

Alewife Zoning Working Group

An aerial architectural rendering of a city block. The scene is filled with multi-story buildings in shades of orange, red, and white. Green trees are scattered throughout the blocks, and a small blue pond is visible in the lower-left quadrant. The overall style is a detailed, hand-drawn sketch.

Alewife District Plan Land Use and Zoning Recommendations
Meeting 2, August 10, 2022

Today's Meeting

Purpose:

- Review Alewife District Plan land use and zoning recommendations
- Review development since completion of Alewife District Plan
- Confirm the community's planning priorities on type and amount of development

Desired Outcomes:

- Confirm community's planning direction and start to discuss zoning strategies

Agenda

- Project Updates
- Review Alewife District Plan Land Use and Zoning Recommendations
- Discuss Type & Amount of Development
- Public Comment



Alewife Overlay District Zoning Working Group

Residents

- Doug Brown, West Cambridge
- John Chun, Cambridge Highlands
- Lizzie Feigenbaum, Cambridge Highlands
- Jennifer Gilbert, North Cambridge
- Eric Grunebaum, North Cambridge
- Suhas Kodali, North Cambridge
- Mike Nakagawa, North Cambridge
- Ann Stewart, Cambridge Highlands
- Ann Tennis, Cambridge Highlands

Business Representatives/Property Owners

- Jane Carbone, Homeowners Rehabilitation Inc.
- Chris Chandor, The Davis Companies
- Igor Ivanovic, Iggy's Bakery
- Kelvin Moses, Healthpeak
- Joseph Poirier, Longleaf Lumber
- Joe Sultan, West Cambridge Science Park

Institutional/Non-Profit Representatives

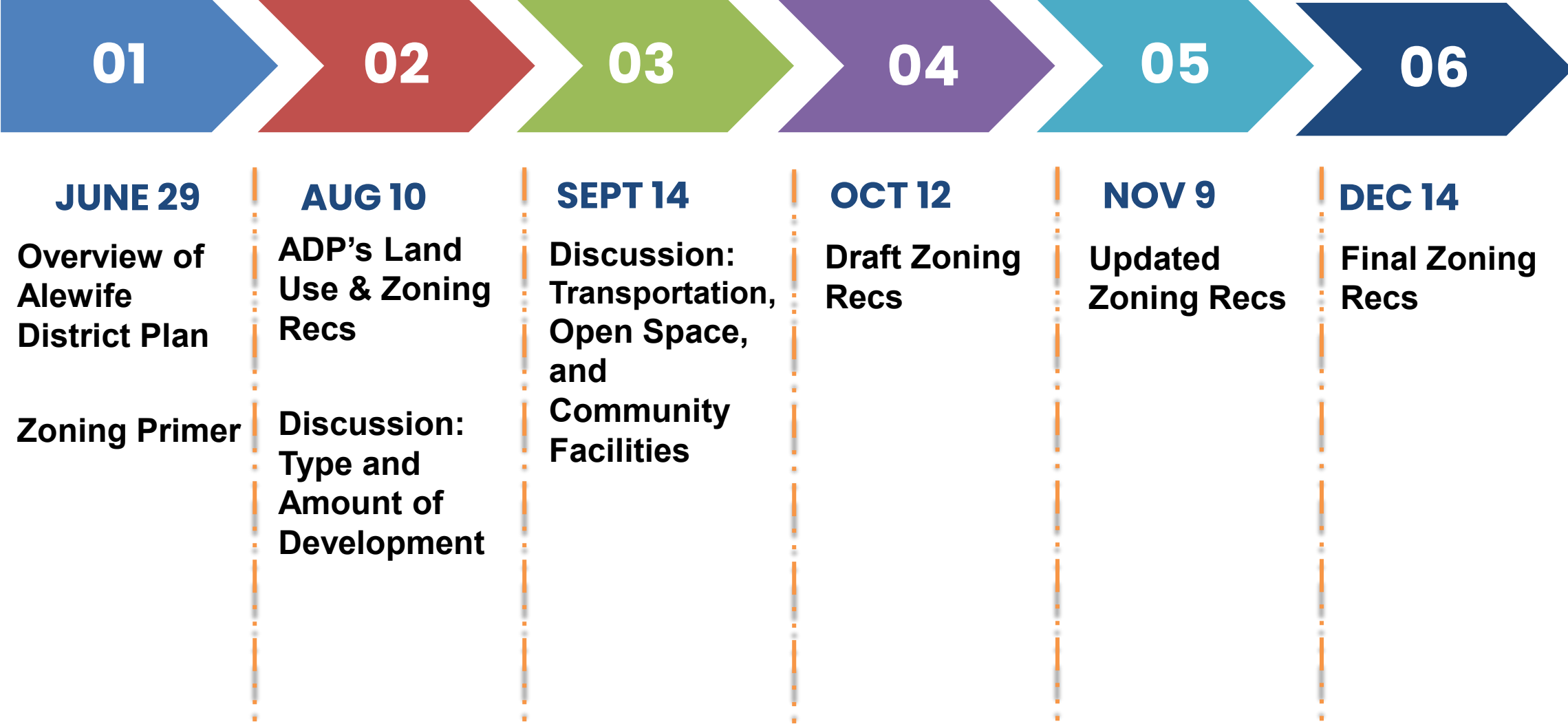
- Diana Marsh, Fayerweather School

Overall Schedule

↓ We are here!



Working Group Schedule

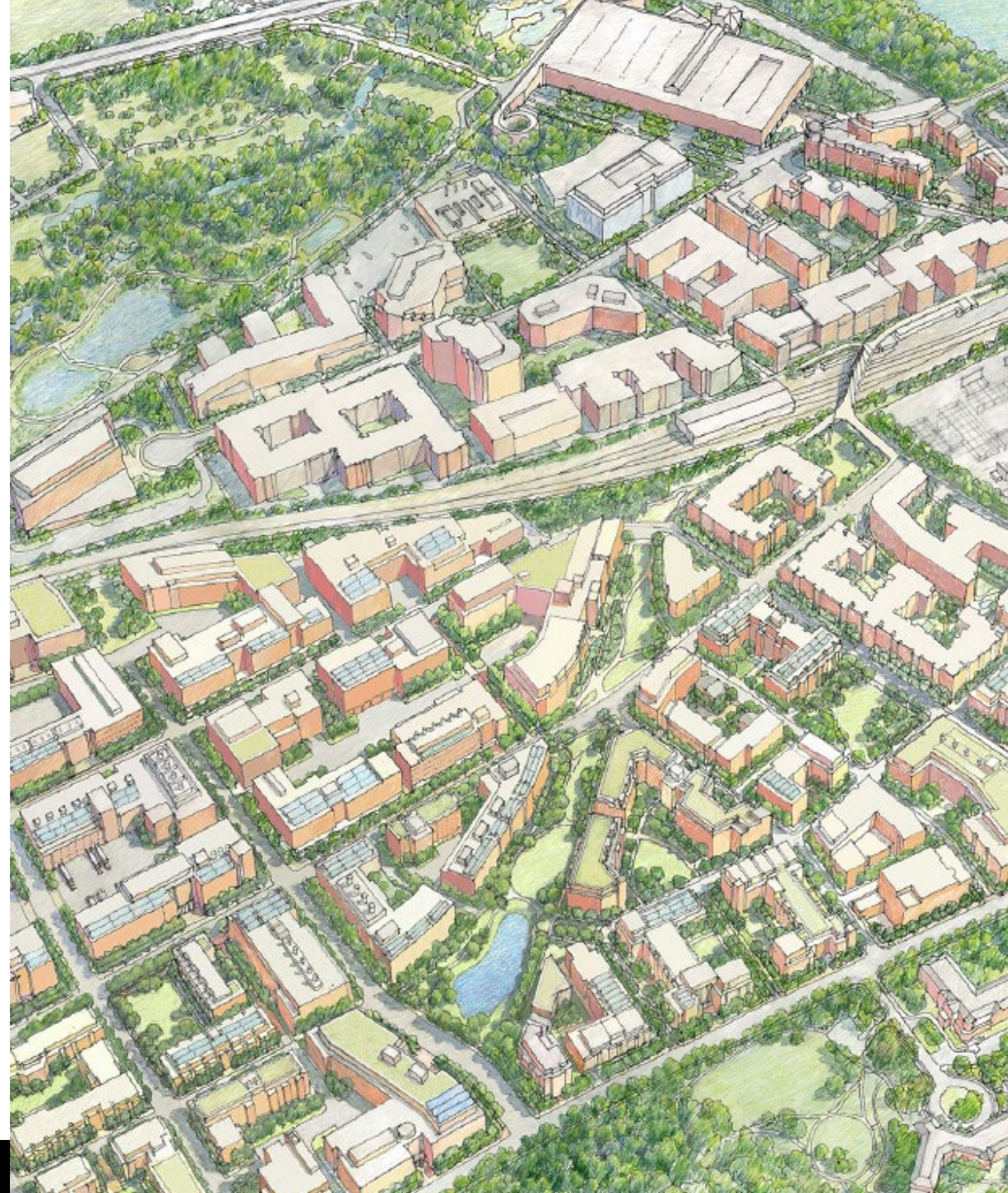


Alewife District Plan's Land Use and Zoning Recommendations



Alewife District Plan Goals

- Build a Cohesive Mixed-Use District
- Integrate Alewife with Rest of Cambridge
- Promote Economic Opportunity
- Enhance the Public Realm
- Encourage Sustainable Modes of Transportation
- Create a Continuous Open Space & Recreation Network



