

Broadway Corridor Planning Study

Demographics
Economic Development
Housing

Built & Natural Environment
Mobility
Community Engagement

- Presentation to -
ARLINGTON REDEVELOPMENT BOARD
Dec. 2, 2019

ON BEHALF OF:



01

Introduction



ABOUT US

We are students from a graduate urban planning practicum course at MIT's School of Architecture & Planning, intended to develop professional skills in the context of real-world planning needs.

We are 9 students from MIT itself and 1 student from Harvard.

Weyi Cao
Chongqing, China

Vakhtang Kasreli
Tbilisi, Georgia

Peter Damrosch
Brooklyn, NY

Kendrick Manymules
Window Rock, AZ

John Fay
Quincy, MA

Ian Ollis
Johannesburg, S. A.

Ognyan Georgiev
Sofia, Bulgaria

Paulo C. A. Perez
Valparaiso, Chile

Griffin Kantz
Los Angeles, CA

Mary Hannah Smith
Phoenix, AZ



WHY BROADWAY?

We have been invited by the Dept. of Planning & Community Dev't. to study the Broadway corridor and to collect ideas to address its current & future needs.

The Broadway corridor has appeared in several recent town-wide planning studies (e.g. the 2015 Master Plan and the 2017 Arts & Culture Action Plan). However, until now, Broadway has not yet been the subject of its own intensive plan or planning study.



Source: John Fay, MIT

WHAT IS OUR ROLE?

After speaking with local residents, conducting additional data-based research, and convening a public workshop, our group is now offering preliminary recommendations in the form of this presentation and a printed report.

Our planning work will serve to inform Town officials and representatives on how the future of the Broadway corridor may be diligently shaped for community benefit. The recommendations are only advisory.



STUDY AREA

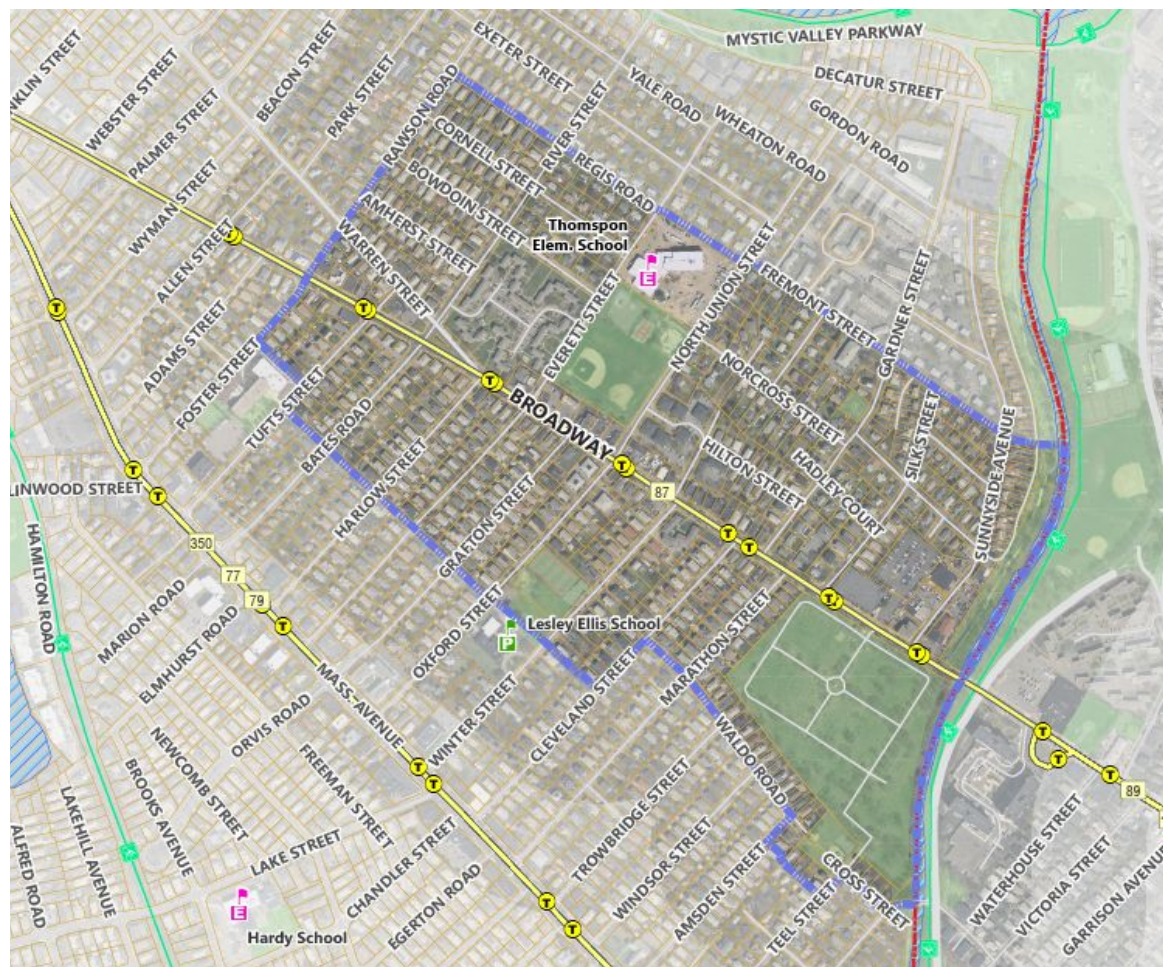
To study the built environment and population which would be most directly affected by any planning interventions, while distinguishing activities on & near Broadway from those near Mass. Ave., we defined a study area boundary. We used roads, Alewife Brook, and property lines as boundaries.

