

Community Meeting #2

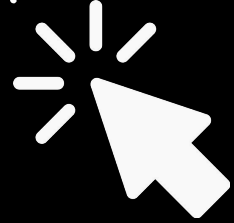
3/27/24

CAMBRIDGE COMMON TO
ALEWIFE BROOK PARKWAY

Welcome!

PLEASE SIGN IN

Click the link to sign in



Or scan:



OUR TEAM

PROJECT LEAD:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT (CDD)

Melissa Peters, Director of Community Planning

Drew Kane, Senior City Planner

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

CDD - EOD (Economic Opportunity and Development) Division

CDD - Environment & Transportation Division

CDD - Housing Division

CDD - Zoning & Development Division

CDD - Community Planning Division

DPW - Dept. of Public Works

TPT (Traffic, Parking, and Transportation)

CHC - Cambridge Historical Commission

DHSP - Department of Human Services Program (Council on Aging and Commission for Persons with Disabilities)

CDD CET - Community Engagement Team

GIS - Geographic Information System

CONSULTANT TEAM:

INTERFACE STUDIO

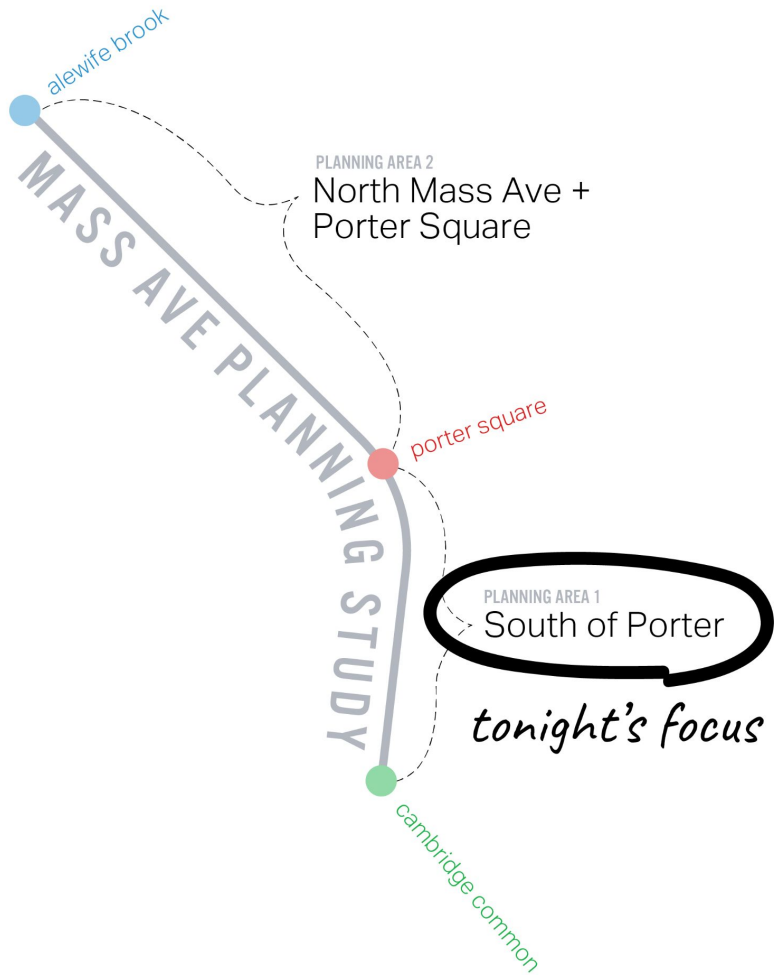
Lead, planning and urban design

CAMBRIDGESEVEN

Architecture

CONSULTECON

Real estate and housing

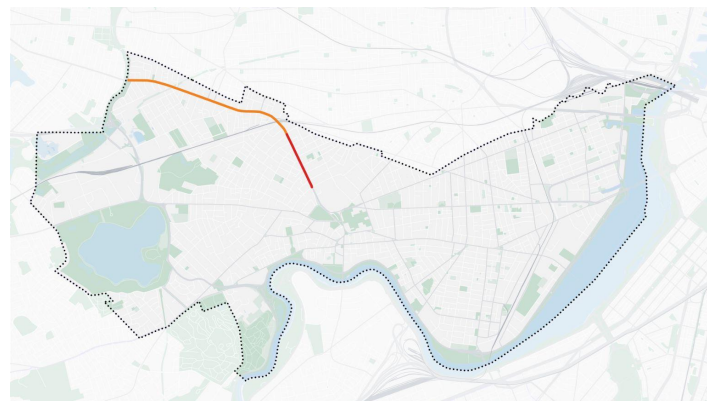
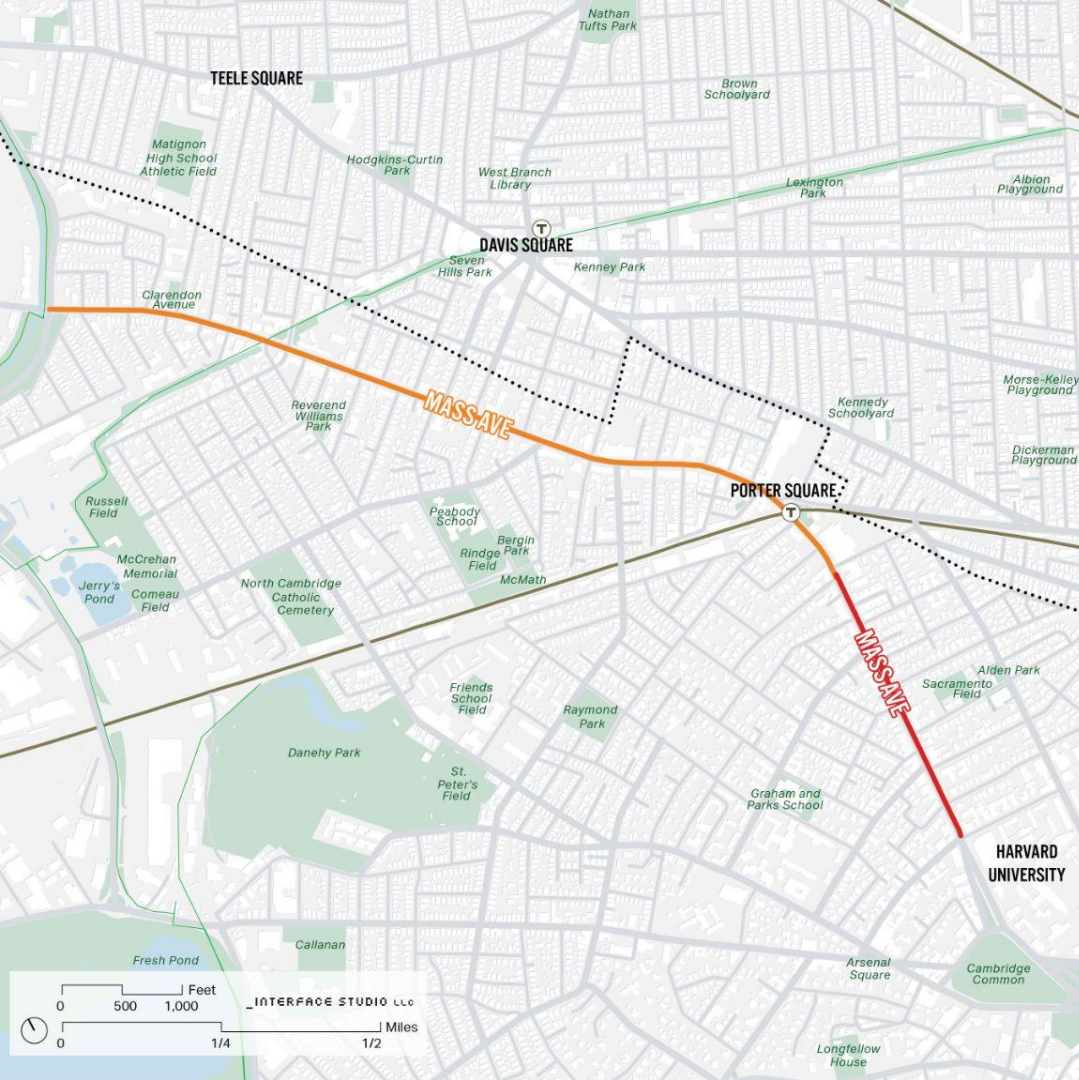


AGENDA

Working Group Meeting 2

- 01** Project Background Recap
Study Area and Project
- 02** Community Meeting 1
Summary and Report out
- 03** South of Porter
Existing Conditions Initial Learnings
- 04** Working Group Discussion
Community Meeting 2 Discussion Questions
- 05** Next Steps
- 06** Public Comment

PROJECT BACKGROUND



STUDY AREA

Interface Studio, October 2023

- South of Porter Square Study Area
- North Mass Ave + Porter Square Study Area
- Parks/Open Space
- Water
- Commuter Rail
- ⋯ City Boundary

OUR CHARGE:

**WHAT DOES
MASS AVE
LOOK LIKE **15**
YEARS FROM
NOW?**

... and HOW do we get there?

- **Prioritization of goals and implementation**
- **Coordination with other planning initiatives**
- **Policy recommendations**
- **Proposed changes in zoning**
- **Complementing future Citywide Design Guidelines**
- **Long term infrastructure projects (public realm, open spaces, sidewalks, etc)**

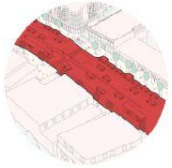
OUR ROLES:

WE ARE ALL
CONTRIBUTING
TO A COMMON
VISION AND
GOALS

ROLES CLARIFICATION

- **The Community** is informing the goals and strategies of the plan
- **Working Group** is a representative body that serves as a sounding board that guides and advises the planning efforts
- **Planning Department** is authoring the plan
- **City Council** is the deciding body and adopts proposed policy changes
- **City Departments** are implementing the plan

FOUR CONCURRENT CITY INITIATIVES



PARTIAL CONSTRUCTION

Planning and Design of the separated bike lanes along Mass Ave

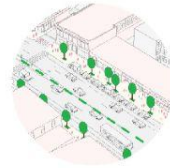
Near term



IMPACT STUDY

Assessing economic impact of bike lanes to businesses along Mass Ave

Annually For The Next Five Years



COMBINED SEWER OVERFLOW MITIGATION

Exploring Green Stormwater Infrastructure Mitigation measures to prevent Combined Sewer Overflow events on North Mass Ave.