Subdistrict Vision

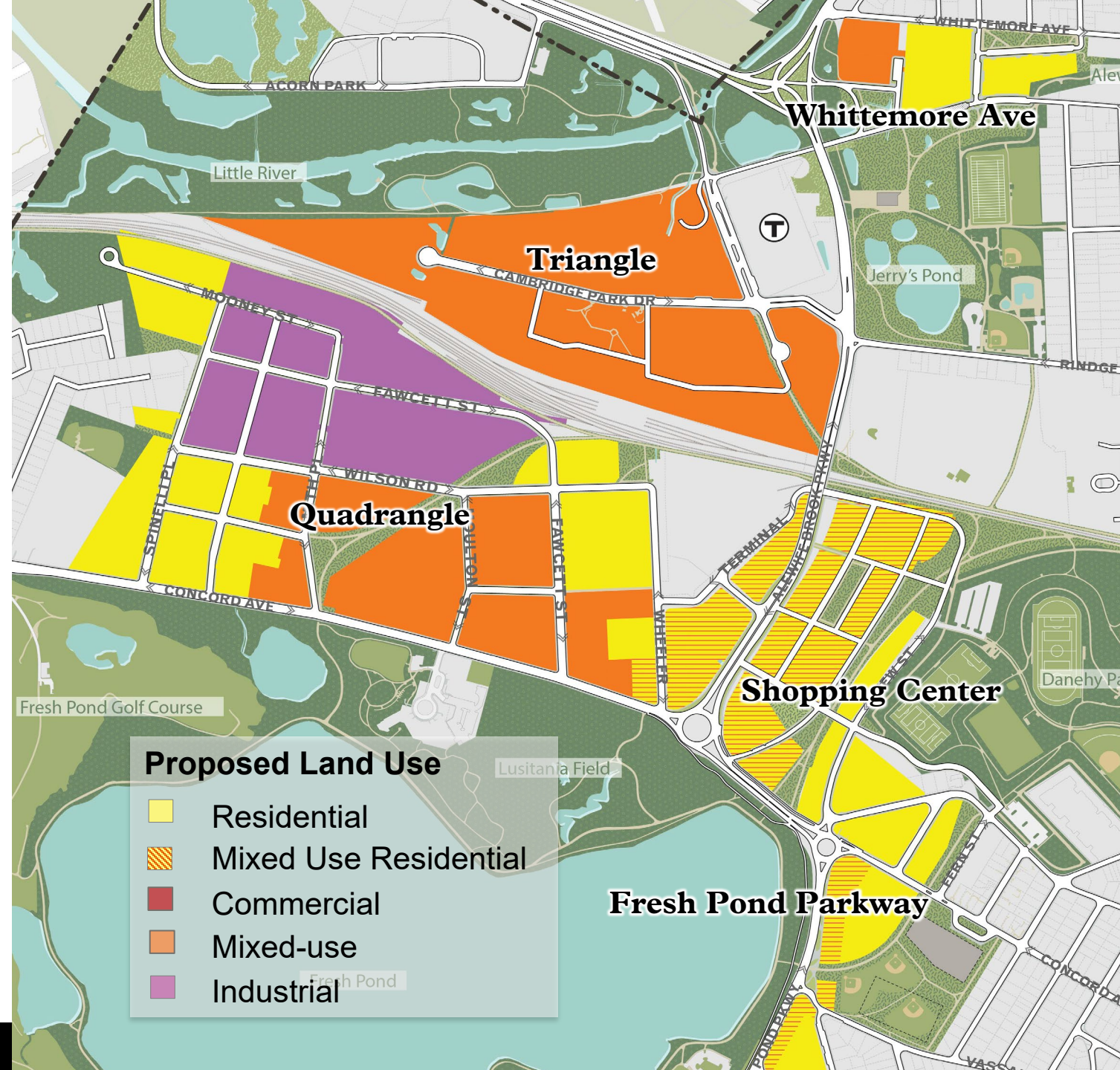
Quadrangle: Preserve and enhance light industrial jobs and balance residential and commercial growth

Shopping Center: Create a walkable shopping destination that includes mixed-use residential development

Fresh Pond Parkway: Encourage mixed-use residential development along Parkway

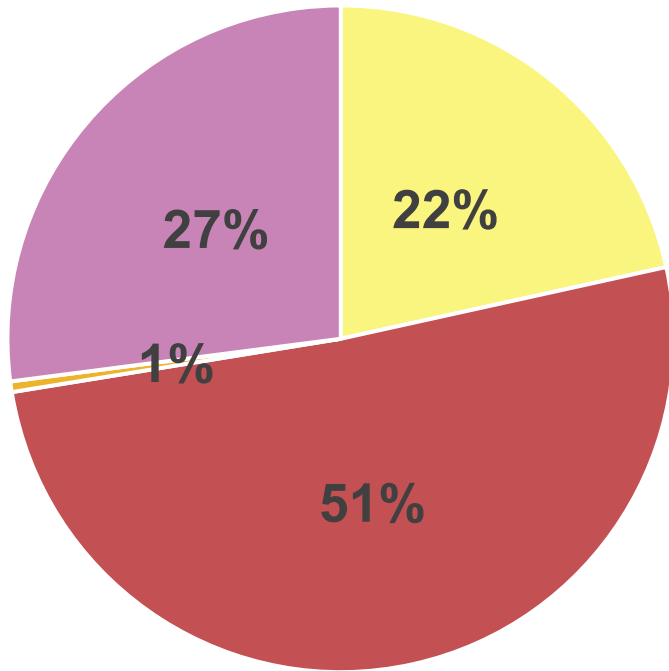
Whittemore Avenue: Encourage mid-density residential development adjacent to residential neighborhood and incentivize open space improvements

Triangle: Promote active ground floors and improve streetscape and bike/ped connections

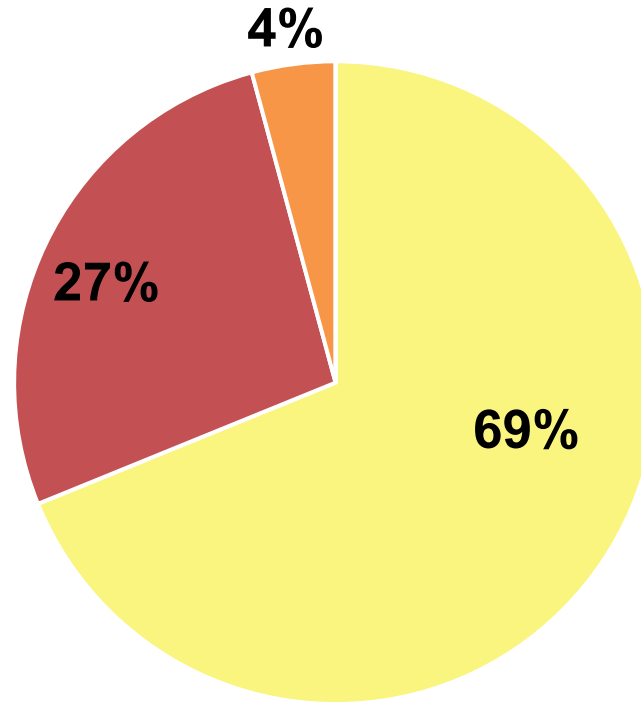


How does the Alewife District Plan Compare?

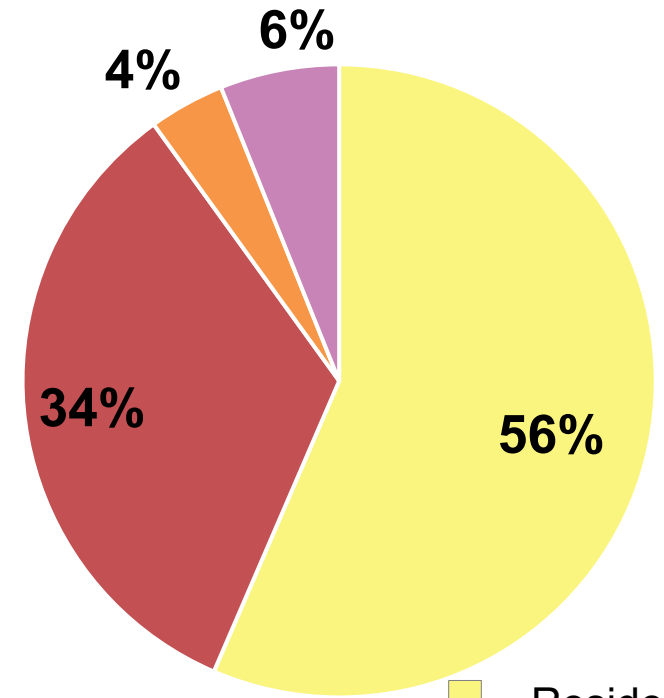
Existing Development



Under Current Zoning



Under Proposed Zoning



- Residential
- Commercial
- Retail
- Light Industrial

Figures estimated at the time of Alewife District Plan (2017). Assumed mixed-use buildout that reflected trends at that time.

How does the Alewife District Plan Compare?

	Existing Development (2017)	100% Buildout Under Current Zoning	100% Buildout Under Proposed Zoning
Residential	712,430	7,020,483	6,347,717
Office/R&D	1,682,830	2,748,983	3,771,750
Retail	17,010	428,300	435,133
Industrial	894,240	-	684,533
Other	356,060	264,617	264,617
Total	3,662,570	10,462,383	11,503,750

Figures estimated at the time of Alewife District Plan (2017). Assumed mixed-use build out that reflected trends at that time.

