activity, and high-quality public spaces. There's more pop-up shops, events, and active storefronts to create a more vibrant atmosphere.
- **It's more Affordable:** Balance density and traffic concerns with the need for more housing and commercial development along Mass Ave. Address the need for affordable housing, particularly for seniors, and integrate it into the existing neighborhood fabric.
- **It's more Beautiful:** Focus on creating a more attractive Mass Ave and public spaces through greening, public artwork, wider sidewalks, and adding more benches.
- **It's easier to Walk Around:** Aim for a balanced and integrated transportation network that prioritizes pedestrians and improves accessibility.

COMMUNITY MEETING 2

SoPo 3/27/24

VIRTUAL MEETING: MARCH 27, 2024

Attendees

109 Pre-Registrants, 50 Participants, including 11 City/Consultant Facilitators

Agenda

1. Community meeting 1 recap
2. South of Porter existing conditions
3. Discussion included 30 minute breakout rooms to brainstorm ideas for Mass Ave South of Porter goals



124 Ideas + Insights!

WHAT WE HEARD - KEY TAKEAWAYS

Ideas for achieving the goals for the corridor:

- Creating more places to gather and fostering neighborhood-serving businesses
- Forming a business association to market the corridor, integrate art, and develop community events
- More art, greening and open spaces
- Better sidewalks, including attention to accessibility
- A diverse mix of housing types and prices

COMMUNITY MEETING 2 - WHAT WE HEARD

As a group, think about Mass Ave South of Porter in 2040. How is it ...

More Neighborhood Oriented?

Initial Ideas:

1	Create more places for the community to gather (sopomap existing space opportunities, lesley plaza, pkg lot) Prompt: what are your ideas for activating these spaces?
2	Foster a mix of local businesses to support neighborhood goods and services
4	Support neighborhood oriented/family friend goods and services a location, for example fresh food/farmers market/grocery
5	Explore the creation of a community kitchen or other similar incubator spaces

● Most repeated

● Multiple community members shared this idea as a way to see and meet their neighbors

Build on the strengths of vibrant commercial corridor
"Build on good bones"

-Faces we want to see in community can't own here - let's create and provide services and activation spaces

-More funky retail - fewer chains

COMMUNITY MEETING 2 - WHAT WE HEARD

As a group, think about Mass Ave South of Porter in 2040. How is it ...

More of a Destination?

Initial Ideas:

1

Integrate more public and performance art through building activation and community events - more things to do **Support the creation of a local business association**

- **This is how a business association works**
- **This is what it does**
- **This is why it's important**
- **Ex. East Cambridge**

● Most repeated

More art along the corridor is not only a neighborhood amenity but would be an invitation for visitors to learn more about the neighborhood

Community members noted that Lesley and Baldwin have art programs

2

Ensure easy and convenient access with multiple mobility options

3

Market the corridor to support local businesses

-More art!

(pop ups in empty galleries, unexpected color)

-This stretch of Mass Ave needs to be accessible to folks coming from further than walking distance

COMMUNITY MEETING 2 - WHAT WE HEARD

As a group, think about Mass Ave South of Porter in 2040. How is it ... **More Beautiful?**

Initial Ideas:

1	Share community identity through creativity and art
2	Plant more trees and vegetation along corridor and open spaces
3	Install more seating and public amenities along the corridor
4	Create more space for sidewalk activation
5	Leverage new development to create more green space <i>Building setbacks, green roofs, etc)</i>

● Most repeated

-Old cambridge vs. the new- art/visuals
can bring folks together

-New development with setbacks could
provide space for more greenery and make it
easier to walk

COMMUNITY MEETING 2 - WHAT WE HEARD

As a group, think about Mass Ave South of Porter in 2040. How is it ...

Easier to Get Around?

Initial Ideas:

1	Balance sidewalk activation with user accessibility	● Most repeated
2	Maintain and repair sidewalks	
3	Signage and wayfinding	
4	Improve pedestrian crossings	● Partial Build Suggestions
5	Reduce transportation user conflicts	

-Love the outdoor dining but it's sometimes challenging to walk on the sidewalk

-Important to manage obstacles for people with disabilities

COMMUNITY MEETING 2 - WHAT WE HEARD

As a group, think about Mass Ave South of Porter in 2040. How is it ...

More Affordable?

Initial Ideas:

1	Support a diverse mix of housing price points	● Most repeated
2	Encourage more housing/residents on the corridor. Set standards for the scale of buildings and architecture styles.	
3	Explore opportunity to redevelop specific sites (ie. dry cleaner, former grocery)	● Community members noted that the former dry cleaning building on Hudson and the former Evergood grocery store would be potential sites for redevelopment to include housing
4	Advocate for local universities to provide more on-campus graduate student housing	

-We want a diverse spectrum of people living here, not all one thing/all affordable

-Universities should be creating more student housing on their campus, more room for others to have housing

COMMUNITY MEETING 3

SoPo 5/29/24

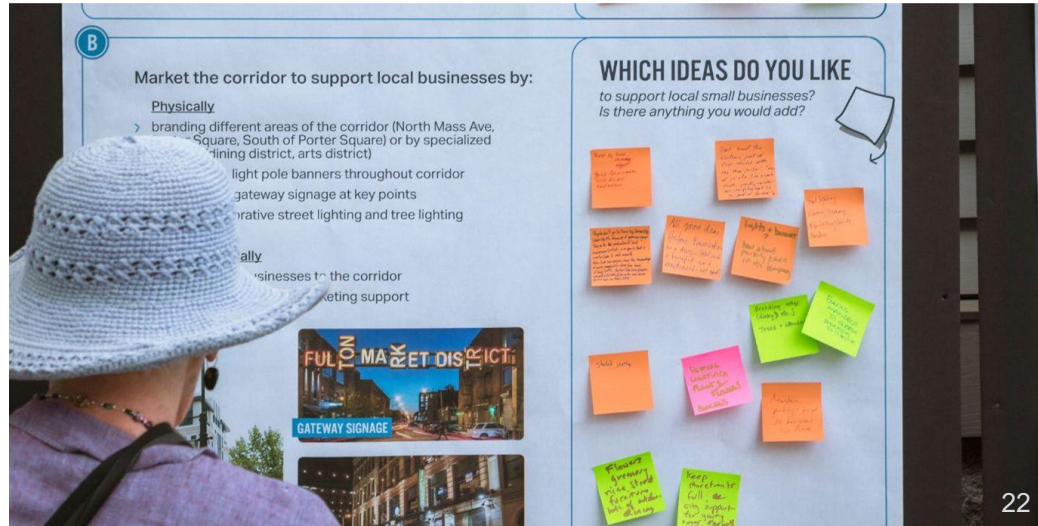
OPEN HOUSE: MAY 29, 2024

Attendees

100+

Agenda

Open house presentation of draft recommendations for Mass Ave South of Porter Square and activities for gathering feedback



