

# 1 Neighborhood & Destination

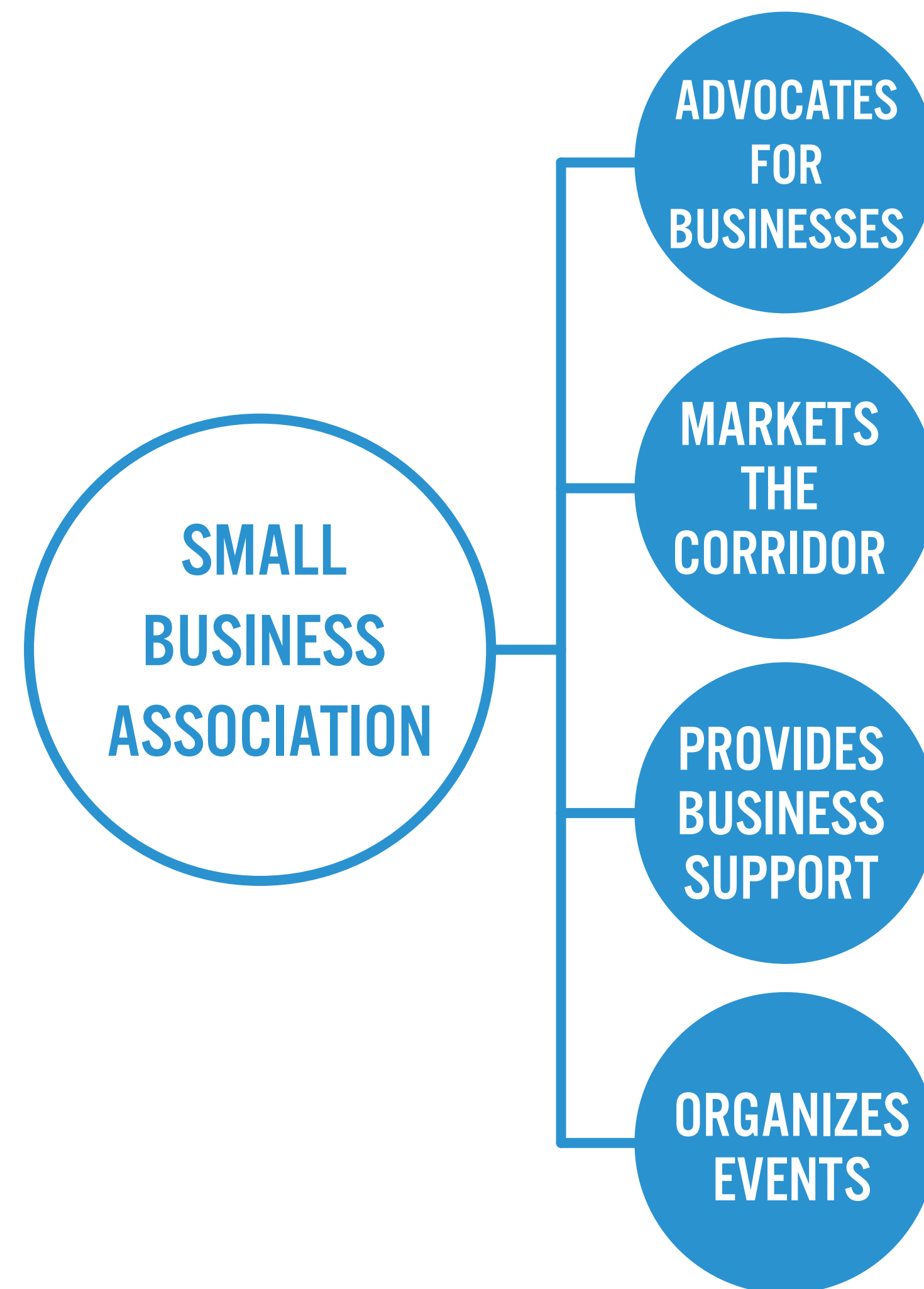
How can Mass Ave continue to provide neighborhood goods & services and foster an active corridor for residents and visitors?

Here are some preliminary ideas:

A

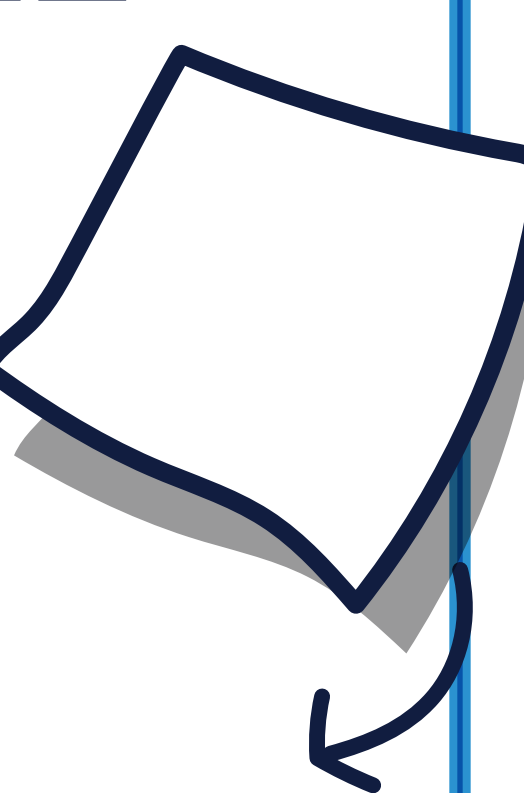
Foster a mix of local, neighborhood-serving, family-friendly goods and services by:

- > supporting the creation of a local business association to support and attract new businesses and to organize community events and programming
- > exploring the creation of a community kitchen or other similar incubator spaces
- > celebrating and supporting local small businesses
- > exploring ways to keep commercial rents affordable



## WHICH IDEAS DO YOU LIKE

to support the commercial corridor?



B

Market the corridor to support local businesses by:

### Physically

- > branding different areas of the corridor (North Mass Ave, Porter Square, South of Porter Square) or by specialized districts (dining district, arts district)
- > adding more light pole banners throughout corridor
- > constructing gateway signage at key points
- > installing decorative street lighting and tree lighting

### Programmatically

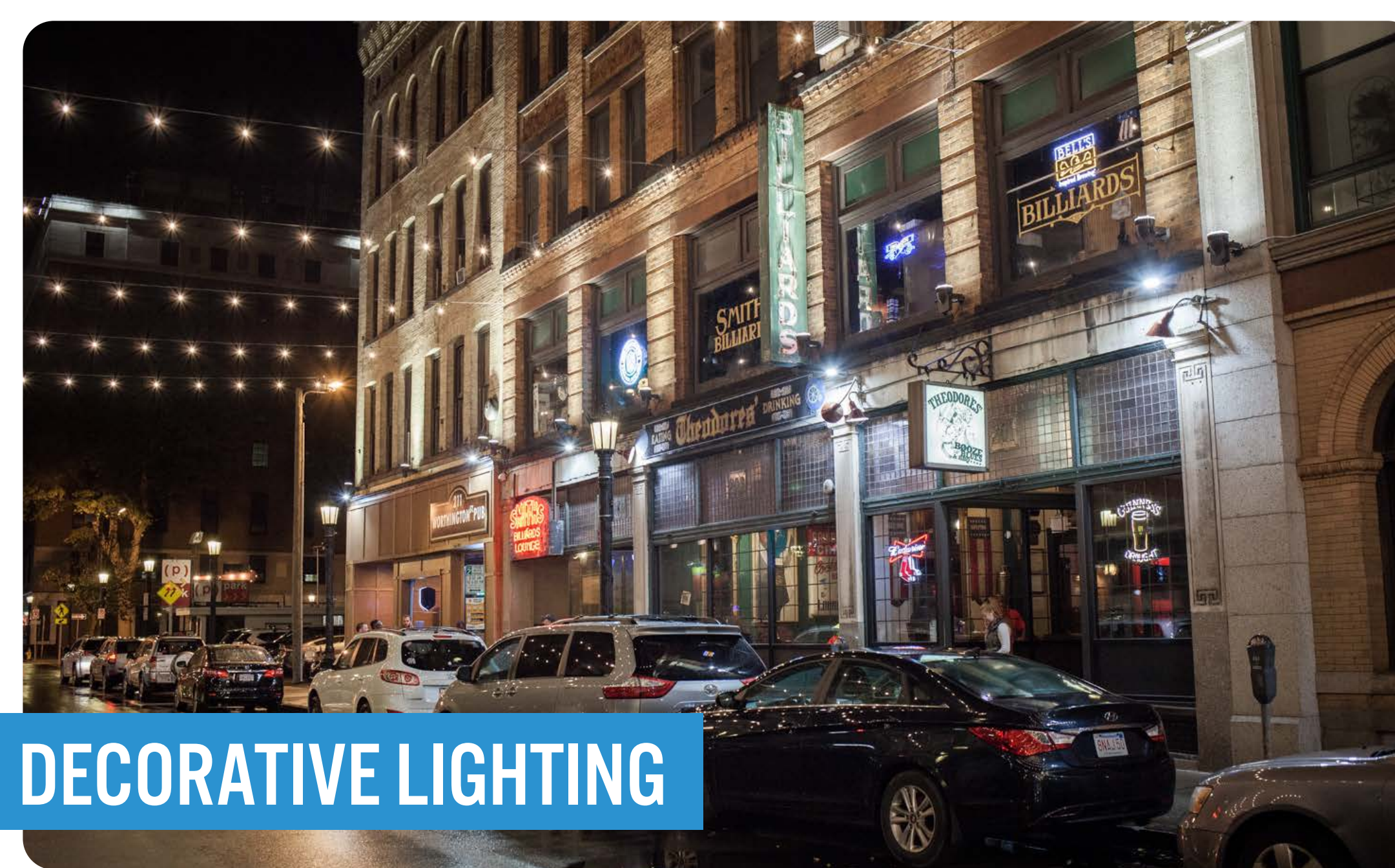
- > recruiting new businesses to the corridor
- > providing business and marketing support



