

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 block, particularly around a central green space and a small pond in the lower-left quadrant. The drawing style uses fine lines and soft shading to create a sense of depth and texture.

Meeting #5: Draft Zoning Principles
October 12, 2022

Today's Meeting

Agenda:

- Discuss draft zoning principles
 - Committee discussion
- Public comment

Objective:

- Confirm working group's shared priorities on zoning principles

Upcoming Meetings

Working Group Meetings

- **October 12:** Draft zoning principles
- **November 9:** Draft zoning framework and recommendations
- **December 14:** Final zoning recommendations

Community Meeting

- **November 3:** Project update and draft zoning principles and framework

City Council Update

- **Date TBA:** Project update and draft zoning principles and framework

Draft Zoning Principles

Key Areas for Discussion

- Land Use
- Street Network
- Open Space
- Public Benefits and Bonuses



ALEWIFE ZONING WORKING GROUP INITIAL DRAFT ZONING PRINCIPLES + FRAMEWORK



Working Draft – Last Updated August 31, 2022

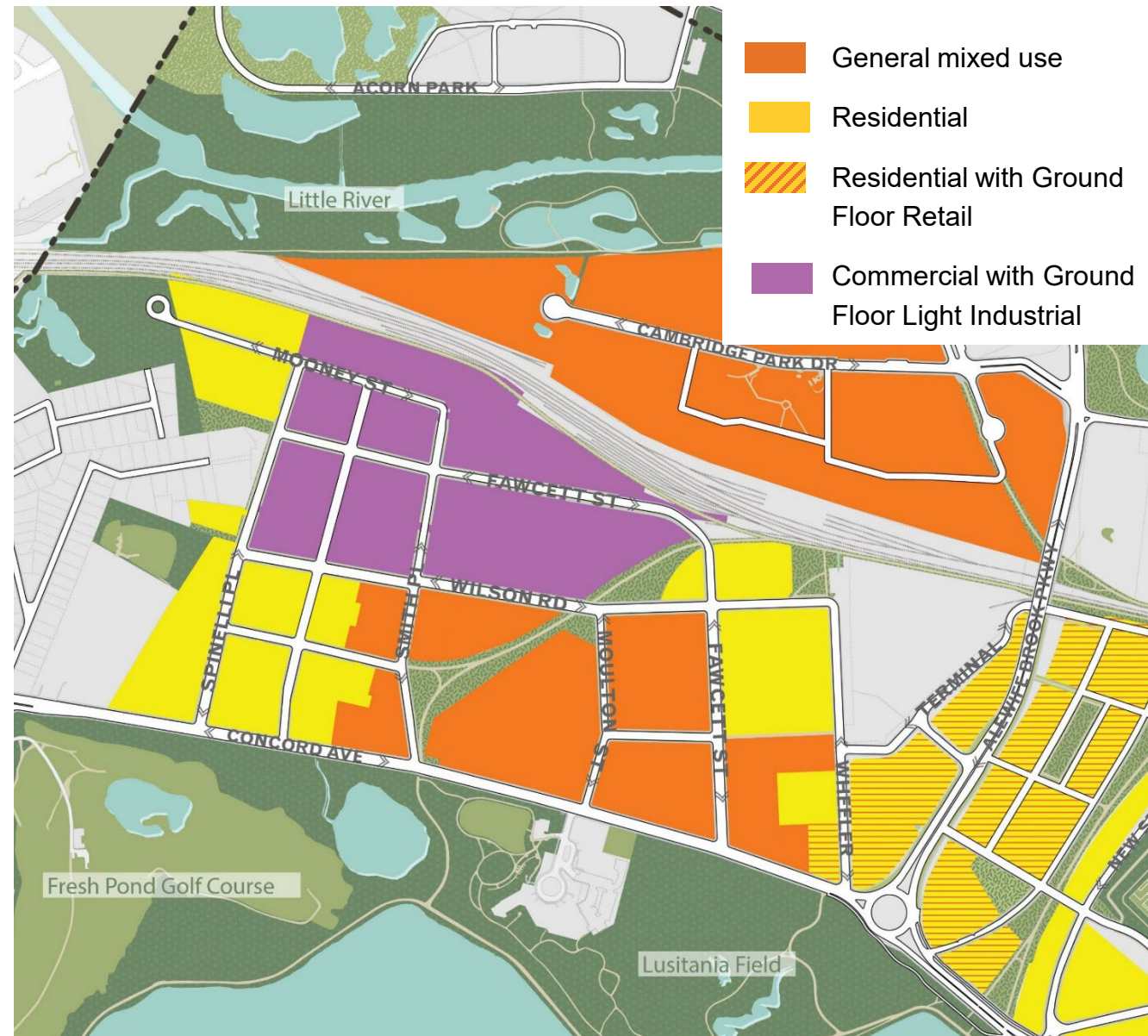
- I. **Use**
 - a. Not as wedded to inclusion of Light Industrial uses at the ground floor – stronger priority is having a greater variety/diversity of uses
 - b. Support concept of “Active Use” on ground floors, which could encompass:
 - a. Arts and culture uses
 - b. Certain residential amenities
 - c. Light industrial or maker space
 - d. Retail & Consumer service uses
 - e. Daycare uses