Five -10 Years From Now

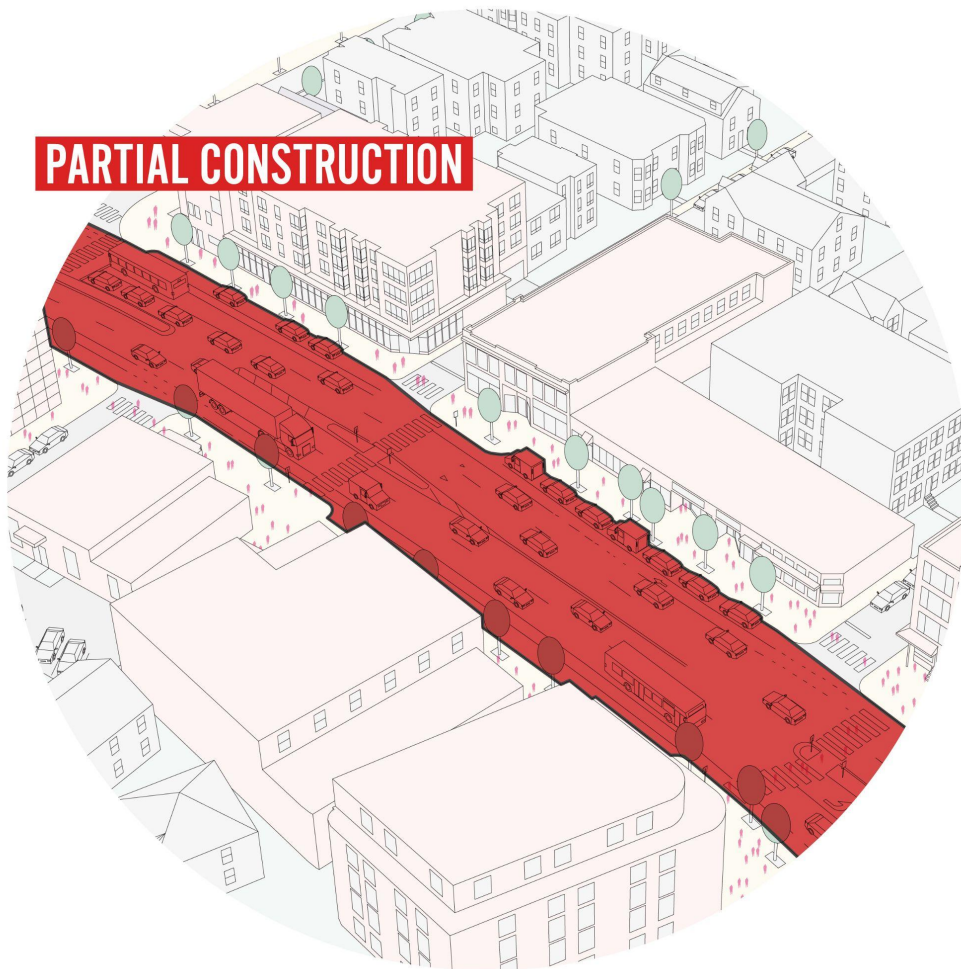


PLANNING STUDY

Vision plan for the properties surrounding Mass Ave, including Zoning, Urban Design, Housing and Business Supports.



15 Years From Now



The Mass Ave Partial Construction is focused on the **near term street design of Mass Ave, curb to curb**. The project was initiated in response to the city's Cycling Safety Ordinance (CSO) and includes:

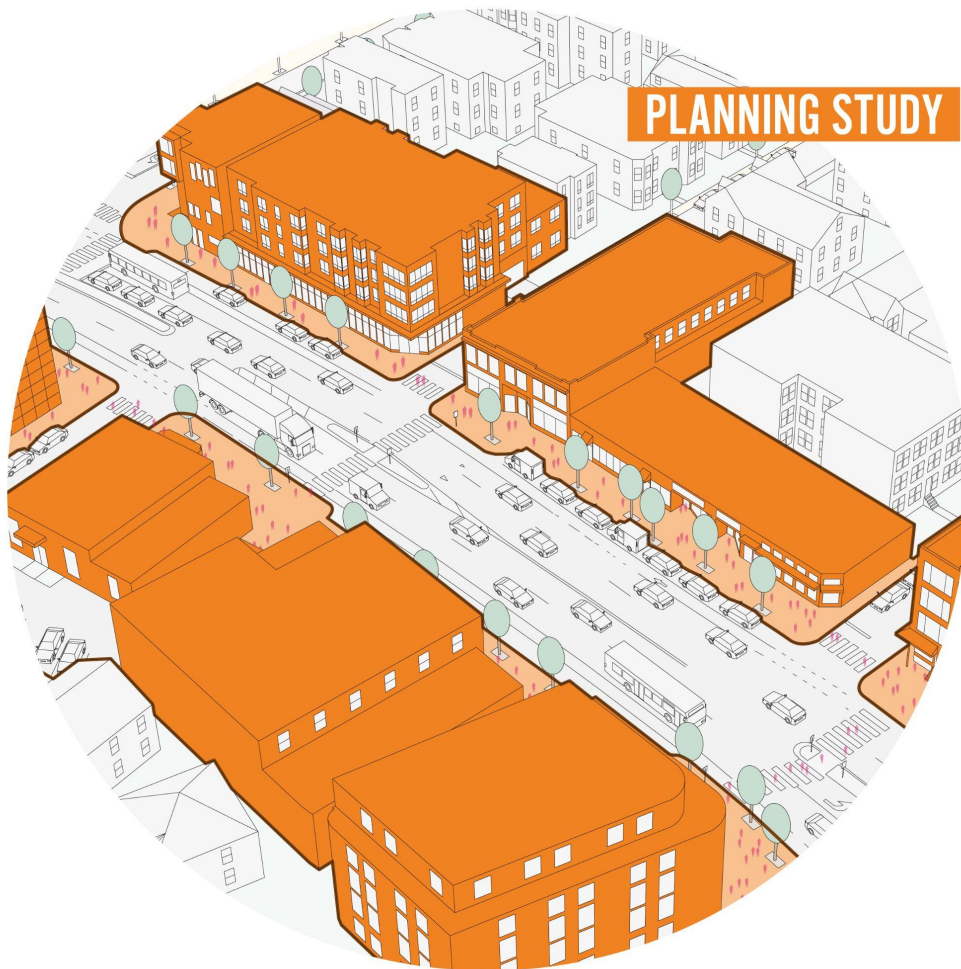
- The design of **separated bicycle lanes**
- Evaluating existing crossing locations for pedestrians and recommendations for additional crossing opportunities
- Curb use regulations (i.e., understand where parking/stopping/loading is possible and not possible)
- Options for bus priority to reduce travel times and improving the reliability of MBTA buses

For more information:

cambridgema.gov/massavepartialconstruction

Questions or comments? Contact:

massave4@cambridgema.gov



This Mass Ave Planning Study (MAPS) is a planning effort help map Mass Ave's future for the next 15 years and will focus on areas including:

- Increasing density & housing opportunities along the corridor
- Addressing affordability issues
- Supporting small & local businesses
- Creating and enhancing vibrant sidewalks & public spaces

For more information:

www.cambridgema.gov/massaveplan

Questions or comments? Contact:

Drew Kane, Senior City Planner
dkane@cambridgema.gov

FOUR CONCURRENT CITY INITIATIVES



For more information on the Partial Construction:
cambridgema.gov/massavepartialconstruction

Questions or comments? Contact: massave4@cambridgema.gov



COMMUNITY MEETING 1 SUMMARY

COMMUNITY MEETING 1 - WHAT WE DID

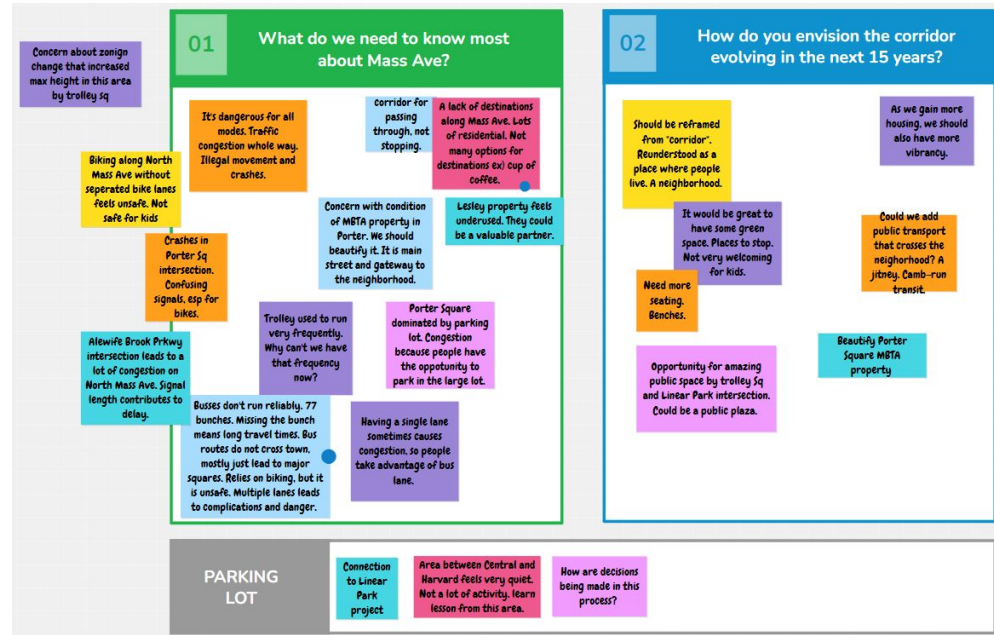
FEBRUARY 29, 2024
6:00pm - 7:45pm

FORMAT: Virtual Meeting on Zoom
ATTENDEES:

- **193 Pre-Registrants**
- **80 Participants** including 11 City/Consultant Facilitators and 1 CART Professional

AGENDA: Project Introduction, Q+A, Breakout Room Discussion, Collab Map Demo, Next Steps

1. What do we need to know most about Mass Ave?
2. How do you envision the corridor evolving in the next 15 years?



COMMUNITY MEETING 1 - WHAT WE HEARD

What do we need to know most about Mass Ave?

- **Underutilized Potential:** There's a consensus that Mass Ave has significant potential that's not fully realized.
- **Need for Mixed-Use Development:** Suggestions include more housing, bakeries, breweries, coffee shops, and other everyday destinations to create a more vibrant and lively atmosphere, especially for North Mass Ave.
- **Housing and Affordability:** While higher density is desired, there's concern about the impact of taller buildings *"density but do it carefully"* *"affordability/housing crisis"*
- **Improving Transit and Safety:** Calls for better transit amenities and frequency, pedestrian-friendly design, and safer biking conditions were prevalent.
- **Pedestrian Priority:** Calls for Mass Ave to prioritize people over cars, with shorter crossing times, safer infrastructure, and more amenities like benches.
- **Public Realm Quality:** There's a sense that parts of Mass Ave are run down, especially in terms of the pedestrian experience and streetscape design. Calls for preserving/enhancing trees and existing green spaces, and adding more public art, and enhancing the cultural and historical aspects of the corridor.
- **Community Engagement:** Residents want more input into development plans and a clearer understanding of how their feedback is being incorporated into decisions.
- **Equitable Development:** Concerns about housing affordability, economic impact studies on local businesses, and ensuring that development plans benefit the entire community, including marginalized groups.