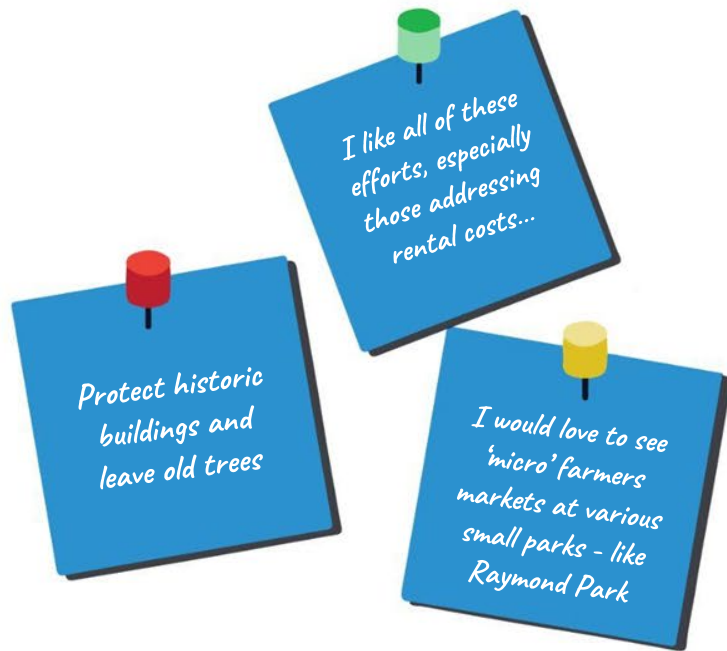
WHAT WE HEARD - KEY TAKEAWAYS

- People want to support local businesses and encourage new ones.
- Partial Construction is still a concern, particularly as it relates to the impact of small businesses.
- Greening was a priority in basically every opportunity to gather feedback at the open house to improve connections and create spaces to gather, including indoor spaces.
- Better sidewalks and focus on pedestrian experience are priorities.
- Public sentiment on housing is a spectrum. Some want no or little change, while others want much taller buildings. But most are comfortable with a moderate amount of increased density and height as long as it doesn't end up like "Central Square."

MORE OF A NEIGHBORHOOD & DESTINATION

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE OPEN HOUSE

- **Supporting local retail** (and affordable space) is a key priority for the community.
- Community members want to extend small business support to **new entrepreneurs** - not just existing local businesses - and **attract new businesses**.
- More **programming and marketing** opportunities to support the corridor was important but not a priority for participants
- Suggestions for events included **farmers markets and micro events**, as well as larger events like the Somerville Porchfest!
- Concerns about loss of parking due to the partial construction project (*we are conveying those to the partial construction team*)



MORE INVITING

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE OPEN HOUSE

- For participants at the open house, **greening** the corridor is a priority for the study area.
- The community wants to see more open space in general, but also draw better connections (like a linear park!) to existing open spaces.
- Open spaces for gathering, like pop-ups and outdoor dining (year round!) were on many participant's minds.
- The community also shared a desire for indoor, affordable community event spaces.

*Night lighting!
...Inviting,
human-level
lighting along
entire length...*

WHERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES

*to make Mass Ave more inviting or
build community identity?*

- = MORE ART!
- = MORE GREENERY!
- = GATHERING SPACES!



*More
impromptu
art!*

EASIER TO GET AROUND

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE OPEN HOUSE

- The community is eager for continued coordination with the partial construction efforts, and offered suggestions for more bus shelters, walk signals, and other elements. Retail parking and bike lanes remain a concern.
- Focusing on the sidewalk quality and amenities is a priority for Mass Ave.

*Think:
people, more
seating*



*Mass Ave
should be all
"sidewalk focus"*

MORE HOUSING OPTIONS

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE OPEN HOUSE

Nearly all of the responses from the building height activity recognized the need for additional housing along Mass Ave.

Concerns we heard included:

- Scale of the buildings
- Relationship of building to the street
- Access to sunlight and building shadows
- New development may impact the number of affordable retail spaces

Opportunities we heard included:

- Additional housing with an emphasis on affordable housing
- More residents could benefit businesses and transit ridership
- New development could create new community and publicly accessible spaces

WHAT IF WE WENT UP...

A LITTLE
(6-8 STORIES)

A LITTLE MORE
(10-12 STORIES)

A BIT MORE?



Keep existing character of street, but with only a mild increase in height.

Taller is fine but not without limits and intelligent oversight.

We heard additional ideas and questions that relate to citywide policies including development process, airbnb rentals, foreign property speculation, vacant housing taxes and rent control. We are passing along what we heard to the city and are advocating for continued discussions around these ideas.

COMMUNITY MEETING 4

SoPo 7/25/24

VIRTUAL MEETING: JULY 25, 2024

Attendees

107 registrants, 67 attended, including 12 City/Consultant Facilitators

Agenda

1. Present overview of the draft recommendations for Mass Ave South of Porter Square
2. Hear from attendees in breakout rooms what ideas excited them and if there were potential strategies missing that they would like to see added

		Is there a strategy that excites you?	Are there potential strategies missing that you would like to see?
MORE OF A NEIGHBORHOOD & DESTINATION 1. Foster a mix of neighborhood-serving, family-friendly goods and services, including creating a business association 2. Market the corridor to support local businesses. 3. Organize and host more community events and performance art		retaining small local businesses - plug number for first floor spaces, continuing a community conversation with new developments local businesses are important to vibrancy vibrant mass ave in the future	
MORE INVITING 1. Share community identity through creativity and art 2. Plant more trees and vegetation along corridor and open spaces. 3. Create more places for the community to gather		more green + inviting (particularly in porter square - more green less concrete) branding is important - where the city of squares has not been how to deal with streets street drainage: combined sewer overflows, rainfall capture, catch basins not a heat island	
EASIER TO GET AROUND 1. Ensure sidewalks are accessible for everybody 2. Provide safe, convenient access to sustainable transportation options 3. Streamline signage and wayfinding		more green space and safer cycling safety is paramount, green is a top priority sidewalks, shade, safe crossings (garfield/square mento) friendly and safe for pedestrians is essential, sidewalks is most important - consistency/visibility	
MORE HOUSING OPTIONS 1. Encourage more housing/residents on the corridor 2. Continue to support City policy for a diverse mix of housing price points 3. Encourage context-sensitive design		200+ new units in the area improve vibrancy with taller/mixed use buildings support more housing, more mixed use zoning on mass ave. "pains me to see single story" but still want to see smaller floor plates, continue to look at walkable living spaces hotels have come to porter square recently, retail space sat for 2-3 years now its a rock and roll daycare. HOW DO WE DO RETAIL BETTER IN NEW DEVELOPMENT IN PORTER SQUARE COMMITMENTS TO STRATEGIES FOR AFFORDABLE RETAIL, SIMILAR AS HOUSING lesley program housing with supportive services housing price - also think through middle income, not just the two sides of the street	

WHAT WE HEARD - KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Attendees support small businesses and are interested in maintaining affordable retail space
- A green, attractive, and safe street is desired
- Attendees want to see more mixed use development of different scales, with affordable housing for low and middle income residents, good urban design and a character that reflects Mass Ave not Kendall Square or Alewife

COMMUNITY MEETING 4 - WHAT WE HEARD

NEIGHBORHOOD & DESTINATION

Is there an idea that excites you?