 - f. Uses like what’s there now – gymnastics, climbing
 - g. Civic uses, schools
 - h. Priorities: Interesting facades, activity at the ground floor, feeling of safety for people walking
 - c. Want to see greater proportion of housing to office/lab uses in the District
 - a. Incentivize housing?
 - b. Importance of affordable housing at various levels of affordability
 - i. Want to see family-sized units (3+ BR)
 - c. Employment will also help support retail and other services w/daytime population
 - d. Is there a better way to ensure a mix of uses throughout the district, not just one or the other?
- II. **Height**
 - a. Generally agree with a transition to less height in the west and a gradual step-up to more intense heights to the east and along the railroad tracks
 - b. Support increasing residential heights to what is permitted in the Triangle
 - c. If incentivizing residential, need heights of 120+ feet because of building code requirements (high-rise steel becomes economically viable at 10-12 stories) – note though that building codes always changing, new methods e.g., mass timber
 - d. Concerns expressed:
 - Light/shadows
 - Trapping heat – need for vegetation
 - Scaling down close to the Highlands neighborhood (per current zoning)
 - Don’t think 80’ buildings contribute to a sense of neighborhood
- III. **FAR**
 - a. Support density that accommodates the higher heights above desired ground-story uses (CDD to help determine)
 - b. Important for both residential and commercial to incentivize a greater variety of ground-story uses