Western bound:
Rawson Rd.

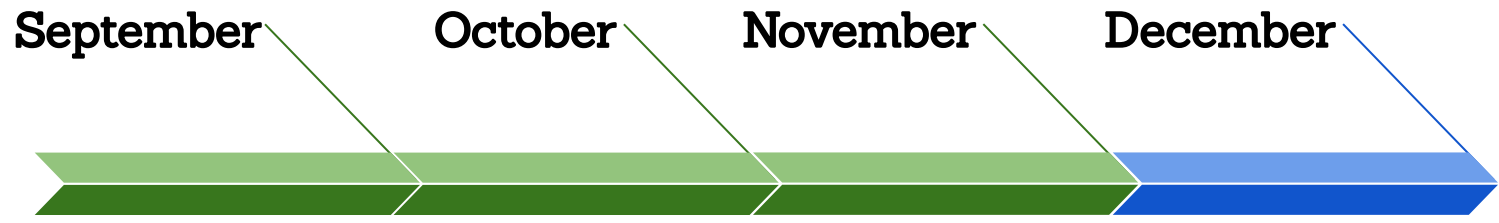
Northern bound:
Regis Rd., Fremont St.

Eastern bound:
Alewife Brook / Town border

Southern bound:
Raleigh St., Waldo Rd., Cross St.



PROJECT TIMELINE



Initial Research

Meetings with the
Town Dept. of
Planning &
Community Dev't.

Town Day

Assembling data

Public Outreach

Interviews, tabling,
community
workshop, email
outreach

Outreach/Analysis

Follow-up with
additional stakeholders

Synthesis of findings
into recommendations

Creation of concept
designs

Final Report

Presentation to the
ARB

Release of the
printed report

02

Community Engagement





On the Street



Direct Outreach



Workshop



Knowledge Sharing



TABLING WITH AREA RESIDENTS

We held two tabling sessions on Broadway, asking for input from residents:

- >> *“What do you like about Broadway?”*
- >> *What don't you like about it?*
- >> *What do you think are major areas for improvement?”*

In total, we spoke to **25** people on the street.



On the Street



Direct Outreach



Workshop



Knowledge Sharing

LOCAL GROUPS

We also met with representatives from multiple organizations, including:

- Equitable Arlington
- Arlington Residents for Responsible Redevelopment
- Housing Corp. of Arlington
- Mystic River Watershed
- Thompson Elem. School Parent-Teacher Organization

BROADWAY BUSINESSES

We've been speaking in person with local businesses along the corridor and inquiring about their needs and the needs of their customers..

EMAIL OUTREACH

On the specific topic of transportation needs, we reached out to & received written feedback from 13 community members -- many via the Transportation Advisory Committee.



On the Street



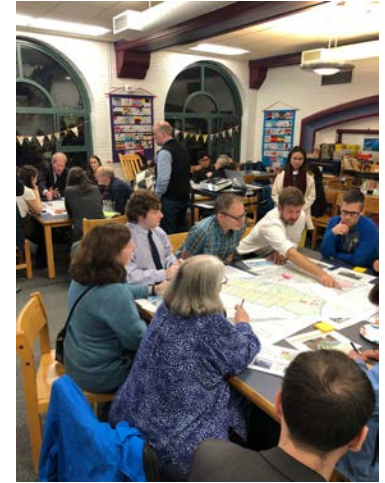
Direct Outreach



Workshop



Knowledge Sharing



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

On the night of Oct. 28, we held a community workshop in the Hardy Elementary School library. **24** community members participated in the workshop, which involved an initial presentation of our research, followed by breakout discussions in small groups.



On the Street



Direct Outreach



Workshop



Knowledge Sharing



INREACH

We met with the following Town committees to field their thoughts on the future of the Broadway corridor:

- Transportation Advisory Committee
- Tree Committee
- Police Department (for traffic safety data)
- Director, Recreation Department



AREAS OF FOCUS

Three focus topics:
(emerging from our outreach process)