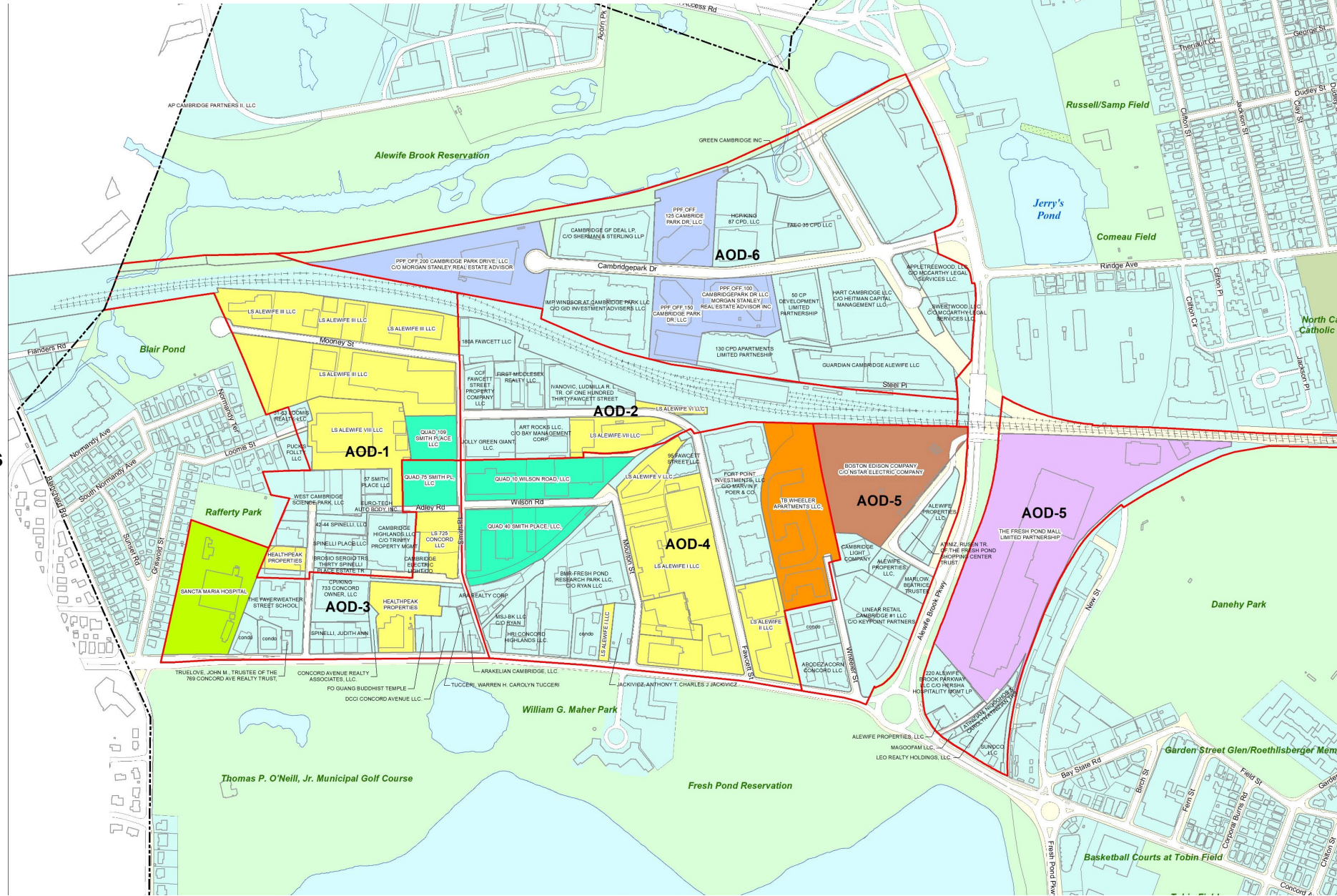
Land Ownership in 2016

312 different owners



Source: City of Cambridge Tax Assessor and Property Database 2016

Land Ownership Today



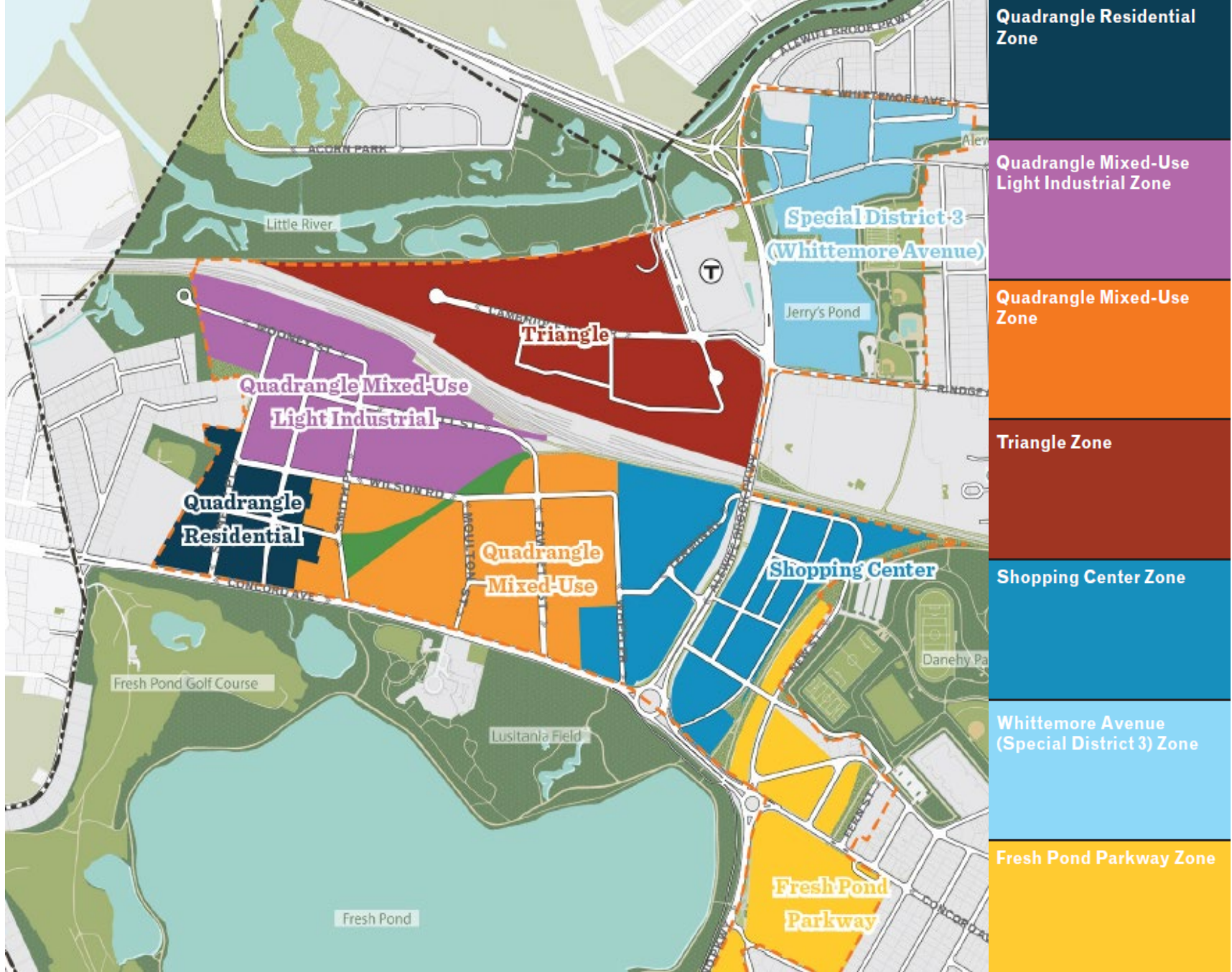
Seven Largest Property Owners in AODs

Acres	Entity
25.4	Healthpeak
16.9	The Fresh Pond Mall
13.4	PPF OFF
9.8	The Davis Companies
6.9	Boston Edison Co, C/O NSTAR
6.0	TB Wheeler Apartments
5.1	Sancta Maria Hospital

Questions to Consider

- **Does the Alewife Plan's recommendations achieve the outcomes we desire?**
 - Mixed use district with balance of residential and commercial development
 - Preservation of light manufacturing / low barrier to entry jobs
 - Residential uses near Highland's neighborhood
 - Ground floor active space on key streets

Proposed Zoning Districts



Overview

AOD zoning concept:

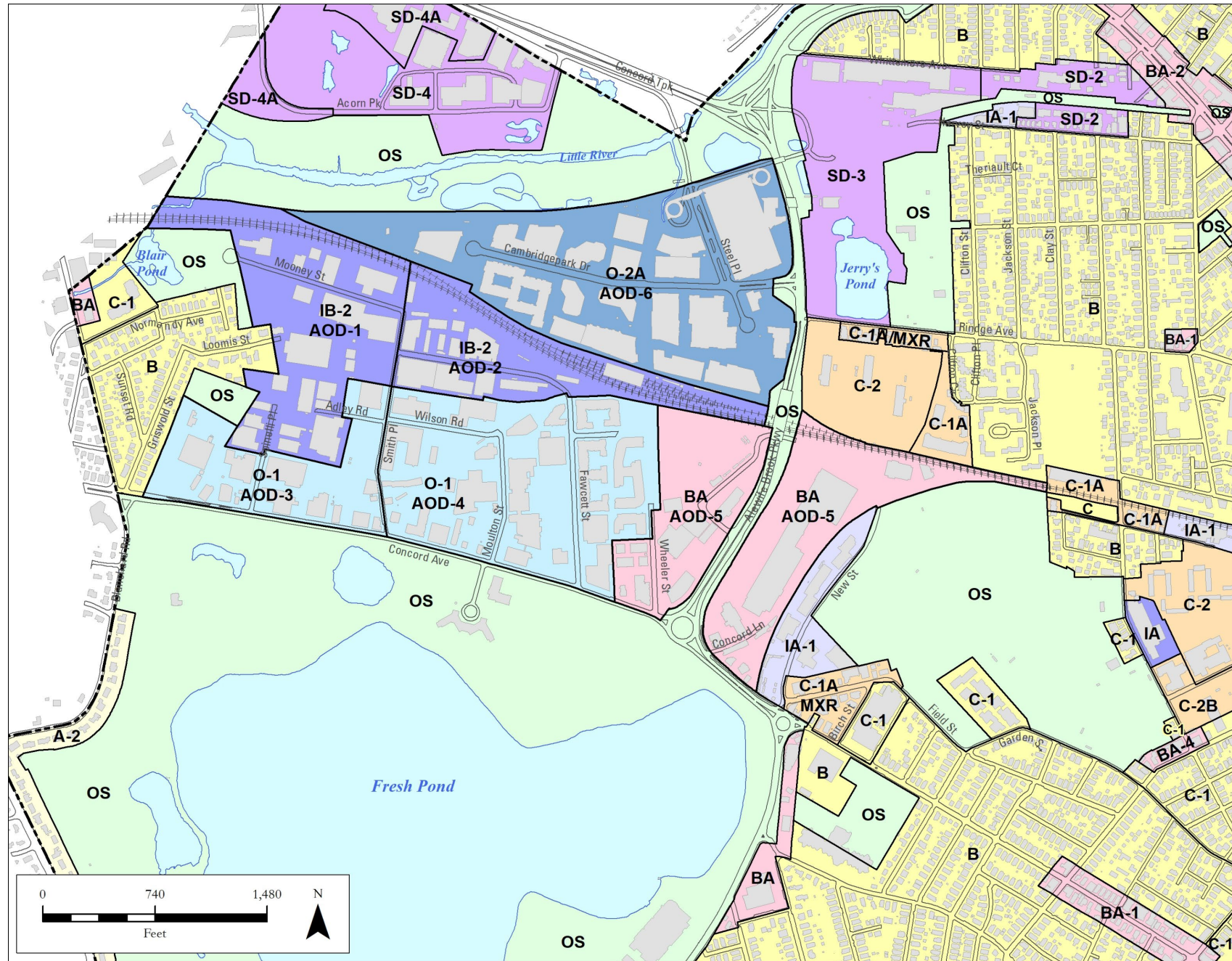
Base zoning: limited density and height

Additional height and density by Planning Board special permit

Planning Board considers **plan objectives** and **design guidelines** when granting special permits

Transfer of development rights (TDR), bonuses for public infrastructure by special permit