CORRIDOR BRANDING



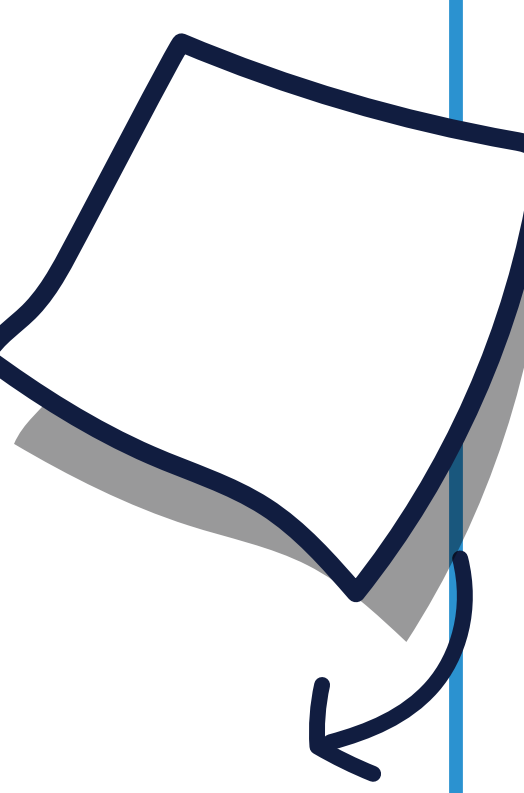
GATEWAY SIGNAGE



DECORATIVE LIGHTING

## WHICH IDEAS DO YOU LIKE

to support local small businesses?  
Is there anything you would add?



C

Organize and host more community events and performance art by:

- > partnering with local institutions, organizations, and businesses to organize and fund events
- > connecting with local artists and performers



FIRST FRIDAYS



PERFORMANCE ART

## WHAT KIND OF EVENTS

would you like to see on Mass Ave?





2

# More Inviting

What are ways to build more community identity along Mass Ave, make it greener, and to create more places to gather?

A

Here are some preliminary ideas:

Share community identity through creativity and art by:

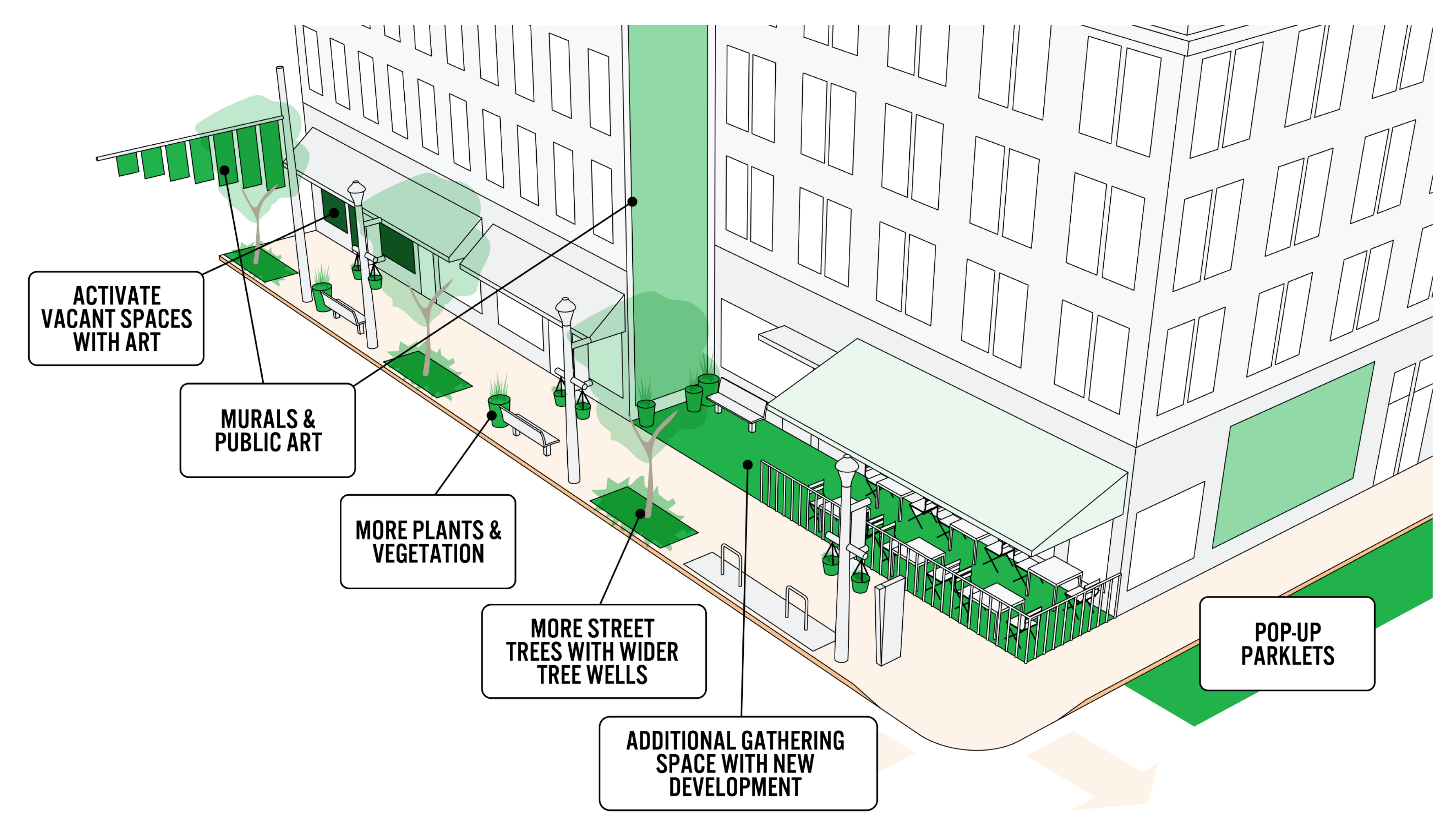
- > identifying locations for murals and public art, such as street/pavement murals or artistic crosswalks
- > installing more benches, bike racks, crosswalks, and other public infrastructure
- > installing ambient lighting in key commercial areas
- > activating vacant commercial spaces with art

Plant more trees and vegetation by:

- > installing more street trees to develop mature canopies
- > make existing street tree wells larger to provide more space for additional vegetation
- > working with property owners to plant more vegetation
- > coordinating with green stormwater infrastructure mitigation measures

Create more places for the community to gather by:

- > partnering with property owners and institutions to create more publicly accessible spaces
- > finding opportunities for pop-up parklets on Mass Ave and side streets



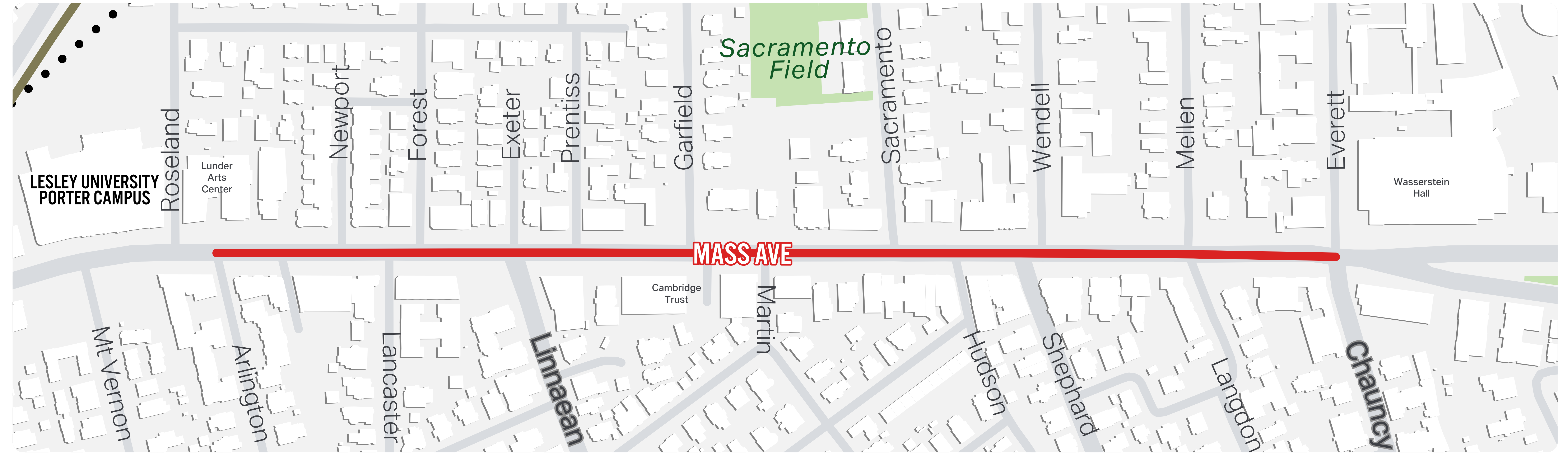
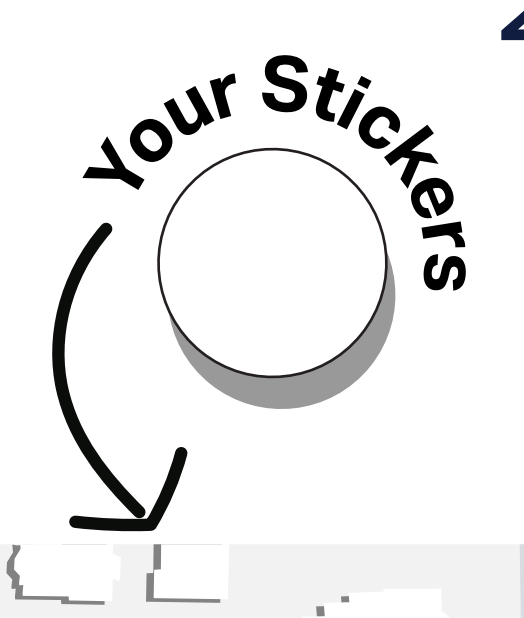
B

## WHERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES

to make Mass Ave more inviting or build community identity?