1. Retaining small local businesses, particularly on the first floors.
2. Continuing a community conversation with new developments.
3. Important to keep supporting businesses, like the gas station...

Are there potential strategies missing that you would like to see?

1. Support existing businesses like the gas station.
2. Aspire to have neighborhood-serving businesses like Evergood Grocery and a bakery.
3. Engage with Lesley to improve ground floor space at Porter Exchange and parking.
4. Activate Lesley Plaza for community events.

MORE INVITING

Is there an idea that excites you?

1. More green and inviting spaces, particularly in Porter Square.
2. Adding more trees and benches for shade.
3. Branding the area to highlight its identity as the "city of squares."

Are there potential strategies missing that you would like to see?

1. Street drainage improvements, combined sewer overflows, and rainfall capture.
2. More open spaces like St. James.

COMMUNITY MEETING 4 - KEY TAKEAWAYS

EASIER TO GET AROUND

Is there an idea that excites you?

1. Ensuring friendly and safe sidewalks.
2. Creating more green spaces and safer cycling routes.
3. More bike parking.
4. Addressing sidewalk repairs on Sacramento.

Are there potential strategies missing that you would like to see?

1. Safer crossings at Garfield and Sacramento.
2. Narrowing road widths.

MORE HOUSING OPTIONS

Is there an idea that excites you?

1. Building more housing along the corridor with a focus on mixed-use zoning.
2. Using density bonuses to ensure affordable ground floor retail.
3. Taller and mixed-use buildings to improve vibrancy.
4. Maintaining a variety of building heights (6-12 stories) to keep the area distinctive.
5. Supporting more walkable living spaces and smaller floor plates.

Are there potential strategies missing that you would like to see?

1. Commitments to affordable retail, similar to affordable housing mandates.
2. Ensuring setbacks are taken seriously by developers.
3. Exploring taller housing options in areas off the main corridor.
4. Ensuring new development is contextualized to adjacent buildings.
5. Incorporating medium-sized buildings and parking behind buildings.
6. Maintaining the unique character of Mass Ave, avoiding a uniform look like Kendall Square or Alewife.
7. Supporting housing for middle-income residents, not just low-income.
8. Ensuring the experience of the corridor at street level is prioritized with trees, landscaping, building design, gathering spaces, retail, and street safety for bikes/pedestrians.

COMMUNITY MEETING 5

N Mass Ave / Porter Square

9/26/24

VIRTUAL MEETING: SEPT 26, 2024

Attendees

221 registrants, 70+ attended

Agenda

1. Recap of Phases 1 and 2
2. North Mass Ave and Porter Square existing conditions
3. Discussion included 30 minute breakout rooms to discuss how this section differs from South of Porter and brainstorm ideas for North Mass Ave



WHAT WE HEARD - KEY TAKEAWAYS

- North Cambridge has more families, while South of Porter Square has more students and institutional anchors
- North Cambridge is less dense and walkable than South of Porter Square, has more auto oriented (and sometimes destination) business, and more a diverse mix of businesses
- Key anchors include Porter Square, Linear Park and Alewife Brook Parkway, and better connections to these are desired
- Heavy focus on pedestrian experience and urban design, particularly as it ties to Porter Square
- Traffic congestion was top of mind

For this round we asked three questions:

**What do we need to
know most about
North Mass Ave and
Porter Square?**

**How might it be
different than Mass
Ave, South of Porter
Square?**

**What are your
hopes for the future
of North Mass Ave
and Porter Square?**

WHAT WE HEARD

What do we need to know most about North Mass Ave and Porter Square?

- **Traffic congestion makes it challenging to thinking about how this corridor can support additional future density**
 - Mass Ave remains a regional transportation corridor
 - Traffic patterns have been shifting, with more volume on side streets impacting residents
- **The area needs to look and feel more like a neighborhood**
 - There is a desire for more businesses that are neighborhood serving
 - More public spaces to gather are needed
- **More greenery and attention to flooding**
 - Existing features such as historical signs and public spaces need updating
 - More shade is needed along the corridor
 - There are some concerns of flooding and mitigating the combined sewer infrastructure
- **It needs to be easier to bike and walk**
 - More pedestrian amenities and benches are needed
 - Better connections are needed to access surrounding neighborhoods
 - What's the right amount of bike parking, where?

WHAT WE HEARD

How might it be different than Mass Ave, South of Porter Square?

- **There are fewer pedestrian destinations**
 - Many commuters use this stretch of Mass Ave to get in and out of town. North Cambridge residents are not creating the traffic, it's commuters by car
 - Pedestrian activity is more limited in North Mass Ave because there are fewer destinations and businesses
- **Who lives there now and potentially in the future**
 - Mass Ave south of Porter Square has more college students and older apartment buildings
 - North Mass Ave and Porter Square have greater potential to add more housing and residents
- **There are immediate needs to address**
 - Examples include activating vacant storefronts and making the corridor safe, cleaner, and more beautiful

WHAT WE HEARD

What are your hopes for the future of North Mass Ave and Porter Square?

- **More of a Neighborhood and a Destination**
 - There will be more businesses on North Mass Ave
 - A cultural district & identity will define the corridor
- **It's more Inviting**
 - North Mass Ave will be much more green with more trees, plants, and green infrastructure
 - The area's history will be celebrated
 - There will be more spaces to gather as a community
- **It's easier to Get Around**
 - North Mass Ave will be more walkable
 - Our green spaces will be better connected - Alewife Brook, Linear Park, and others
 - There will be improved bus/bike service on the corridor
- **It provides more Housing Options**
 - A balance between more housing and scale that is needed for attracting more businesses and activities
 - More affordable housing options will be available
 - Future density on the corridor will consider impacts on the transportation network

COMMUNITY MEETING 6

N Mass Ave / Porter Square

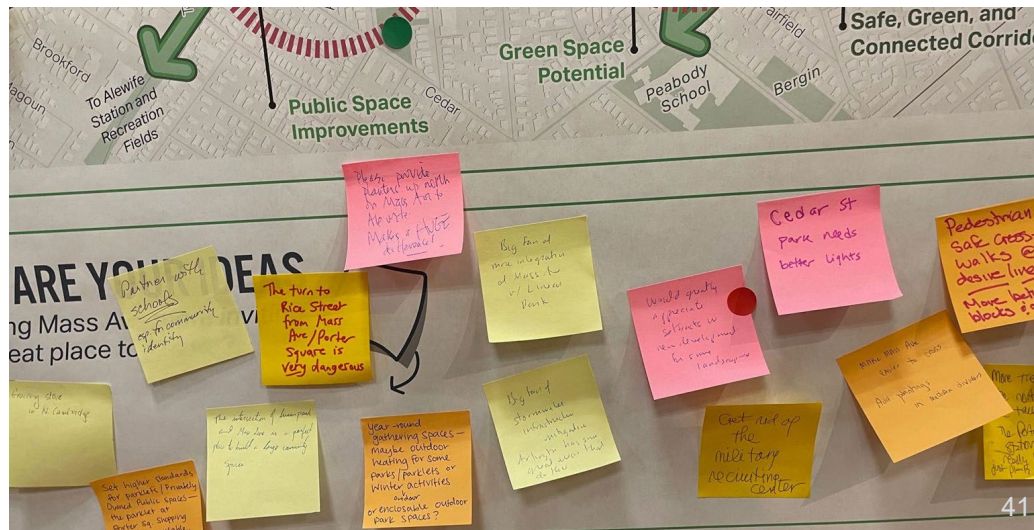
11/13/24

Attendees

80+ participants

Agenda

Open house presentation of draft recommendations for North Mass Ave and activities for gathering feedback