Zoning Principles: Land Use

What We Heard

- Desire for mixed-used district
- Would like to see a greater proportion of housing to office/lab uses
 - Importance of affordable housing at various levels of affordability (i.e., inclusionary and all-affordable)
- Desire for a variety of ground floor uses, including but not limited to light industrial
- Support for a “main street” in a defined location, where active uses would be required for both residential and commercial development.
- Active uses could include:

○ Arts and culture	○ Retail
○ Residential amenities	○ Daycare uses
○ Light industrial	○ Recreational
○ Civic uses (e.g., libraries)	



In 2019, the community prioritized light industrial uses in the Quad to provide low barrier-to-entry jobs.

What's the desired use mix in the Quad?

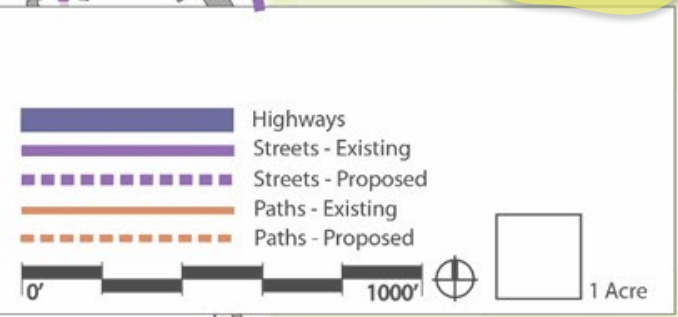
DPW?