1. Grab a set of red, green, and blue stickers.
2. On the map below, add your stickers to identify places you think could use art, greenery, or gathering spaces.

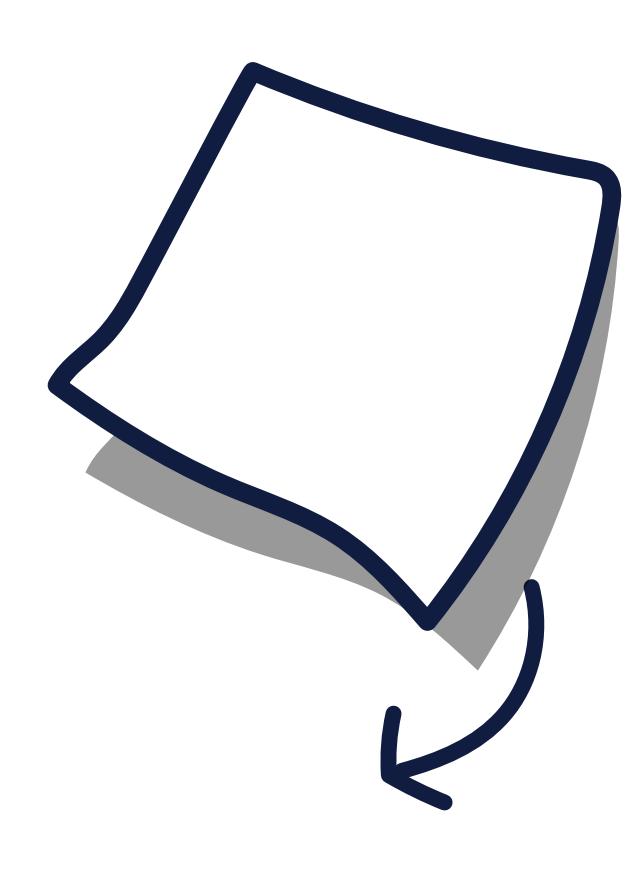
- = MORE ART!
- = MORE GREENERY!
- = GATHERING SPACES!



C

## WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS

for making Mass Ave more inviting and a great place to gather?

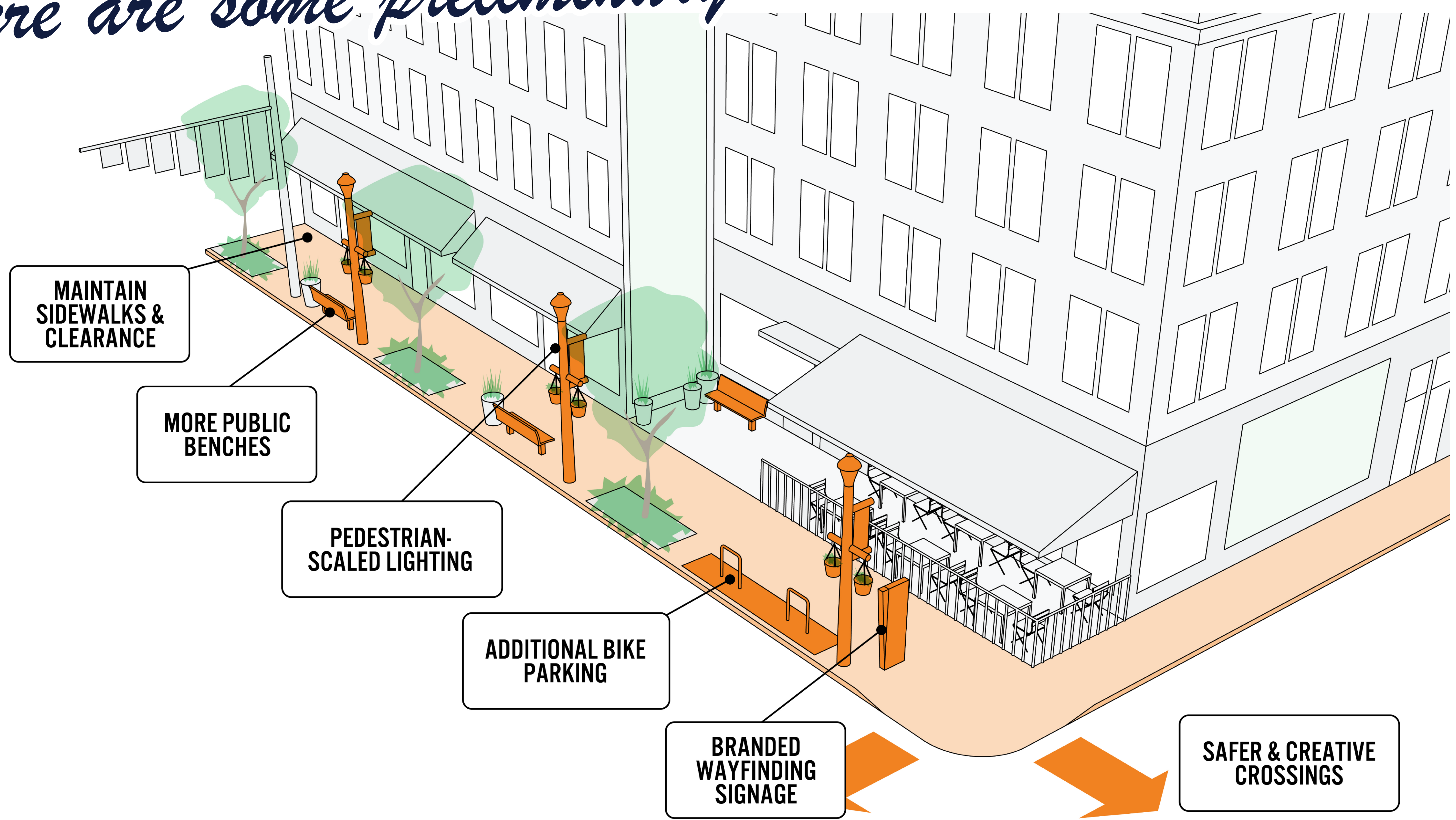




# 3 Easier to get Around

What are ways to make it easy for everybody on Mass Ave to access and navigate the corridor?

Here are some preliminary ideas:



**A**

**Ensure sidewalks are accessible for everybody by:**

- > maintaining and repairing sidewalks by reporting poor sidewalk conditions or sidewalk obstructions
- > balancing sidewalk activity with access for people with disabilities, for example ensuring outdoor dining leaves enough sidewalk clearance

**Provide safe, convenient access to sustainable transportation options by:**

- > providing safer, more visible crossings on Mass Ave and perpendicular streets
- > Install public amenities to increase safety and comfort along Mass Ave: frequent street benches, shade trees, and pedestrian-scale lighting
- > coordinating with MBTA to install more bus shelters where appropriate
- > providing additional bike parking and blue bike station areas
- > encouraging shared off-street parking between businesses

**Increase signage and wayfinding by:**

- > creating branded wayfinding signage at key gateways and destinations
- > installing a variety of signage types including: pedestrian and roadways signage and sidewalk markers

**B**

## WHERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES

*to focus on accessibility and comfort?*

1. Grab a set of red, green, and blue stickers.
2. On the map below, add your stickers to identify places you think could use a focus on getting around.

Your Stickers

- = **SIDEWALK FOCUS!**
- = **LIGHTING!**
- = **TRANSIT AMENITIES!**  
(bike and bus amenities, benches)

**C**

## WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS

*for making Mass Ave easier to get around?*



# 4 More Affordable

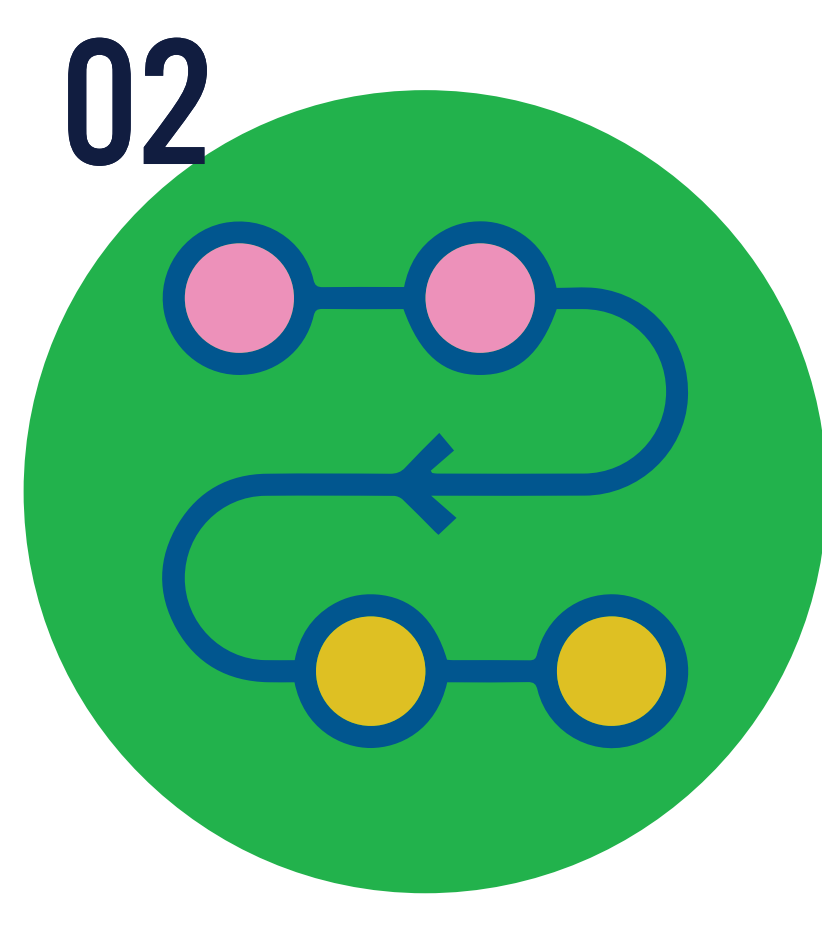
## Affordable Housing 101!