COMMUNITY MEETING 1 - WHAT WE HEARD

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 1 - WHAT WE HEARD

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QUICK
POLL

*On a scale of one to five do
themes resonate with you?
1=NEEDS MORE WORK 5=YES*

SOUTH OF PORTER SQUARE

(ARLINGTON TO CHAUNCY)

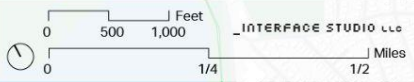


Within .25 miles of Lower Mass Ave:
 Total population: 11,100
 Total number of households: 4,700
 Average Household Size: 1.89

**SOUTH OF PORTER SQUARE
 PRIMARY SERVICE AREA**

Interface Studio, October 2023

- South of Porter Square Study Area
- North Mass Ave + Porter Square Study Area
- Parks/Open Space
- Water
- Commuter Rail
- ⋯ City Boundary



RESIDENTS



7%

YOUTH UNDER 18
[779 residents]



32

MEDIAN AGE
[29 Citywide]



14%

SENIORS OVER 65
[1523 residents]

29%

FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS
[40% Citywide]

12%

HOUSEHOLDS BELOW POVERTY
570 households

\$122,000

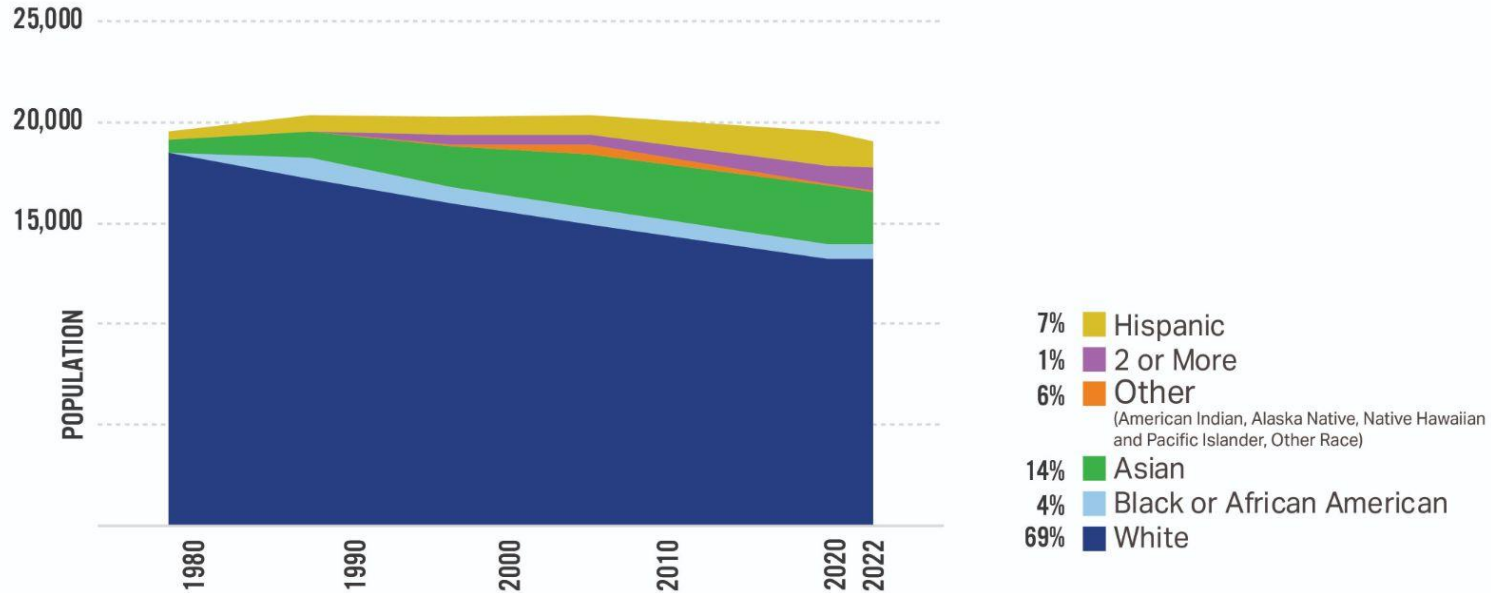
2023 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

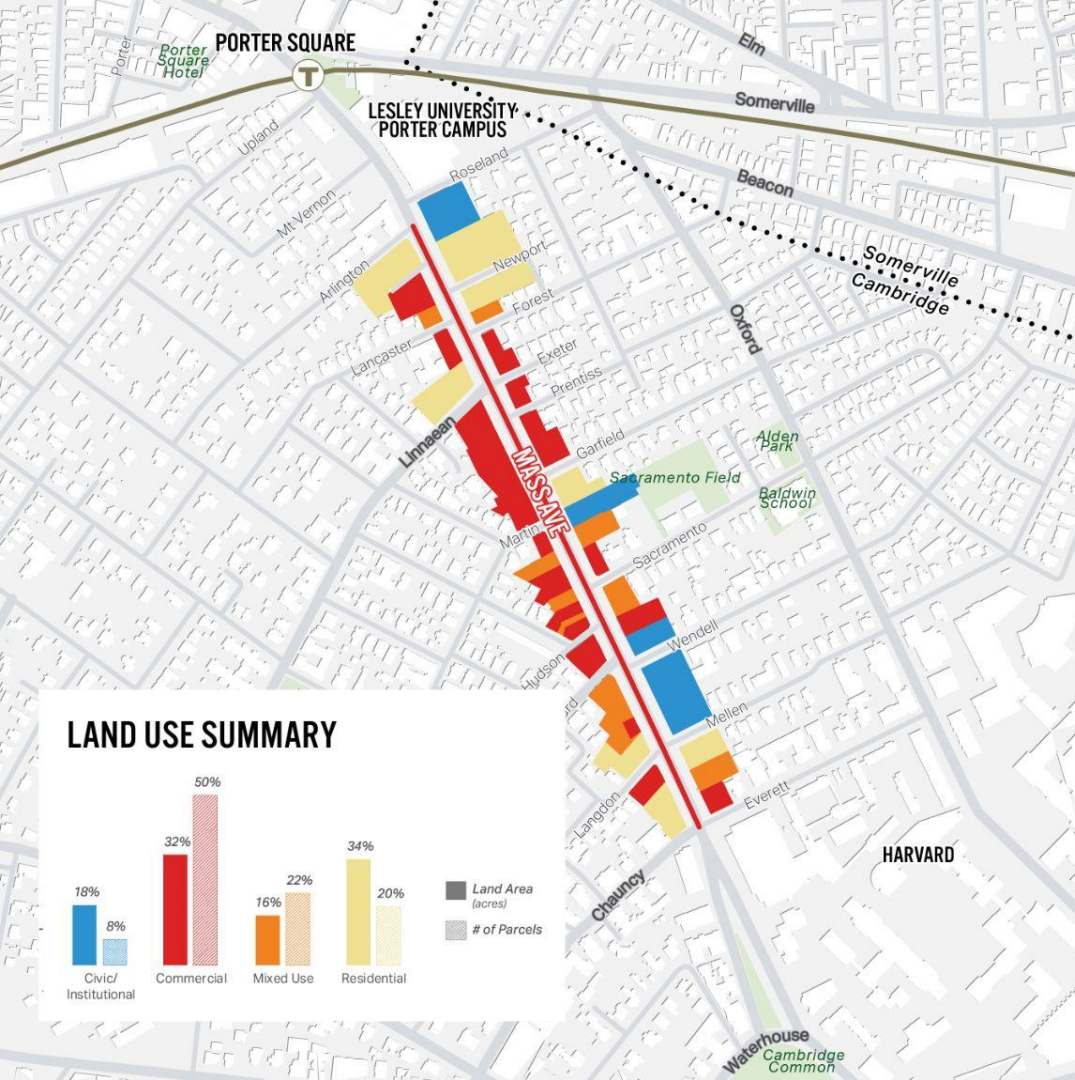
CAMBRIDGE (2022)
\$121,000

CHANGE OVER TIME

RACE + ETHNICITY

Census Tracts within .25m South of Porter Square Study Area
December 2023

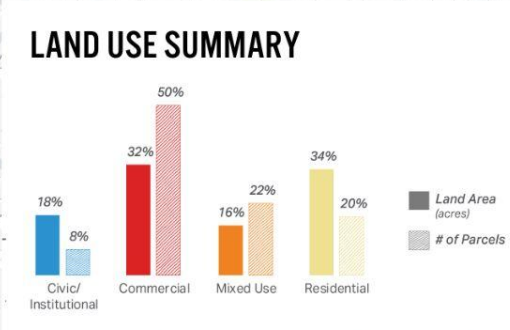




LAND USE PATTERNS

Most of Lower Mass Ave is commercial.

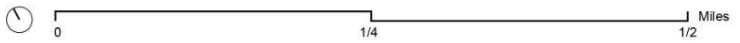
HOW CAN WE HAVE MORE NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES AND ALSO BE A DESTINATION?



GENERALIZED LAND USE

Cambridge Open Data, December 2023

- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Residential
- Institution
- South of Porter Square Study Area



BUSINESSES

Mass Ave is home to many legacy businesses that have served diverse communities in Cambridge. It is fairly mixed in terms of what types of businesses are there.

Although most businesses are neighborhood serving, some destination retail exists.

Rapidly changing retail consumer patterns (ie. online shopping, food delivery) put added pressure on retailers.