Should commercial development be concentrated near the tracks?

Do we still want to prioritize residential next to Cambridge Highlands?

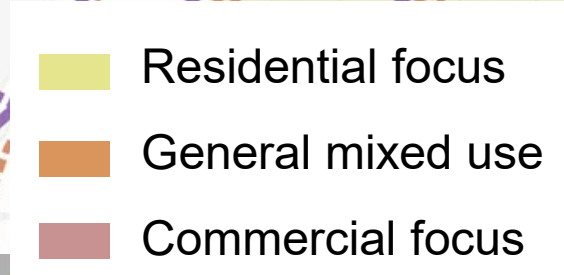
Mixed use but incentivize residential?

Should we prioritize residential use on Concord Ave (w/ ground floor active space)?



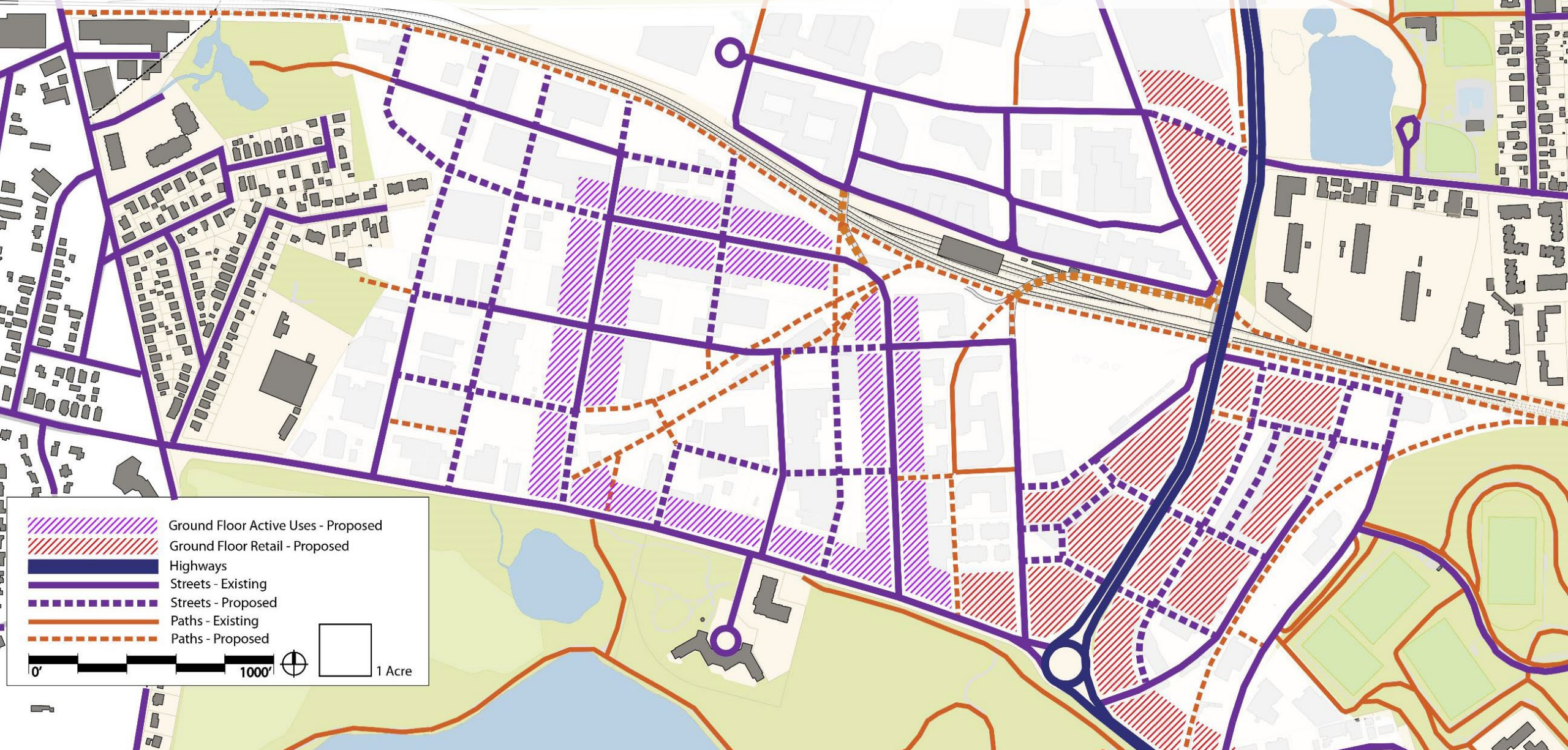
Legend:
Highways (thick blue line)
Streets - Existing (solid purple line)
Streets - Proposed (dashed purple line)
Paths - Existing (solid orange line)
Paths - Proposed (dashed orange line)

