

COMMUNITY MEETING

1826 + 1840 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE



RODE



studio2112
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

CONTENTS

- 01 INTRODUCTION & PROJECT GOALS
- 02 SITE ANALYSIS & APPROACH
- 03 SITE RESPONSE & MASSING
- 04 PROGRAM & CONFIGURATION
- 05 PUBLIC REALM

OWNER



JUST A START
BUILDING HOMES, CAREERS, AND FUTURES



Madeline Lee
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ARCHITECT



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Project Architect

LANDSCAPE

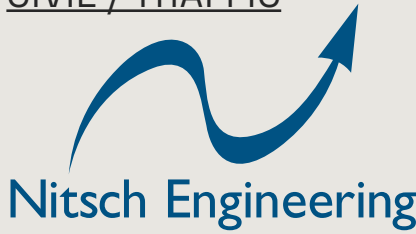


Lynne Giesecke
Principal



Bryan Sak
Landscape Designer

CIVIL / TRAFFIC



INTRODUCTION & PROJECT GOALS 01

1826 + 1840 MASS AVE



WHO WE ARE

Since 1968, Just A Start has been creating pathways to possibilities in Cambridge and surrounding communities. We're dedicated to promoting equity by creating access to stable housing and building pathways to economic opportunity.

We are located at the Rindge Commons Economic Mobility Hub by Alewife Station where we bring together a state-of-the-art education and job training center, affordable housing, universal pre-kindergarten, and services available to the entire neighborhood.



THE CHALLENGES

HOUSING, SUSTAINABLE INCOME, EQUITABLE COMMUNITY

Cambridge is a thriving city with many resources, but opportunities for family-sustaining work, quality education, and affordable homes have not been accessible to all residents.

Our community needs:

- **More truly affordable, permanent housing solutions**
- **Living wage job opportunities for low-income residents**
- **Opportunities for economic mobility and financial stability within the community**



MAKING IT WORK

WHAT DOES AFFORDABLE HOUSING MEAN?

Examples of what this looks like in practice:

- **30% AMI:** A retiree relying on Social Security as their primary source of income.
- **60% AMI:** A 3-person household with a single parent working as a nurse with two kids.
- **80% AMI:** A 4-person household with two adults working as teachers and two kids.

Cambridge Incomes by Household Size (2026)			
Income (AMI*)	1 person	2 people	4 people
30%	\$36,000	\$41,160	\$51,420
50%	\$60,000	\$68,600	\$85,700
60%	\$72,000	\$82,320	\$102,840
80%	\$96,000	\$109,700	\$137,100

*AMI = Area Median Income as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.



1826 & 1840 MASSACHUSETTS AVE.

BACKGROUND & PROJECT GOALS

Just A Start purchased the lots from Lesley University with support from the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust in November 2024 for the purpose of **creating new, affordable & sustainable multifamily housing.**

Our Project Goals:

- **Create ~100 affordable homes** for families in a transit & amenity-rich area
- **Build sustainably:** high standards for energy usage and design
- **Incorporate community & planning goals** of the Mass Ave Planning Study, Affordable Housing Overlay, and Multifamily Design Guidelines

Just A Start's mission is to promote equity by creating access to stable housing and building pathways to economic opportunity.

1826 & 1840 MASSACHUSETTS AVE.

ENGAGING WITH NEIGHBORS

COMMUNITY MEET & GREET:

- October 14th at Lunder Arts Center
- **Topics:**
 - Intro to Project Team
 - Affordable Housing Goals
 - Neighborhood Context
 - Interim Use of the Lots
 - Project Timeline