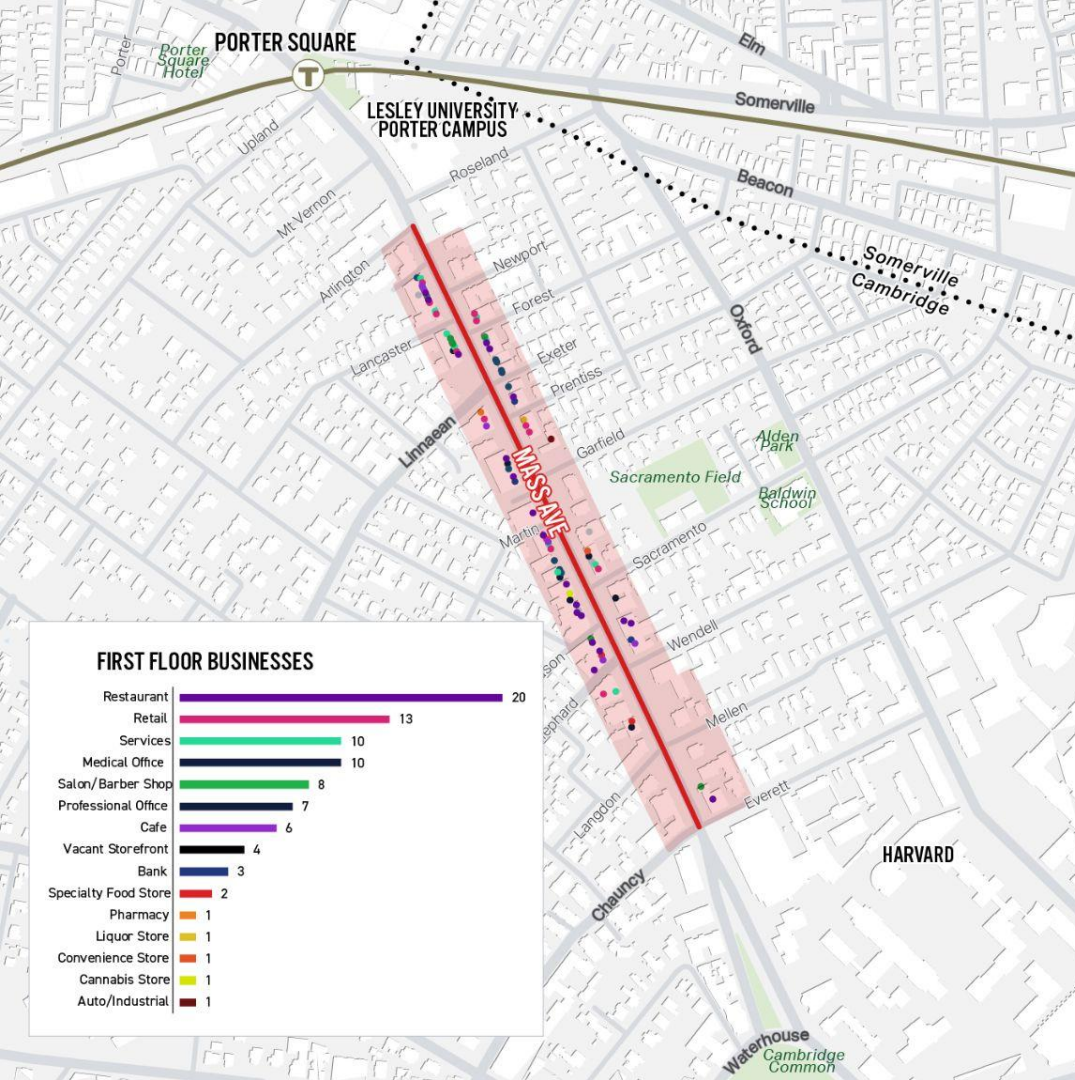
HOW CAN WE HAVE MORE NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES AND ALSO BE A DESTINATION?



QUIZ GAME

What's the most common type of business on Mass Ave, South of Porter Square?





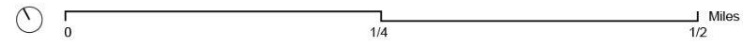
BUSINESSES

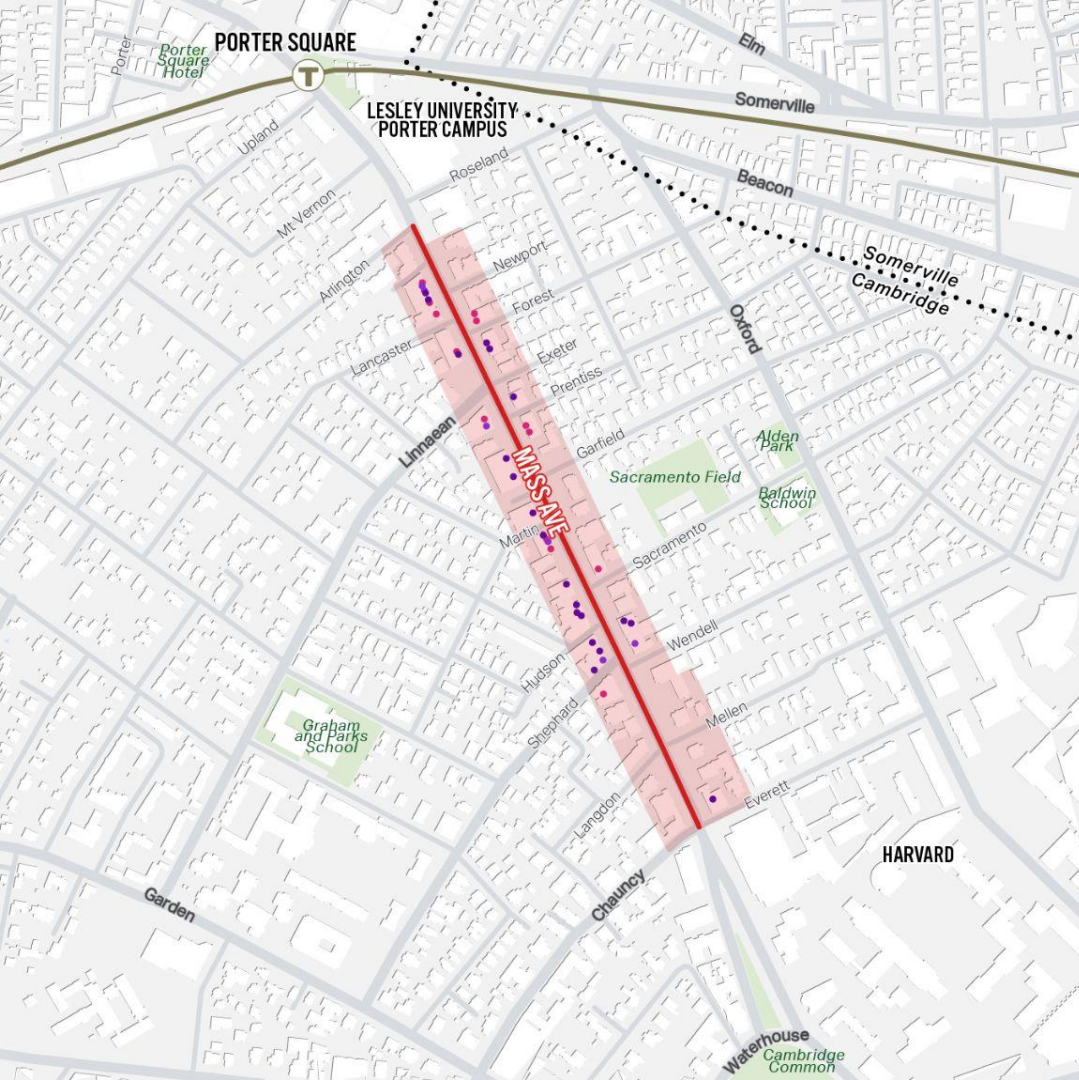
Total number of first floor businesses: 88

BUSINESS MIX

Cambridge, Interface Studio, December 2023

- Restaurant
- Bank
- Cafe
- Social Service Organization
- Retail
- Medical Office
- Specialty Food Store
- Convenience Store
- Pharmacy
- Professional Office
- Liquor Store
- Cannabis Store
- Salon/Barber Shop
- Services
- Auto/Industrial





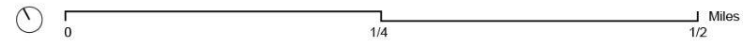
BUSINESSES

Total number of restaurants: 20

BUSINESS MIX

Cambridge, Interface Studio, December 2023

- Restaurant
 - Cafe
 - Retail
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 - Pharmacy
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 - Cannabis Store
 - Salon/Barber Shop
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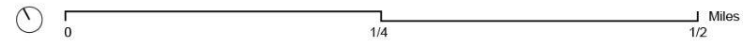
BUSINESSES

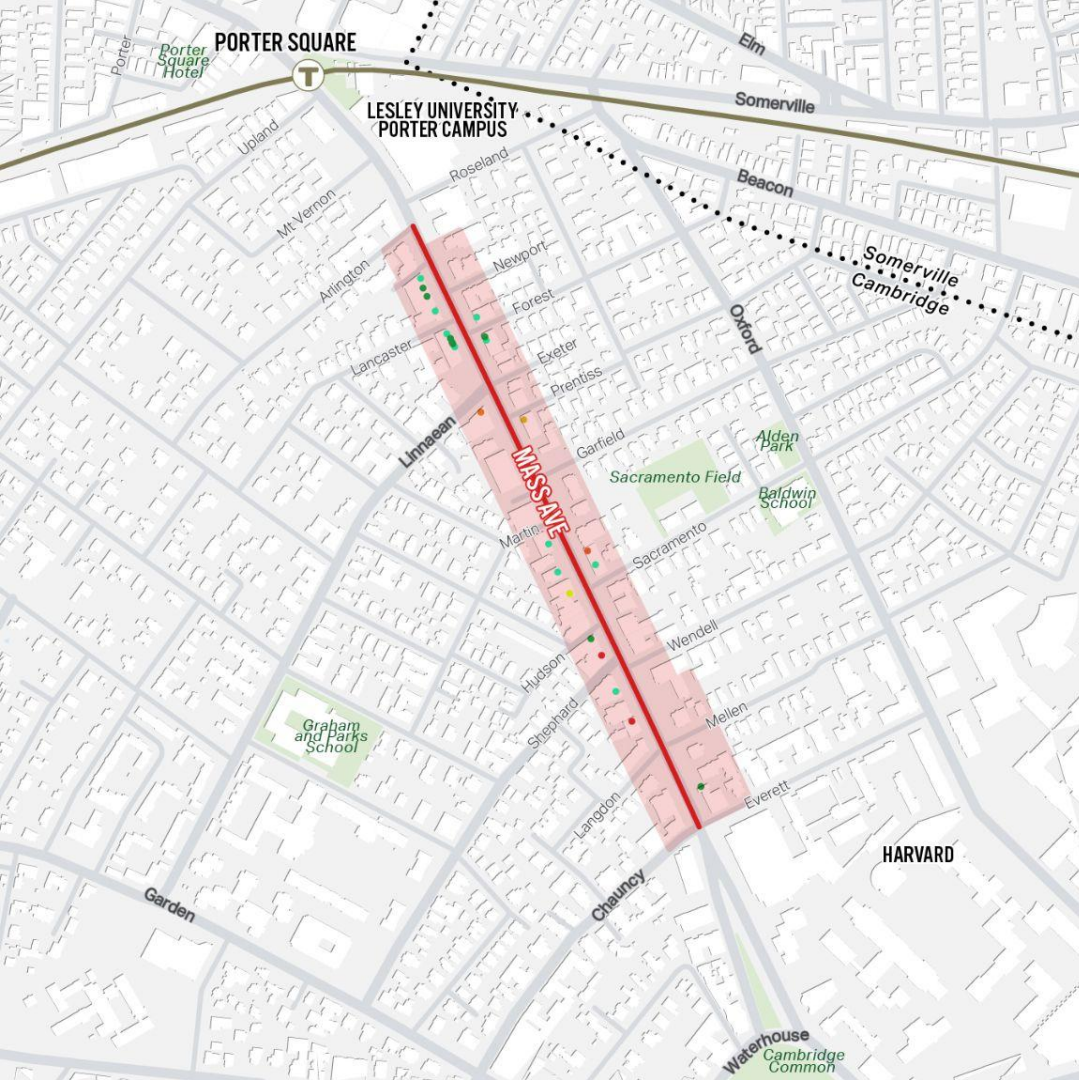
Total number of offices (professional and medical): 17

BUSINESS MIX

Cambridge, Interface Studio, December 2023

- Restaurant
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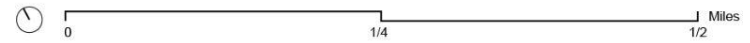
BUSINESSES

Pharmacies, grocery, neighborhood goods

BUSINESS MIX

Cambridge, Interface Studio, December 2023

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 - Auto/Industrial



HOUSING

Interest rates and the high costs of land and construction are **cooling the housing market**.