### A WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO HOUSING COSTS?



#### LAND

Land is scarce in Cambridge, making it expensive.



#### PROCESS

Requirements that add time, process, or set standards.



#### CONSTRUCTION

Inflation has made the cost of labor and materials worse.



#### CAPITAL

High interest rates have made the cost of borrowing money higher.



#### PROFIT

These increased costs lower profit margins for developers, who need a return on investment.

### B WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

Housing is generally considered “affordable” if a household spends no more than **30%** of their income to live there.

Someone can find their housing affordable, even if it is market rate. There is also Affordable Housing - which is when a unit is restricted to a household at a certain income.



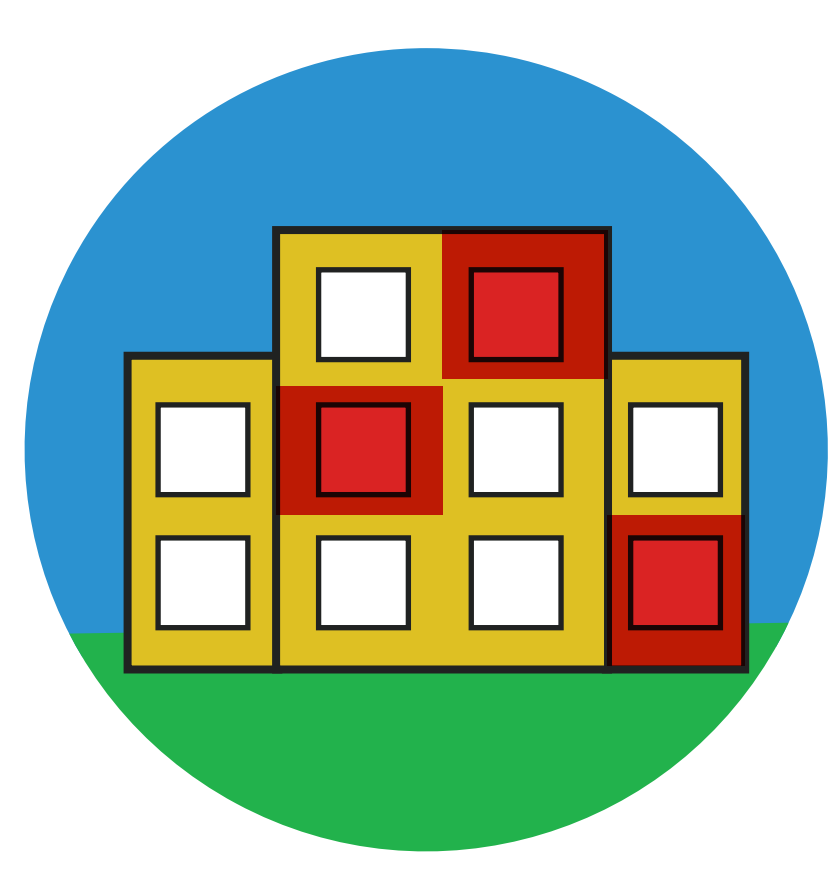
### C HOW DOES AFFORDABLE HOUSING GET BUILT?

The City of Cambridge is adding affordable units to the market in a few ways. Housing builders use City and other available public and private funding to create new affordable housing through:



#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY

The AHO allows the creation of new, permanently affordable housing that is denser than what might be currently allowed.



#### INCLUSIONARY HOUSING

Market-rate developments of ten or more units are required to allocate 20% of residential floor area for low- and moderate- income tenants or homebuyers.



#### CAMBRIDGE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST

City funding and funding from contributions from non-residential developers of large projects.



# 4 More Housing Options

How can Mass Ave better support a mix of housing options and price points for the community?

## A WHAT IS ON MASS AVE TODAY?

FACT: In 1961, you could build up to 60 feet on most of the corridor. Today, it is 45 feet in many places.



ONE-STORY RETAIL



HISTORIC MANSIONS



HISTORIC MASONRY APARTMENTS



FOUR-STORY MIXED USE



INSTITUTIONS



AFFORDABLE HOUSING OVERLAY APARTMENTS

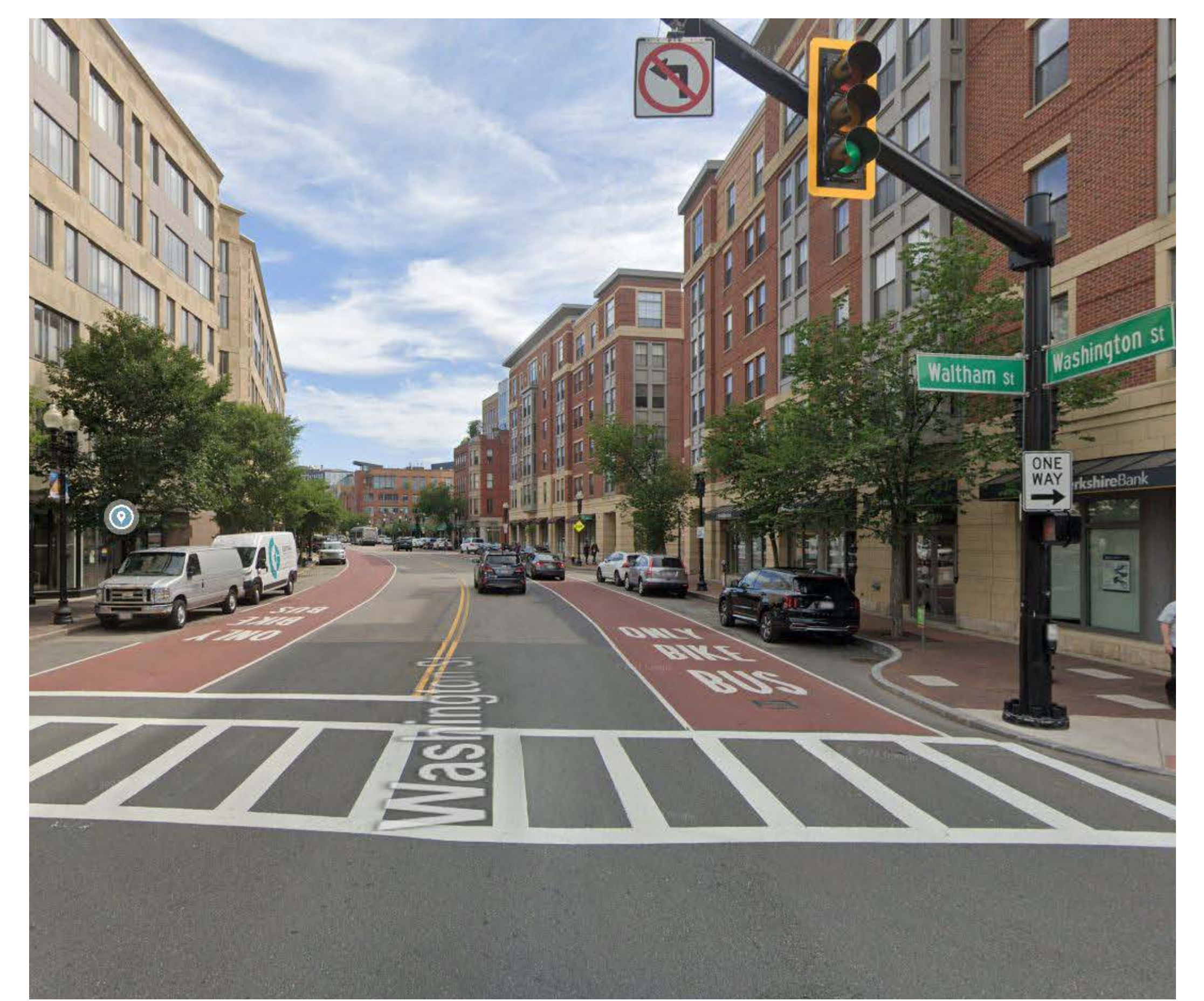
*What does a corridor this wide feel like...*

### ...IN OTHER PLACES?

Mass Avenue is about 100 feet wide. In other places where the road is this wide, it's common to have some taller buildings that help create a sense of place and more activity.