Added requirements: e.g., open space and permeable area



Map Changes

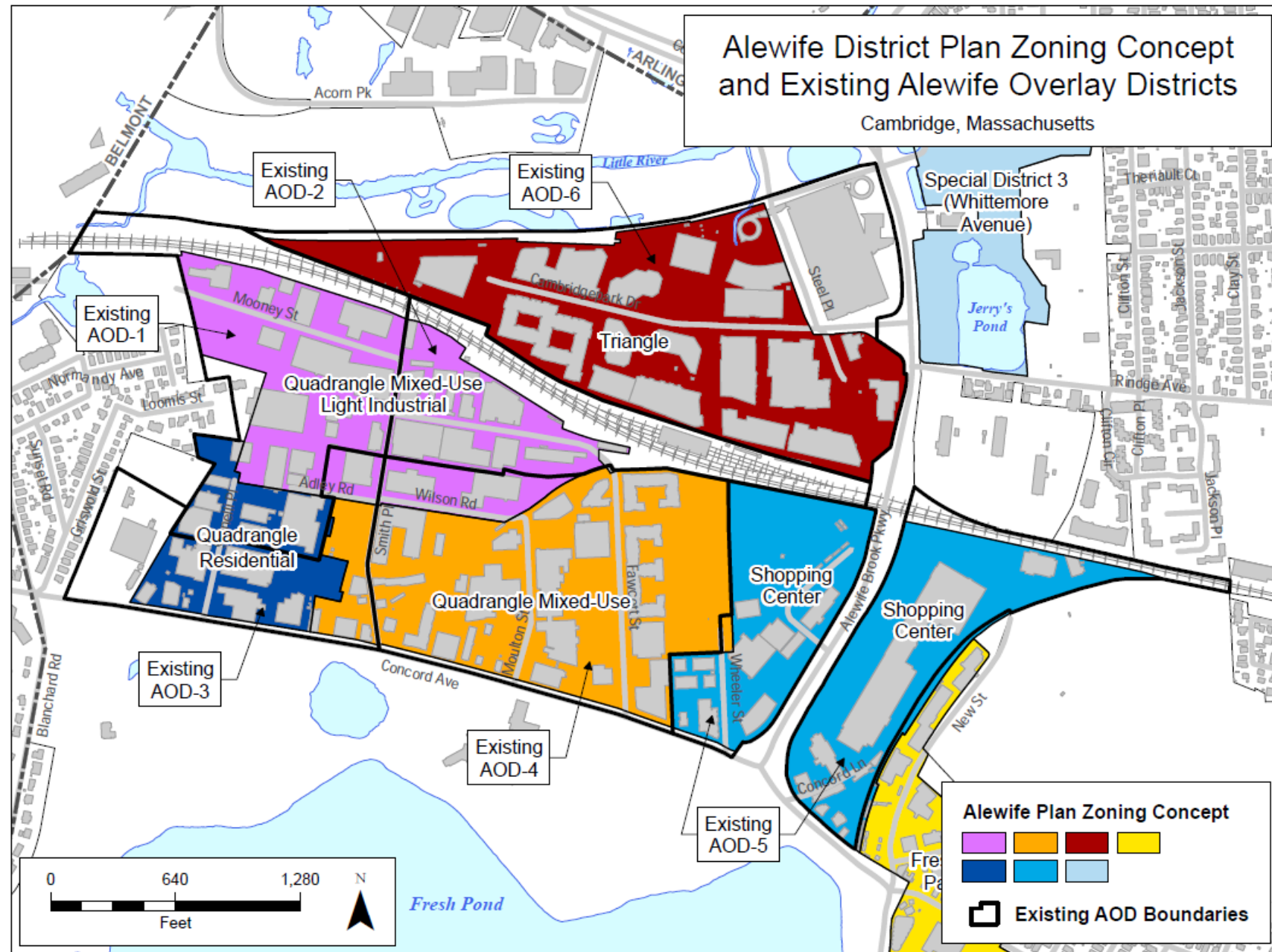
Subtle differences from current AODs:

“Quad NW” and “Quad NE” (mostly)
→ **“Quad Mixed-Use Light Industrial”**

“Quad SW” (+ part of “Quad NE”)
→ **“Quad Residential”**

“Quad SE” (mostly)
→ **“Quad Mixed-Use”**

Unchanged: **“Shopping Center”** and **“Triangle”**



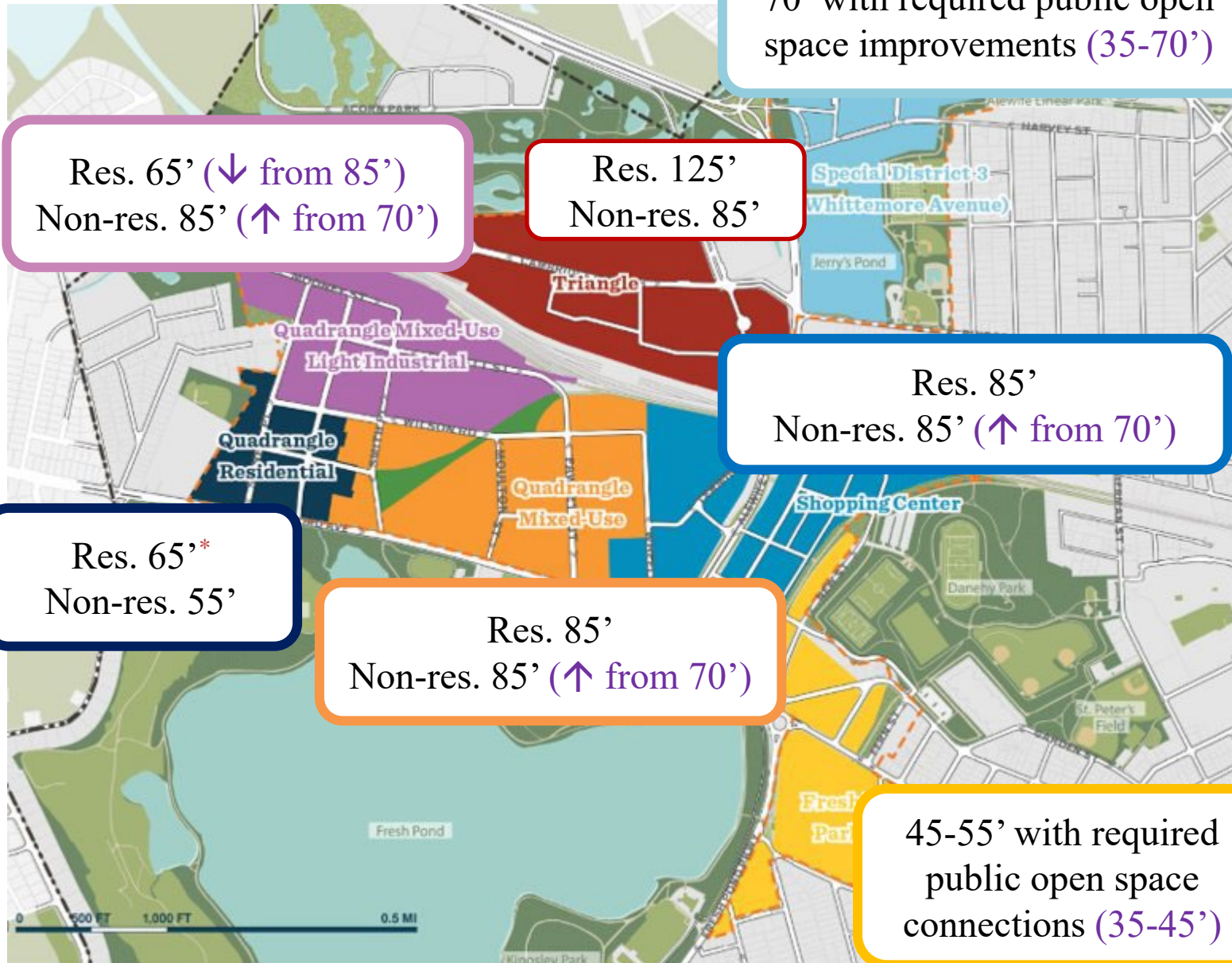
Zoning Changes “At a Glance”

Regulations	Existing AOD Zoning	Recommended Zoning per Alewife Plan	Net Change
Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows residential and office/lab Limited retail, industrial allowed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows residential and office/lab Retail, industrial encouraged in key places 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adds incentives for ground-floor retail and light industrial uses
Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate density 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate density Some flexibility for mixed-use development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentivizes mixed-use development
Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitions from lower in the west to taller in the east 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More uniform, slightly taller non-residential heights to accommodate desired ground story uses and open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased non-residential height with ground-floor light industrial uses
Setbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexible setbacks except for 15'-25' green area front yards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prescriptive standards for building fronts to achieve a more active streetscape 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form-based approach for building siting
Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15% open space, 25% permeable area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20% open space, 25% permeable area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +5% required open space
Parking & Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking required per base zoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low maximum parking ratios TDM and funding contributions to support non-auto transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduces maximum parking Enhanced TDM and transportation fund

Key Zoning Changes

Maintain density limits and adjust heights to:

- Promote desired building types (ground floor light industrial, mixed-use residential)
- Promote more and improved open space
- Allow higher ground floor elevations for flood protection
- Allow greater use of TDR and density bonuses for public space and infrastructure
- Retain lower heights near existing residential neighborhoods (retain green buffer near Highlands)



*Residential FAR increased to 2.0 from 1.5 for Quad Residential zone only.

Height Buffers

- Alewife plan recommended maintaining existing buffers from residential and open space districts

Applicable District	Height Limitation	Required Buffer
AOD-1 (Quad NW) AOD-3 (Quad SW)	Reduced to 35'	w/in 100' of Residence or Open Space District
AOD-1 (Quad NW) AOD-3 (Quad SW)	Reduced to 45'	w/in 100'-200' of Residence or Open Space District
Parkway Overlay Districts	55' along Alewife Bk. Pkwy. 50' along Concord Ave.	Parkway Overlay Districts

Use Regulations (20.94)

Regulations	Existing AOD Zoning	Recommended Zoning per Alewife Plan
Allowed Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per base zoning district • Retail uses allowed by special permit (with limitations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per base zoning district • Retail uses allowed as-of-right on ground story (where not otherwise allowed)
Required Use Mix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In AOD-5 (Shopping Center) District: Where development is at least 100,000 SF, it must contain 20-50% non-residential use, and the first 225,000 SF of non-residential use must be retail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground-story retail and/or light industrial space required for special permits along some streets identified in Alewife Plan

Dimensional Standards – FAR Bonus (20.95.11) and TDR (20.98)

	Existing Zoning (All AOD Districts)	Recommended Zoning per Alewife Plan (All AOD Districts)
Public Infrastructure Bonus	+0.25 FAR across entire parcel for ped/bike crossing between AOD-2/AOD-4 and AOD-6	Retain bonus
	“1-for-1” FAR bonus to convey land for public open space, roadway, or pathway use (per SF of land conveyed)	Retain bonus, consider other public uses to incentivize? (community space, public facilities)
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)	Allowed GFA can be transferred within a district, or across districts “west-to-east”	Retain TDR, consider additional flexibility for “donating” and “receiving” sites?



Parking and Transportation Standards (20.97)

Standard	Existing Zoning	Proposed Zoning
Parking Ratios	Base zoning (min-max): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail: ~0.7-5.0 spaces/1,000 SF Office: ~1.2-6.7 spaces/1,000 SF Lab: 0.95-1.9 spaces/1,000 SF Industrial: Min. ~0.6-1.0 spaces/1,000 SF Residential: Min. 1 space/unit 	New maximum ratios: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retail: 0-1.5 spaces/1,000 SF Office: 0-1.1 spaces/1,000 SF Lab: 0-0.8 spaces/1,000 SF Industrial: 0-0.5 spaces/1,000 SF Residential: 0.25-0.75 spaces/unit
Pooled Parking	Pooled or public parking facilities allowed by special permit	Pooled or public parking facilities allowed by special permit
Parking Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-grade parking set back 10' from street GFA for above-grade structured parking may be waived by SP for flooding considerations 	All parking must be below grade or set behind buildings and screened from street (for up to 2 streets)
Transportation Improvements	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced TDM for special permits \$5/SF transportation infrastructure fund contribution for commercial uses

“The Bottom Line”

Most of what is recommended in the Alewife District Plan can be done under current zoning.

What in the Alewife Plan *can't* be done under current zoning?