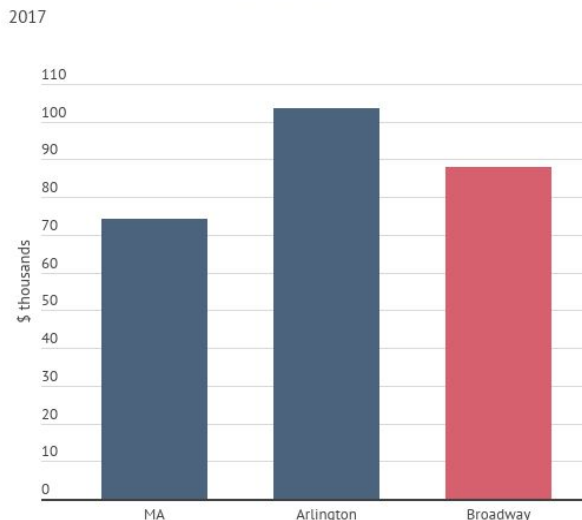
- 1. Housing
 - ▶ Focus Site: Lahey Building/“Gateway” to Arlington
- 2. Mobility
 - ▶ Focus Site: Streetscape
- 3. Neighborhood Character
 - ▶ Focus Site: Lussiano Field

03

Housing



Median household income



The cost of having a house



37%

Of households are cost-burdened and **spend over 30% of their monthly income on housing**. **11% of households spend over 50%**.

This includes renters, as well as owners.



\$ 2504

Is the median monthly cost of housing in Broadway corridor, **19% above the MA median**. For Arlington as a whole, the gap is even bigger - **\$ 2734 or 30% above the state median**.



Arlington is a great place to live, but is becoming harder to afford.

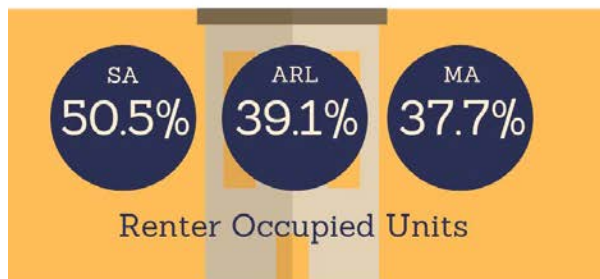
The median income in the study area, while above the statewide level, is below the median income for town as a whole.

Housing affordability, or the cost of buying or renting a home, is increasingly a problem for residents in Arlington, as in much of the Boston area.

The neighborhood around Broadway has been an important source for affordable housing in Arlington, and there's potential for even more.

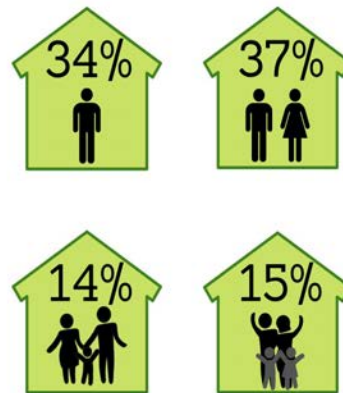


RENT OR OWN?