Scale: 0' to 1000' (1 Acre)



Residential focus (yellow)
General mixed use (orange)
Commercial focus (red)

Where and how much ground floor active space should we require in the Quad?

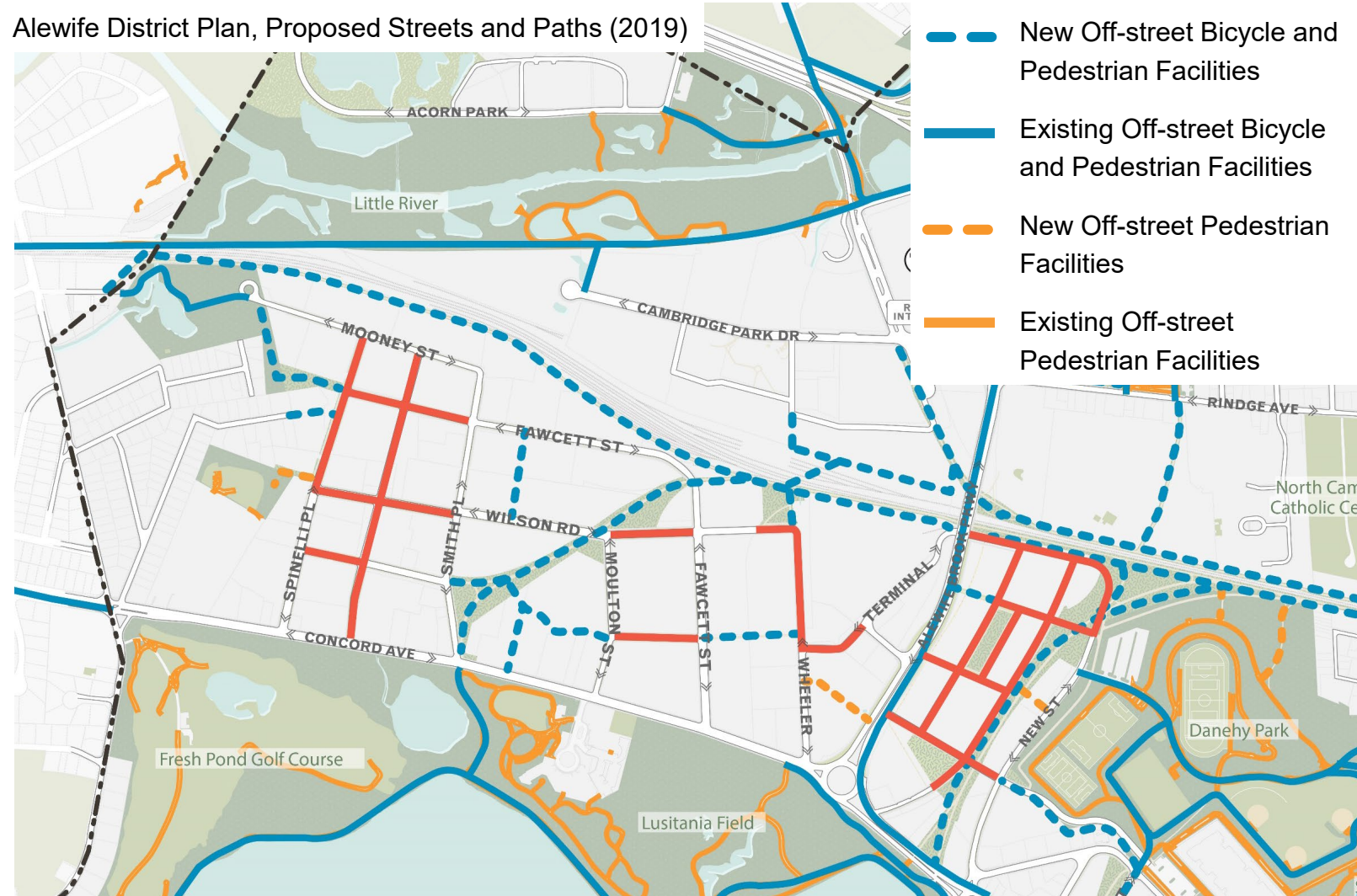


Zoning Principles: Street Network

What We Heard