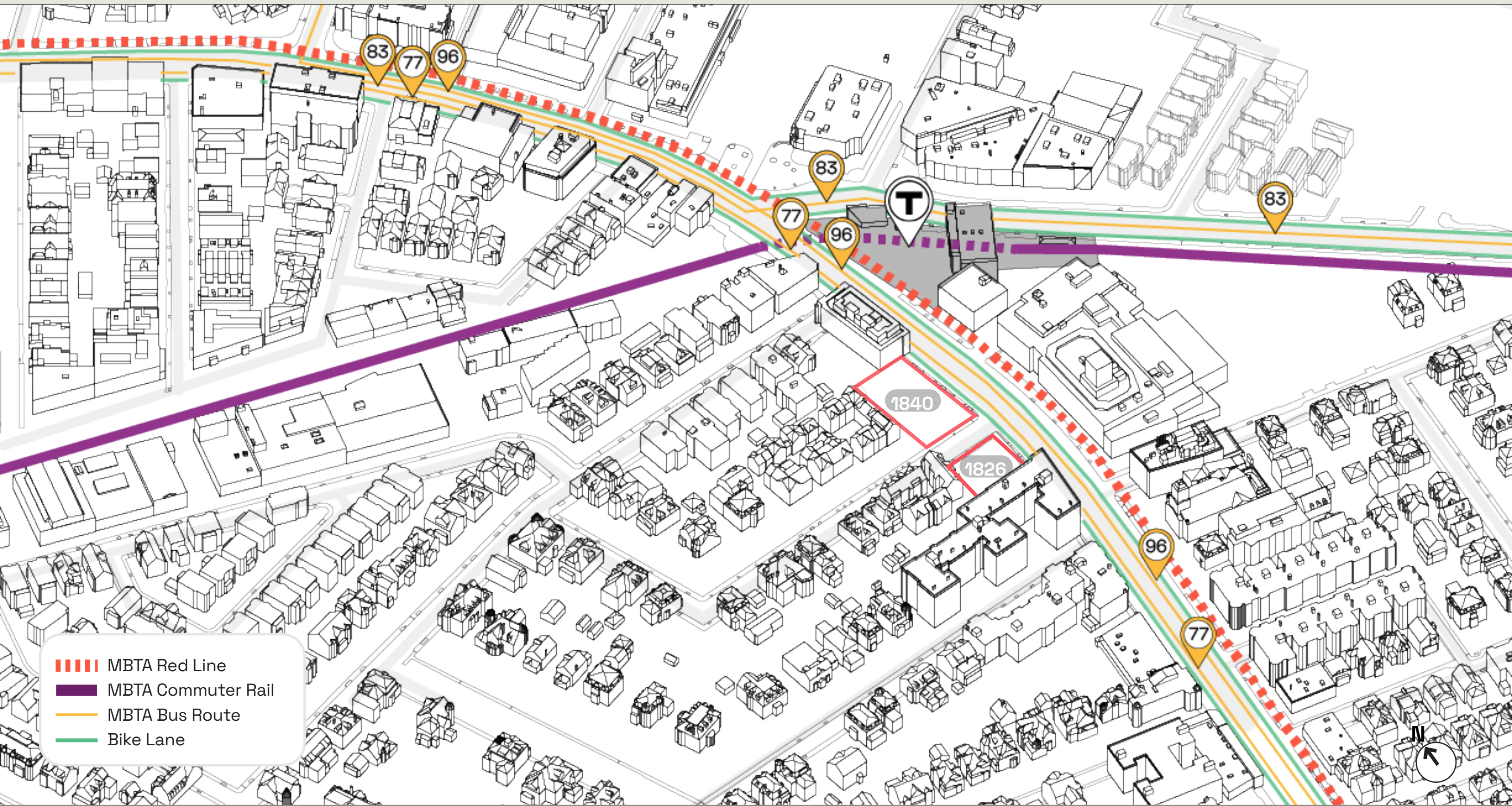


SITE ANALYSIS & APPROACH 02

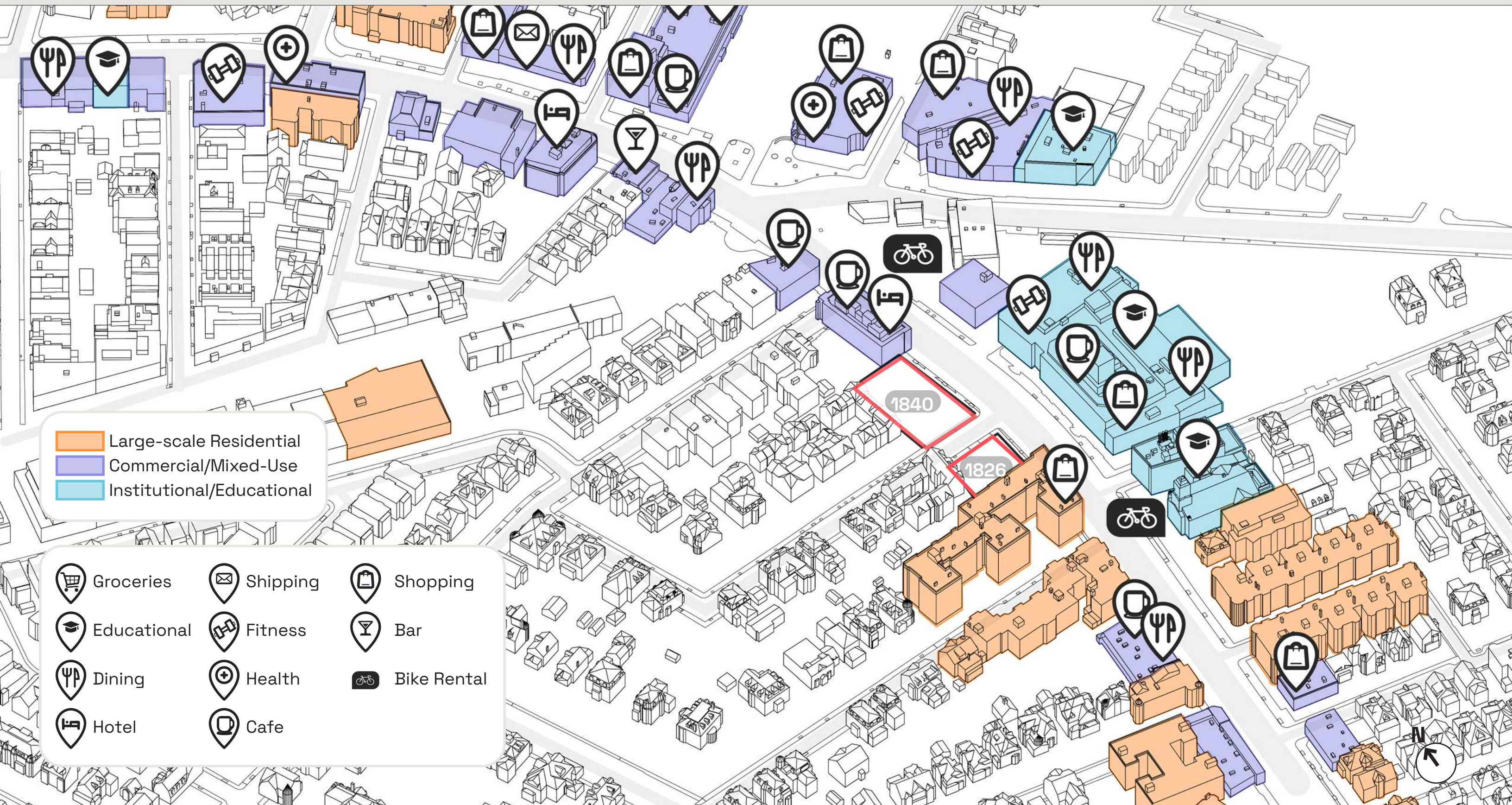
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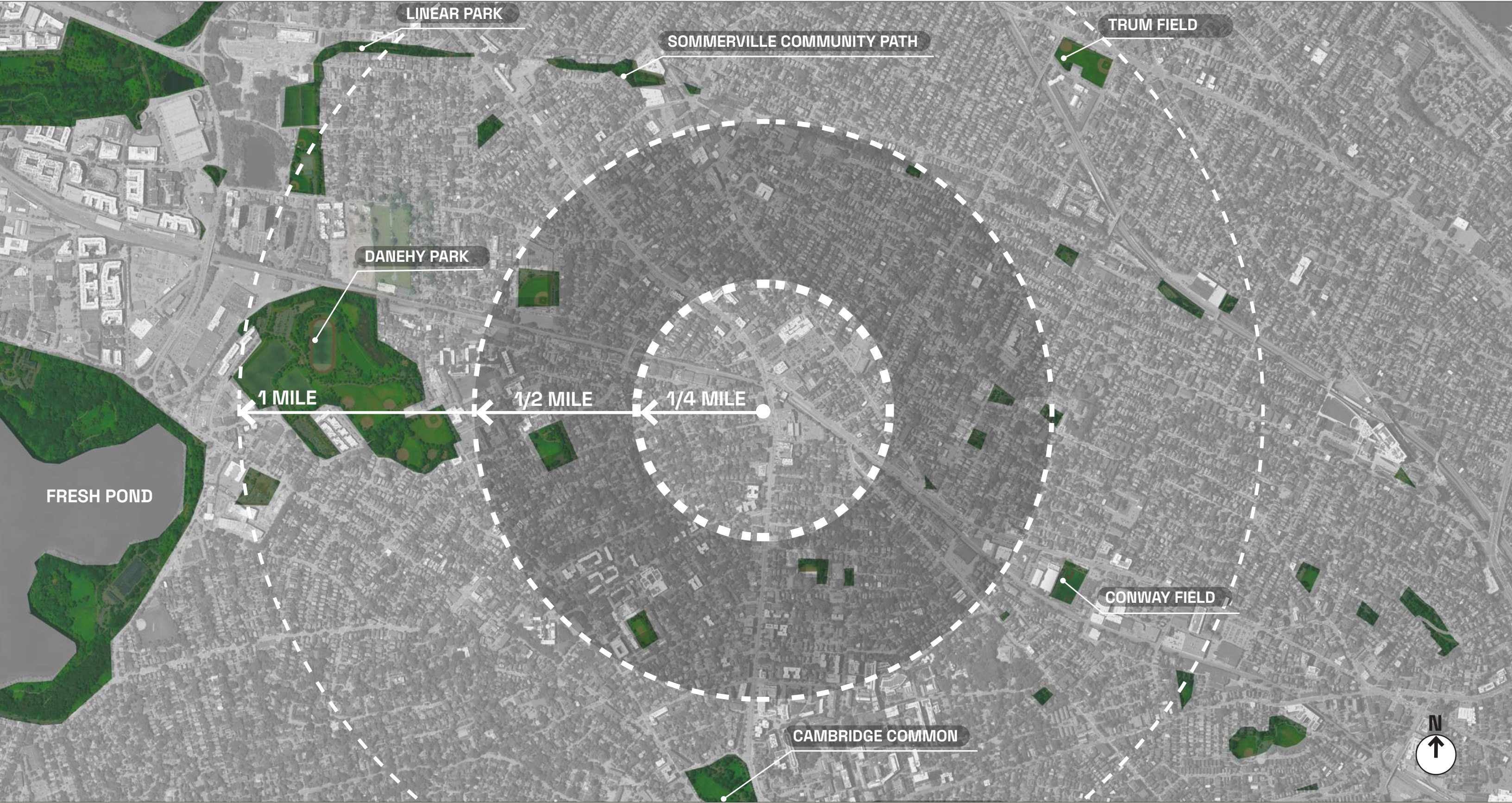




NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITIES



NEARBY PUBLIC GREENSPACE



WHAT WE’VE HEARD:

More housing

Trees, trees, trees!

**Design that considers
the neighborhood
context**

**Community space /
Outdoor dining**

Interim gardening space

QUESTIONS + CONCERNS:

Building heights

**Impact on parking and
traffic**

**Size and program of
open space**

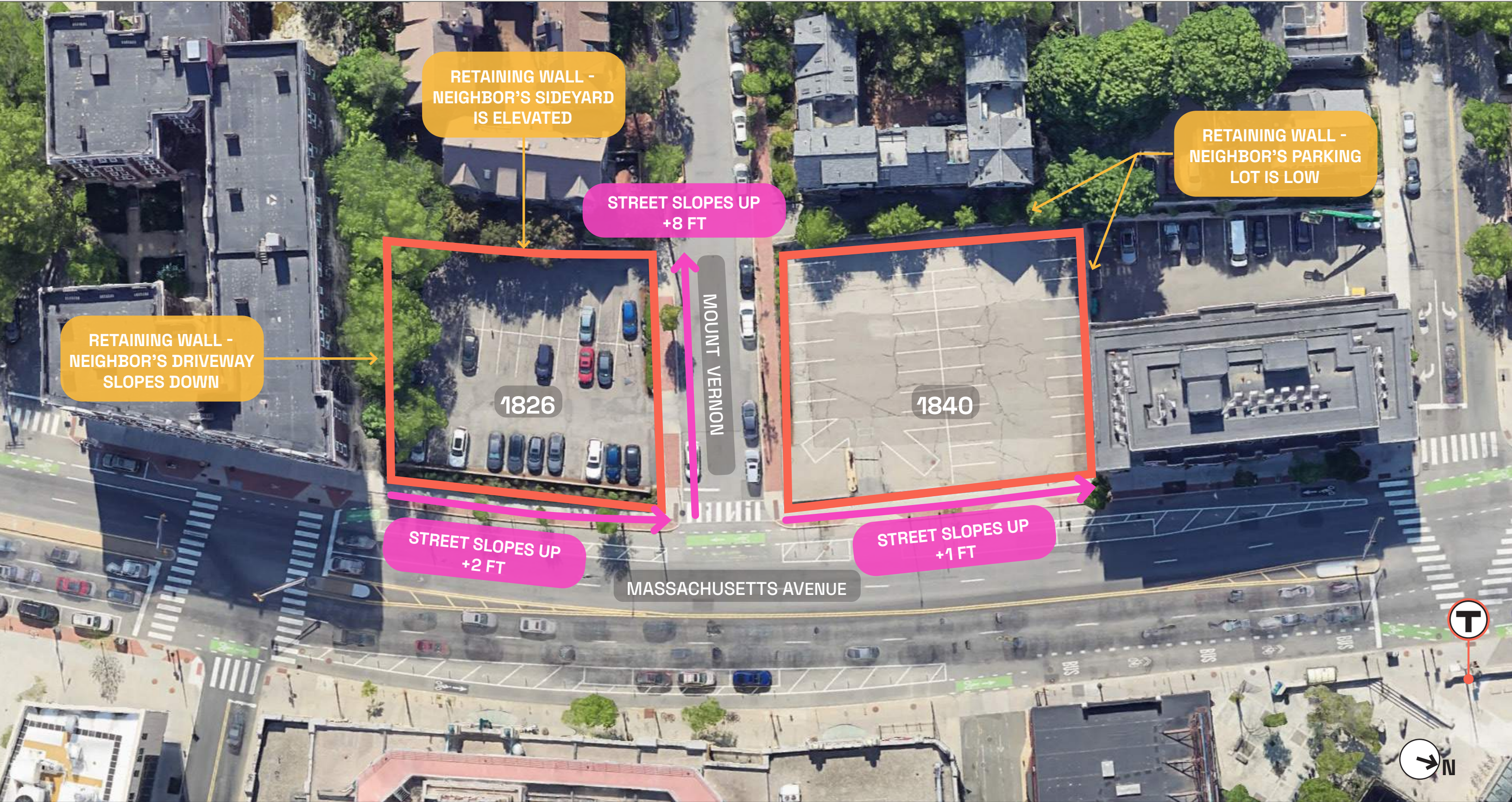
BALANCING TRADE-OFFS:

**Active ground floor //
On-site parking**

**Open space //
Building height**

**Community space //
Retail offerings**

**Family-sized homes //
1-bedrooms**

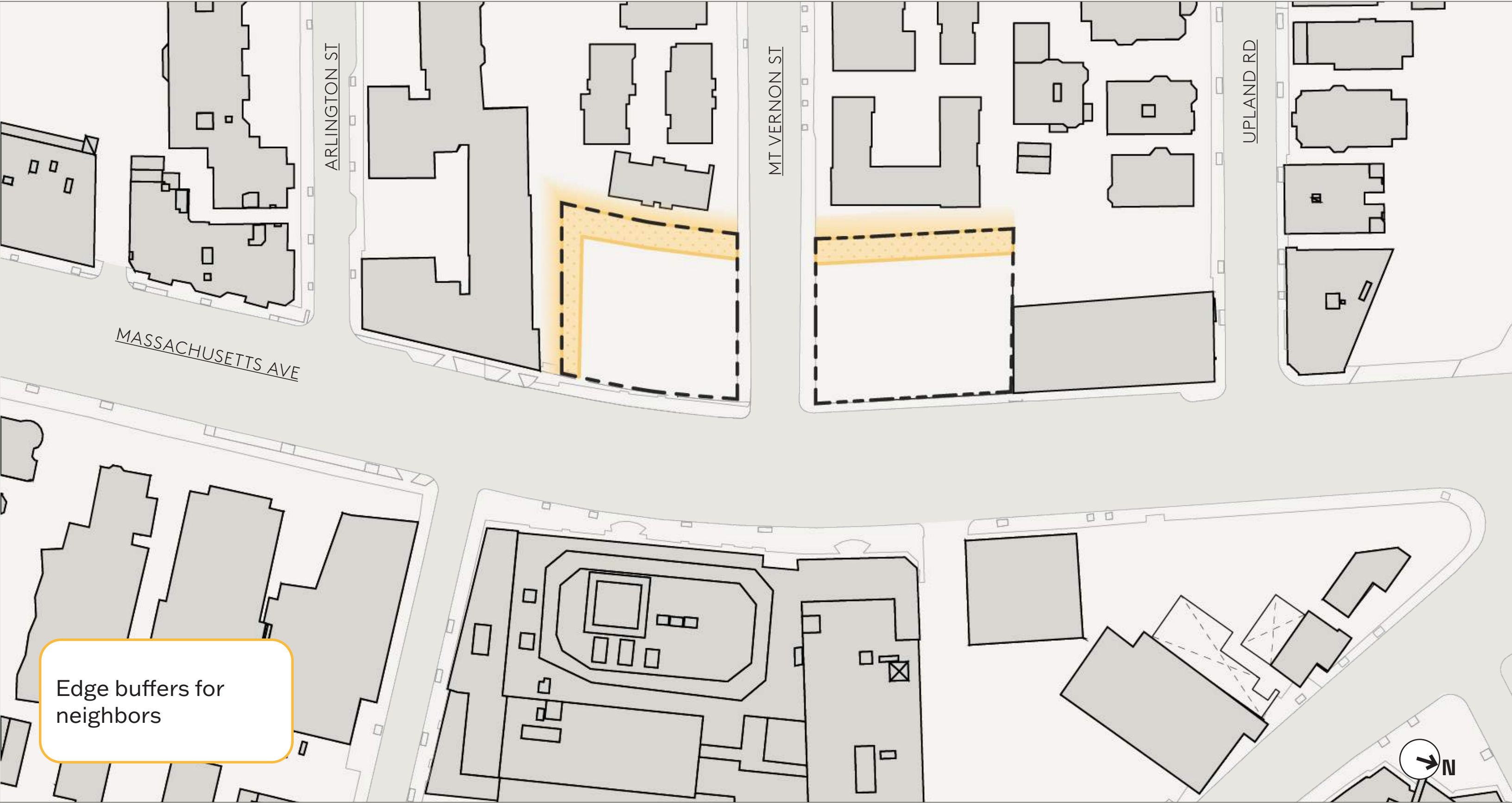




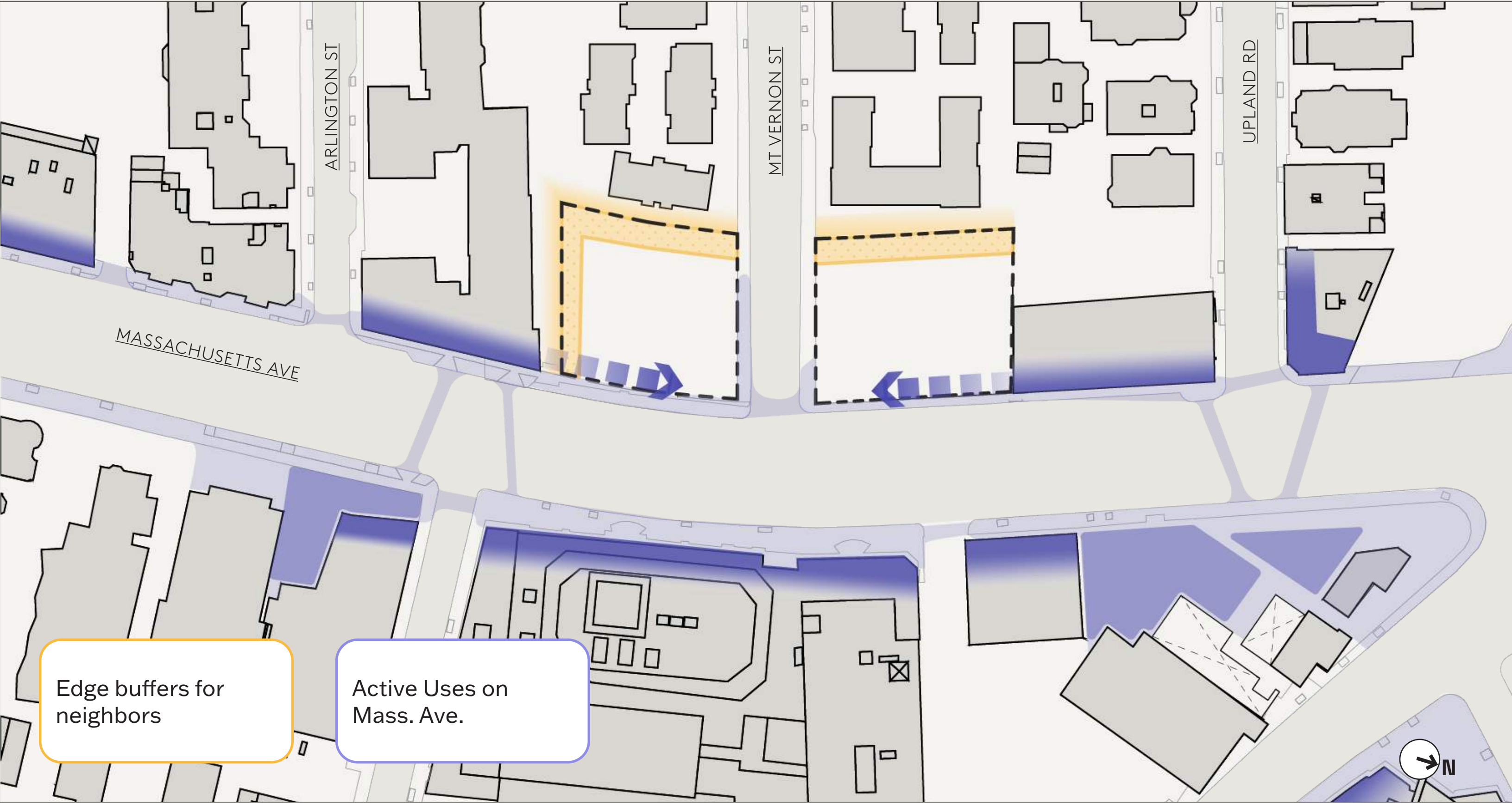
View of 1826 Mass Ave. from Mass Ave.