WHAT WE HEARD - KEY TAKEAWAYS

Section 1:

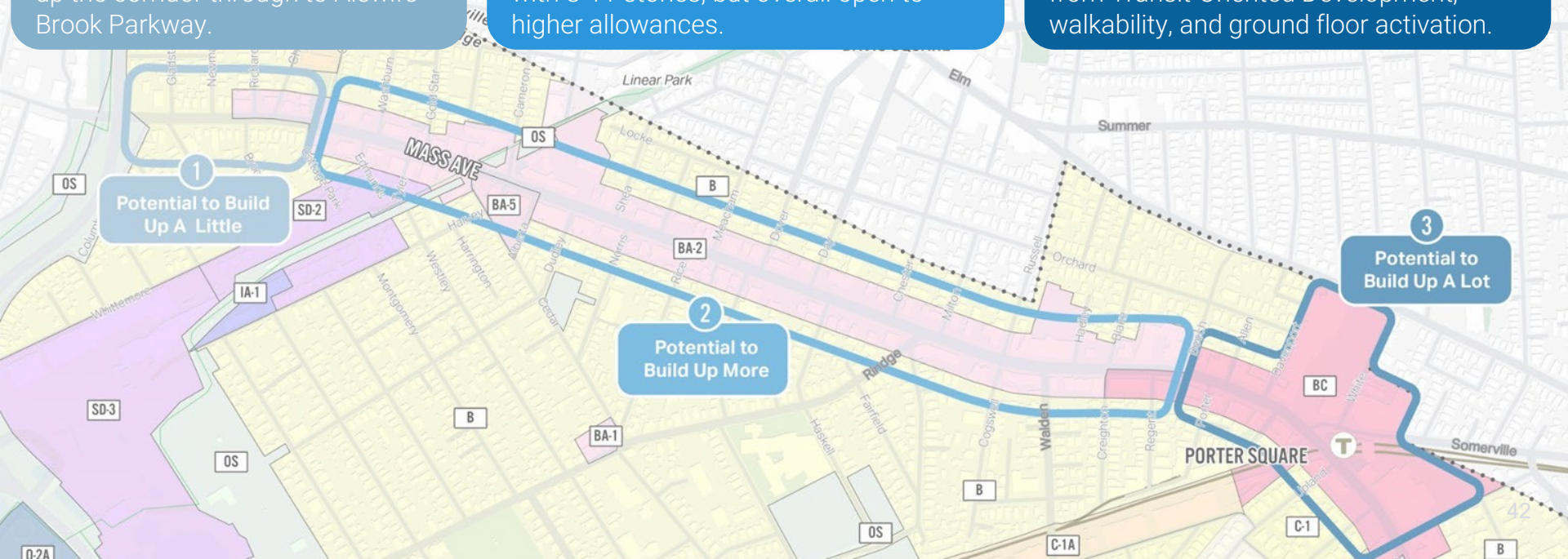
A majority of the participants were **eager for more density** all the way up the corridor through to Alewife Brook Parkway.

Section 2:

Some participants were concerned about traffic congestion and parking with 8-11 stories, but overall open to higher allowances.

Section 3:

In Porter Sq, people are not as hesitant to significantly increasing heights to benefit from Transit-Oriented Development, walkability, and ground floor activation.



OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY OF WHAT WE HEARD

Six stories only; regular developers will make tons of money"

I want to live in the "city" of Cambridge, not another suburban enclave build with a vision that creates an active urban environment..."

"We should go tall 12+ by right on all those sections. Mass Ave is a boulevard and we are in a housing crisis."

1
Potential to Build Up A Little

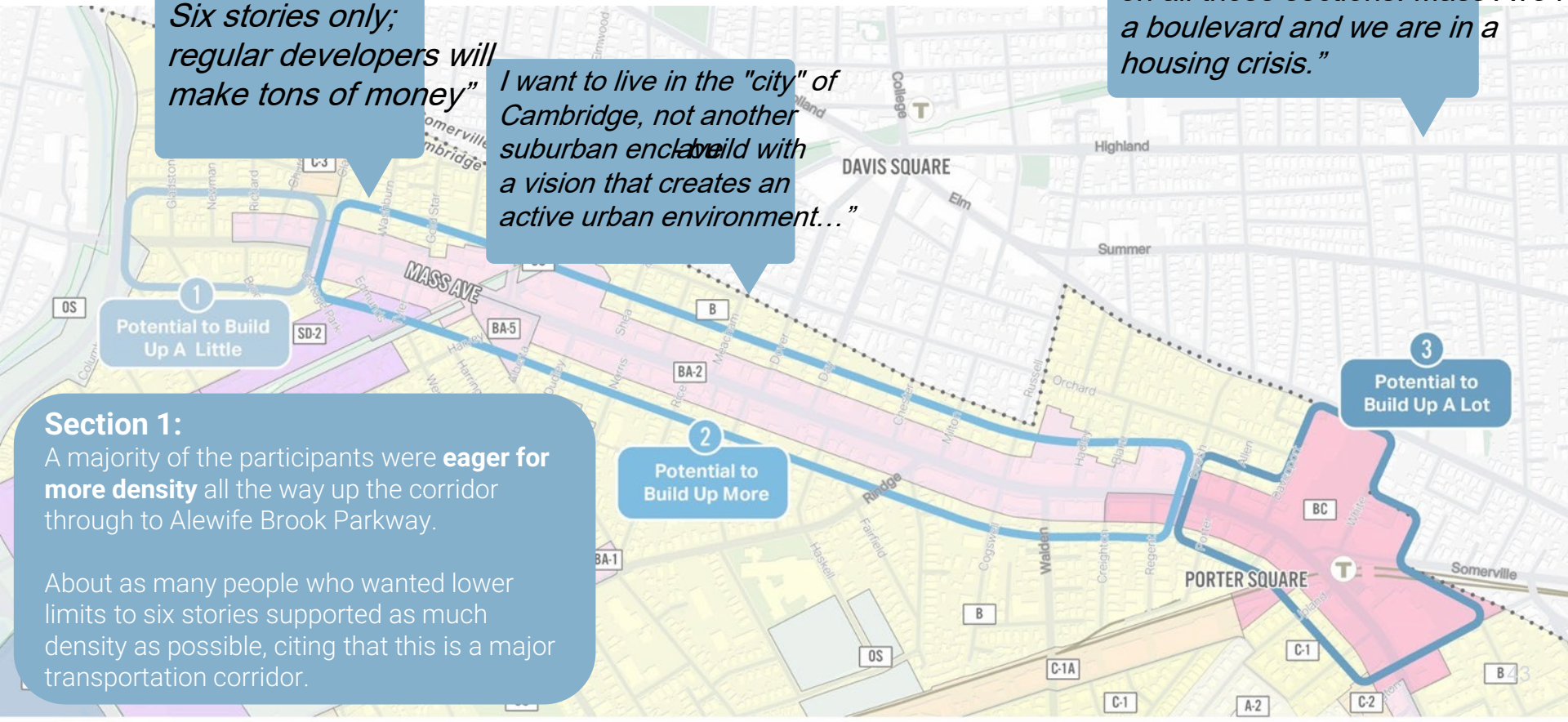
Section 1:

A majority of the participants were **eager for more density** all the way up the corridor through to Alewife Brook Parkway.

About as many people who wanted lower limits to six stories supported as much density as possible, citing that this is a major transportation corridor.

2
Potential to Build Up More

3
Potential to Build Up A Lot



OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY OF WHAT WE HEARD

"Creating a node at Trolley Square (Linnean and Mass Ave) makes sense to me."

1
Potential to Build Up A Little

North Mass Ave is kind of desolate. Not much reason to go there rather than Davis. Higher density could really improve the neighborhood feeling. I want to live in the "city" of Cambridge, not another suburban enclave with a vision that creates an active urban environment..."

"Limit stories to 5, affordable housing is a must" and "I agree with overall objectives, but 8-11 stories is too much, 6 will be sufficient"

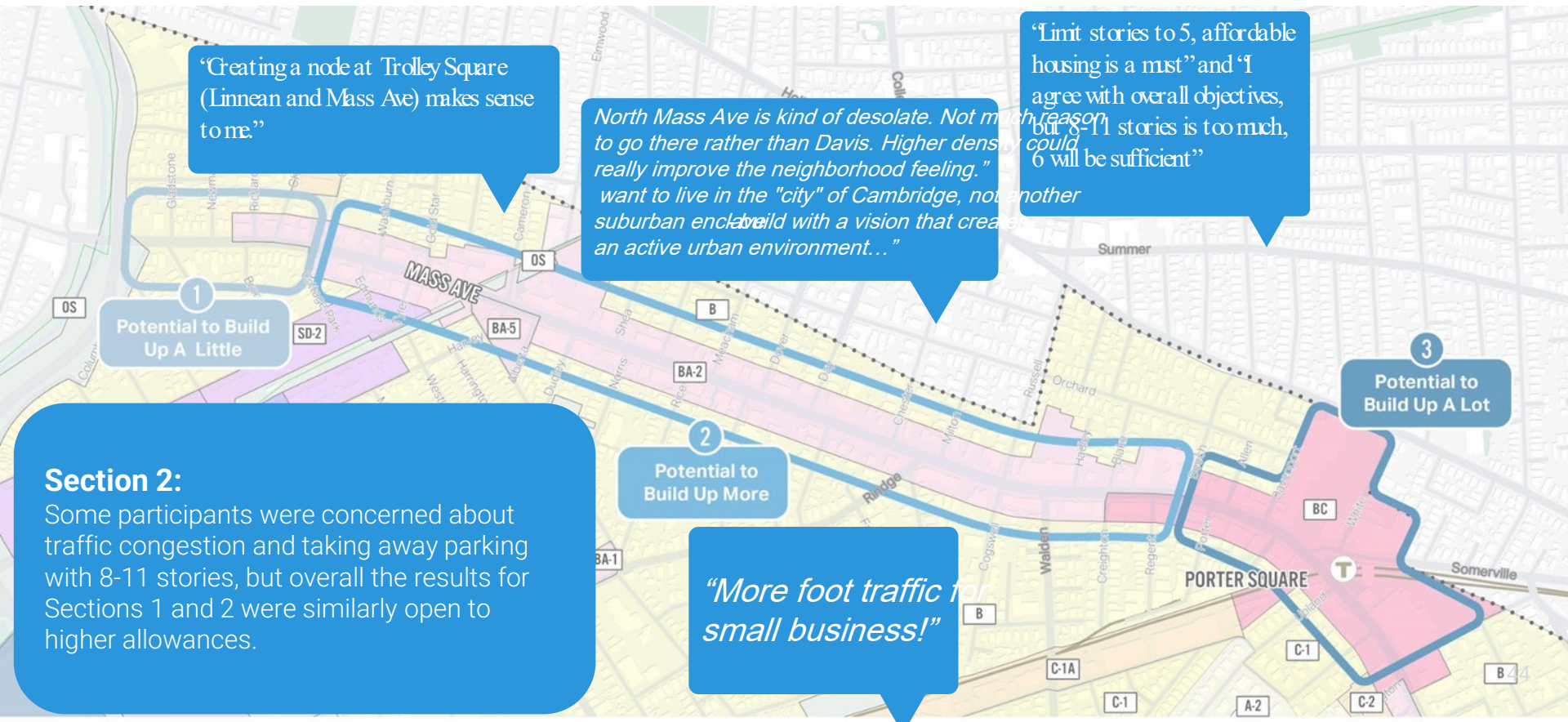
2
Potential to Build Up More

"More foot traffic for small business!"

3
Potential to Build Up A Lot

Section 2:

Some participants were concerned about traffic congestion and taking away parking with 8-11 stories, but overall the results for Sections 1 and 2 were similarly open to higher allowances.



OPEN HOUSE SUMMARY OF WHAT WE HEARD



“Activate public transit; address housing crisis”

“Please max the allowable height, our neighborhood can accommodate for it”

3
Potential to Build Up A Lot

Section 3:

Nearly every participant wanted to see more density in order to benefit from TOD (Transit-Oriented Development), walkability, and ground floor activation. In Porter, people are not as hesitant to significantly increasing heights.

2
Potential to Build Up More

1
Potential to Build Up A Little

COMMUNITY MEETING 7

Porter Square 1/30/25

VIRTUAL MEETING: JAN 30, 2025

Attendees

274 registrants, 100+ attended

Agenda

1. Recap of community process
2. Draft urban design principles for Porter Square + breakout discussions
3. Draft zoning recommendations for Porter Square + breakout discussions

01 Where would you locate a new open space and why?

1 would be great to improve open space by the T stop

2 using area above track could be fascinating but SSS. Space is definitely under utilized.

3 Ideally we'd want to be off from Mass Ave. But we can use greenery to separate from the street. Small seating areas along Mass Ave further south are popular and inviting, so maybe we can replicate that success. make the street inviting.