MASS AVE, CENTRAL SQUARE



WASHINGTON ST, BOSTON

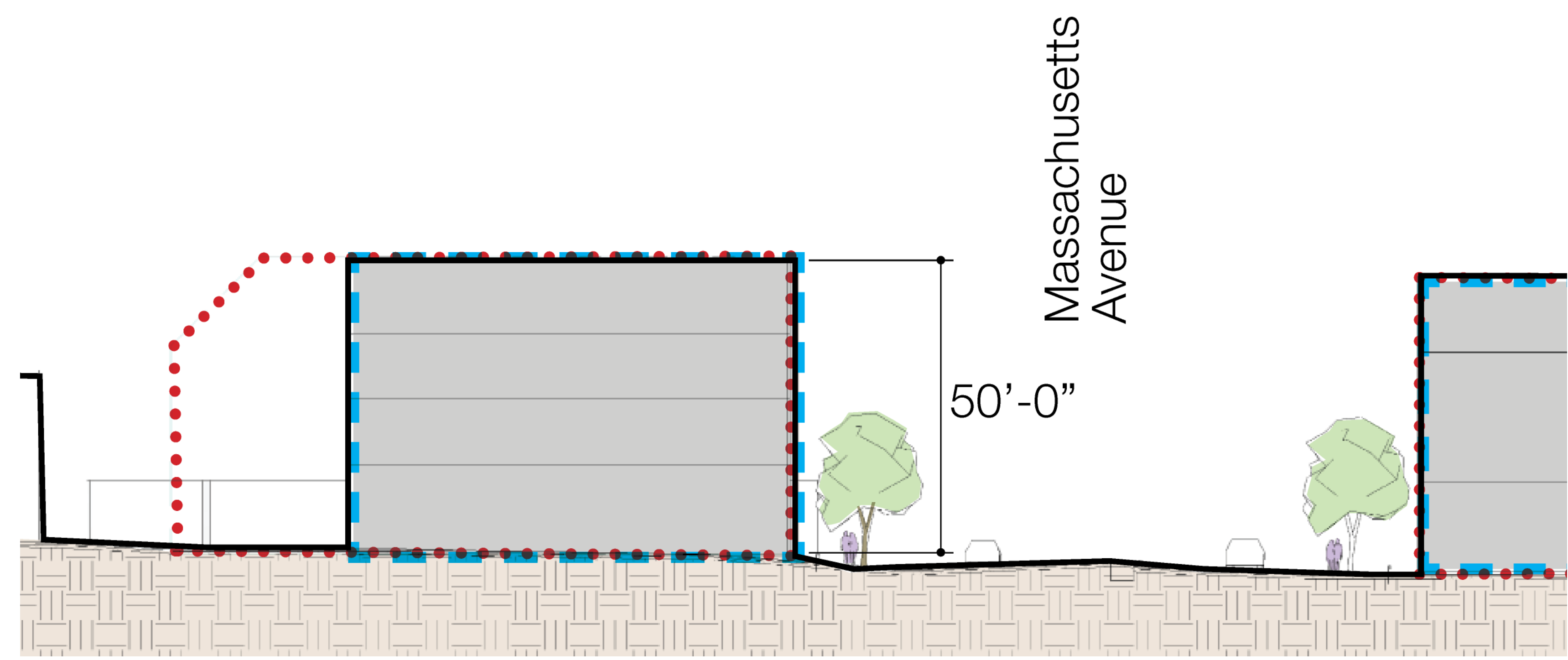
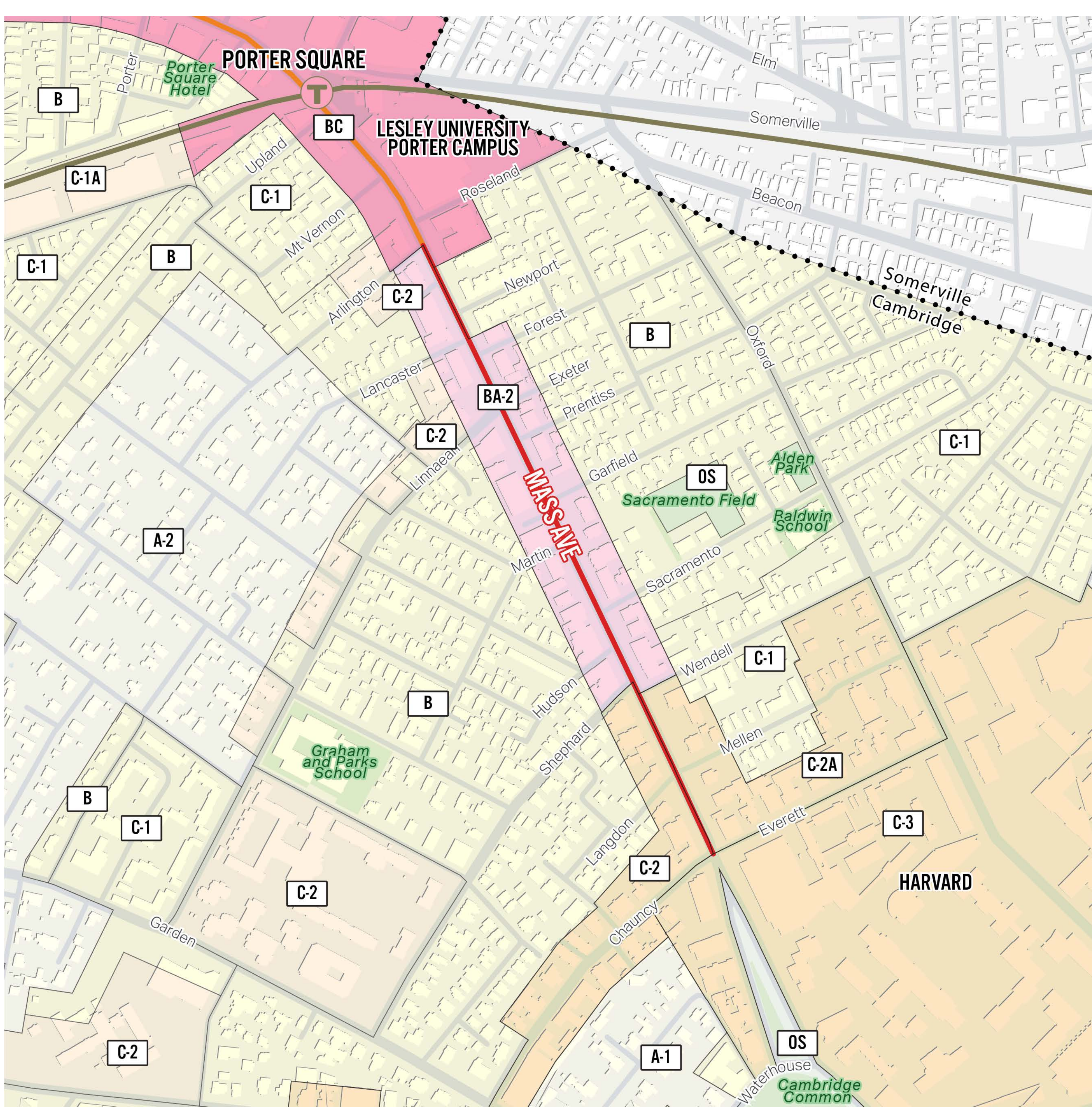


14TH STREET, DC



SHORT NORTH, COLUMBUS

## C WHAT CAN BE BUILT TODAY?



Mass Ave South of Porter Square is regulated by the **Mass Ave Overlay District (MAOD)**, which intends to promote retail, design, and pedestrian amenities. The MAOD and BA-2, the most common zoning base district, allow:

- MAXIMUM HEIGHT: 50'**
- REQUIREMENTS: GROUND FLOOR NON-RESIDENTIAL USES**
- STORIES: 4**
- UNITS: 13 (16 IF ON THE CORNER)**

Above map: base zoning that touches Lower Mass Ave study area includes BA-2, C-2, and C-2A.



# 4 More Housing Options

How can we encourage new housing on the corridor?

## A WHY IS INCREASING DENSITY ON MASS AVE IMPORTANT?

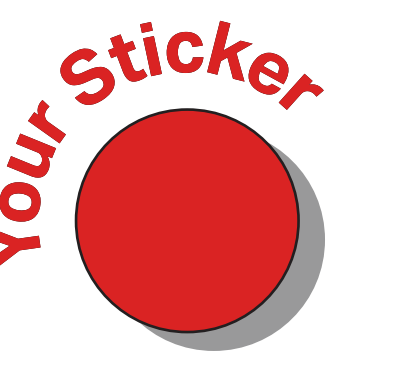
Last year, the single most important issue for residents citywide was affordable housing.<sup>1</sup> New housing - market-rate and affordable - is seen as an extremely important issue for Cambridge communities.

Envision Cambridge - the City's Plan for 2030 - specifically named a need for all kinds of new housing to address affordability in the city. Major corridors - like Mass Ave - have been identified as a place for additional housing density.

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Citywide Survey, 2023.

## WOULD YOU RATHER:

Place your dot in the scenario you prefer.



### KEEP THE SAME DENSITIES

#### KEEP IN MIND LESS DENSITY:

- Can maintain the existing character of the street
- Does not increase housing units or additional housing types to accommodate new households
- Does not provide support for additional transit use
- May limit the customer base for local businesses