- There should be a more connected street network
- Bike/ped connections to the T are necessary
- Priority investments:
 - Terminal Road connection
 - Bike/ped bridge
 - Commuter rail station

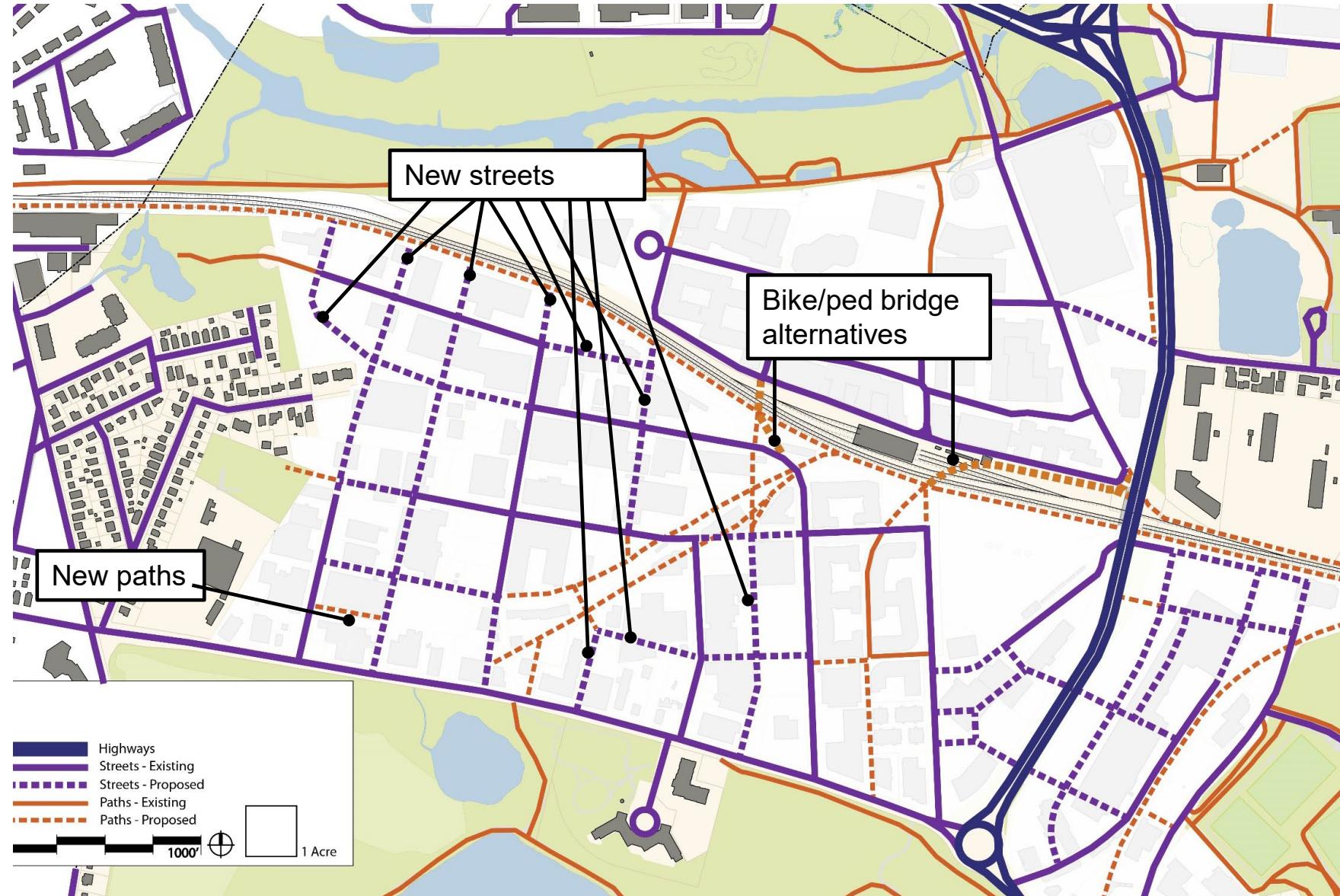
Alewife District Plan, Proposed Streets and Paths (2019)