02 What would you do there in the future?

MORE OPEN SPACE, LESS BUILDING

PLANTING - REDUCE URBAN HEAT ISLAND EFFECT

FAMILY SPACE / PLAY SPACES FOR CHILDREN

POSITIVE GREEN SPACE

ACTIVE USES - MORE THAN JUST A PASS-THROUGH

PLACES FOR KIDS TO PLAY GAMES

LINEAR PARK - MAY NOT ALLOW FOR MORE THAN JUST PASSING THROUGH

A GREEN SPACE TO VISIT

DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN GREEN AND OPEN SPACE - MAKE SURE ACTUAL GREEN SPACE IS PROVIDED

SPACES SIMILAR TO THAT IN FRONT OF MAIN PUBLIC LIBRARY IS DESIRED

COMMUNITY GARDEN

OUTDOOR FURNITURE

PARK FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS - REF. CLARENDON PARK

SPACE TO RELAX

GREENWY / KEEP TREES AND ADD MORE

Creates pedestrian options between two options are more centric. This is better

opens possibility retail with parking along White St. A issue of making effect.

could we have an elevated park? like the high line. keep the parking lot as it is. Active linear space that preserves the parking

Preference for this version. Would like to see more connection between Mass Ave the neighborhood. The station feels separate. Linear park facilitates movement for pedestrians without needing a large contiguous space.

Being off Mass Ave makes it more comfortable, and we would need to include amenities.

01 What are your hopes for the future of Porter Square?

we have a unique community, we have all these small businesses in the area, in order to get open space, do we need a big project - it does risk impacting on the unique character of the area and prop... small retailers are still important.

we have lost transportation here that anywhere else in the city

there are not a bunch of choices

02 Which option do you prefer and why?

consider building up over the rail by letting you're not blocking anything and I wouldn't build a tall building there

Option 1: Central

makes sense - and if you could go over the T, their right-of-way out and go low

most recent footprint of 10 stories - suggest a 'stud case' gallery, maybe the notion of building over the T-track

Option 2: Radial

don't want all the buildings to be 10 stories

don't want to be Washington DC, where everything is the same, 5 stories, need variation

that area is so unique, how do we know that? walkable, close knit community and all these amenities how can we preserve the uniqueness of it?

preserve our rich, wonderful history, heritage come through porter square!

never gonna happen in our lifetime - but build as much as we can in the neighborhood - don't want to erase the character on that part of Cambridge

Option 3: Linear

don't think you should have high rise in the neighborhood - don't want to erase the character on that part of Cambridge

concerned about parking

don't want to price out people even with the affordable housing requirement!

WHAT WE HEARD - KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There's strong interest in short-term improvements like added seating, shade, and greenery in Porter Square.
- Attendees shared how Porter Square can be a vibrant, walkable area that connects to local businesses with public spaces that blend relaxation with activity.
- Attendees preferred more density near the T and Mass Ave with sensitive transitions to surrounding residential areas.
- A lively mix of retail and green space is essential.

PORTER SQUARE

PREVIOUS INPUT RECEIVED

SHOW PS SOME LOVE

"The old rotating overhead sculpture could use some revitalizing freshening"

"No one really occupy this space. Needs more greenery"

PROVIDE BETTER OPEN SPACE

"Porter Square seriously needs a sizable plaza-type area that supports gathering/is inviting to hang out in, instead of smaller barely used/poorly activated spaces like this one scattered about."

"The current layout is a concrete jungle, unpleasant to be in.."

"Right now this isn't even a 'square'. It's a parking lot."

MORE SQUARE/LESS PARKING

"It would be great if Porter could be a pleasant place to be when not in a car, but as it is, every corner feels like an island in a sea of traffic."

"I think the top priority should be finding ways to make this area more pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly."

BUILD UP

"Can we change zoning and be creative about having a multi use space in Porter that incorporates housing over existing retail space and finding clever solutions that allow for parking and account for influx in cars."

"Probably a bit further out, but consider air rights development over the tracks approaching Porter!"

"1 story buildings are a missed opportunity. Adjust zoning so that all the beautiful buildings currently along the corridor are legal again, and more."

**MORE OF A
NEIGHBORHOOD
& DESTINATION**

**ZONING ALLOWS
FOR GREATER HEIGHT
FOR POTENTIAL
HOUSING**

**ENCOURAGE
CONTEXT
SENSITIVE
DESIGN**

**EVENTS +
POP UPS**

**MORE VIBRANT
ATMOSPHERE**

**MORE
HOUSING
OPTIONS**

**RESTORED
PUBLIC
ART**

**MORE
INVITING**

**MORE
TREES +
PLANTINGS**

**IMPROVE
ACCESSIBILITY**

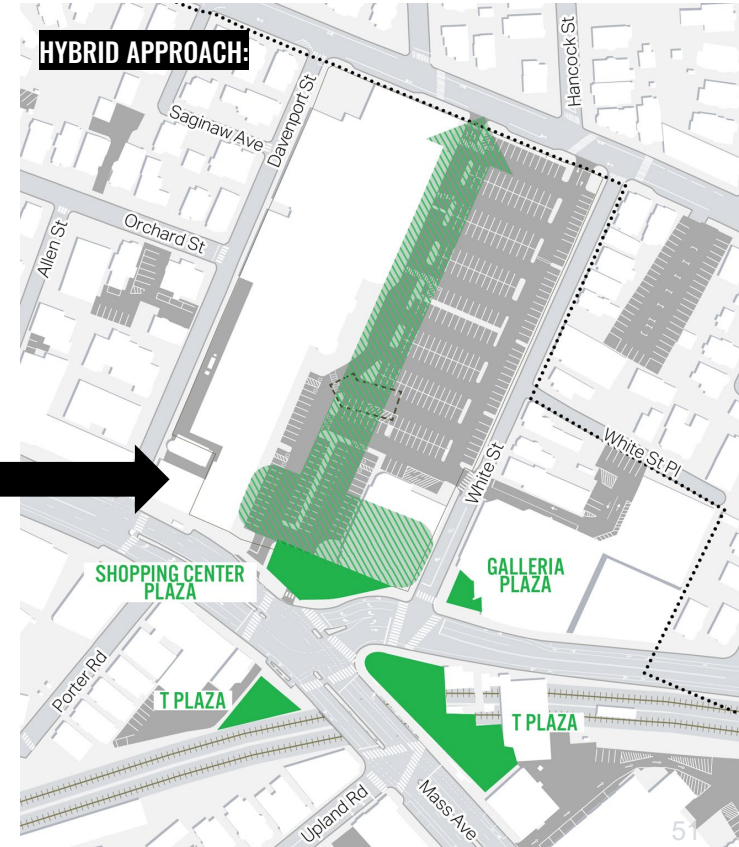
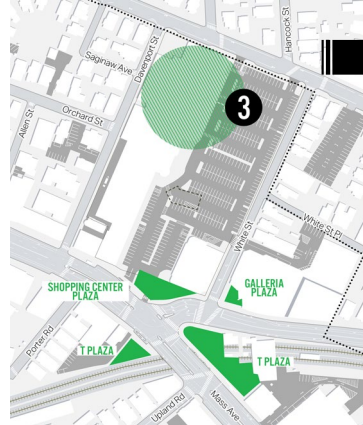
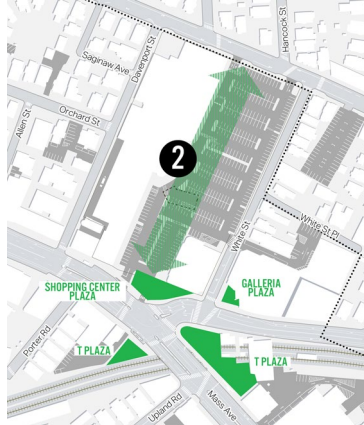
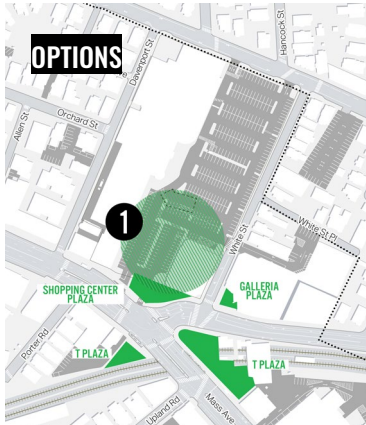
**EASIER TO
GET
AROUND**