SA = Study Area

HOUSEHOLD SIZE

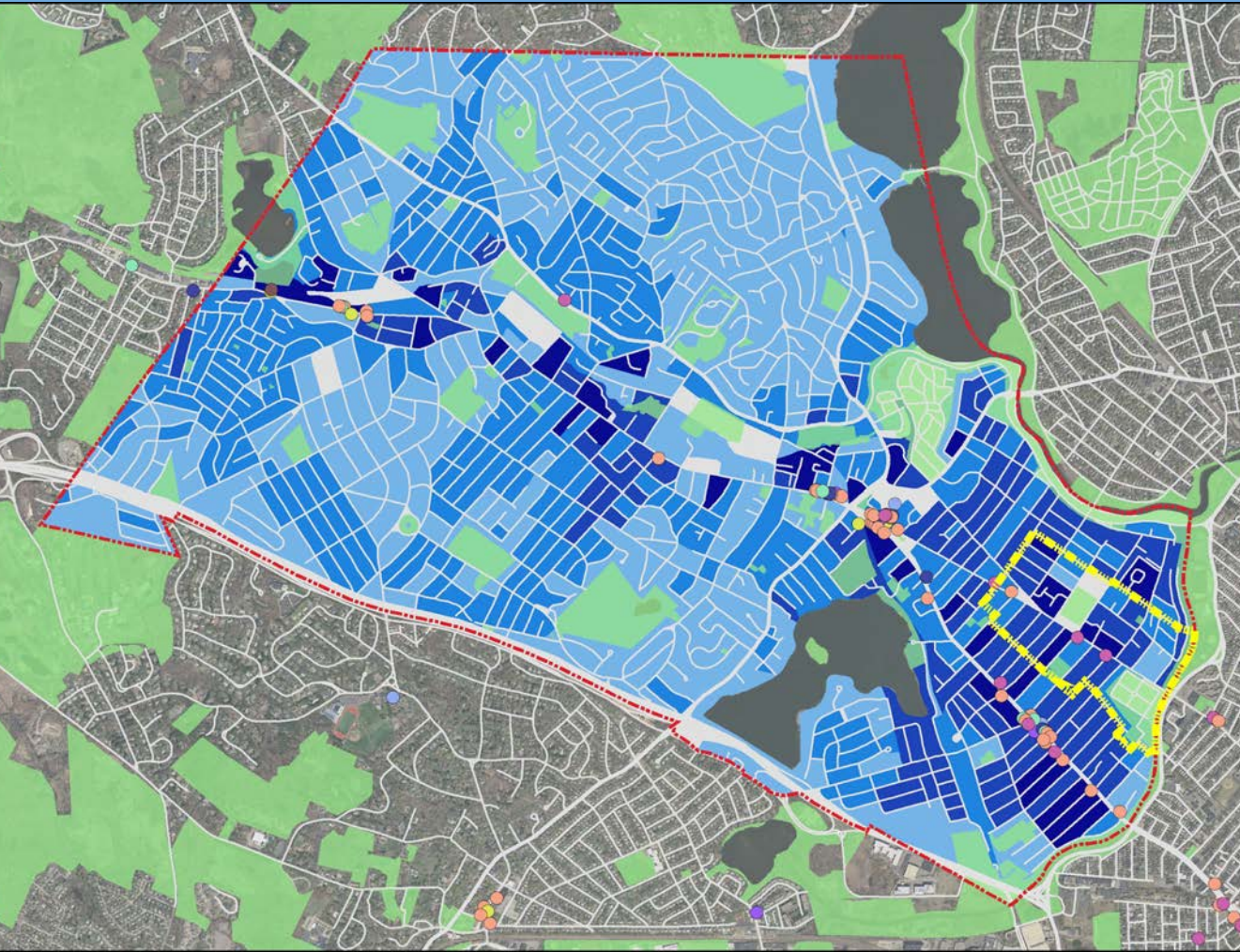


Households in the study area are similarly varied in size.

60 yrs

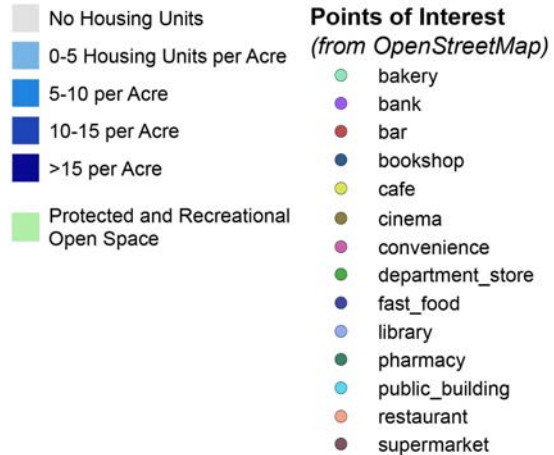