OR

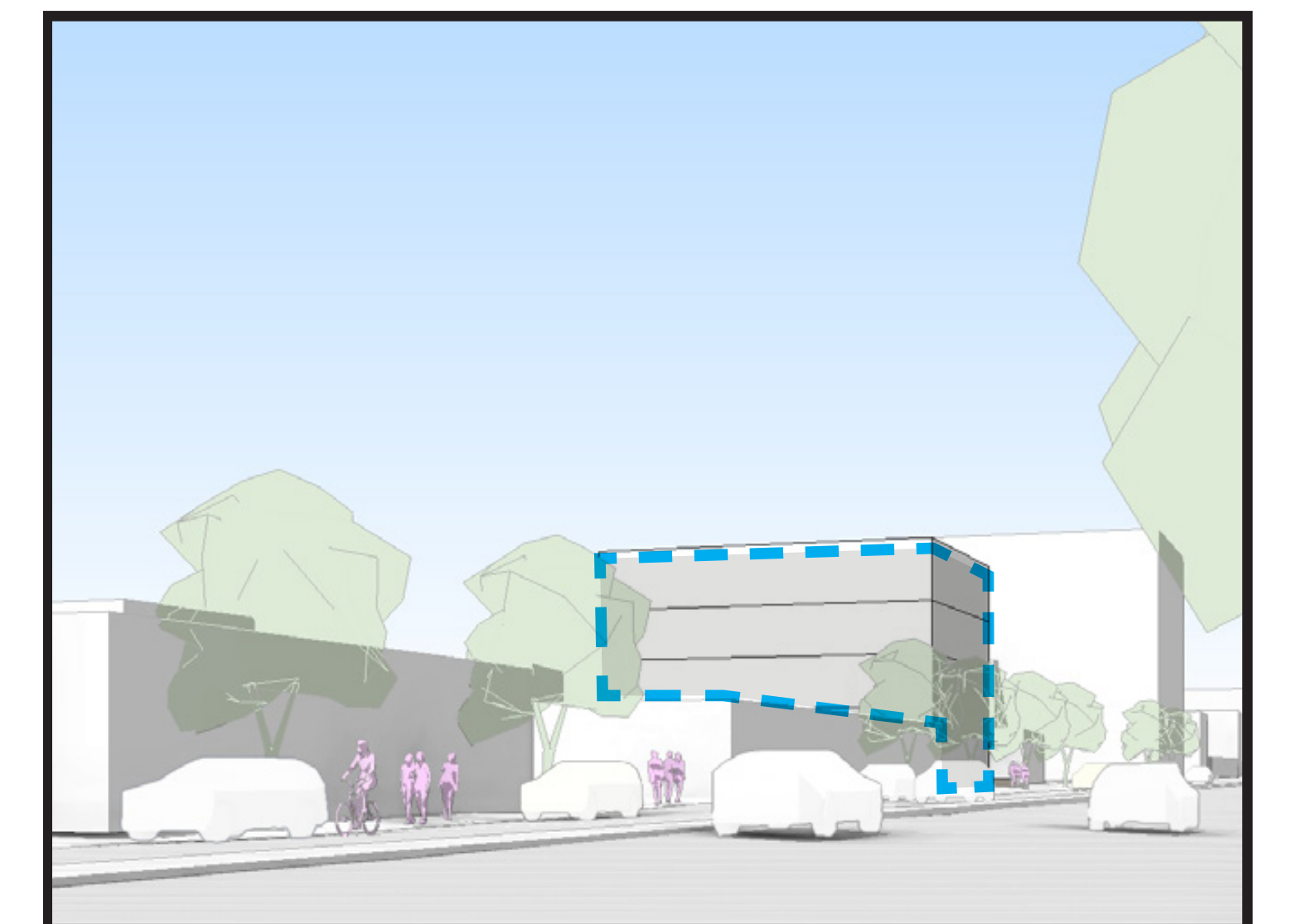
### INCREASE HEIGHTS TO SUPPORT MORE DENSITY

#### KEEP IN MIND MORE DENSITY:

- May stabilize prices over time by increasing housing supply
- Can increase housing types to accommodate different household needs
- Risks loss of historic, one-story retail buildings and potentially increases retail rents
- Can add people and foot traffic to support small business
- Can help the city reduce its carbon footprint

## B What if WE WENT UP...

This is what can be built today (about 4 stories, 13 units).