At the same time, the demand for more and affordable housing continues to **increase**.

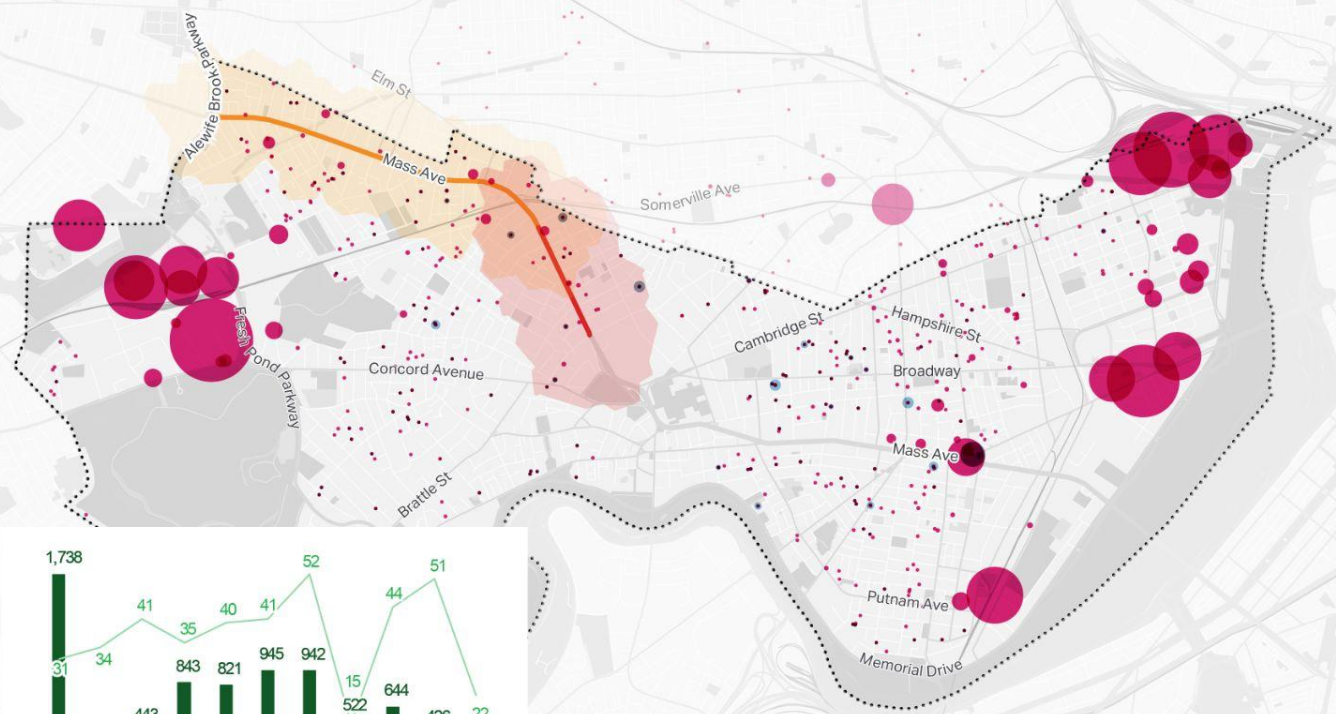
The updated **Cambridge Affordable Housing Overlay (AHO)** has named corridors like Mass Ave as places that can support more density by right under AHO zoning.

HOW CAN HOUSING BE MORE AFFORDABLE?



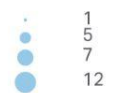
HOUSING STARTS 2013 - 2023

Cambridge Open Data: Housing Starts, Somerville Permits, Interface Studio, October 2023

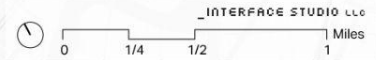
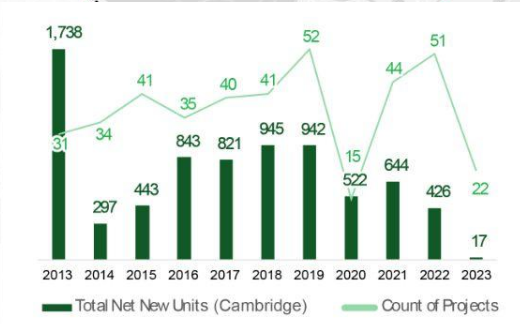
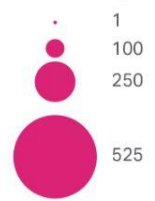


- South of Porter Square Study Area
- North Mass Ave + Porter Square Study Area
- ⋯ City Boundary

Net Loss (Housing Units)



New Housing Starts (Housing Units)



INTERFACE STUDIO LLC

*Cambridge permits analyzed until June 2023. Somerville permits analyzed 2015 - 2022; permits from 2022 - present are displayed as pipeline

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

Cambridge Open Data: Development Log, Affordable Housing Overlay Pipeline, Somerville Permits 2022-Present, Interface Studio, January 2024

- South of Porter Square Study Area
- North Mass Ave + Porter Square Study Area
- ⋯ City Boundary

Market Rate Development Pipeline

Developments in Service Area

- 1** 1 Cedar St 8 Units
- 2** 2400 Mas Ave 56 Units
- 3** 2161 Mass Ave 8 Units
- 4** 3-5 Linnaean St. 5 Units

Affordable Housing Overlay Development Pipeline

Developments in Service Area

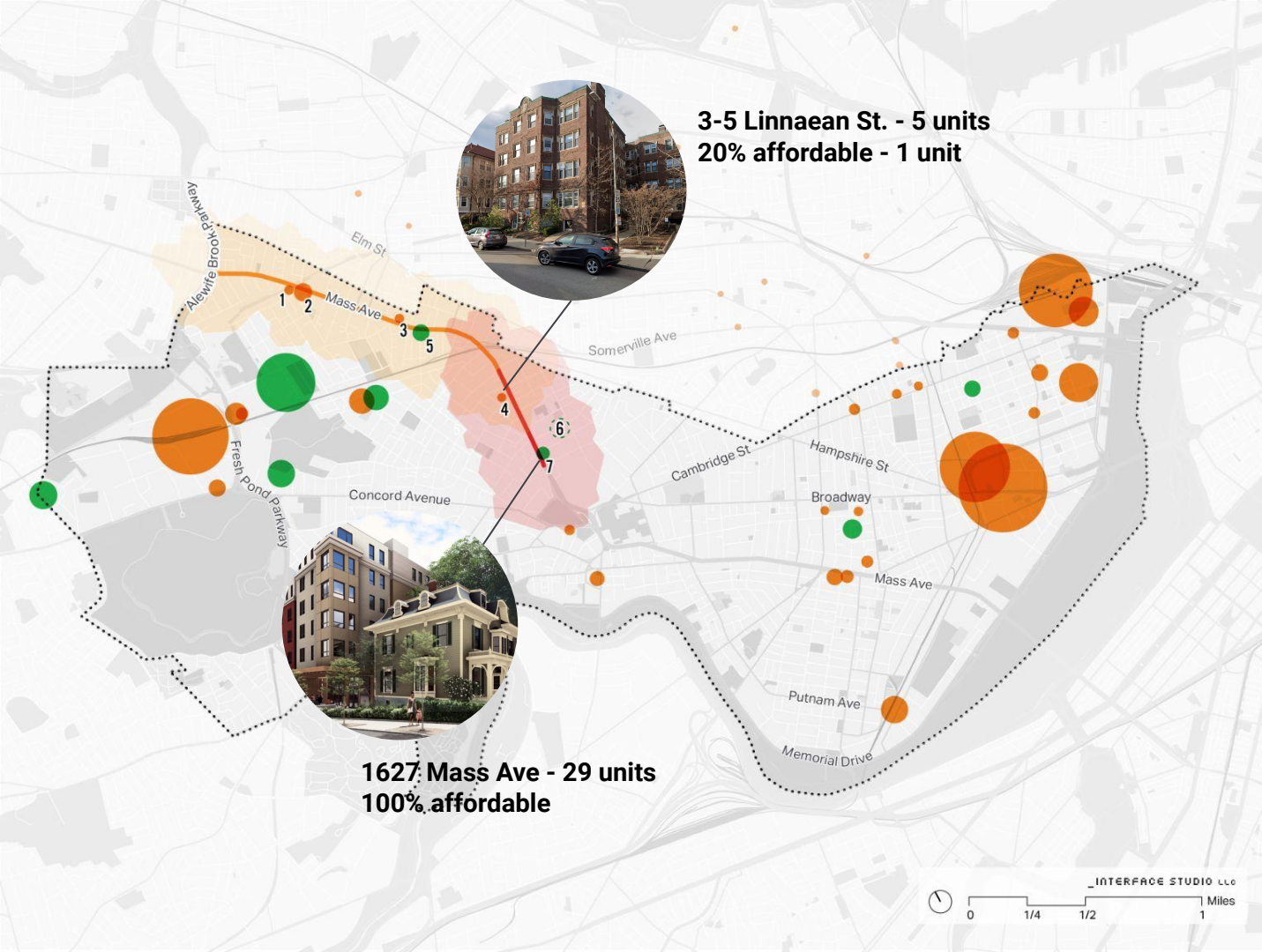
- 5** 2072 Mass Ave 48 Units
- 6** 30 Wendell St TBD
- 7** 1627 Mass Ave 29 Units ("4 Mellen St")