Median age of homes in the study area.

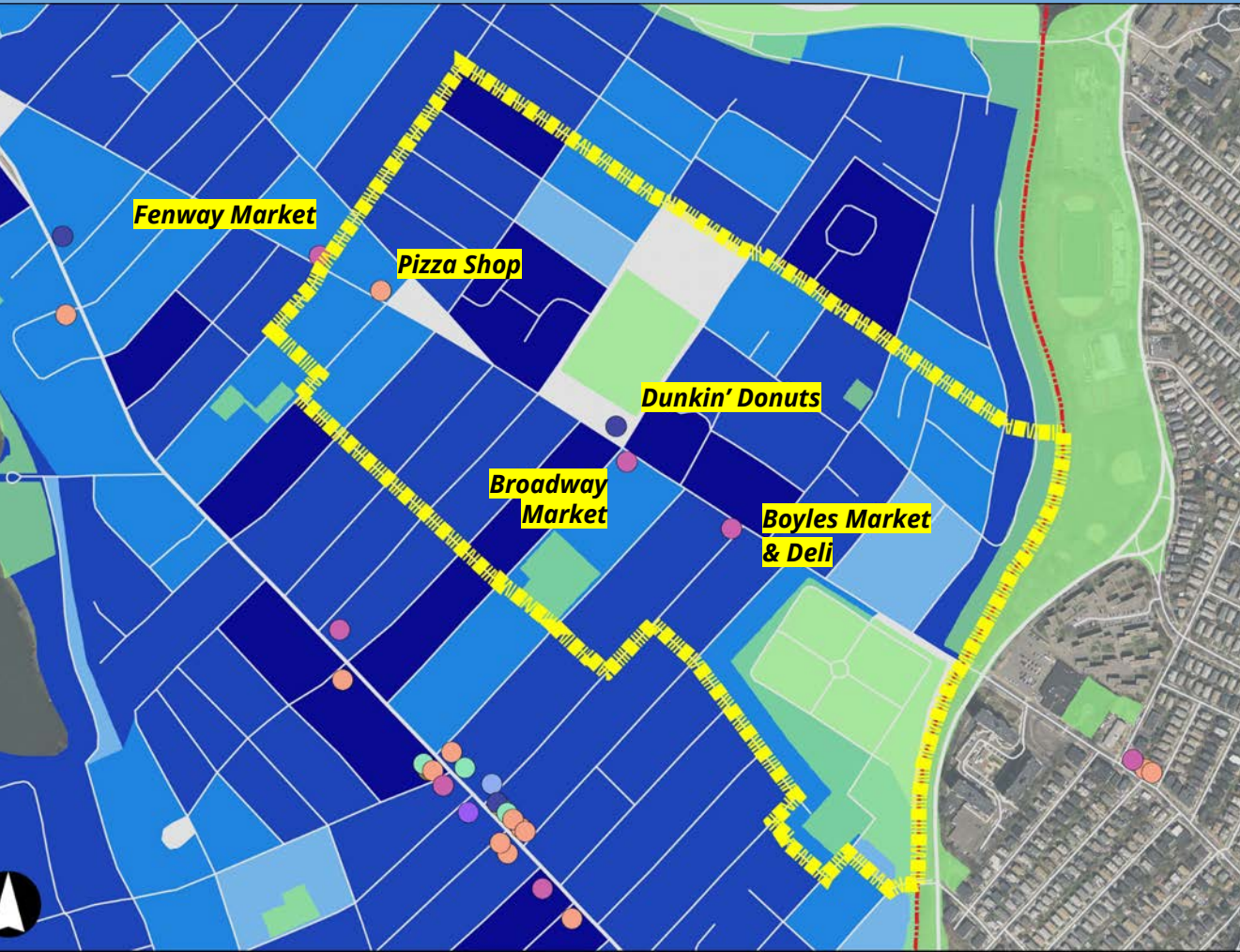
The residential units along the corridor are predominantly 2.5-story buildings with a few triple-deckers.