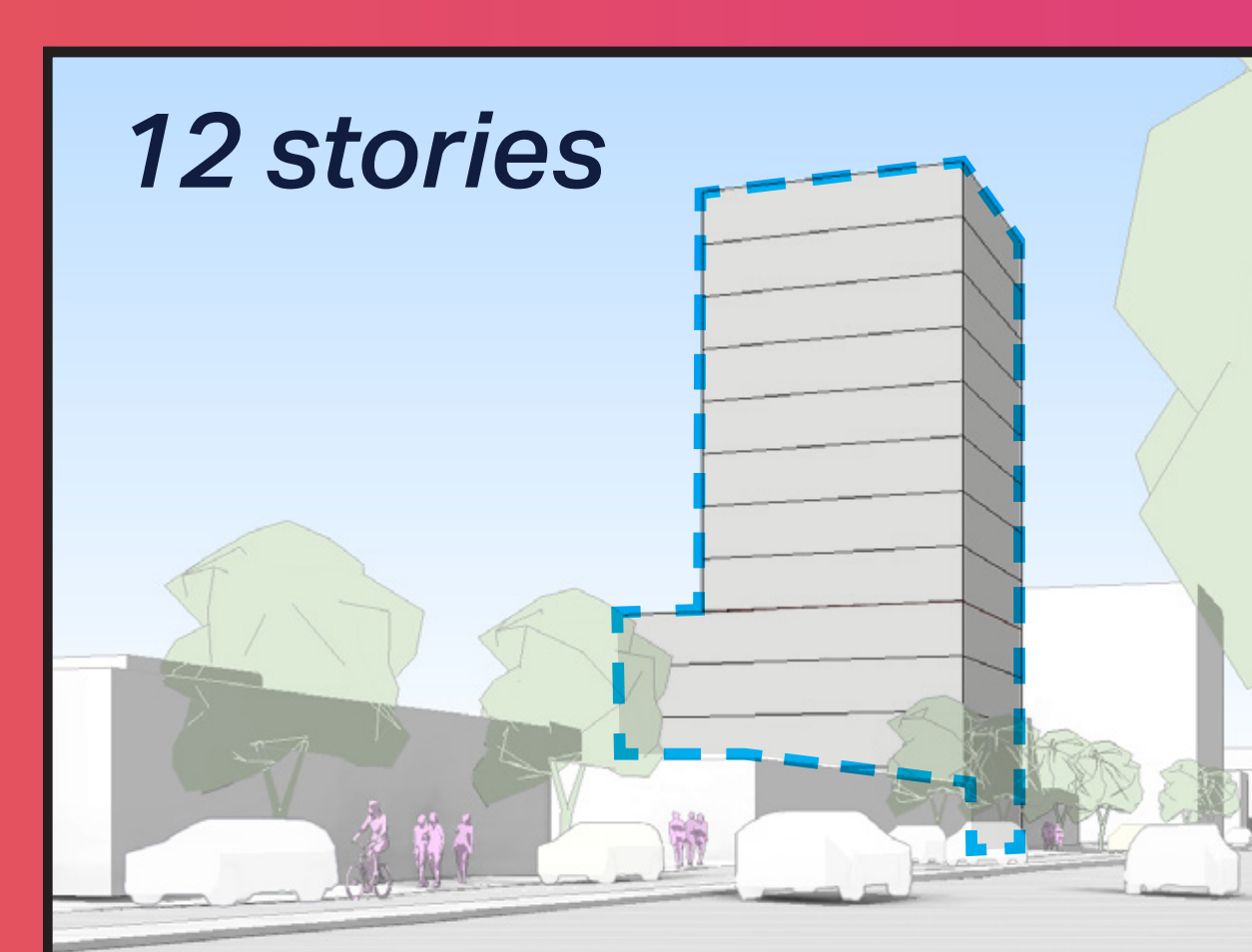
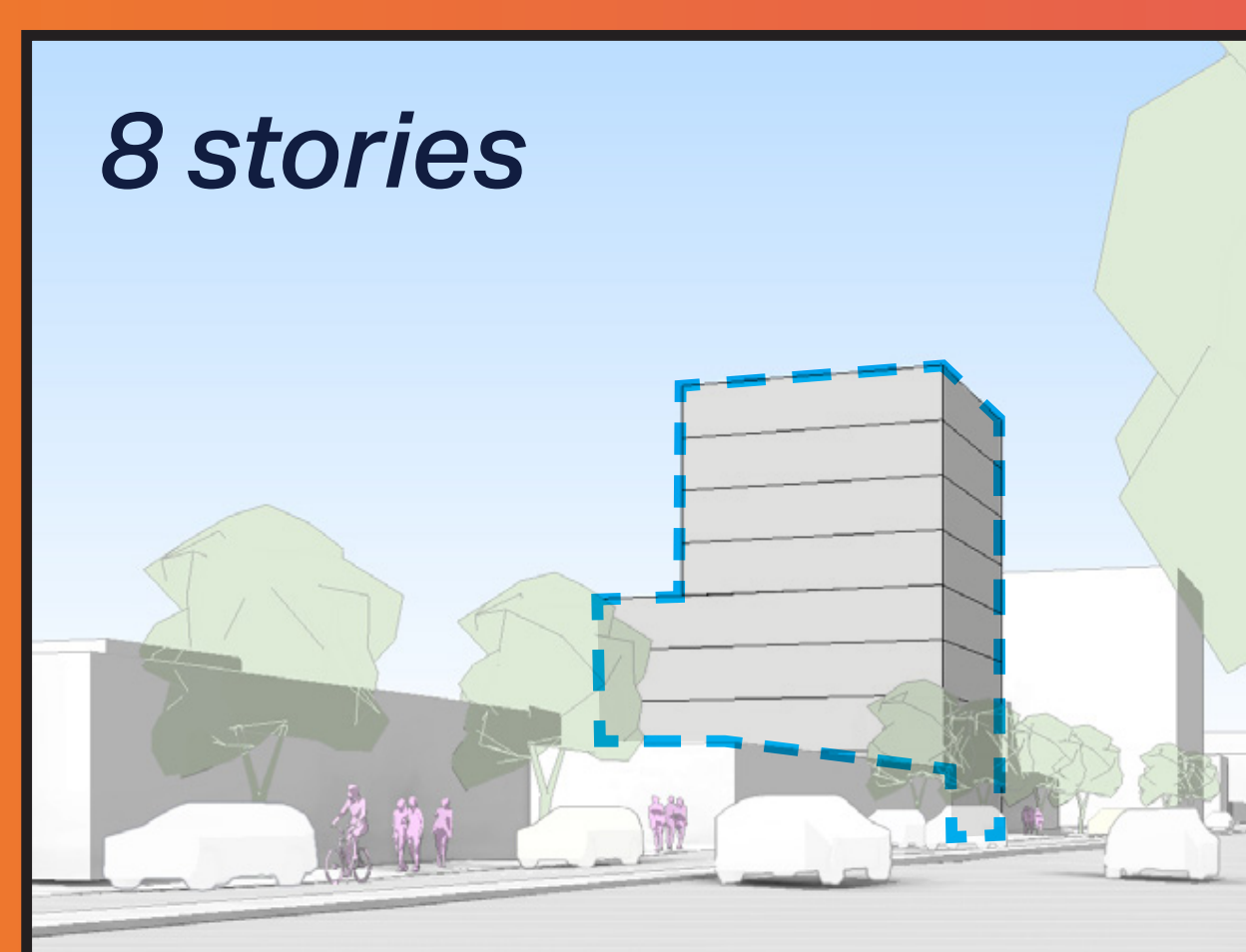
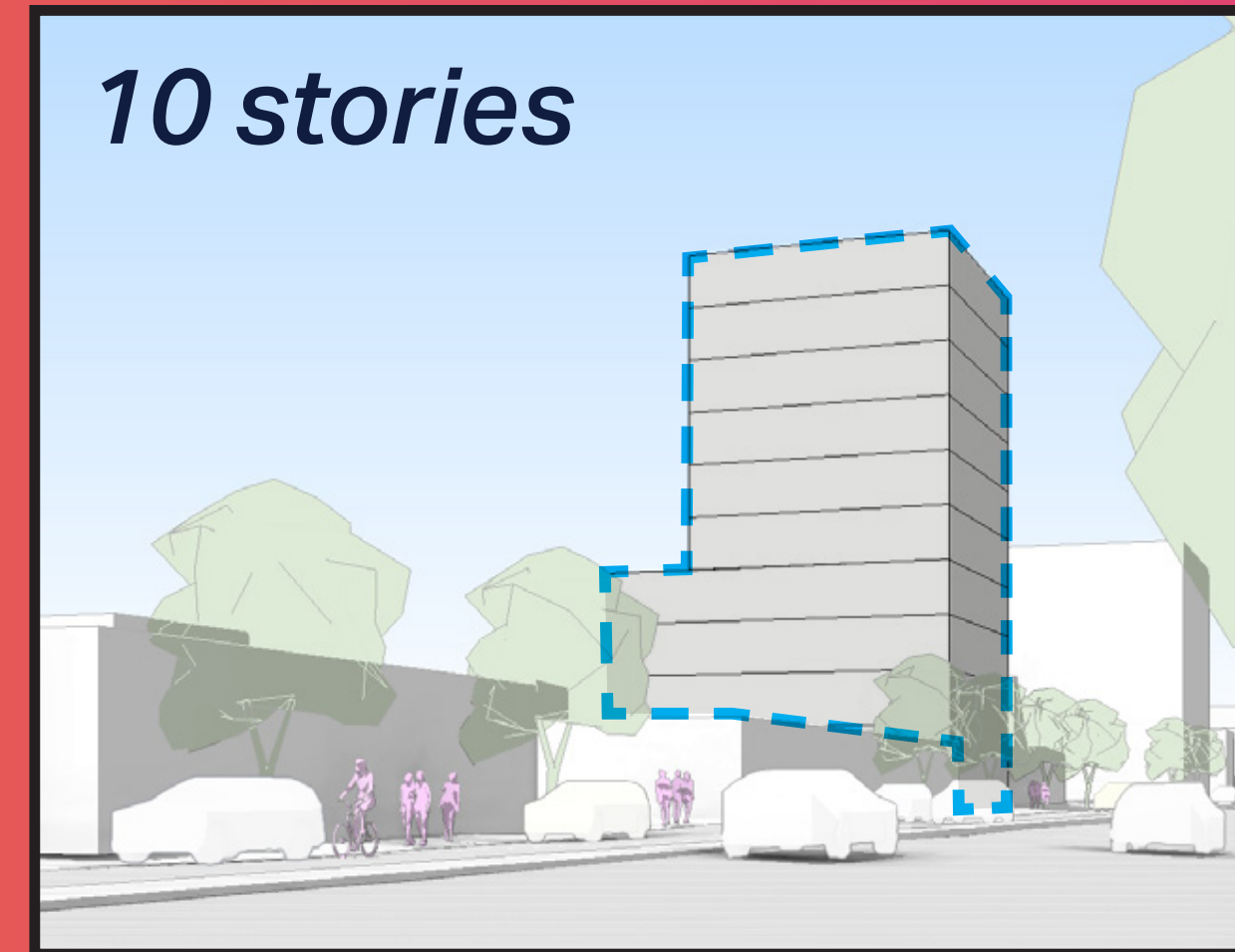
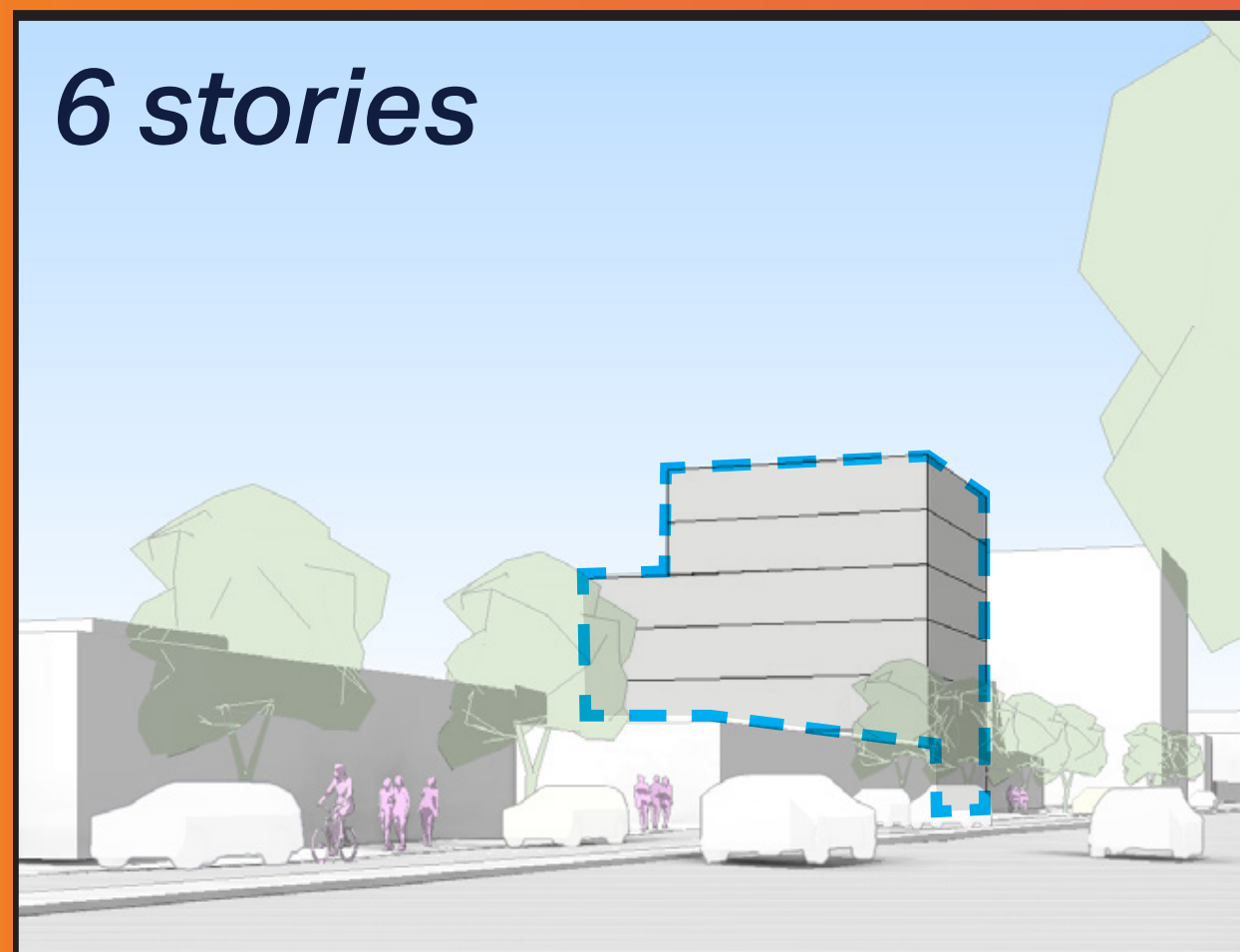


### A LITTLE

### A LITTLE MORE

### A BIT MORE?

- 1 Grab a numbered dot sticker and index card.
- 2 Check out the examples (right).
- 3 Place your dot in the column you like best.
- 4 Write your reactions on the index card and pin to the row below your dot!



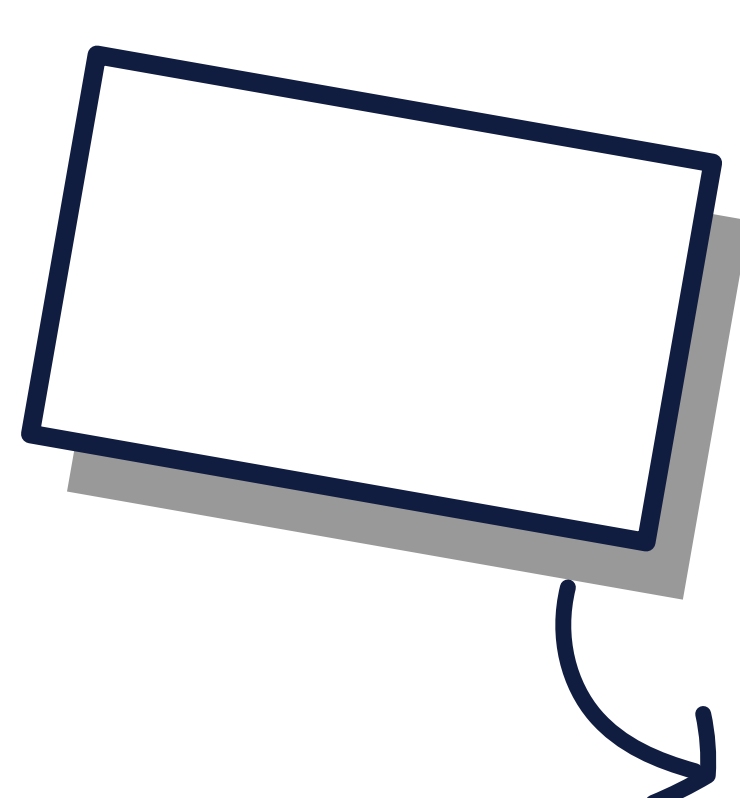
More than 12 stories?