**PRIORITIZE
PEDESTRIANS**

**HOW THE VISION
SHAPES
RECOMMENDATIONS**

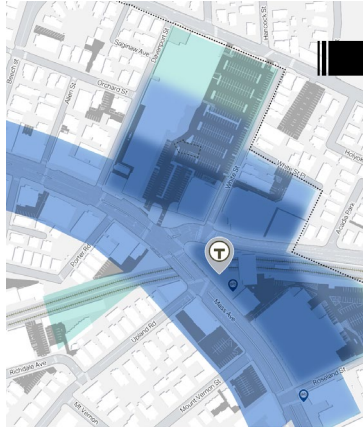
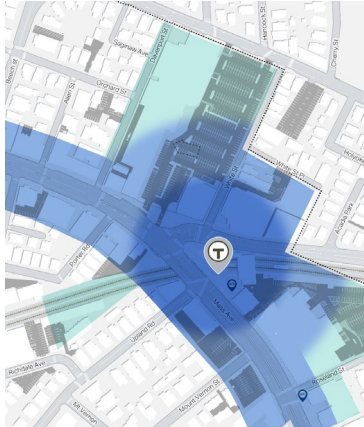
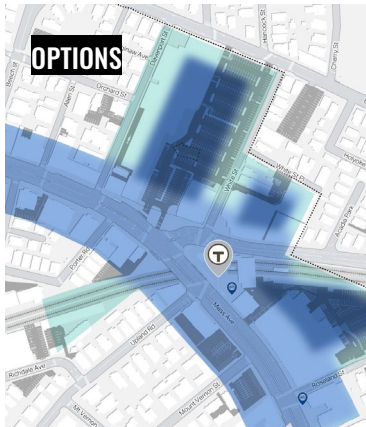
PORTER SQUARE SUMMARY OF WHAT WE HEARD

- Appreciation for the long term thinking, but interest in interim activations - a Porter Square Glow Up - Activate with seating, shade, more plants/trees
- Emphasis on public space that supports and is linked to the commercial businesses
- A place for all - agree with Post Office Square comparison "can relax but also active programming"
- A space that is lush, a respite from the hustle and bustle of Mass Ave
- A hybrid that integrates the best of all three - retail supporting space that offers a respite AND supports better connection to Davis square/access through the site.



PORTER SQUARE SUMMARY OF WHAT WE HEARD

- Desire for density along Mass Ave but with thoughtful transitions to residential areas. Respects nearby neighbors (in terms of shadows) and is varied (avoids wall or continuous height)
- Maintain a lively commercial mix with small businesses, retail, and entertainment, creating a walkable, destination-worthy experience
- Lots of interest in building up closest to the T - seen as less impactful on surrounding neighbors.
- Hybrid approach: Concentrate massing on Mass Ave and the T



- 6-8 Stories
- 8-11 Stories
- 12-18 Stories

COMMUNITY MEETING 8

Draft Recommendations & Plan

4/10/25

OPEN HOUSE: APRIL 10, 2025

Attendees

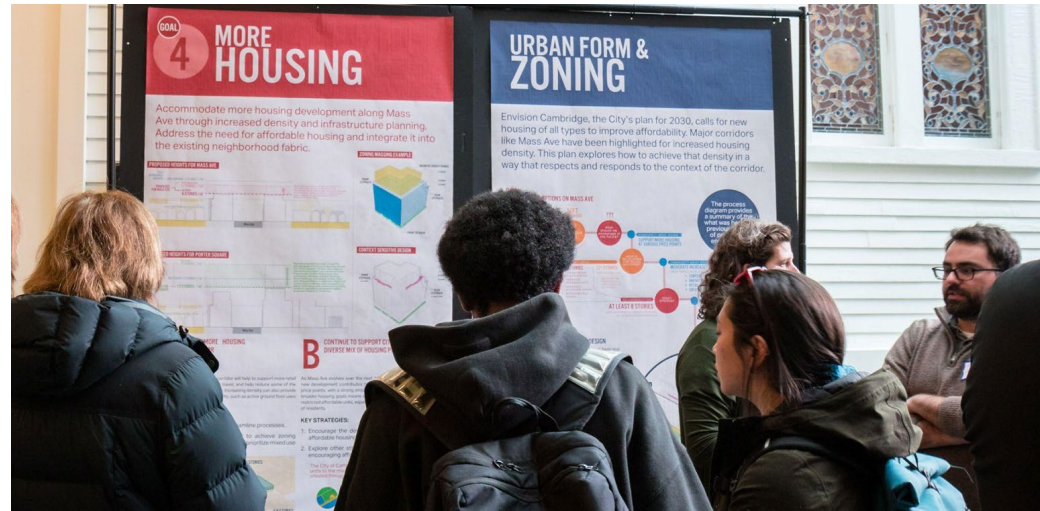
100+

Agenda

Open house presentation of full draft recommendations for the entire Mass Ave study area and draft plan announcement.



A newspaper handout for participants summarized the planning process and overarching recommendations.



WHAT WE HEARD - KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Overall support for increasing the density along the corridor with variations and the highest density near the Porter Square T station. Some concerns remain about the tallest range of buildings and impacts on traffic and parking.
- Attendees support a more walkable Mass Ave with enhanced streetscape and green space.
- There is a desire for more investment in transportation to support the increased density.

CROWDSOURCE MAP

ONLINE CROWDSOURCE MAP

To gather rich, place-based insights directly from the community, we launched an interactive **online crowdsourcing map** dedicated to the Mass Ave Planning Study. This map invited residents to share their insights, highlight favorite spots, and suggest improvements along the corridor.