MAKING THE BEST USE OF PROXIMITY

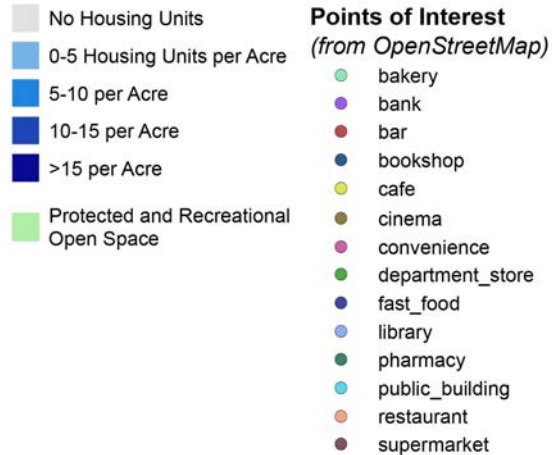
Broadway is centrally located in the densest area of Arlington, with great connectivity to Arlington Center and Somerville, but there aren't the same level of commercial amenities as in other parts of the town. Should that change?

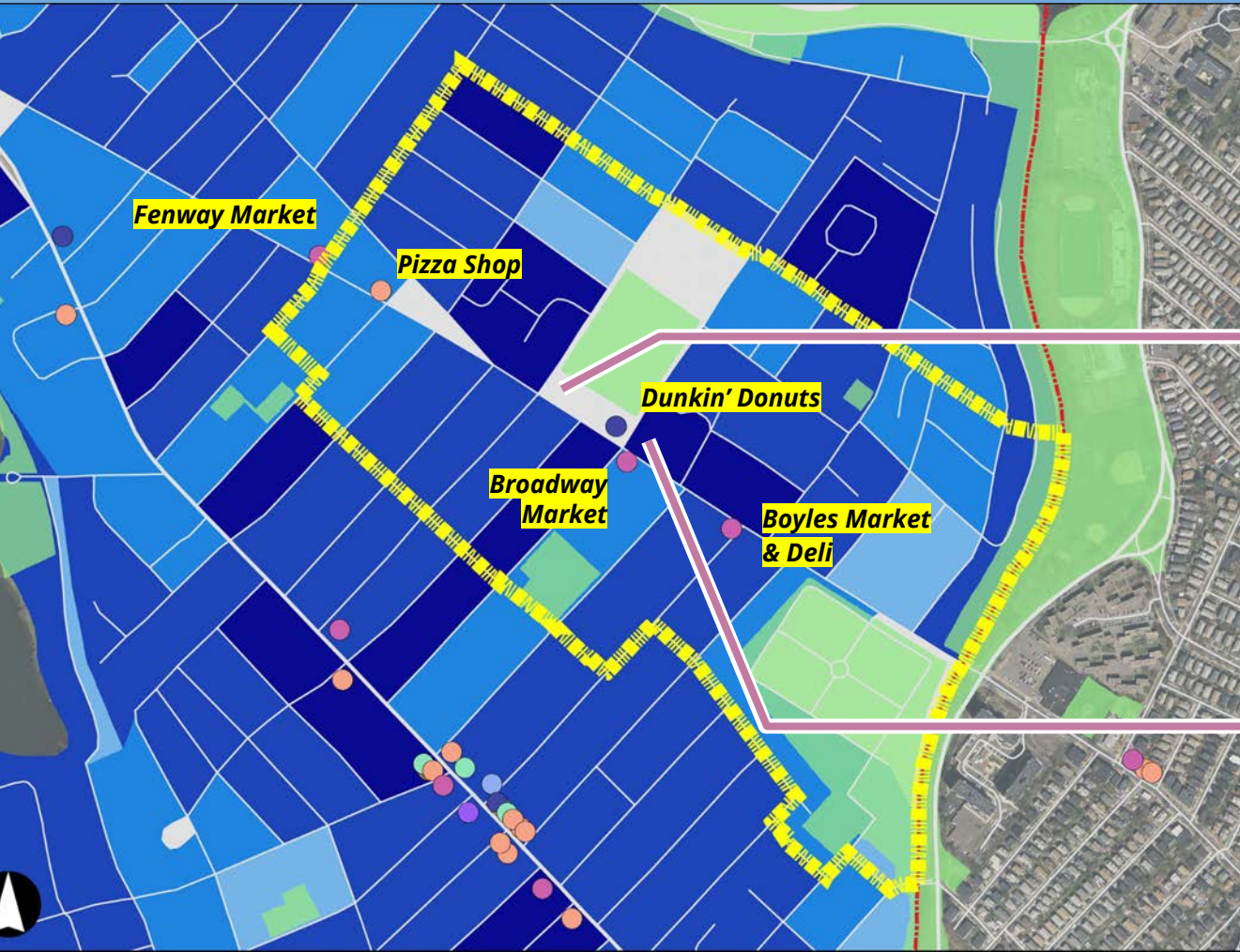




MAKING THE BEST USE OF PROXIMITY

Broadway is centrally located in the densest area of Arlington, with great connectivity to Arlington Center and Somerville, but there aren't the same level of commercial amenities as in other parts of the town. Should that change?





RECENT/UPCOMING DEVELOPMENTS

117 Broadway

14 affordable units
with ground-floor commercial



87-89 Broadway

3 3-bedroom market-rate units
with ground-floor commercial



WHAT WE'VE HEARD

- **Affordable housing quantity** is the top policy priority.
- However, don't neglect quality.
- Community members are **open-minded to denser housing development** along Broadway, but point out **traffic & school funding** constraints.
- Community members would like to see **more amenities near where people live** on Broadway.



OUR HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS

INCENTIVIZE & SHAPE AFFORDABLE HOUSING GROWTH

- Review dimensional restrictions on **height & density** to improve viability of affordable & mixed-income housing developments.
- Host **community processes** about how public land may be acquired for affordable housing.
- Examine **underutilized land parcels** for redevelopment. Plan a new future for the “Gateway”/Lahey Building site and the parcels adjacent to Lussiano Field. [»Later in this presentation we present our vision for these sites.](#)

ENSURE HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE ON BROADWAY

- Ensure future development addresses **hazards from flooding and extreme weather.**
- **Ground-floor retail** should contribute to streetlife.

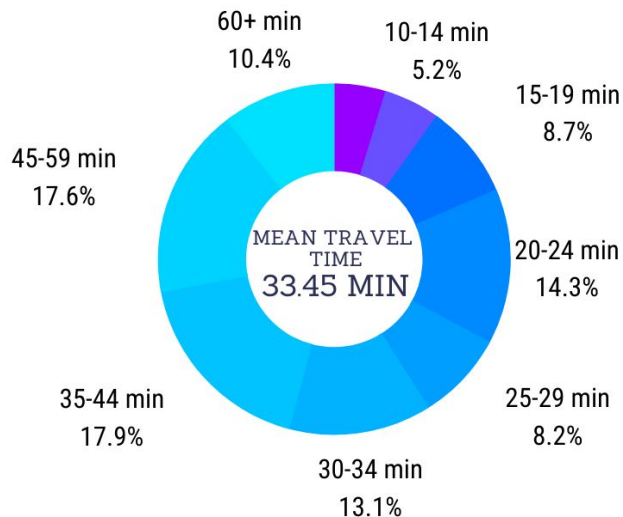
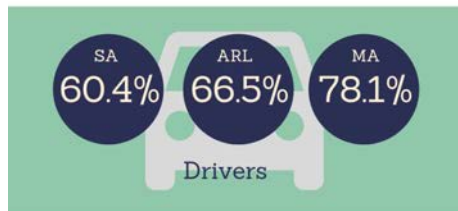
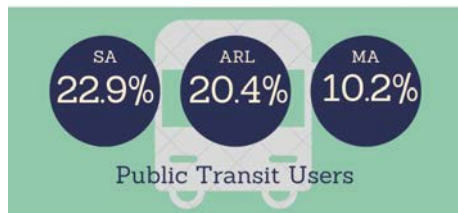
04

Mobility





HOW DO RESIDENTS COMMUTE?



HOME-WORK COMMUTE

By far, most residents get to work by car. However, the Broadway corridor has a high percentage of bicyclists and transit riders.

Most residents do not work in Arlington -- they work in Boston, Cambridge, or Somerville.

Those who do work along Broadway mostly commute from other cities/towns.

Reliable, regional transportation is important for the corridor.

WALKABILITY

Where do people walk?

Corner markets, Stop & Shop, childcare centers, schools, bus stops, parks, Arlington Town Center, etc.