PLACE A DOT ON YOUR PREFERRED SCENARIO FOR MASS AVE



TELL US WHY!

What would be the potential benefits or drawbacks?

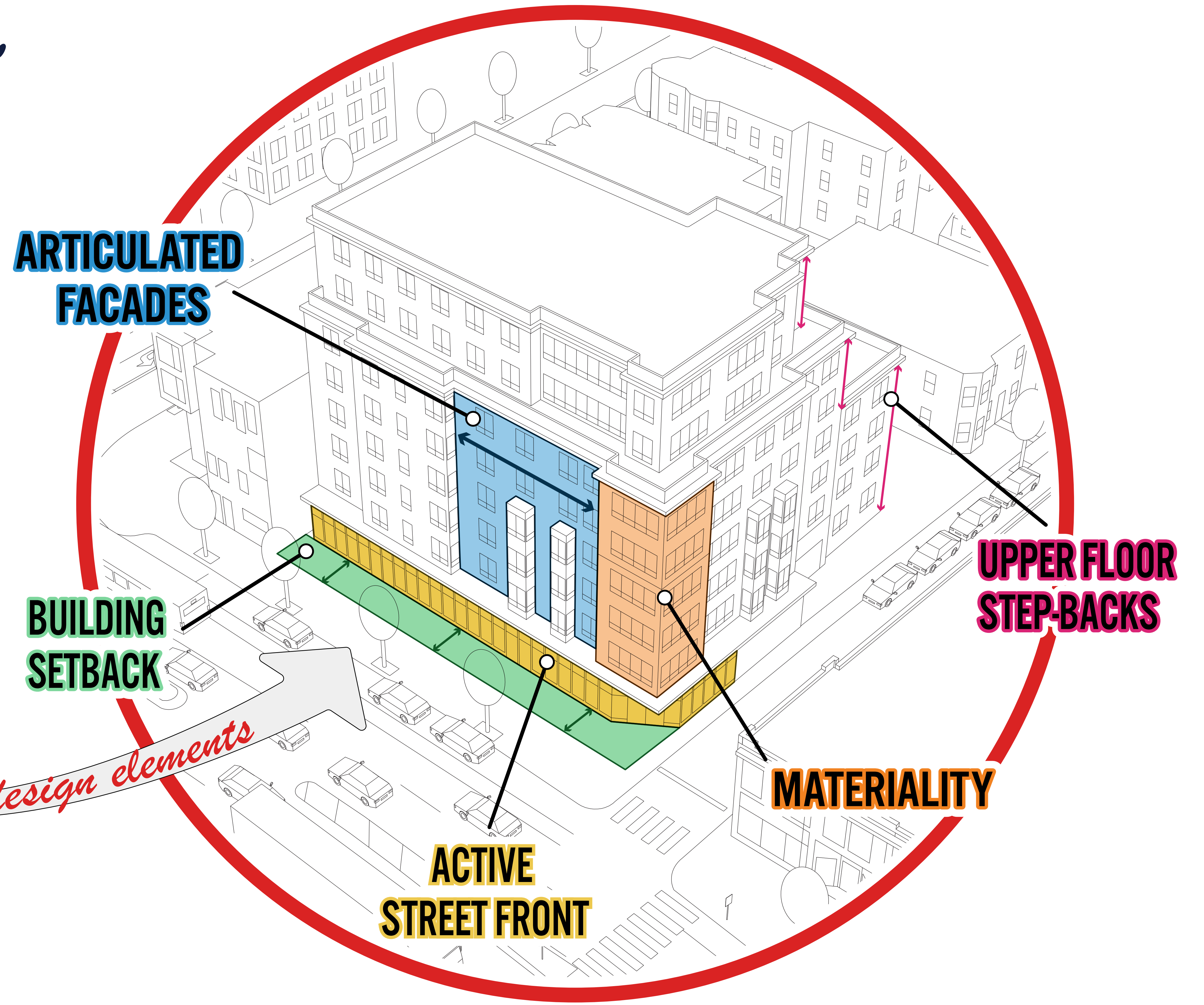
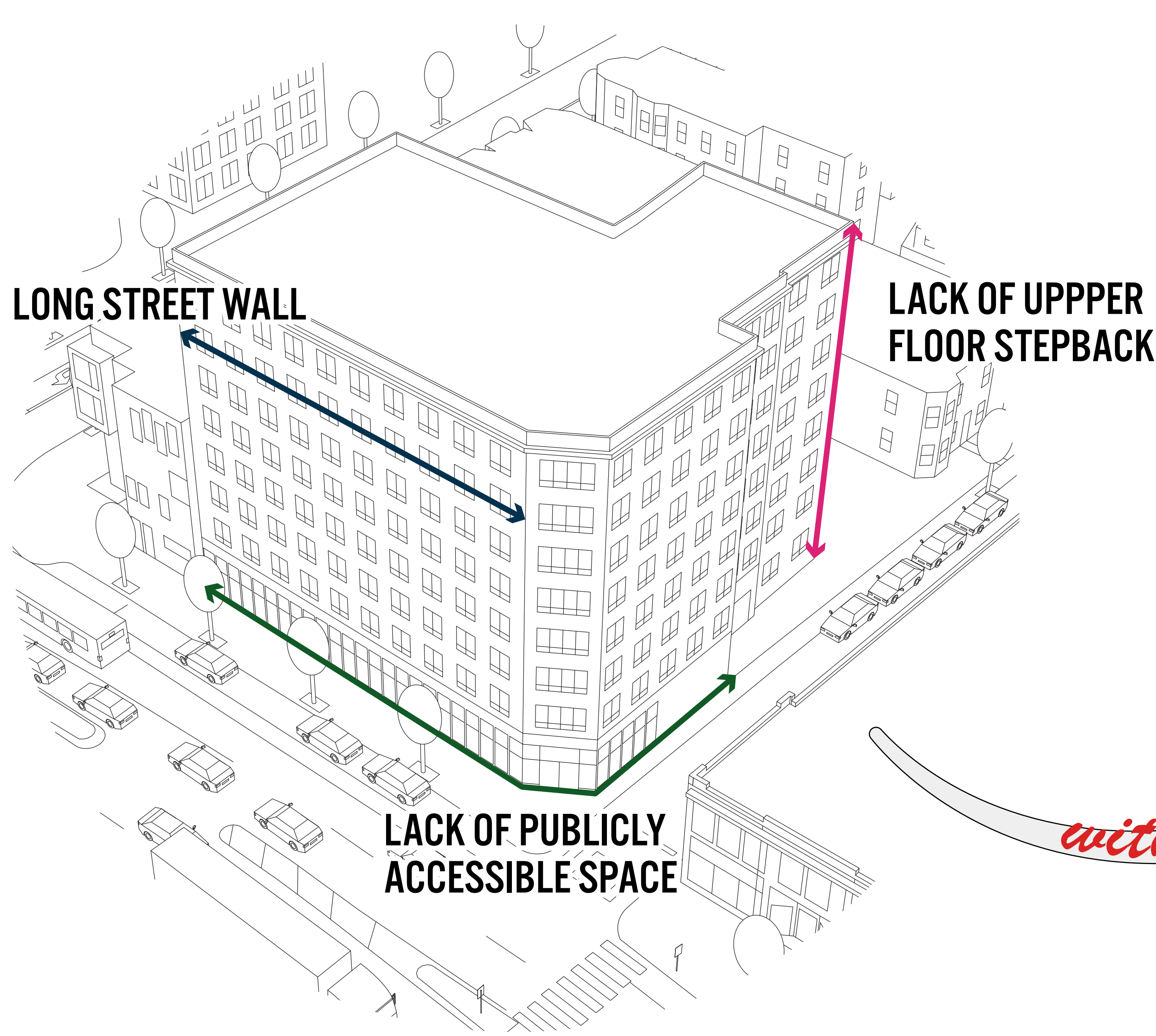




# 4 More Housing Options

How can we use new developments to contribute positively to the neighborhood?

Here are some ideas:



## ACTIVE STREET FRONT

An active street front typically includes restaurant or retail use but active offices and even some residential uses can contribute to energetic street life. A ground floor that is designed for transparency, access, and flexible programs can be active.



## UPPER FLOOR STEPBACKS



Stepbacks reduce a building's volume as it rises. Setbacks can reduce a building's shadows, its mass, and overall sense of scale.



## ARTICULATED FACADES

Articulated facades means the pattern of a building's windows, doors, balconies, and bays. Using articulated facades can add depth, interest, and even shelter from sun, wind, and rain.

## BUILDING SETBACK

A building setback pushes a building away from the street to allow for widened sidewalks, plazas, porches, street-trees, and rain gardens. Setbacks can add additional ground level activity, whether public or semi-private.



## MATERIALITY



Materiality means using brick, wood, glass, metal, or many other materials. Materiality can contribute to a building's scale, texture, color, and reflectiveness. They are a primary way that buildings can relate to one another.

## DO YOU HAVE OTHER IDEAS

for using design elements to contribute to the neighborhood?