A light industrial district requires large block sizes to fit large light industrial building types.

Proposed Street Network

- Reduction of light industrial floorplates allows for smaller block sizes.
- Introduction of additional streets and paths improves connectivity.

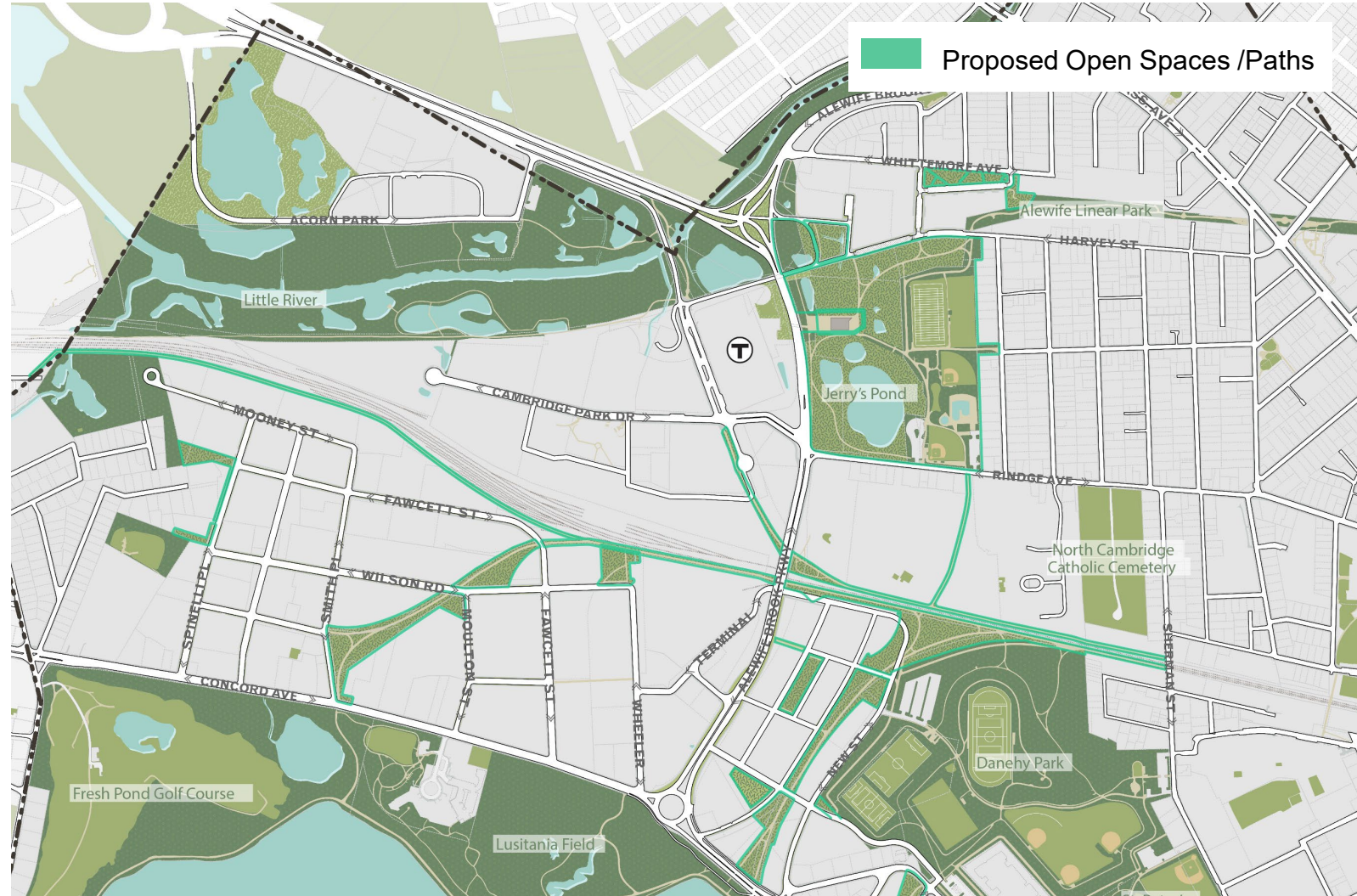


Zoning Principles: Open Space

Alewife District Plan, Open Space Vision Network (2019)