View of 1840 Mass Ave. from Mass Ave.

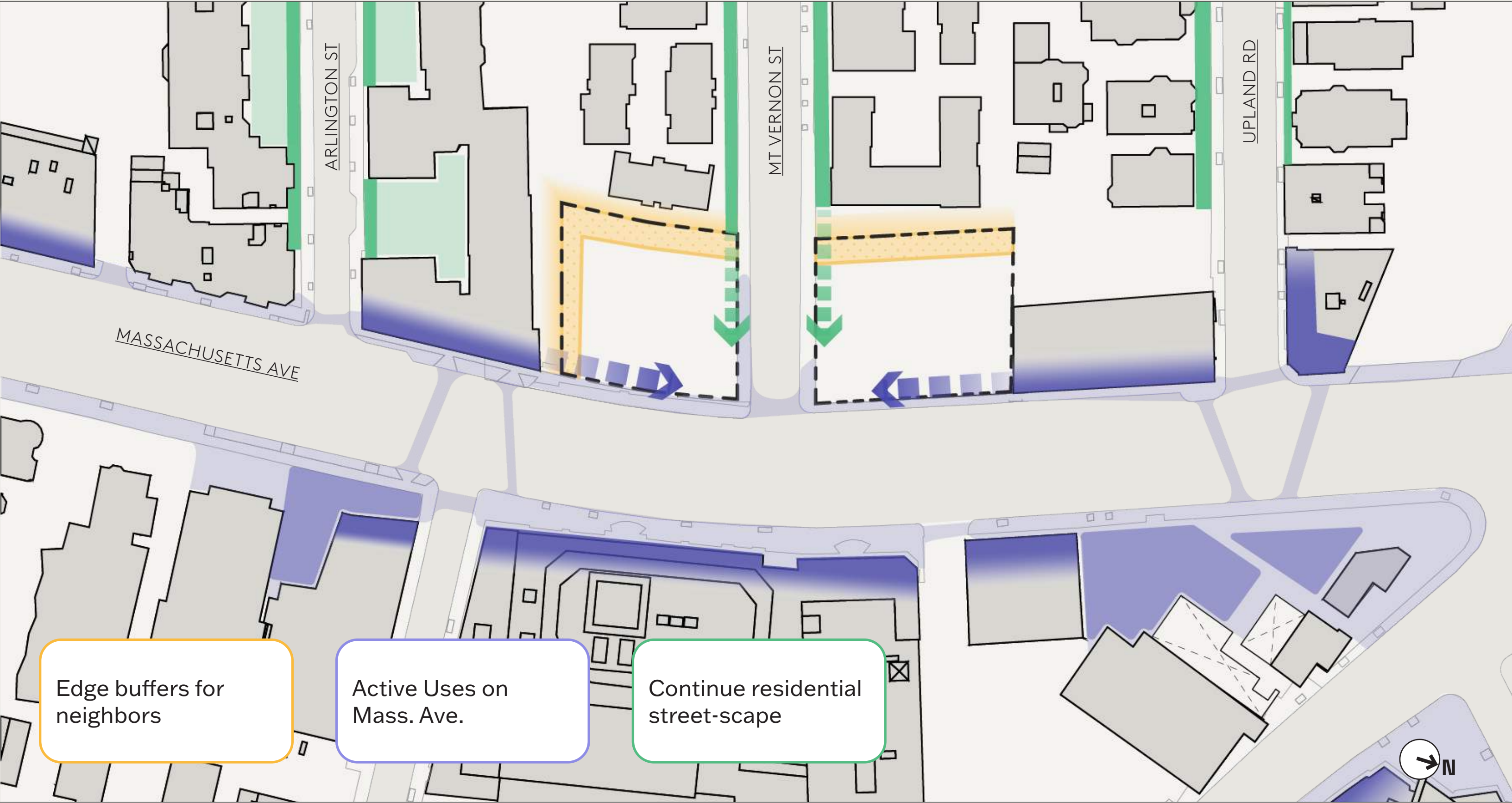


Edge buffers for
neighbors



Edge buffers for neighbors

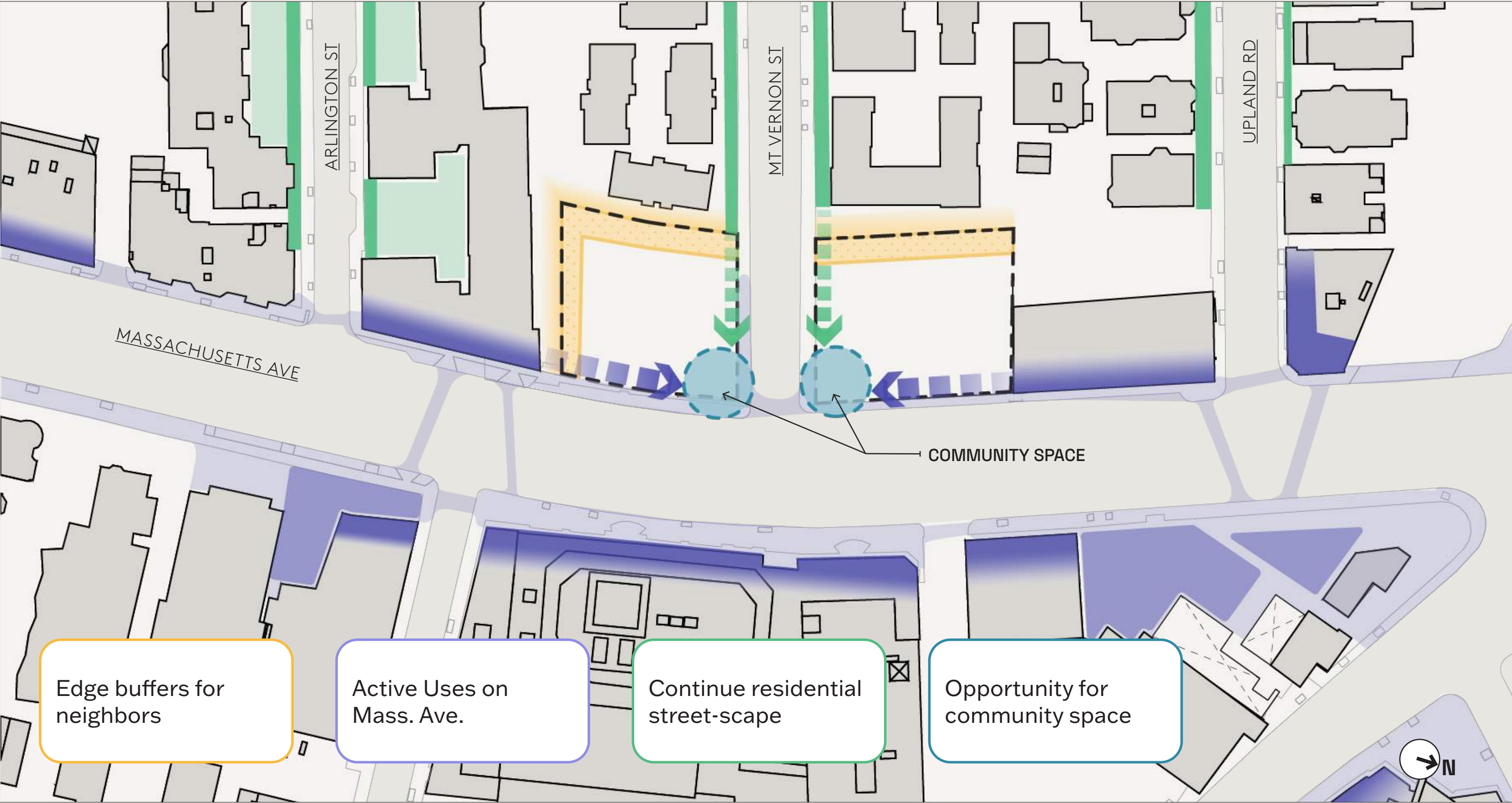
Active Uses on Mass. Ave.



Edge buffers for neighbors

Active Uses on Mass. Ave.

Continue residential street-scape



Edge buffers for neighbors

Active Uses on Mass. Ave.