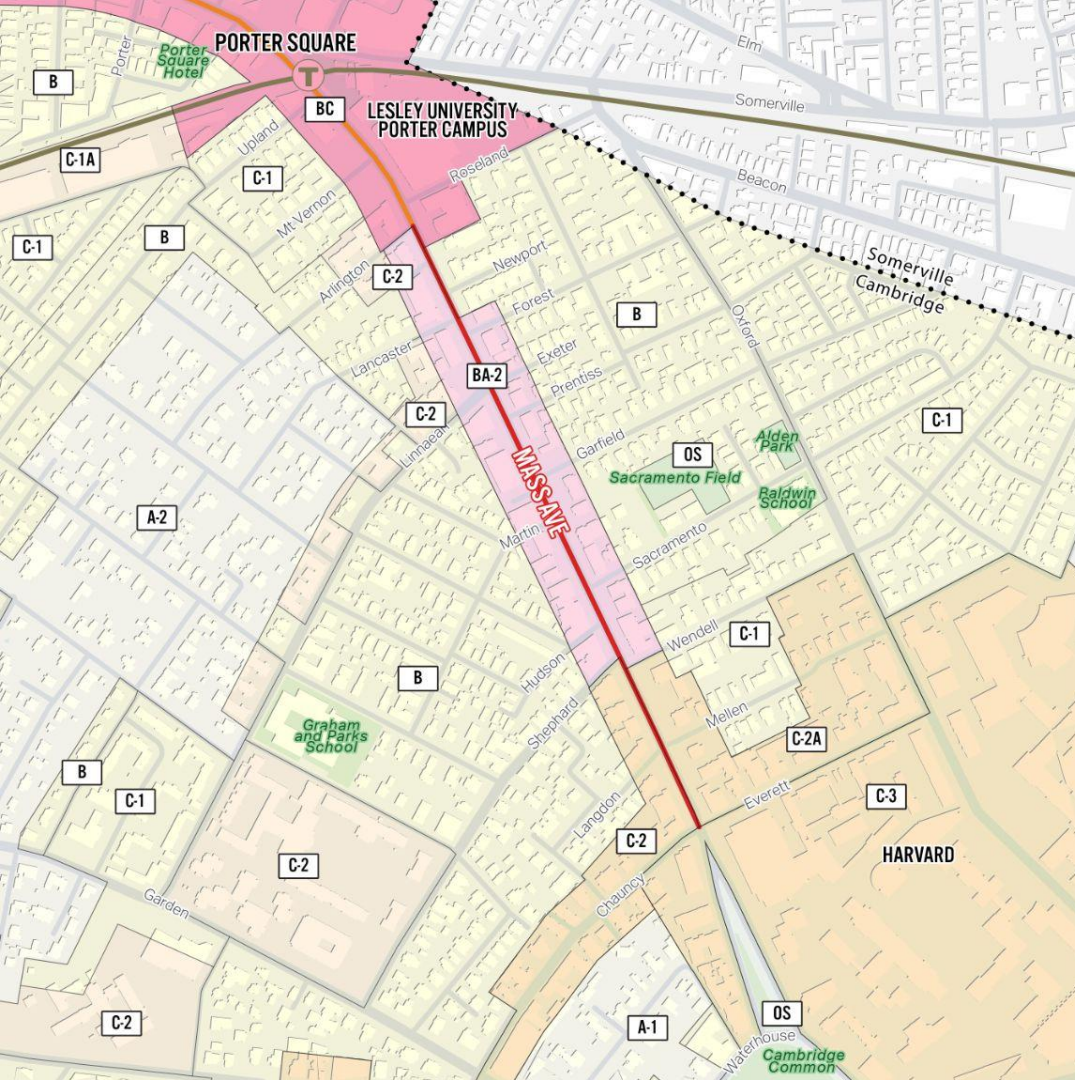


3-5 Linnaean St. - 5 units
20% affordable - 1 unit



1627 Mass Ave - 29 units
100% affordable





ZONING

66% of Lower Mass Ave is zoned BA-2.

ZONING DISTRICT	COUNT
B	2
BA-2	6
BC	1
C-2	3
C-2A	2
Grand Total	13

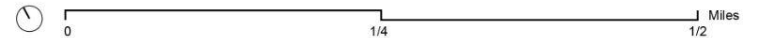
ZONING DISTRICTS

Interface Studio, October 2023

Base Zoning

- A-1
- A-2
- B
- BA-2
- BC
- C-1
- C-1A
- C-2
- C-2A
- C-3
- OS

INTERFACE STUDIO L.L.O.



ZONING OVERLAYS

Lower Mass Ave has several overlapping overlays.

The Mass Ave Overlay District promotes retail, design, and pedestrian amenities.

- Maximum height 45' in BA-2 or 50' if mixed use
- Required Ground Floor Non-Residential Uses
- Regulated store size maximums (to promote small businesses)

ZONING DISTRICTS

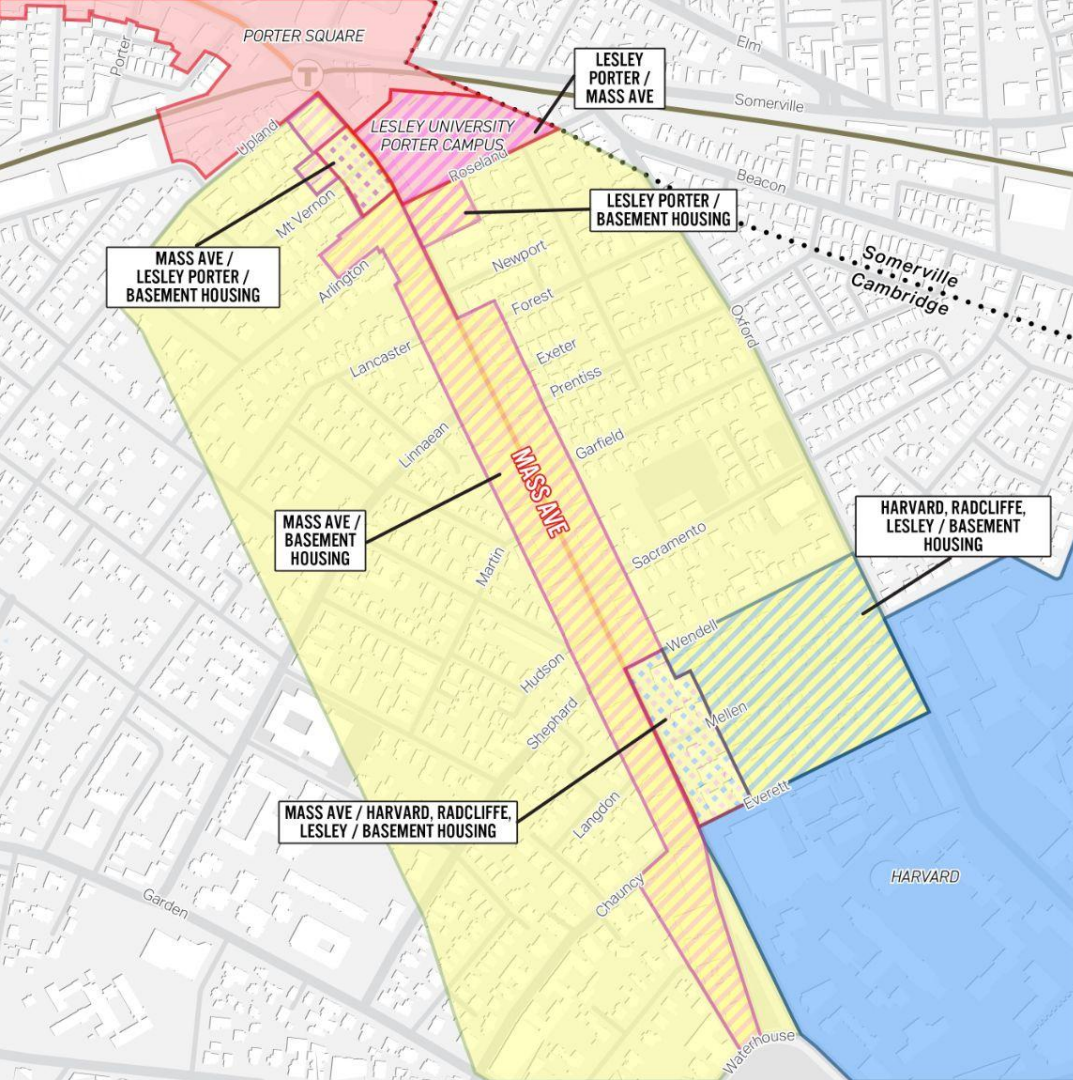
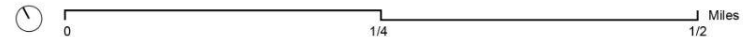
Interface Studio, October 2023

Relevant Overlay Districts*

- Massachusetts Avenue
- Lesley Porter
- Harvard, Radcliffe, Lesley
- Basement Housing
- Lesley Porter / Mass Ave
- Lesley Porter / Basement Housing
- Mass Ave / Basement Housing
- Mass Ave / Lesley Porter / Basement Housing
- Mass Ave / Harvard, Radcliffe, Lesley / Basement Housing
- Harvard, Radcliffe, Lesley / Basement Housing