✓ Strengths:

- Sidewalks on every street
- (Somewhat) frequent crosswalks on Broadway
- Great tree shading on side streets

✗ Weaknesses:

- Long street width to cross
- Damage from tree roots
- Long distance to major retail
- Poor tree shading on Broadway
- Safety concerns at intersections

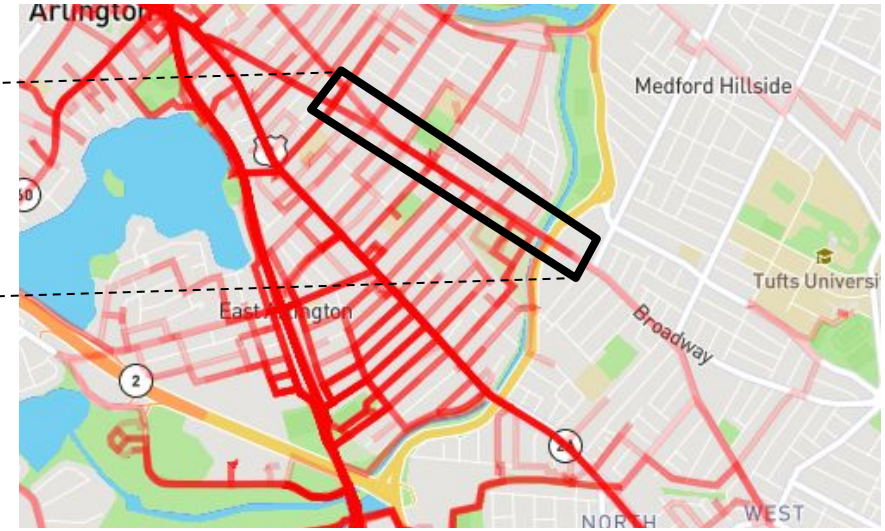
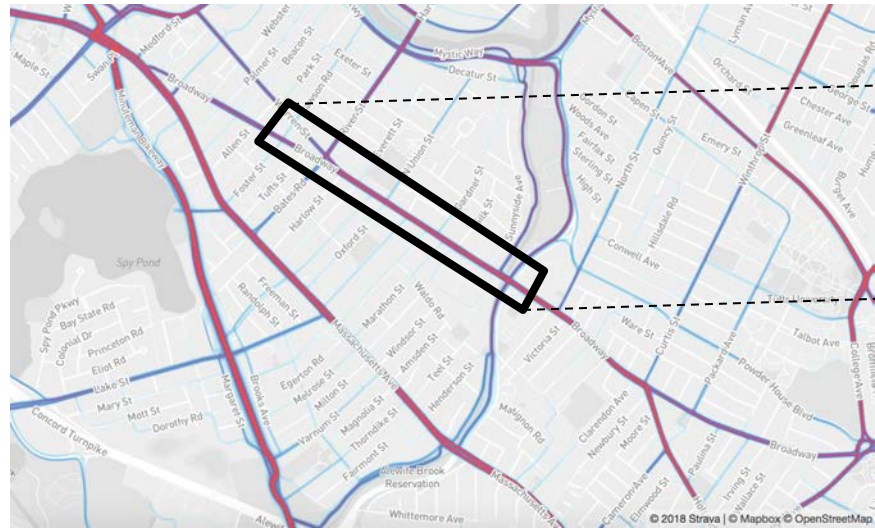


Crossing the intersection at Broadway and Warren St.-River St. can be difficult.



Curb extensions could help shorten crossing distances and slow traffic.

BICYCLING



STRAVA MAP

GPS data from biking smartphone app.

LIME BIKES

GPS data from dockless bikes.

BICYCLING

Not safe for all

Safe for all, but requires space



CURRENT CONDITIONS

42-44 ft wide; two traffic lanes and parking on each side



WHAT IS POSSIBLE?

Left: Arlington, VA
Right: Boulder, CO

TRANSIT

MBTA #87 (below) serves Broadway, whereas **#88** and **#89** start from Clarendon Hill. All three are heavily used, and are often crowded in the morning rush hour. The **#87** terminates at Clarendon Hill, outside Arlington, on Sundays.



Morning On-boardings

Morning Off-boardings

TRANSIT



CURRENT CONDITIONS

Bus stop on Broadway.



WHAT IS POSSIBLE?

Benches and bus shelters elsewhere in Arlington and Somerville. Bus/bike lane in Allston. Drinking fountain: UrbanFF vendor's photo.