Continue residential street-scape

Opportunity for community space

SITE RESPONSE & MASSING 03

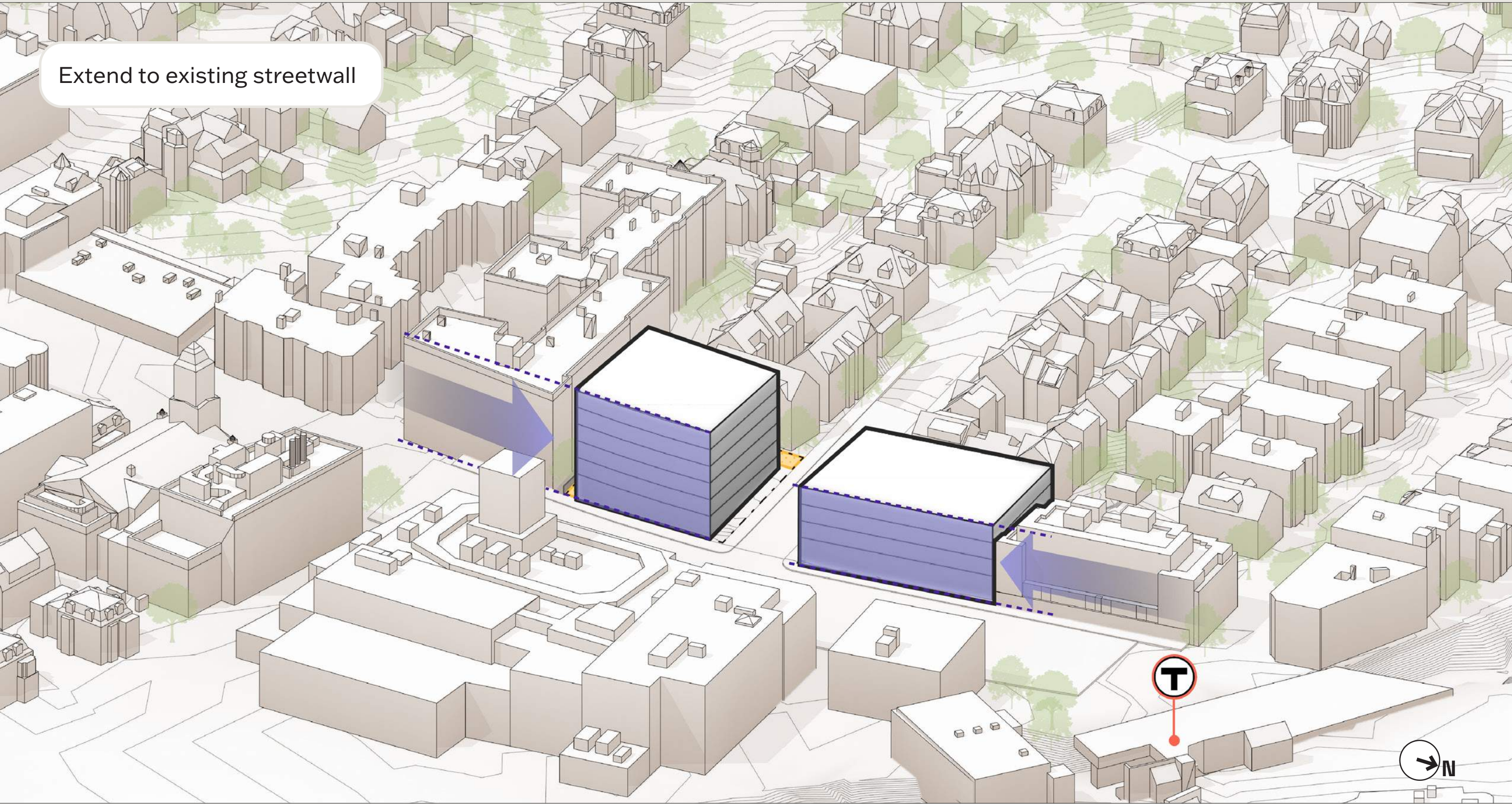
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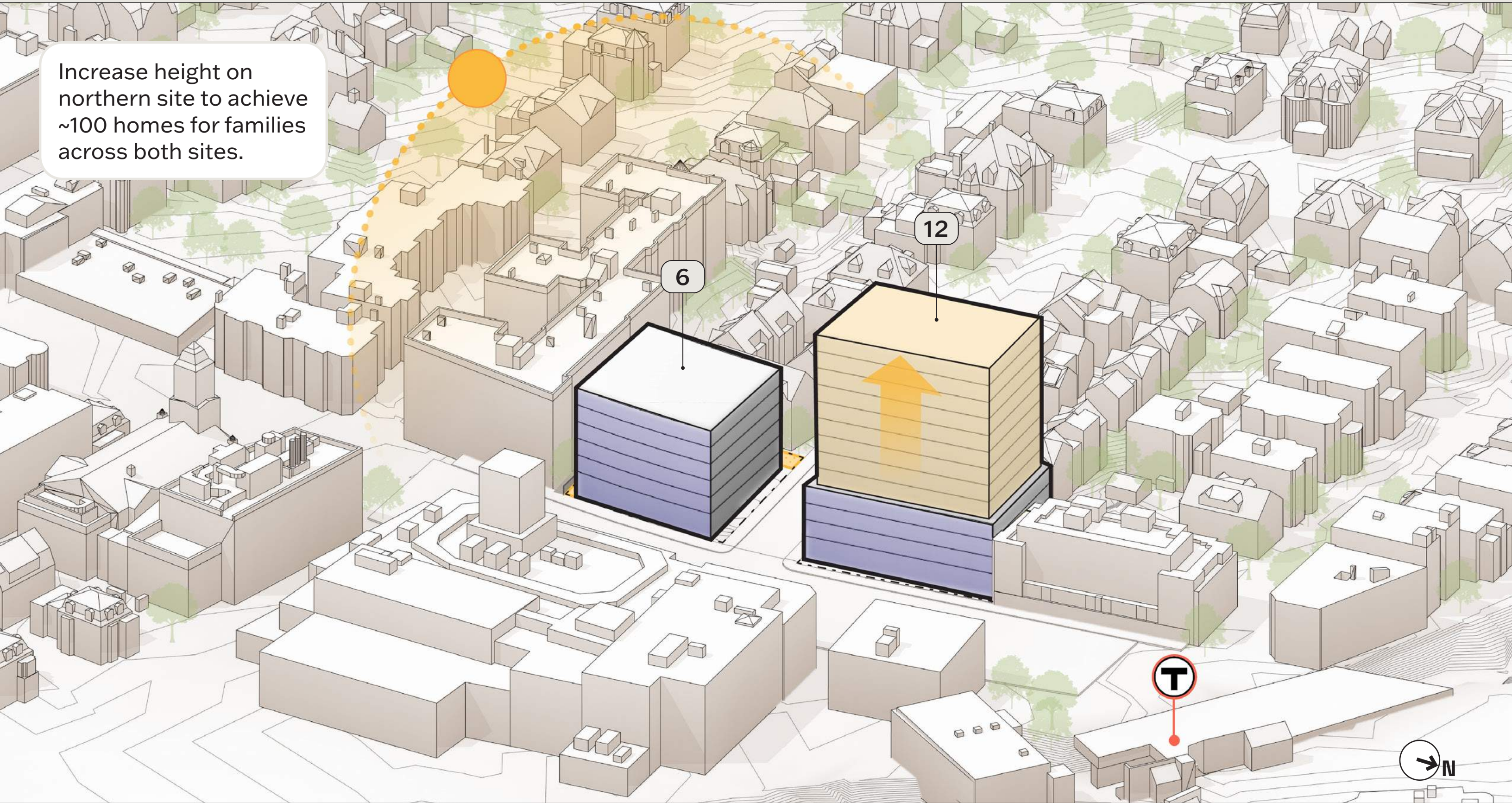
Establish edge buffers