- **Height:** Commercial heights are limited (55' or 70' in quad), not allowing the additional height to offset high-bay industrial space at the ground story
- **Setbacks:** 15' or 25' green front yard is required, prohibiting elevated walkways and some desired streetscape improvements
- **Parking:** Base zoning sets some minimum requirements that are above the recommended maximum ratios

Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop

▨ Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop

Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects

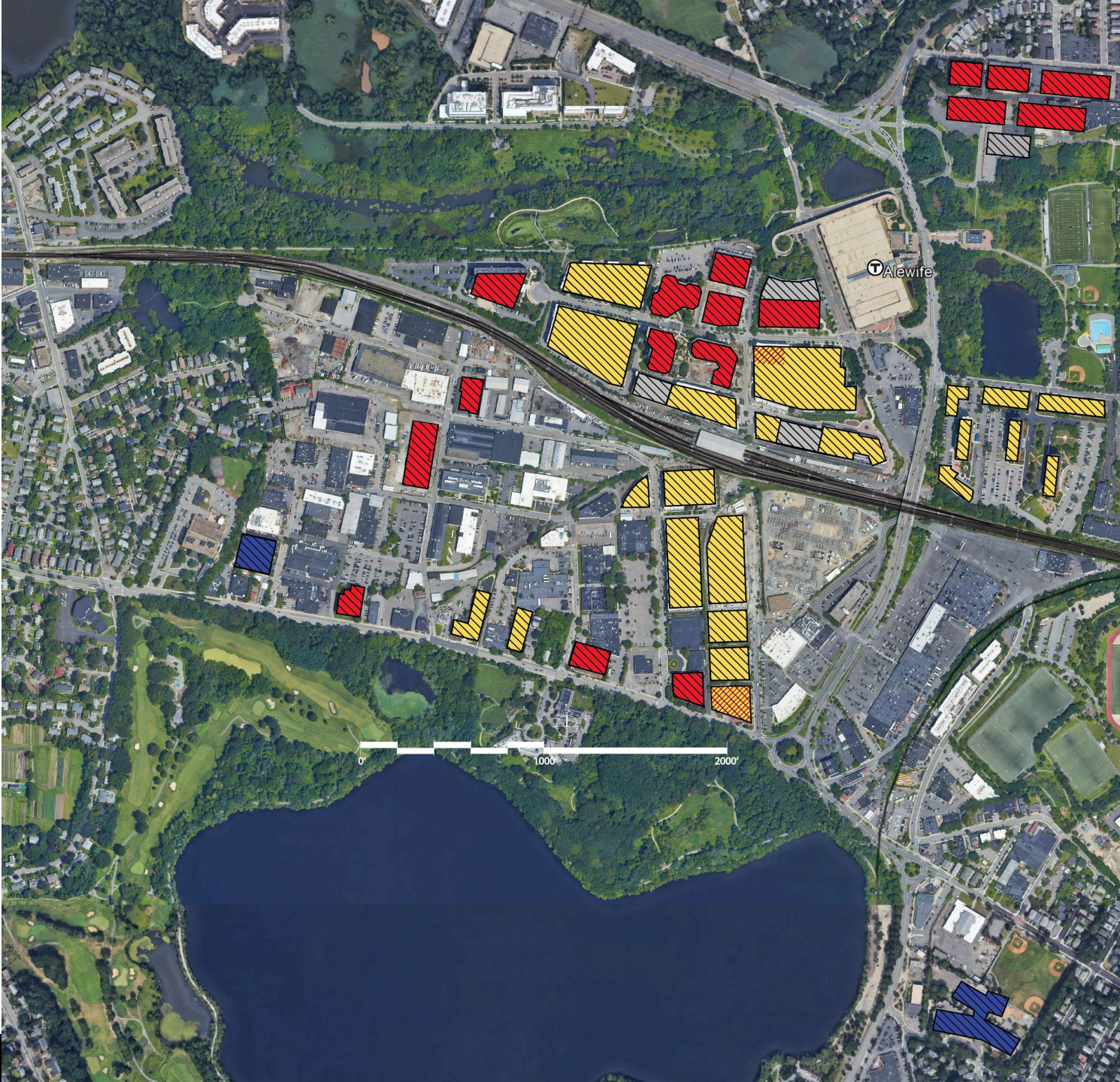


Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop with Existing Land Uses

Land Use

- Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Mixed-Use
- Residential with ground floor retail
- Parking
- Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop
- Commercial with ground floor light industrial

Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects and key public facilities



Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop with Existing Land Uses, + Alewife Vision

Land Use

- Residential
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- Residential with ground floor retail
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75-109 Smith PI (approved 2020)

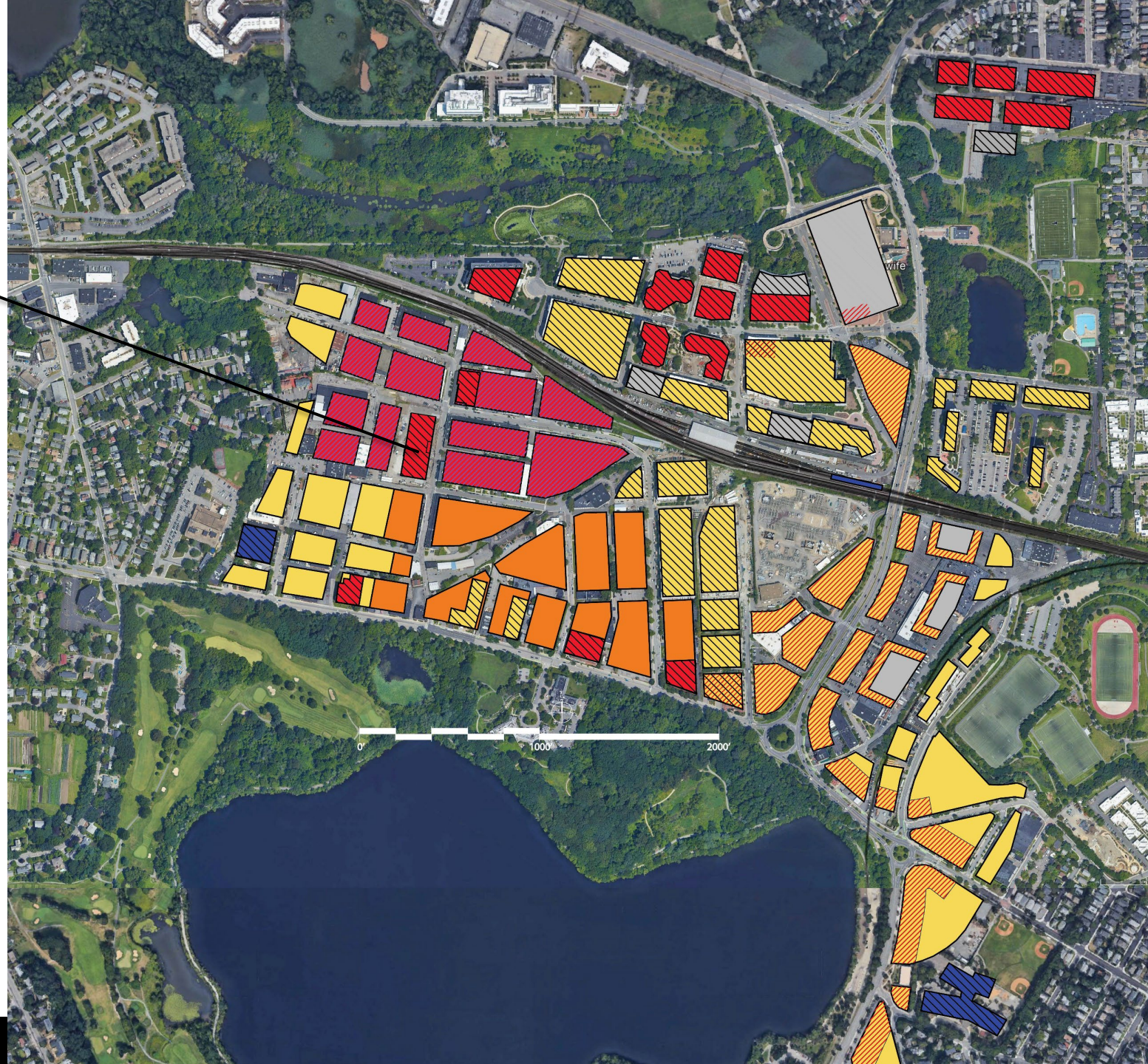


- 3-story / 113,000 square feet
- Technical office/lab uses
- 29% open space to lot area
- Designed to accommodate future elevated walkway and meet flood resilience recommendations from Alewife Plan
- Streetscape redesign

Land Use

 Residential	 Residential with ground floor retail
 Commercial	 Parking
 Institutional	 Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop
 Mixed-Use	 Commercial with ground floor light industrial

Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects and key public facilities



180 Fawcett St (approved 2022)



- 4-story / 58,000 square feet
- Technical office/lab uses
- Flood resilient design and activated green roof
- Streetscape redesign

Land Use

Residential	Residential with ground floor retail
Commercial	Parking
Institutional	Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop
Mixed-Use	Commercial with ground floor light industrial

Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects and key public facilities