* Affordable Housing Overlay not mapped but applies citywide

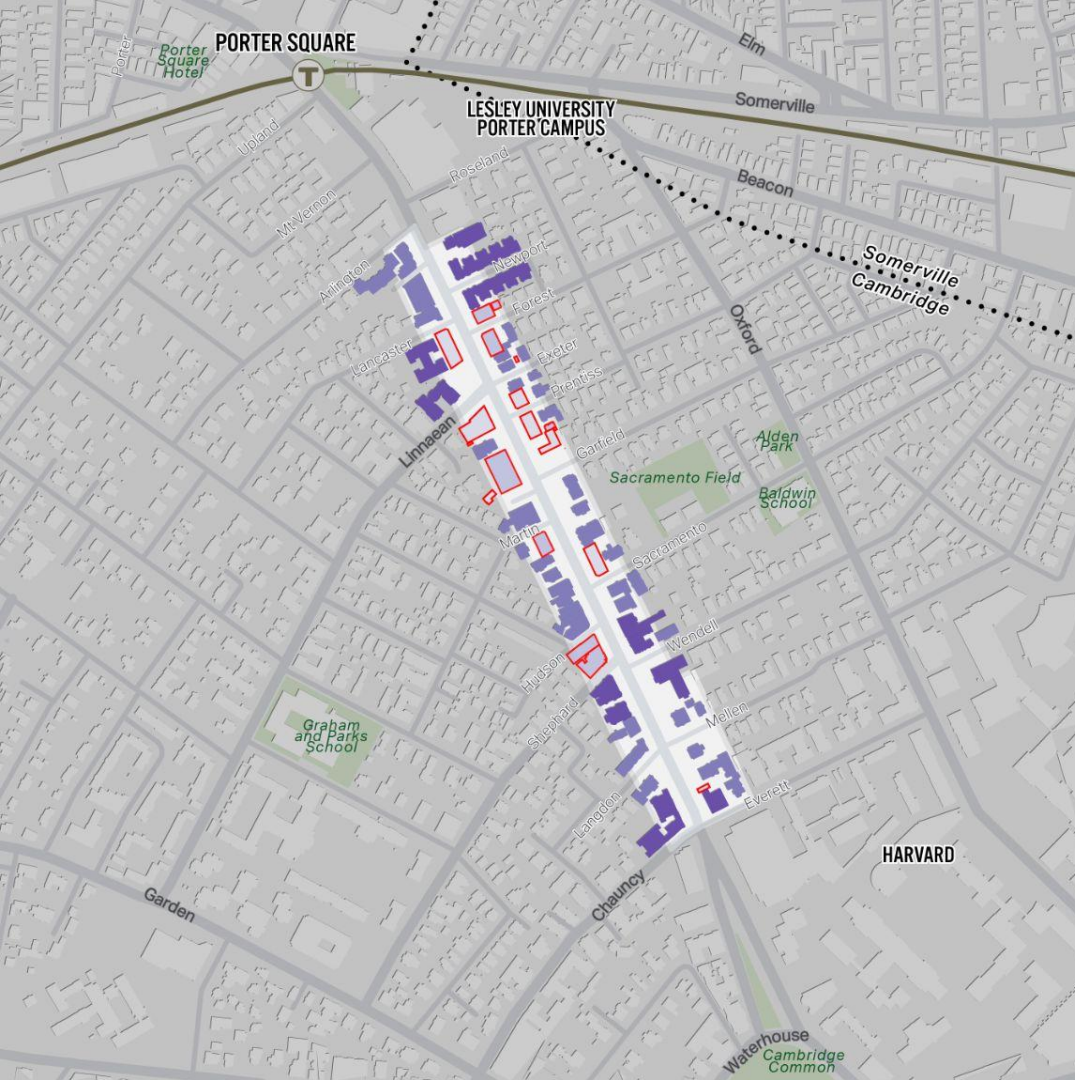
INTERFACE STUDIO LLC



QUIZ GAME

What's the median building height on this section of Mass Ave?





BUILDING HEIGHTS

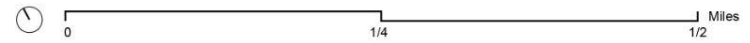


PERCENT OF BUILDINGS BY HEIGHT

BUILDING HEIGHTS

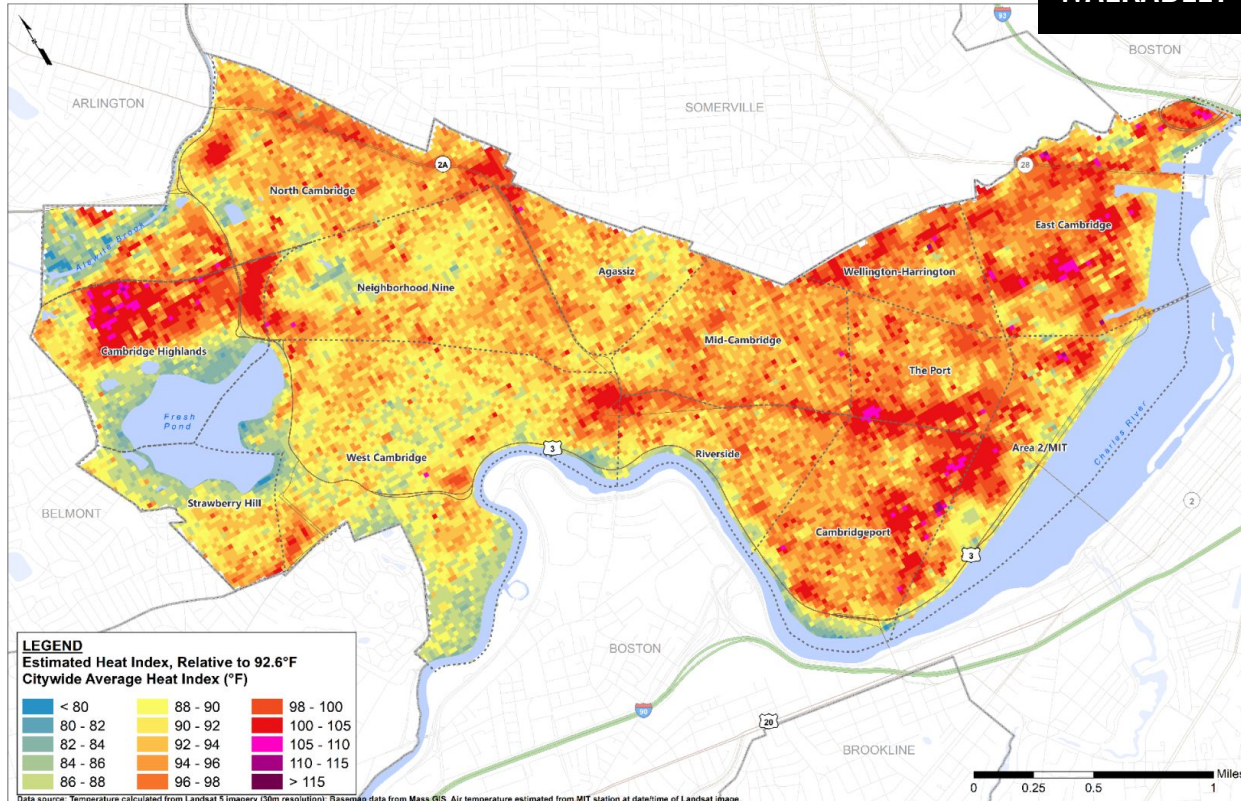
City of Cambridge, Interface Studio, January 2024

- 20' and below
- 20 - 35 ft
- 35 - 55 ft
- 55 - 85 ft



HEAT IMPACT

HOW CAN MASS AVE BE MORE BEAUTIFUL AND WALKABLE?



Mass Ave (particularly Porter Square) is vulnerable to heat and is a primary Cool Corridor on the Resilient Cambridge plan.

Source: Urban Heat Island Technical Report

TREE COVER

Tree canopy in nearby neighborhoods is high compared to the city

29% 30% 32%

North Cambridge

Neighborhood Nine

Baldwin

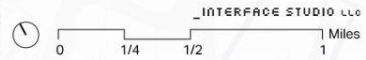
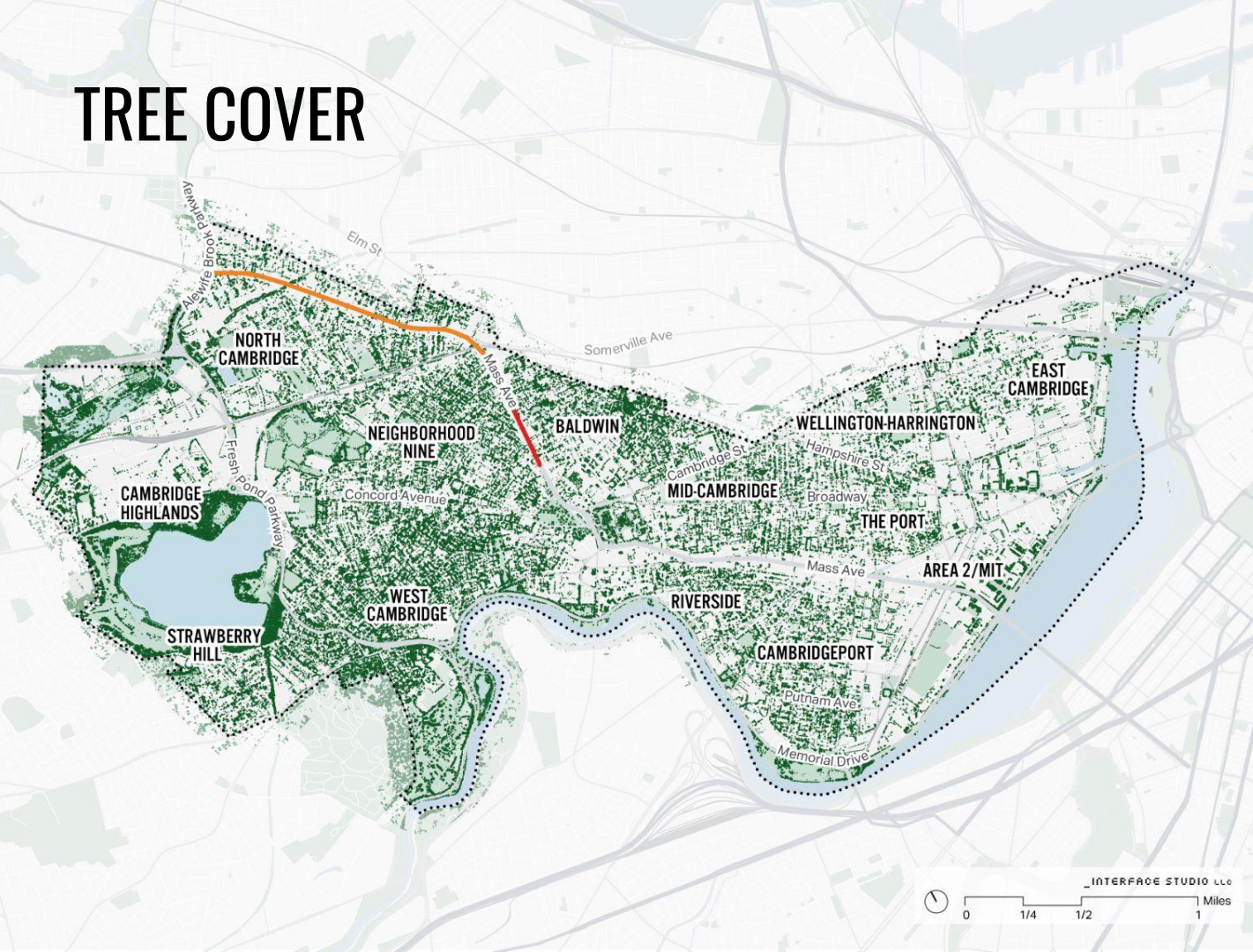
26%

Citywide Tree Canopy Coverage

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE TREE COVER

City of Cambridge (2018 Cover), Interface Studio, February 2024

- Lower Mass Ave Study Area
- North Mass Ave + Porter Square Study Area
- Tree Canopy





Mass Ave - and many of its open spaces - are impervious

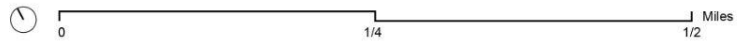


A gap in the tree canopy is present in the study area

CAMBRIDGE IMPERVIOUS SURFACES AND TREE CANOPY COVERAGE

Interface Studio, Cambridge Open Data, February 2024

- Impervious Surfaces
- Parks
- Tree Canopy
- Sacramento Street Urban Garden



2011 Streetscape Master Plan



The 2011 *Lower Mass Ave Streetscape Master Plan* called for increased tree canopy, landscape improvements and consolidated bus stops

LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

- LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES ON PUBLIC PROPERTY
- LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES ON PRIVATE PROPERTY
- PUBLIC PLAZA IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITY
- GREENWALL OPPORTUNITIES ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

STREET TREES

- EXISTING TREES
- REMOVE & REPLACE EXISTING TREES
- POTENTIAL NEW TREES IN EXISTING EMPTY TREE WELL
- POTENTIAL NEW TREES (BACK OF SIDEWALK)
- POTENTIAL NEW TREES

CURB REGULATIONS

- BUS STOP
- LOADING ZONE
- COMBO LZ/METERS
- HANDICAP
- FIRE HYDRANT
- UNREGULATED

BIKE LANES

- EXISTING BIKE LANE
- PLANNED BIKE LANE

EXPERIENCE

Our team conducted an assessment of experiential qualities to better understand where there are opportunities to help activate the street.