Extend to existing streetwall

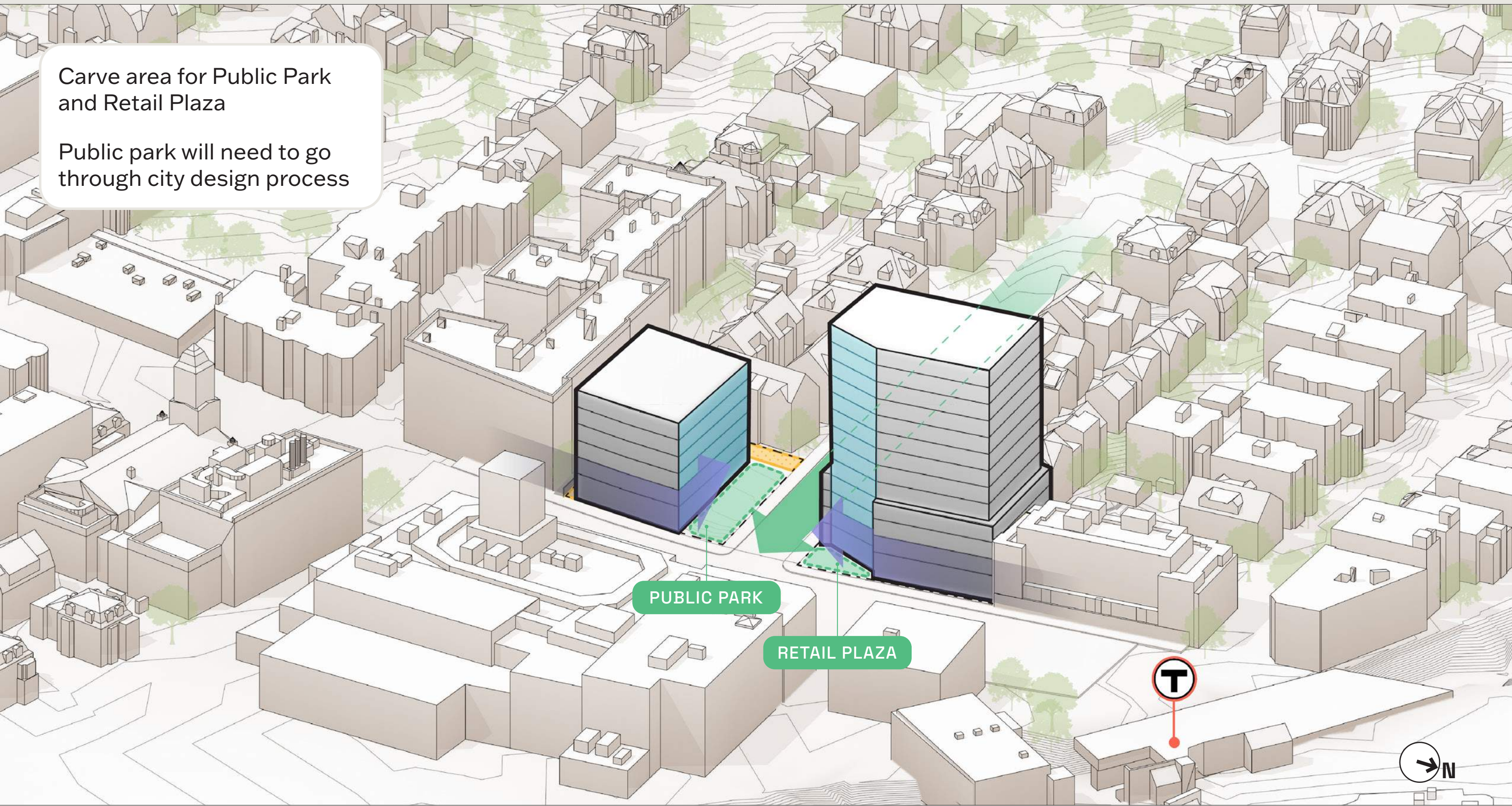


Increase height on northern site to achieve ~100 homes for families across both sites.



Carve area for Public Park and Retail Plaza

Public park will need to go through city design process











Mt. Vernon Street



Upland Road at Mt. Vernon Street

NEXT STEPS IN DESIGN

21
12

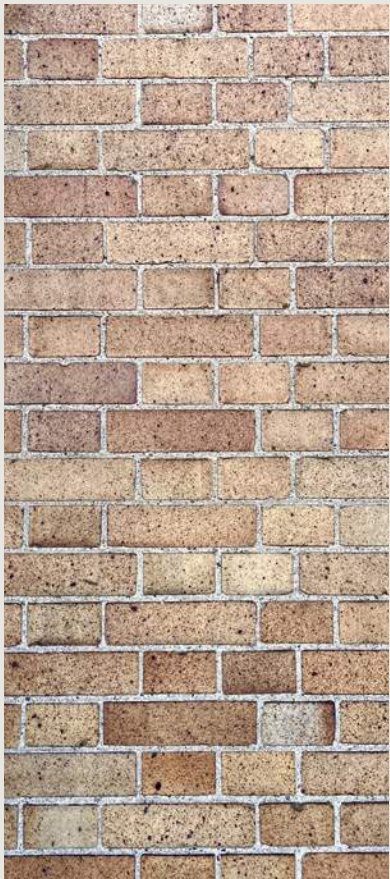


RODE

We will begin to develop an architectural facade language with the following goals in mind:

- **Site Specific** response
- **Contemporary** design
- Responsive to **character of the neighborhood**
- **Residential** feel that transitions to commercial district on Mass Ave
- **Warmth and texture** in materiality
- **Richness** in detail at multiple scales
- Architecture that **engages** with the **public sidewalk**
- Efficient building design





FACADE INSPIRATION ▼



▲ NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT PALETTE

PROGRAM + CONFIGURATION 04

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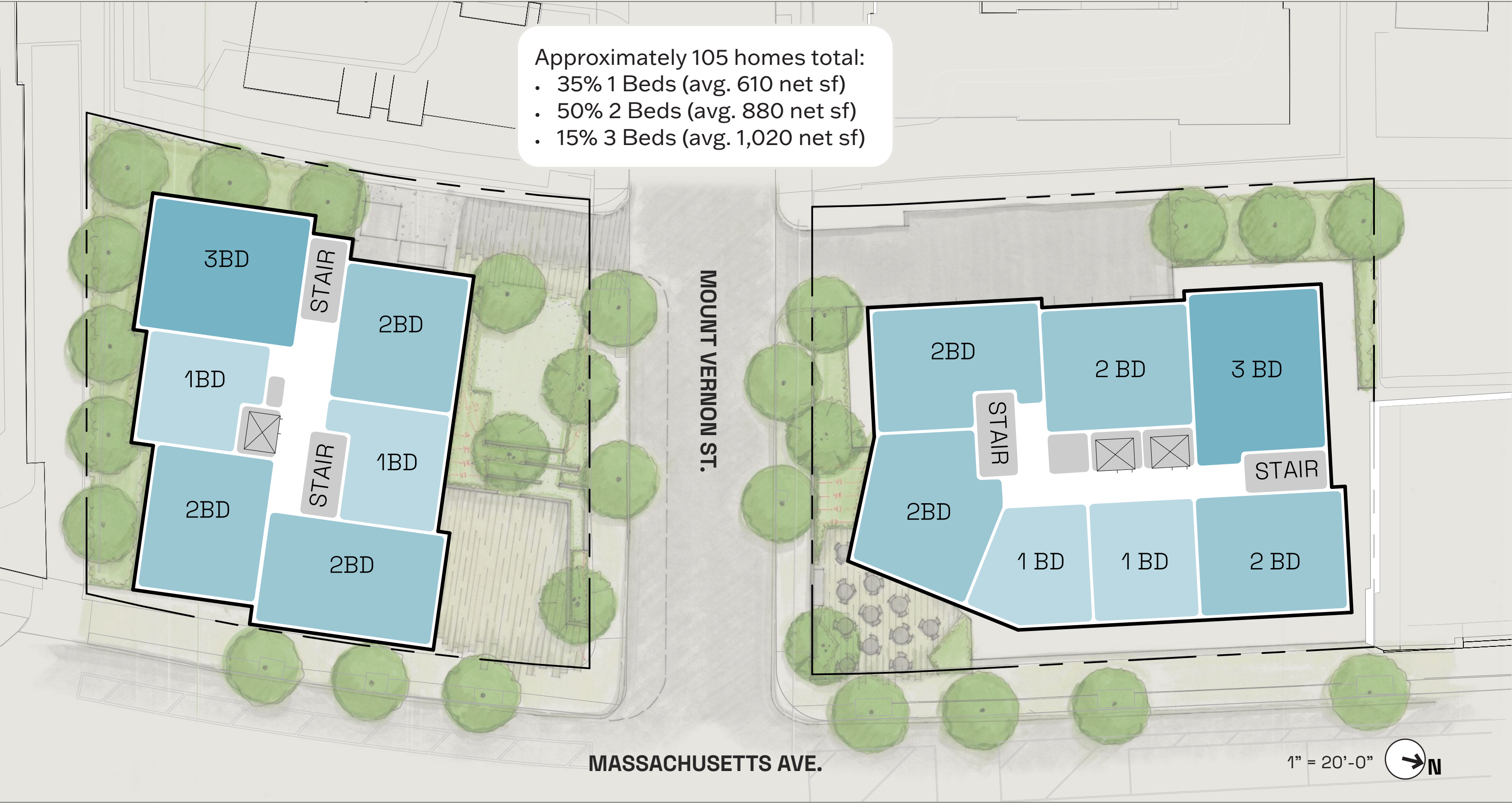


TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN

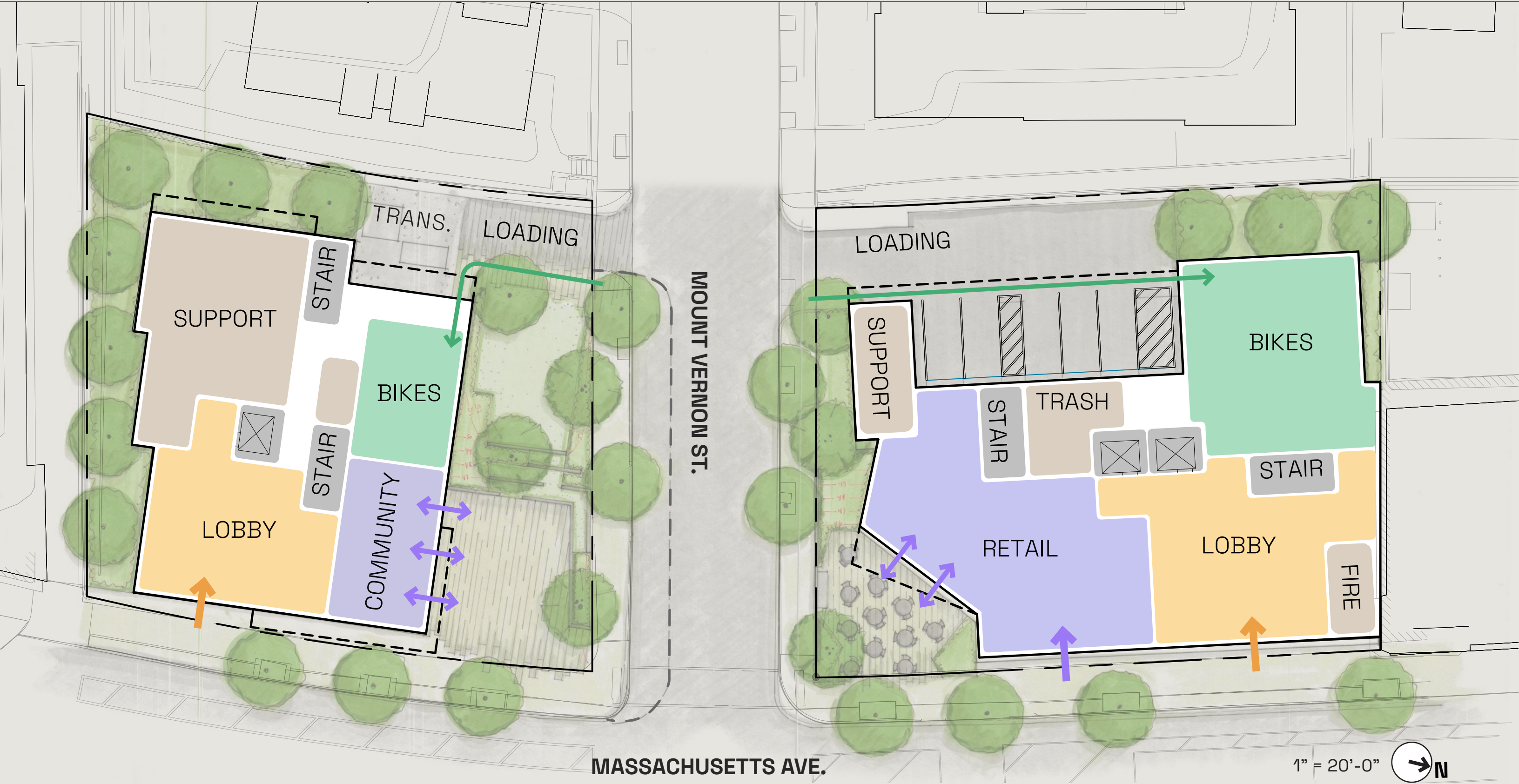


Approximately 105 homes total:

- 35% 1 Beds (avg. 610 net sf)
- 50% 2 Beds (avg. 880 net sf)
- 15% 3 Beds (avg. 1,020 net sf)



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

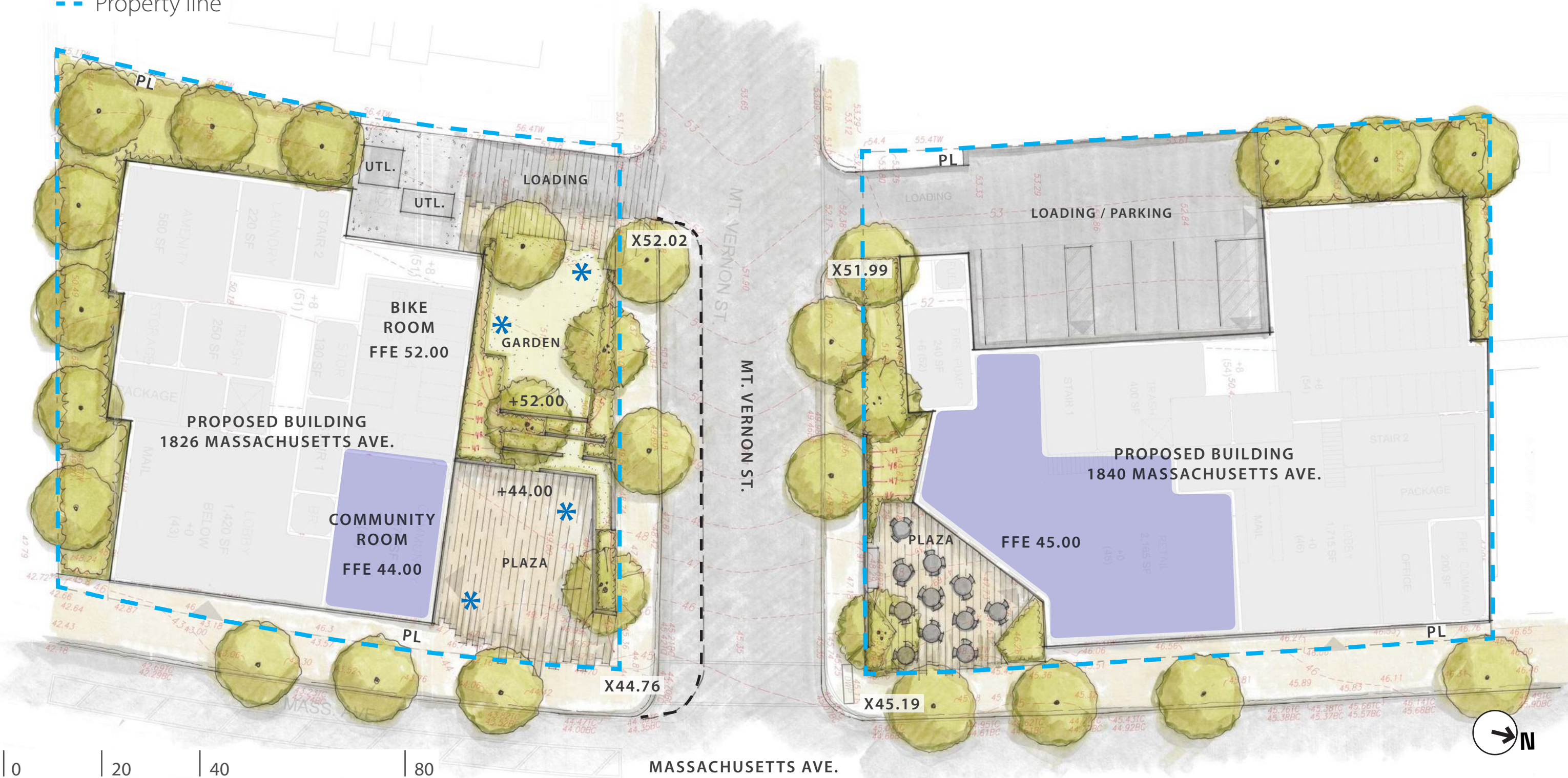


PUBLIC REALM 05

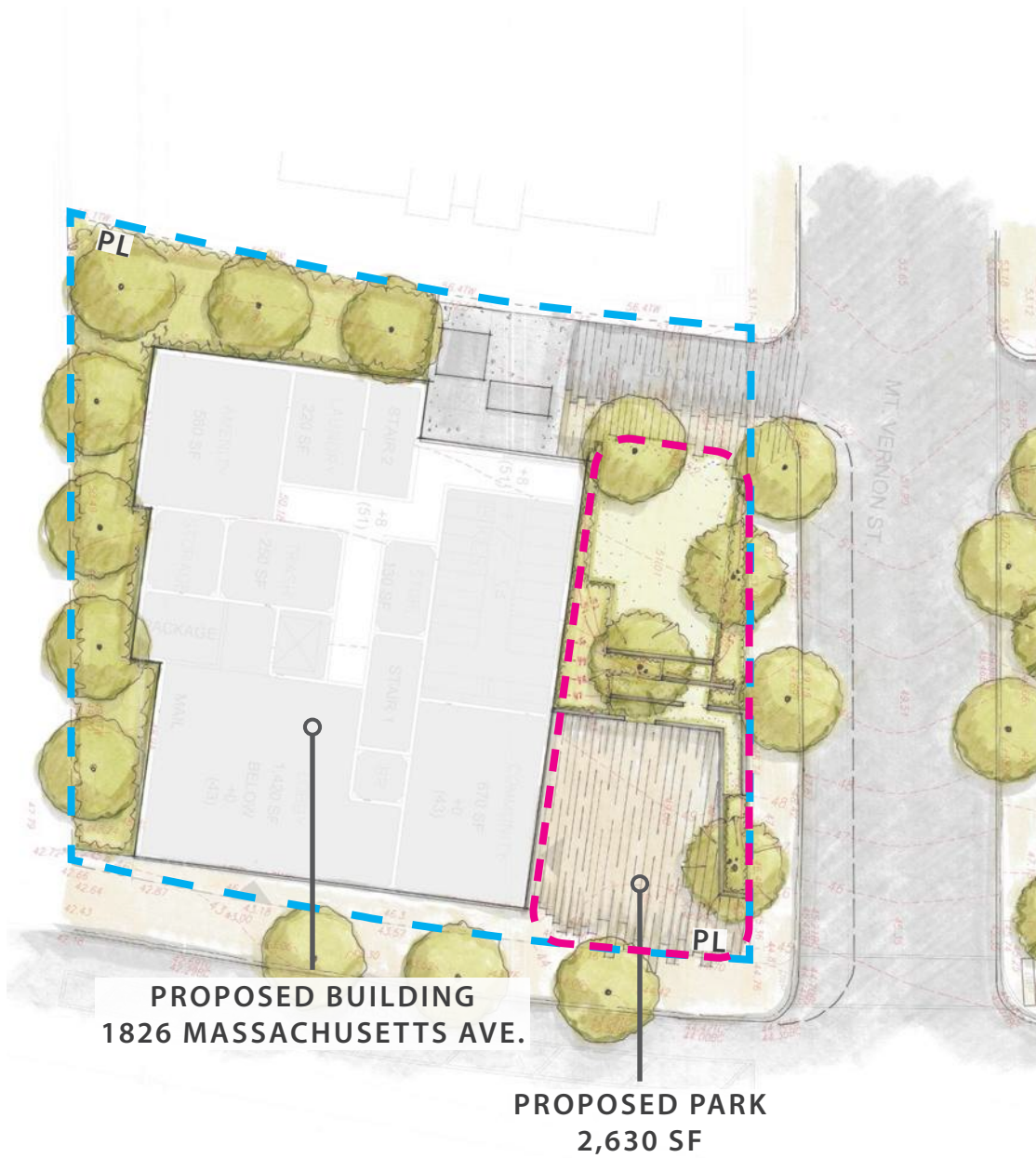
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- * Potential programmatic feature location
- Potential curb bump out (for park expansion)
- - - Property line