671 Concord Ave (completed in 2020)

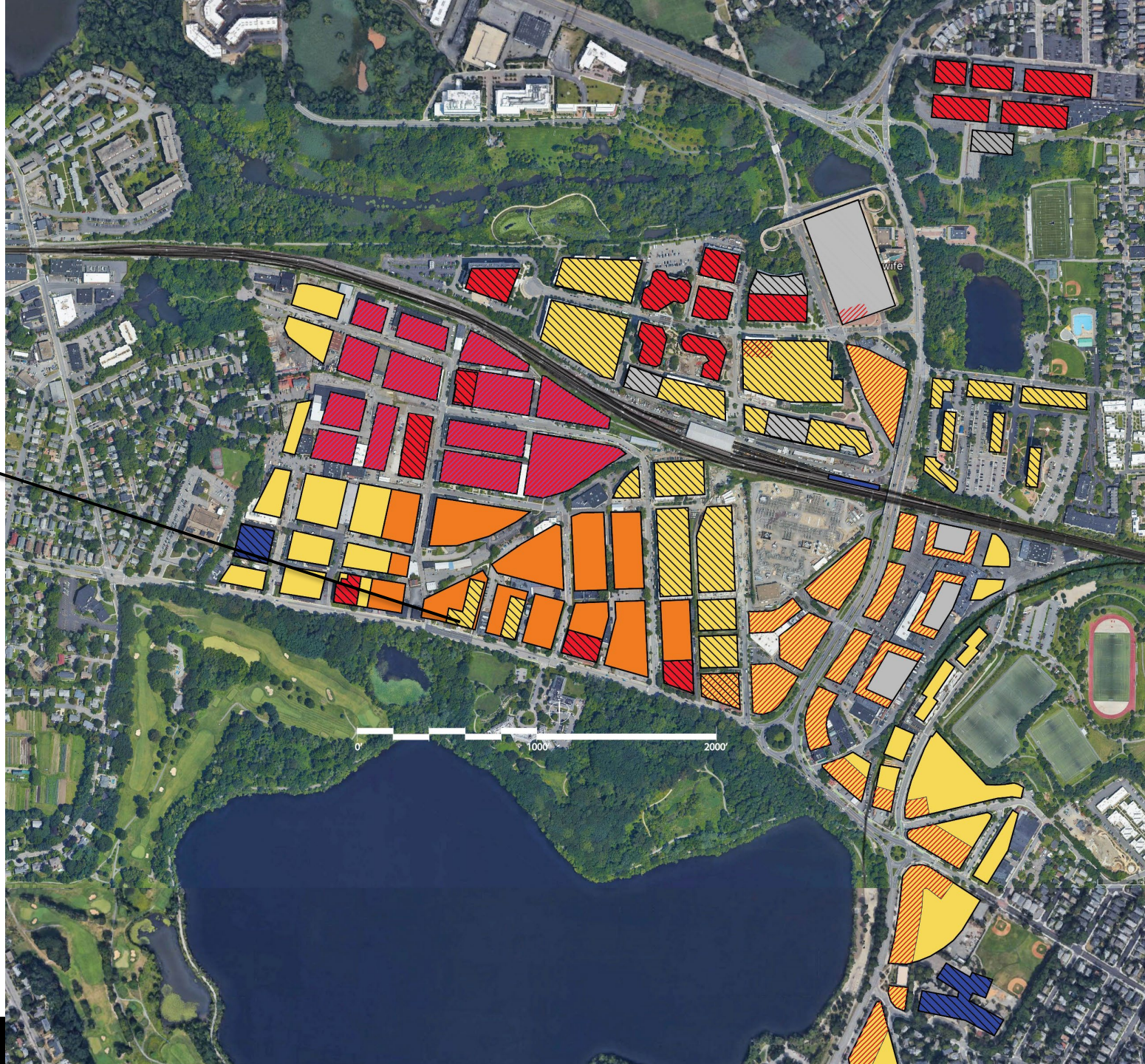


- 98 permanently affordable units
- Obtained a BZA comprehensive permit
- Designed to meet Passive House standards

Land Use

Residential	Residential with ground floor retail
Commercial	Parking
Institutional	Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop
Mixed-Use	Commercial with ground floor light industrial

Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects and key public facilities



55 Wheeler St (approved 2018)

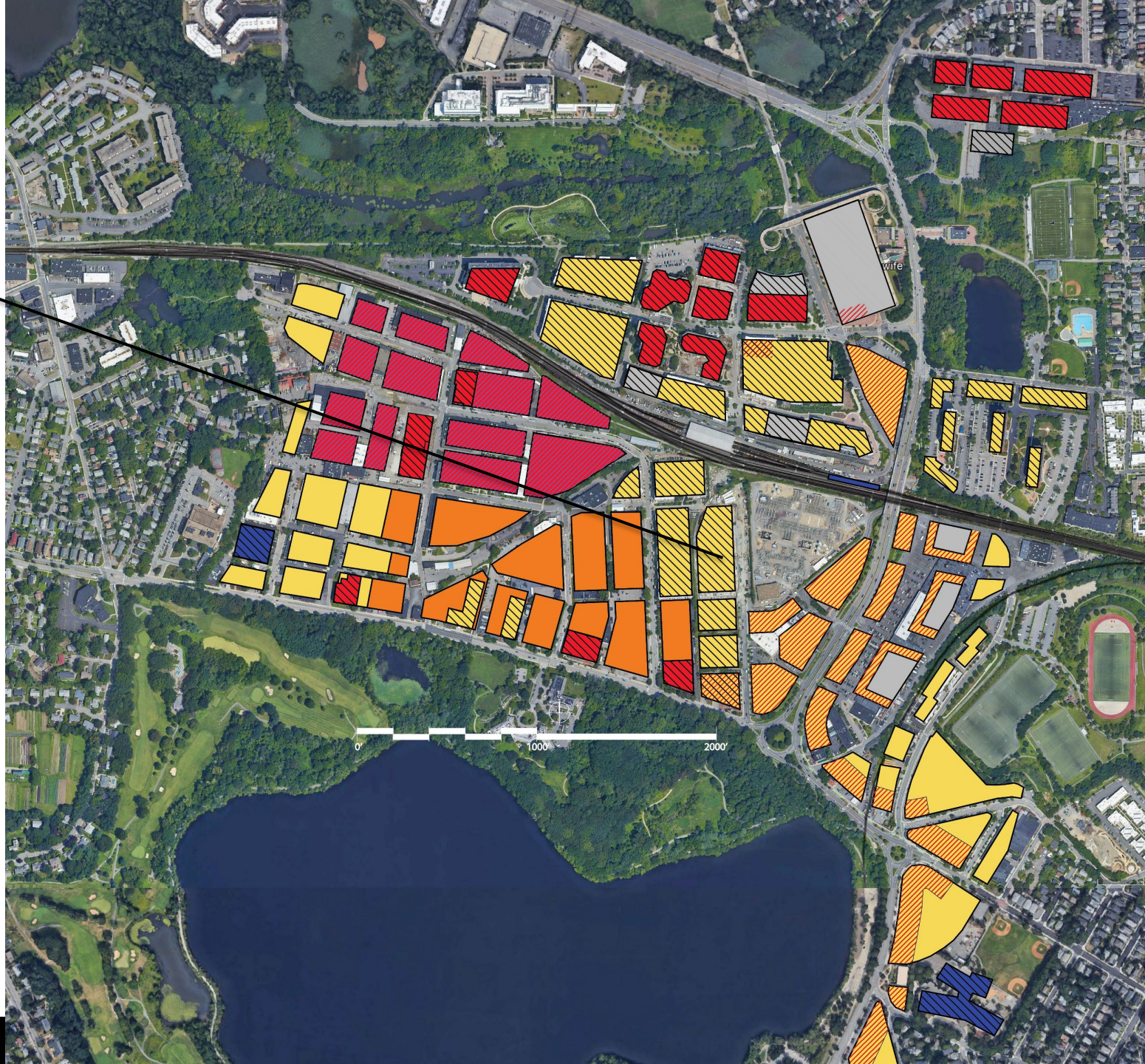


- 7-story / 137,029 square feet
- 526 residential units
- Includes new public street and bike/ped connections as recommended in Alewife Plan, elevated first floor and a raised sidewalk

Land Use

Residential	Residential with ground floor retail
Commercial	Parking
Institutional	Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop
Mixed-Use	Commercial with ground floor light industrial

Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects and key public facilities



Mooney St Proposal (2019-2021)

- Petition to rezone AOD-1; failed on Council vote.
- Included increased building height up to 85 feet
- FAR bonus for providing infrastructure for railroad crossing to Alewife station
- Mix of residential and office/lab and consumer-facing/light industrial uses

Land Use

 Residential	 Residential with ground floor retail
 Commercial	 Parking
 Institutional	 Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop
 Mixed-Use	 Commercial with ground floor light industrial

Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects and key public facilities



36-64 Whittemore Ave (Alewife Park/IQHQ)

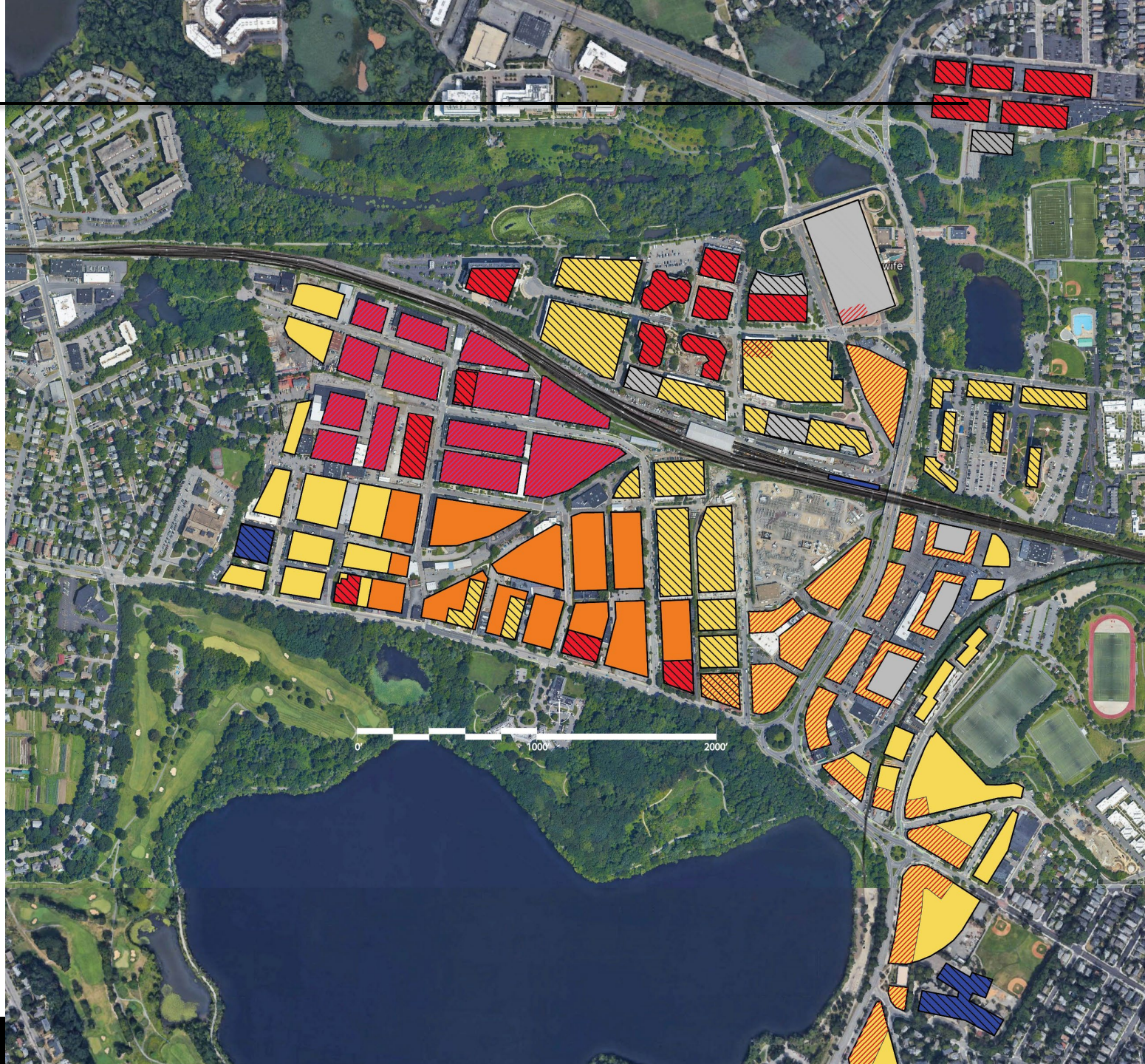


- 5 buildings / 735,500 square feet
- Predominantly technical office/lab uses, with some retail use
- Includes improvements to Jerry's Pond and MBTA headhouse
- Incorporates community gardens and on-site Ecological Center and tree nursery

Land Use

Residential	Residential with ground floor retail
Commercial	Parking
Institutional	Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop
Mixed-Use	Commercial with ground floor light industrial

Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects and key public facilities



Concord Wheeler Phase 2 (approved 2016)

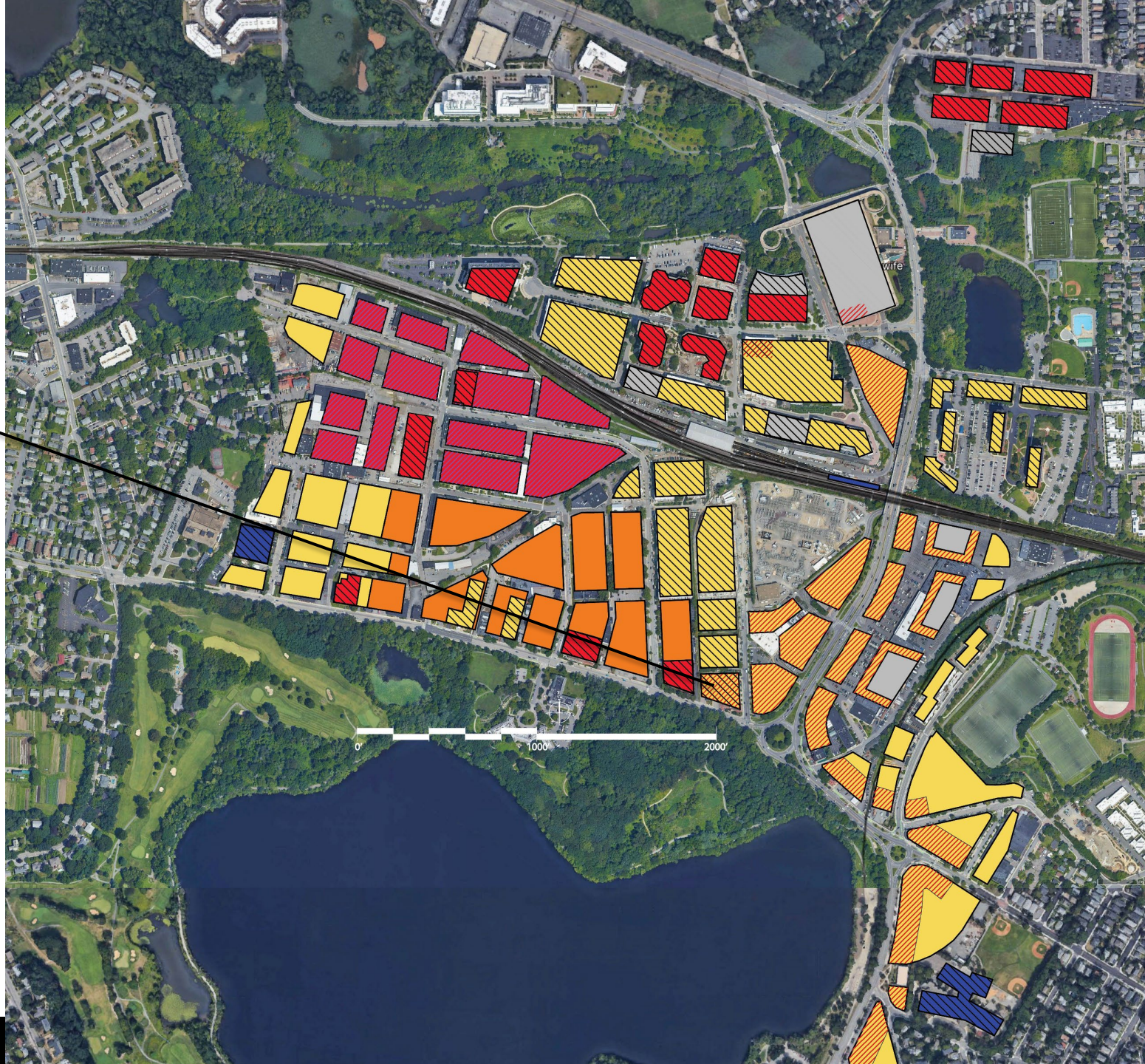


- 6-story / 50,000 square feet
- 49-unit residential building with ground-floor retail and consumer service uses
- Includes bike/ped public improvements in order to support mixed-use, transit-oriented planning for the area

Land Use

 Residential	 Residential with ground floor retail
 Commercial	 Parking
 Institutional	 Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop
 Mixed-Use	 Commercial with ground floor light industrial

Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects and key public facilities



87-101 Cambridgepark Dr (approved 2020)

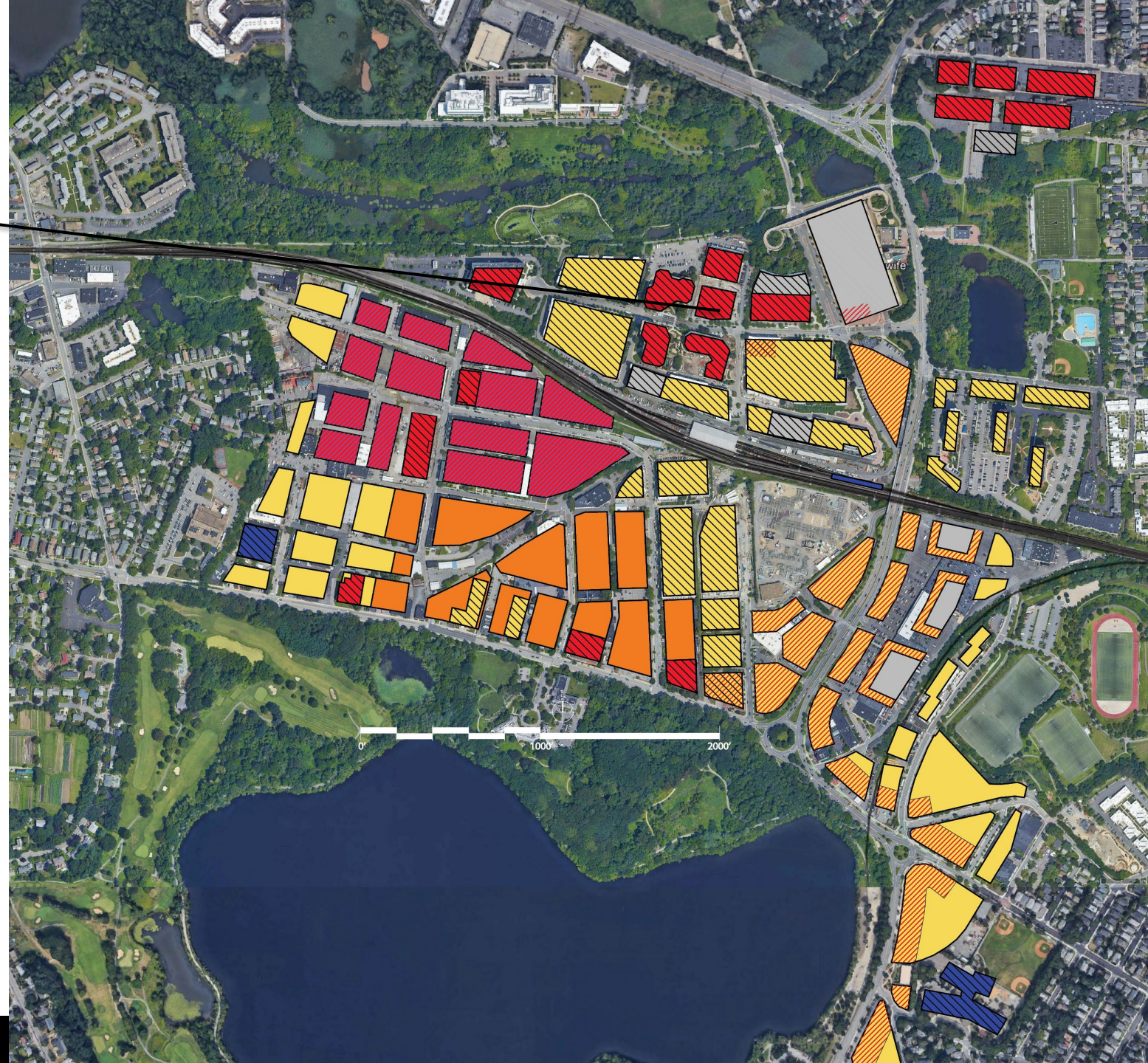


- 5-story / 142,000 square feet
- Technical office/lab uses and ground-floor retail & consumer service uses
- New multi-use path connecting Cambridgepark Drive to Fitchburg path to the north

Land Use

Residential	Residential with ground floor retail
Commercial	Parking
Institutional	Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop
Mixed-Use	Commercial with ground floor light industrial

Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects and key public facilities



35 Cambridgepark Dr (approved 2016)

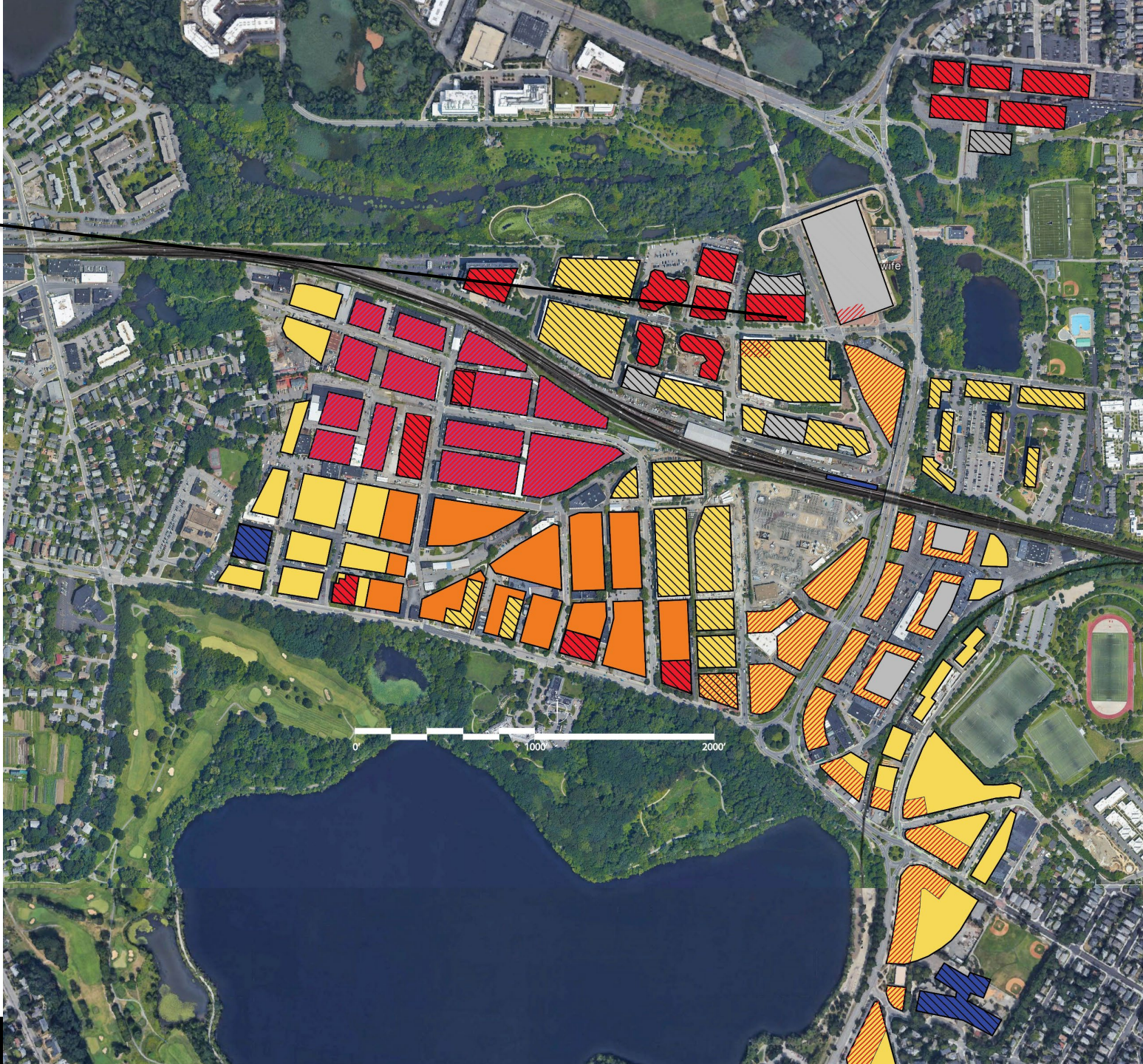


- 5-story / 185,000 square feet
- Technical office/lab uses and ground-floor retail
- Replacement of asphalt parking area with multiple rain gardens, bioswale, shade tree clusters and outdoor seating areas.