Public Realm Activation Opportunities

Blank Walls



Open Space Activation Opportunities

Unprogrammed Plaza



Auto-Centric Uses

Pedestrian-Scale is Missing



Pedestrian Mobility Barrier

Uneven Pavement



Gas station

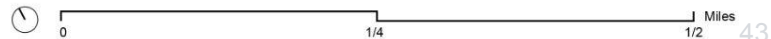


Parking lot

EXPERIENCE

Interface Studio, October 2023

- Walkability and Accessibility Barriers
- Public Realm Activation and Open Space Enhancement Opportunities



NEXT STEPS

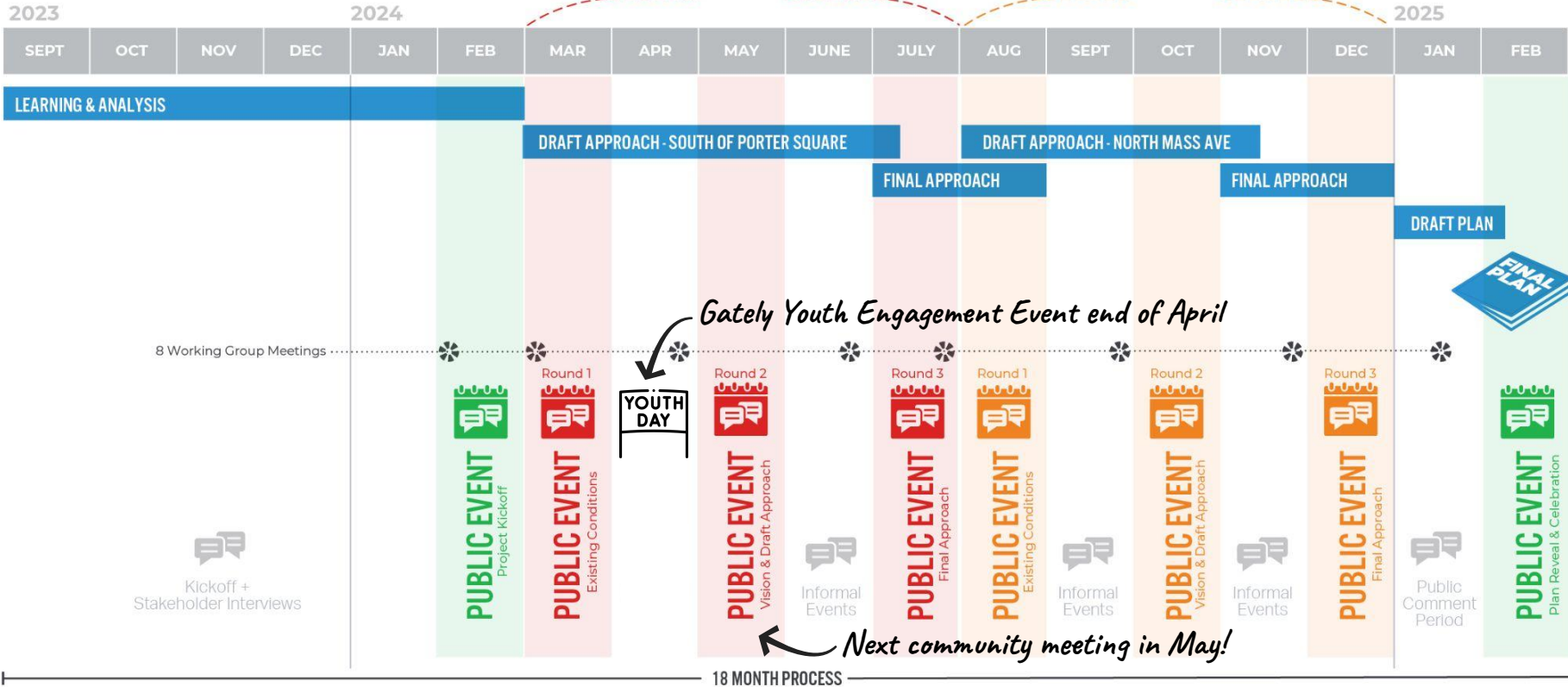
PROJECT SCHEDULE

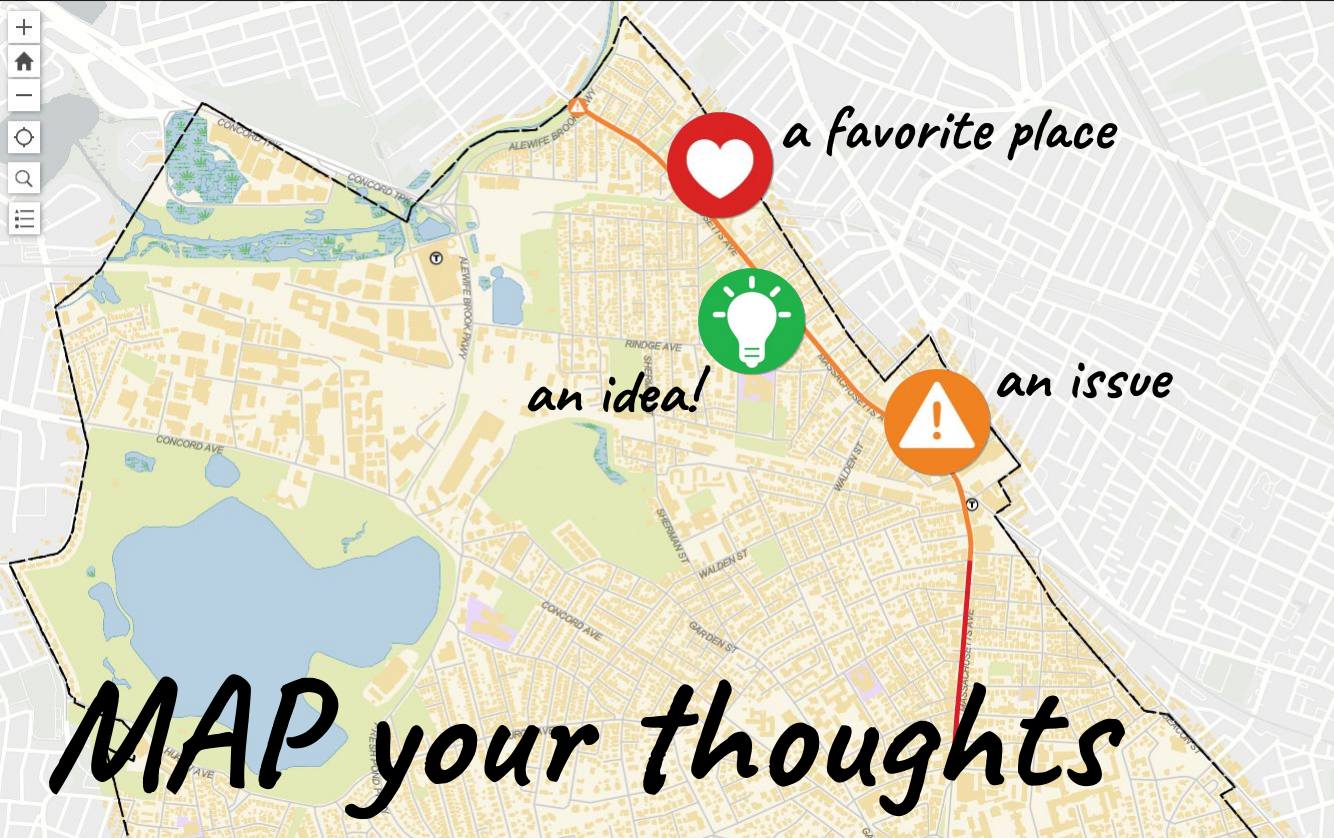
PHASE 1 PROJECT KICKOFF

PHASE 2 SOUTH OF PORTER SQUARE

PHASE 3 NORTH MASS AVE + PORTER SQUARE

PHASE 4 FINAL PLAN





MAP your thoughts

on our crowdsource map: bit.ly/MAPS_map

Mass Ave Comments

Location
Click the map to draw the location.
Enter an address to search

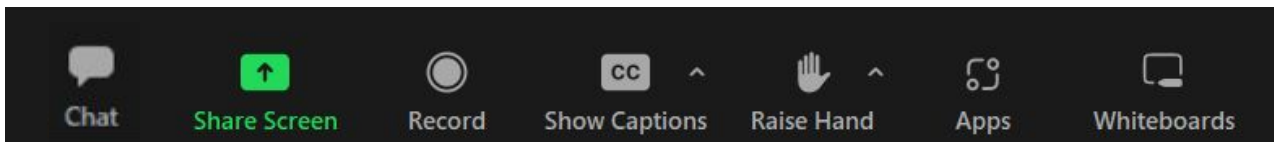
Share your thoughts!
I want to share

Map Comment

SCAN:  bittly



Q+A: RAISE YOUR HAND TO ASK A QUESTION



Use **chat** to type a question

Use **Raise Hand** to ask a question and we will unmute you!



On your phone, use *9 to request to speak, we'll read the last 4 digits of your phone number when it's time for you to speak.

Zoom Poll:

FILL IN THE BLANK As South of Porter evolves in the future, it will

1. RETAIN ITS _____
2. SUPPORT _____
3. CREATE _____
4. IMPROVE _____

COMMUNITY MEETING 1 - WHAT WE HEARD

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.

BREAKOUT GROUPS

(30 MINUTES)

Main discussion:

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

- **More Neighborhood Oriented?**
- **More of a Destination?**
- **More Beautiful?**
- **Easier to Walk Around?**
- **More Affordable?**