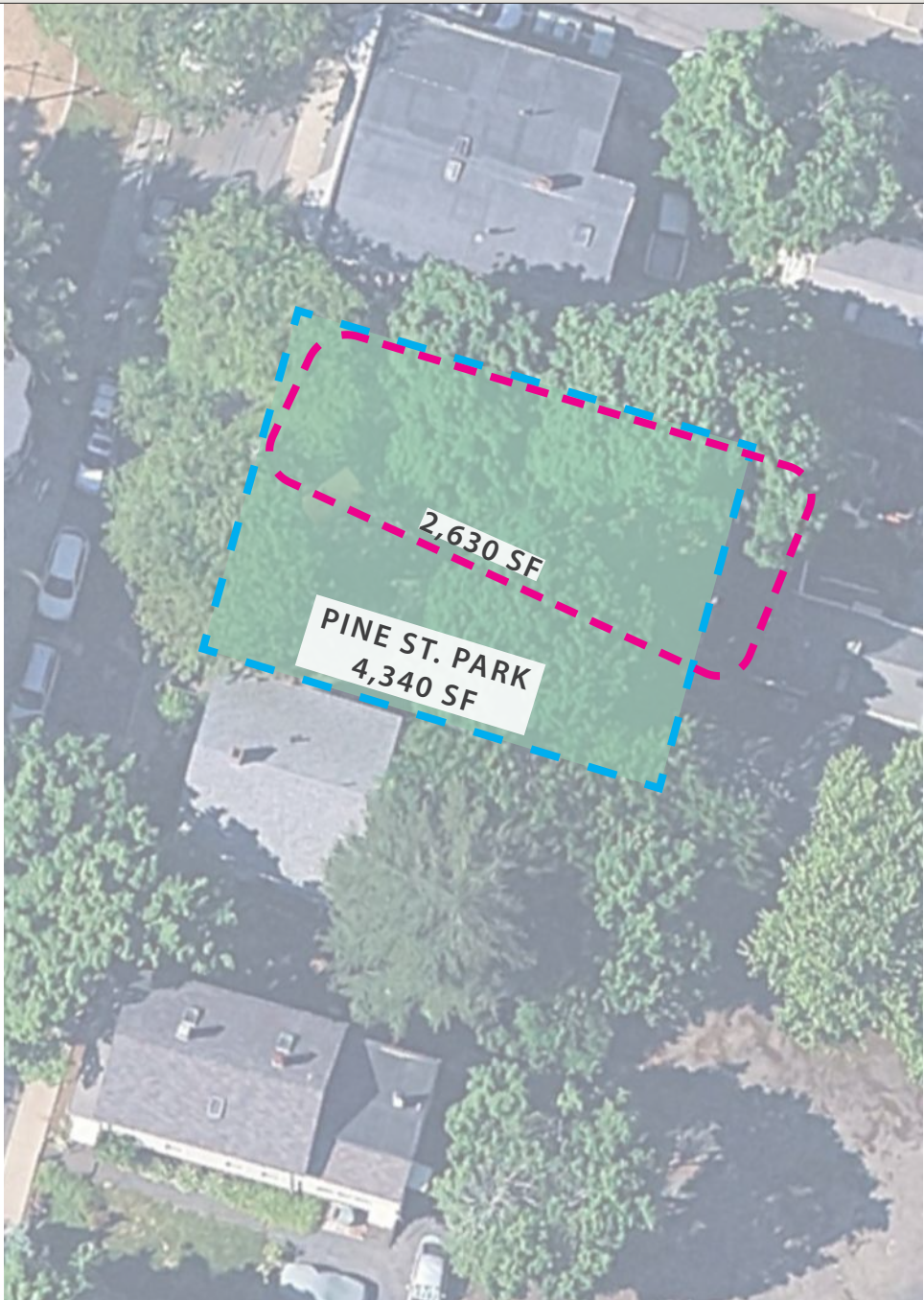


SIZE COMPARISON | 1826 MASSACHUSETTS AVE. PARK SPACE



1826 MASSACHUSETTS AVE. - PORTER SQUARE, CAMBRIDGE

- Total parcel area: approx. 12,000 SF
- Proposed park area: 2,630 SF (22% of total parcel area)
 - **Less SF than a full-size doubles tennis court (~2,800 SF)**



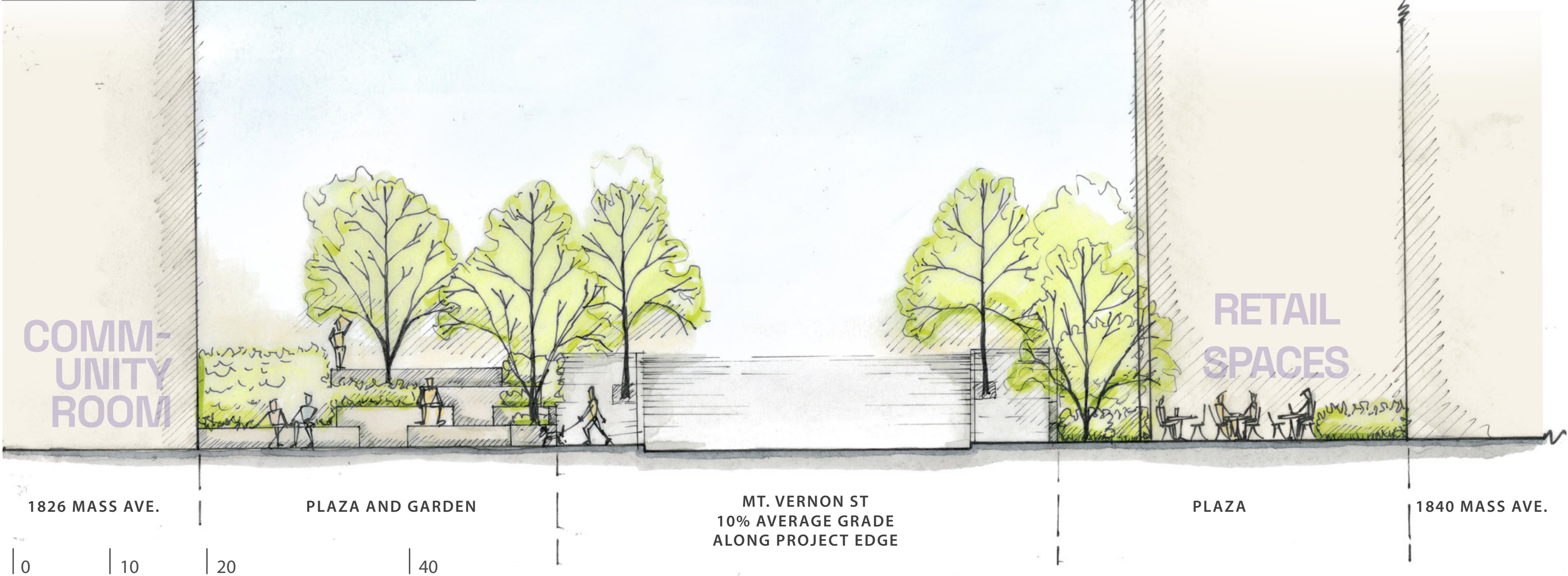
PINE STREET PARK - THE PORT, CAMBRIDGE

- Located ~2.2 miles from project site
- Total parcel area: ~4,340 SF
- 1.65x larger than proposed park at 1826 Massachusetts Ave.
- Amenities: small play structure, swing set, single-jet splash pad, bottle filler, fixed benches



CONCEPTUAL SECTION | GRADE CHANGE ALONG MT. VERNON ST.







1 Movable activities and games



2 Integration of public art in plaza



3 Movable tables and chairs



4 Water feature/splash pad



5 Embankment slide



6 Interactive sculptural elements

How would you use the park?

What facade materials do you think would be a good fit here?

What do you envision happening in the Community Room?

Anything about your neighborhood we haven't considered?

STAY IN TOUCH

Project Website:

www.justastart.org/1826-1840-massachusetts-avenue/

Sign Up for Updates:



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Thank you!
Next Meeting: August 2026



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THANK YOU