Land Use

Residential	Residential with ground floor retail
Commercial	Parking
Institutional	Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop
Mixed-Use	Commercial with ground floor light industrial

Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects and key public facilities



50 Cambridgepark Dr (approved 2018)



- 8-story / 321,683 square feet
- Multifamily residential and ground-floor retail & consumer service uses
- New raised cycle track on Cambridgepark Drive and ped/bike improvements on north-south drive

Land Use

Residential	Residential with ground floor retail
Commercial	Parking
Institutional	Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop
Mixed-Use	Commercial with ground floor light industrial

Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects and key public facilities



15 Smith/40 Wilson Rd (proposed)

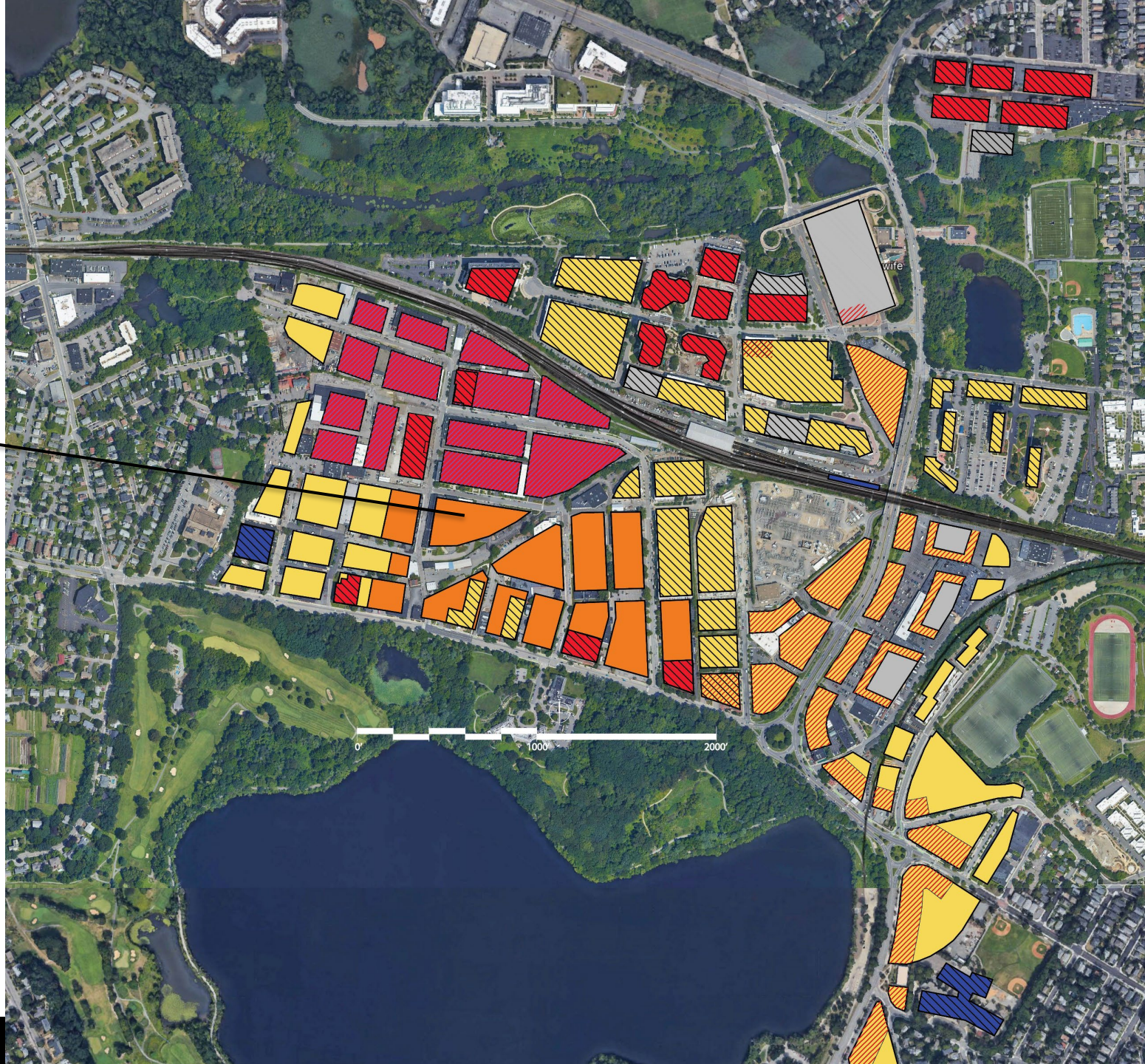


- 4-story / 280,000 square feet
- Technical office/lab uses with ground-floor retail and consumer service uses
- Proposes redesigned public realm and street sections in alignment with Alewife Plan
- Incorporates linear multi-use path along rear property line

Land Use

 Residential	 Residential with ground floor retail
 Commercial	 Parking
 Institutional	 Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop
 Mixed-Use	 Commercial with ground floor light industrial



Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects and key public facilities



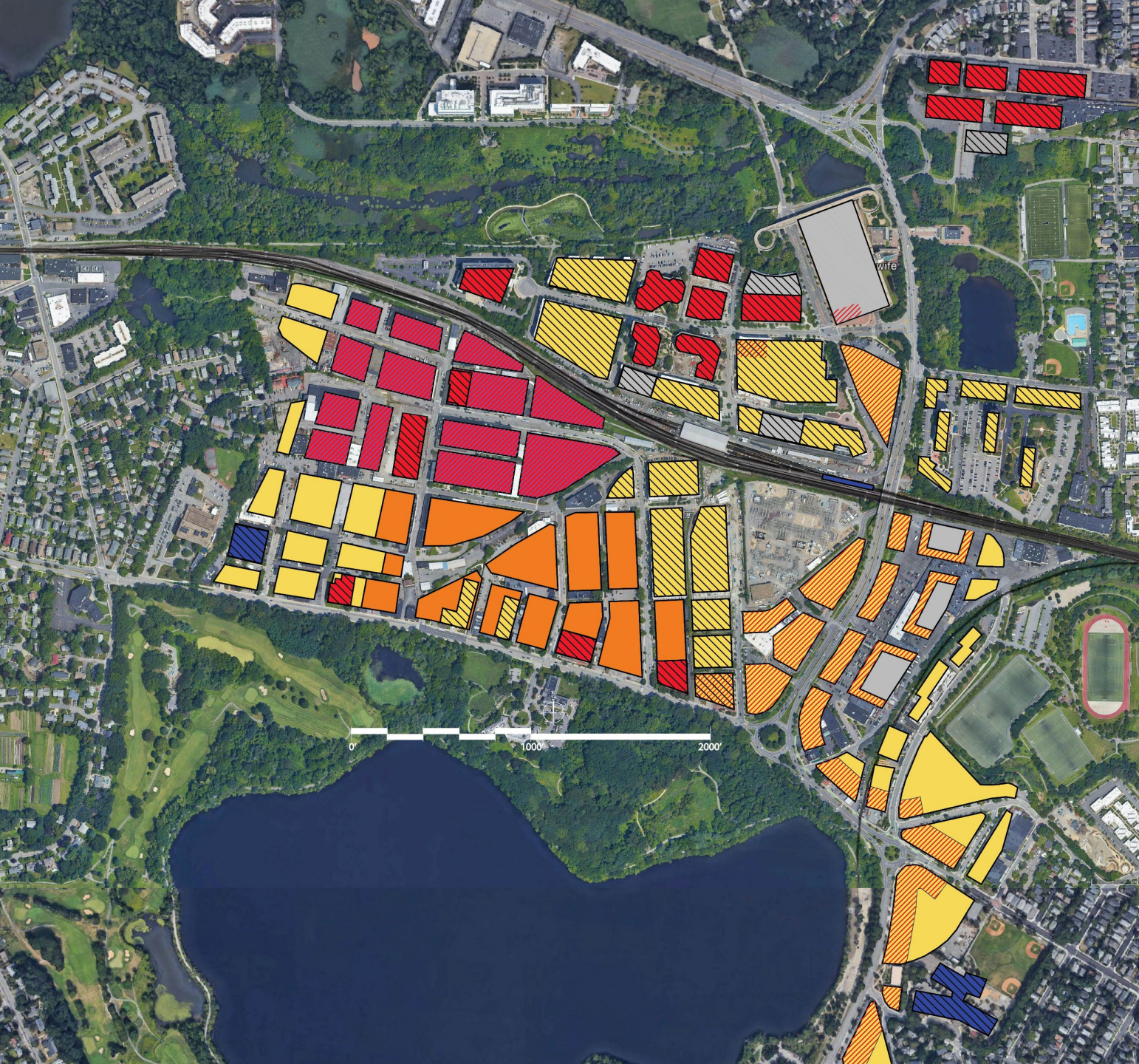
Summary

- Recent development mostly consistent with Alewife District Plan
- No industrial ground floor uses
- No residential at IQHQ

Land Use

 Residential	 Residential with ground floor retail
 Commercial	 Parking
 Institutional	 Buildings Unlikely to Redevelop
 Mixed-Use	 Commercial with ground floor light industrial

Includes recently constructed (since 1997), under construction, and recently permitted projects and key public facilities



Discussion Questions

- Given recent development, is this the desired land use mix?
 - More residential?
 - Light industrial?
 - Location of uses?
 - Height and density?
 - Open space and public facilities?
 - Location of ground floor active space?

Projected Land Use at Full Build-out