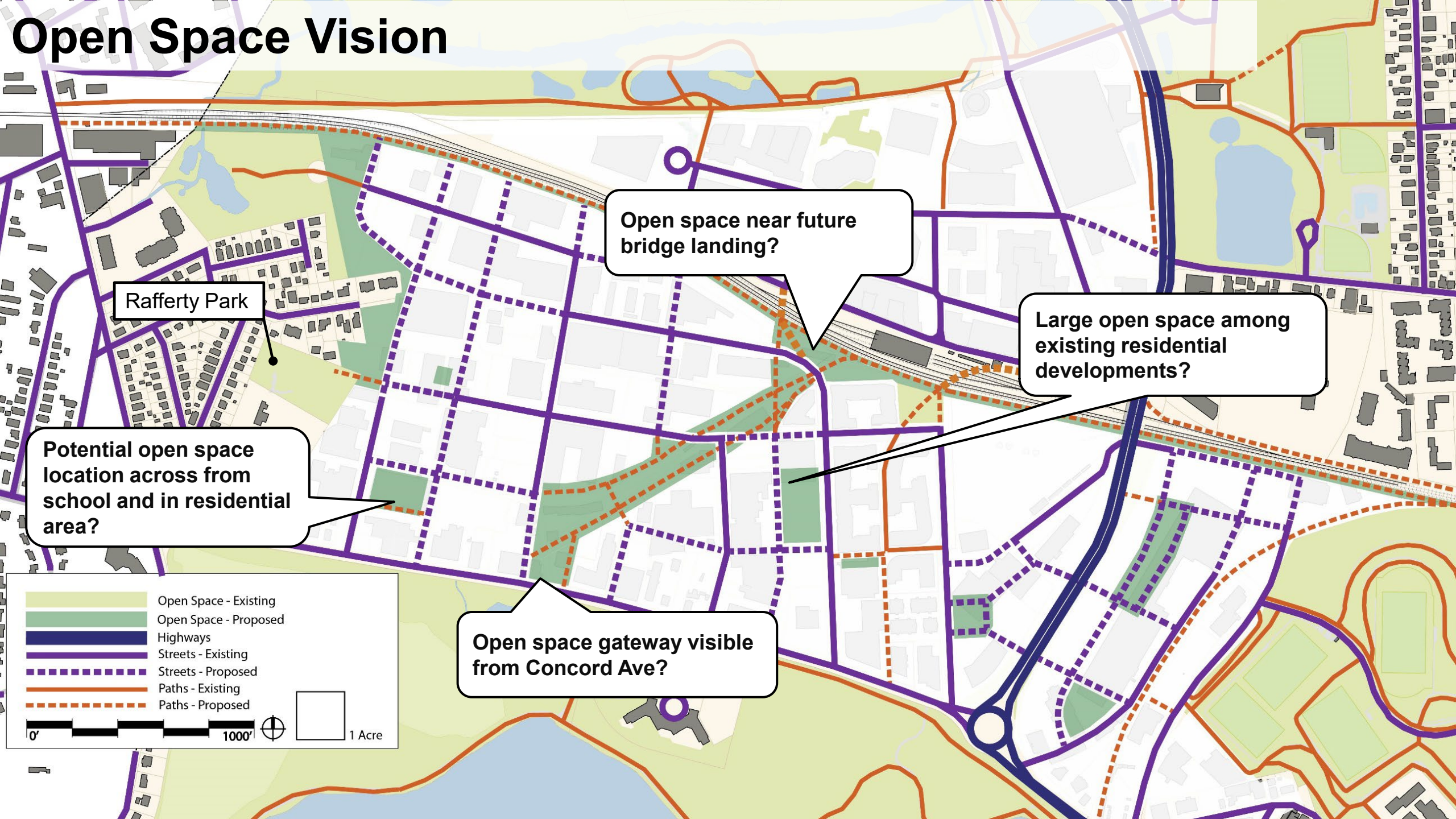
What We Heard

- Desire for one large neighborhood park (1+ acre) as well as multiple mini-parks
- Open space should serve multiple benefits, including climate resilience (i.e., stormwater retention, dense tree canopy)
- Connecting open spaces is important
- Improve and restore Blair Pond
- Encourage open spaces on roofs
- Open spaces should be near residential areas



The Alewife District Plan identified a 3-acre linear park to connect the district's existing open spaces.

Open Space Vision



Rafferty Park

Open space near future bridge landing?

Large open space among existing residential developments?

Potential open space location across from school and in residential area?

Open space gateway visible from Concord Ave?

- Open Space - Existing
- Open Space - Proposed
- Highways
- Streets - Existing
- Streets - Proposed
- Paths - Existing
- Paths - Proposed

0' 1000' 1 Acre

Zoning Principles: Public Benefits and Bonuses

What We Heard

- Support additional density/height to incentive desired public benefits (e.g., bridge, housing, ground floor active uses, open space, etc.)
 - Want to retain lower heights near Cambridge Highlands
 - Allow more intense heights to the east and along the railroad tracks
- Agree with scaling the bonus to the size of the public benefit provided
- Transportation fund proposed in Alewife Plan at \$5/sf for new commercial development should be increased.
- Language on the density bonus should be clear about what needs to occur to obtain it
- Include phasing requirements to balance the delivery of important infrastructure (e.g., bridge) with additional density/development

What are your priorities?

Public Benefits

- Terminal Road connection
- Bike/ped bridge
- Commuter rail station
- Ground floor active space
- 1-acre open space
- Improvements to Blair Pond
- Affordable housing beyond inclusionary
- 100% affordable housing

Where and how much additional height would you allow for public benefits?

Is the area along the tracks appropriate for additional height to pay for bridge, open space?

Should taller buildings frame Alewife Brook Pkwy and allow for additional housing and ground floor uses near the T and Shopping Center?

Should we retain lower heights near Highlands?

Can additional height subsidize lower rent generating ground floor uses?

Do we want to encourage taller development on Concord Ave?

Highways
Streets - Existing
Streets - Proposed
Paths - Existing
Paths - Proposed

1 Acre

- Residential focus
- General mixed use
- Commercial focus
- Residential w/ground floor active space