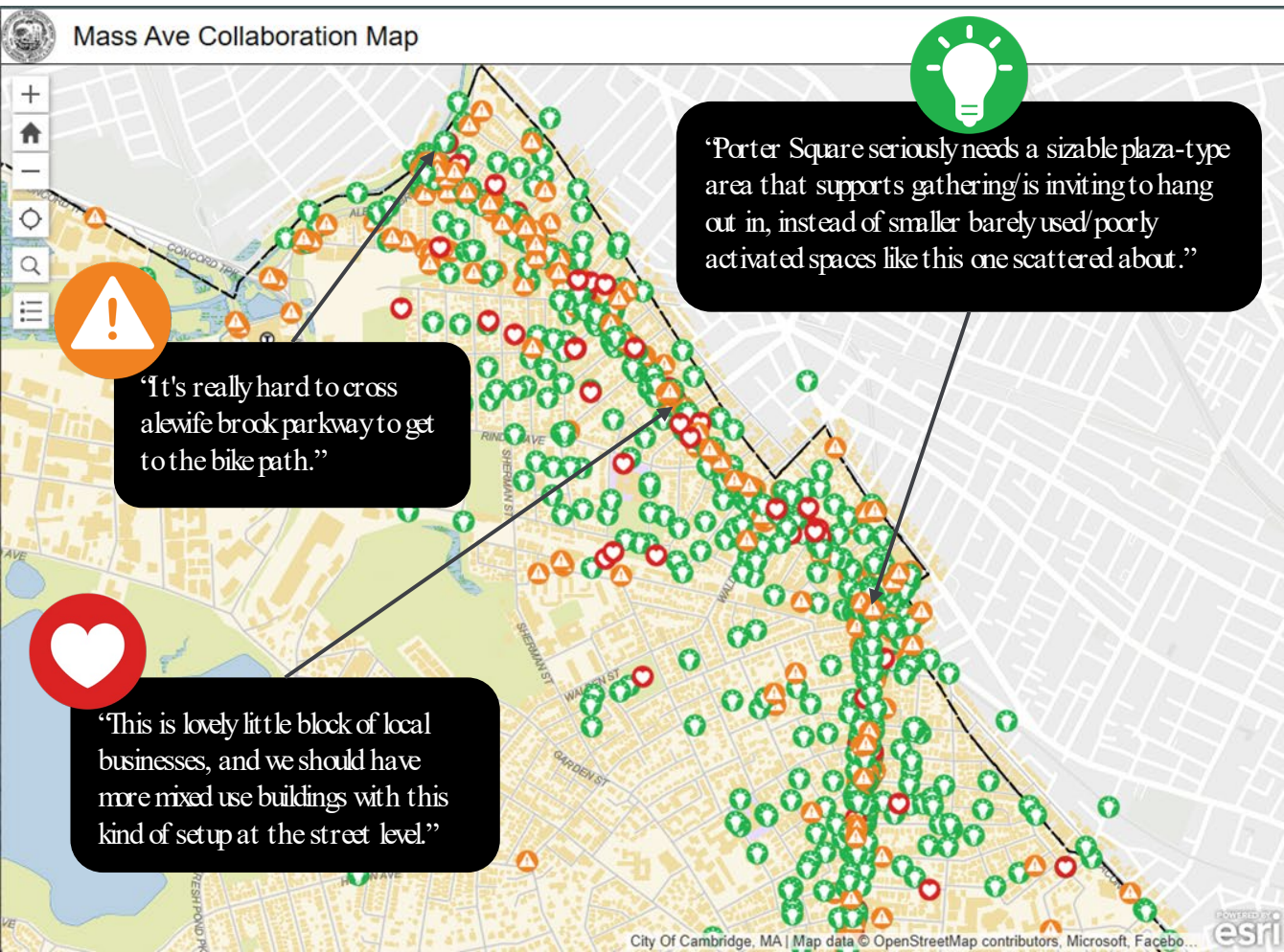
Participants could pin their comments on specific locations, react to others' input with likes, and engage in ongoing dialogue—making the map not just a feedback tool, but a space for conversation and collaboration. The map remained open for contributions over an eight-month period, was advertised on blue bike stations and on direct mailers to nearby residents, and fostered sustained community engagement throughout the planning process.

Overall, it was a successful tool:

- Over **900 unique comments** were posted
- More than **4,000 total interactions** (including comments and likes) were recorded

The map served as a dynamic tool to visualize community priorities and to inform the broader planning process with real, lived experiences from those who know Mass Ave best.

CROWDSOURCE MAP: OVER 900 COMMENTS AND 4,000 INTERACTIONS



Mass Ave Comments

An issue about mobility (cycling, transit, driving)	65 ♥
An idea about mobility (cycling, transit, driving)	49 ♥
An idea about accessibility	47 ♥
An idea about buildings & development	44 ♥
An issue about mobility (cycling, transit, driving)	42 ♥
An issue about parks & public spaces	41 ♥
An idea about mobility (cycling, transit, driving)	38 ♥
An idea about buildings & development	32 ♥
An idea about parks & public spaces	31 ♥
An issue about mobility (cycling, transit, driving)	29 ♥
An idea about housing	29 ♥
An issue about safety	29 ♥
An idea about sidewalks	28 ♥

+ Add a thought

CROWDSOURCE MAP WHAT WE HEARD - TOP* COMMENTS BY CATEGORY FOR MASS AVE

Accessibility: "Knowing at the street level when the next trains are coming in, both purple and red, that would help people make decisions and it could be attractively displayed and visible from multiple angles with a kiosk for a hearing impaired person to tap for audio."

Businesses: "It is crazy how much parking there is for Porter Square, this would be a great opportunity to replace this parking with high density housing with ground level businesses."

Development: "A single-story building with a huge parking lot right next to the train station is a terrible waste of valuable space - the parking could be replaced by a park (like it was supposed to be!) and we could add more housing above the shops."

Housing: "Why does everything transition into suburban-like sprawl north of Porter Square? It seems like such a transit corridor should have denser housing, yet so much is buildings on huge lots and parking lots - it feels like a big strip mall."

Mobility: "This area (Mass Ave near Walden St) is a bit scary to bike north on. You have to merge with the car traffic, in an intersection where cars are changing lanes and there is a bus stop. Also the asphalt is uneven."

Outdoor Dining: "LOVE the outdoor dining parklets that are here Spring thru Fall."

Parks & Public Space: "Porter Square is essentially dominated by this parking lot, which is unpleasant and unbecoming of a child- and cyclist-friendly city like Cambridge. I think the top priority should be finding ways to make this area more pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly."

Public Art: "The old rotating overhead sculpture could use some revitalizing freshening."

Safety: "This wide intersection with the way Mass Ave can turn onto Rindge while walk signal is active is incredibly dangerous. It's really hard to cross Alewife Brook Parkway to get to the bike path."

Sidewalks: "I generally think there is a huge opportunity on Mass Ave to pedestrianize and increase outdoor seating areas. By either removing a lane of traffic, or removing the parking area, we would open up massive space for greenery, outdoor dining etc."

*Top are comments that received the most upvotes (likes) by other crowdsourcing map participants.