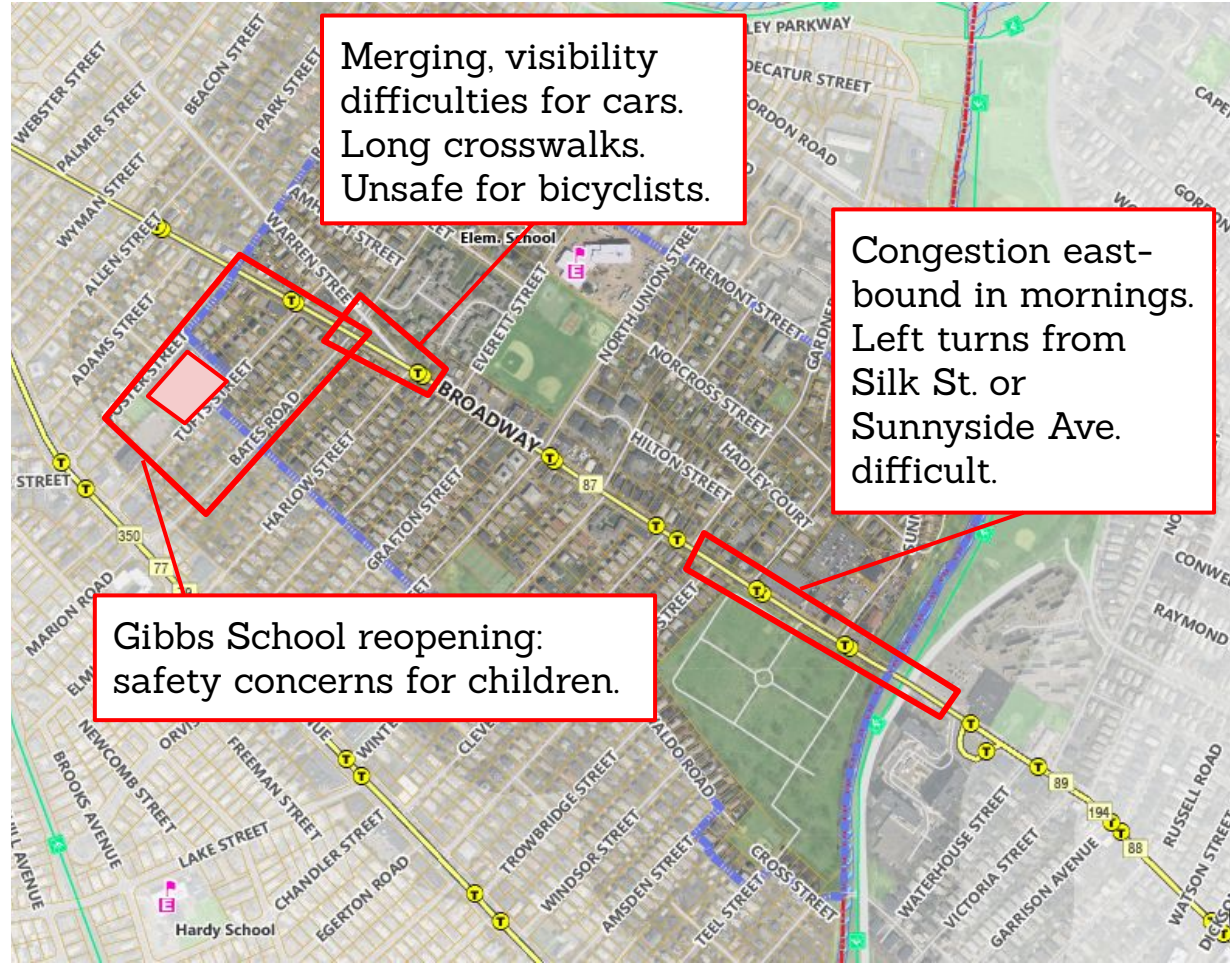


WHAT WE'VE HEARD

- With mobility, **pedestrian and bicycle safety** are the top concerns.
- Many crosswalks are unsafe.
- Residents would appreciate **having places to walk to**.

"We really need **bike lanes** here."

"The Warren St. intersection is a **deathtrap**, for everyone--cars, pedestrians, and bicyclists."



Merging, visibility difficulties for cars.
Long crosswalks.
Unsafe for bicyclists.

Congestion east-bound in mornings.
Left turns from Silk St. or Sunnyside Ave. difficult.

Gibbs School reopening: safety concerns for children.

OUR **MOBILITY** RECOMMENDATIONS

CORRIDOR-WIDE

- Implement **bike lanes** along Broadway, potentially removing parking on one side of the street to do so.
- Make **walking routes to school safer**: improve crosswalks.
- Improve the pedestrian & transit-user environment: **bus stop shelters, benches, night lighting, tree shading**.
- Advocate for Arlington Center **Sunday service on MBTA #87 bus**.

INTERSECTIONS

- **Improve safety & traffic flow for all modes at the Sunnyside Ave. & Alewife Brk. Pkwy. intersections**, following a study. Consider a bus/bike-only lane on the eastbound approach to Alewife Brk. Pkwy.
- **Improve safety for all transportation modes at the Broadway/Warren St. intersection** through a redesign. Shorten crosswalks with curb extensions and consider realigning traffic.

05

Neighborhood Character





ASSETS

- Tree lined streets
- Well-kept, traditional-style residential buildings
- Several well-loved neighborhood stores generating foot traffic
- Lussiano Field



OPPORTUNITIES

- Vacant lots or unused buildings
- Dead facades
- Parking surrounding buildings
- Large empty yards in front of apartment buildings
- Variety of forms, no unifying characteristics for buildings or their relationship to sidewalk

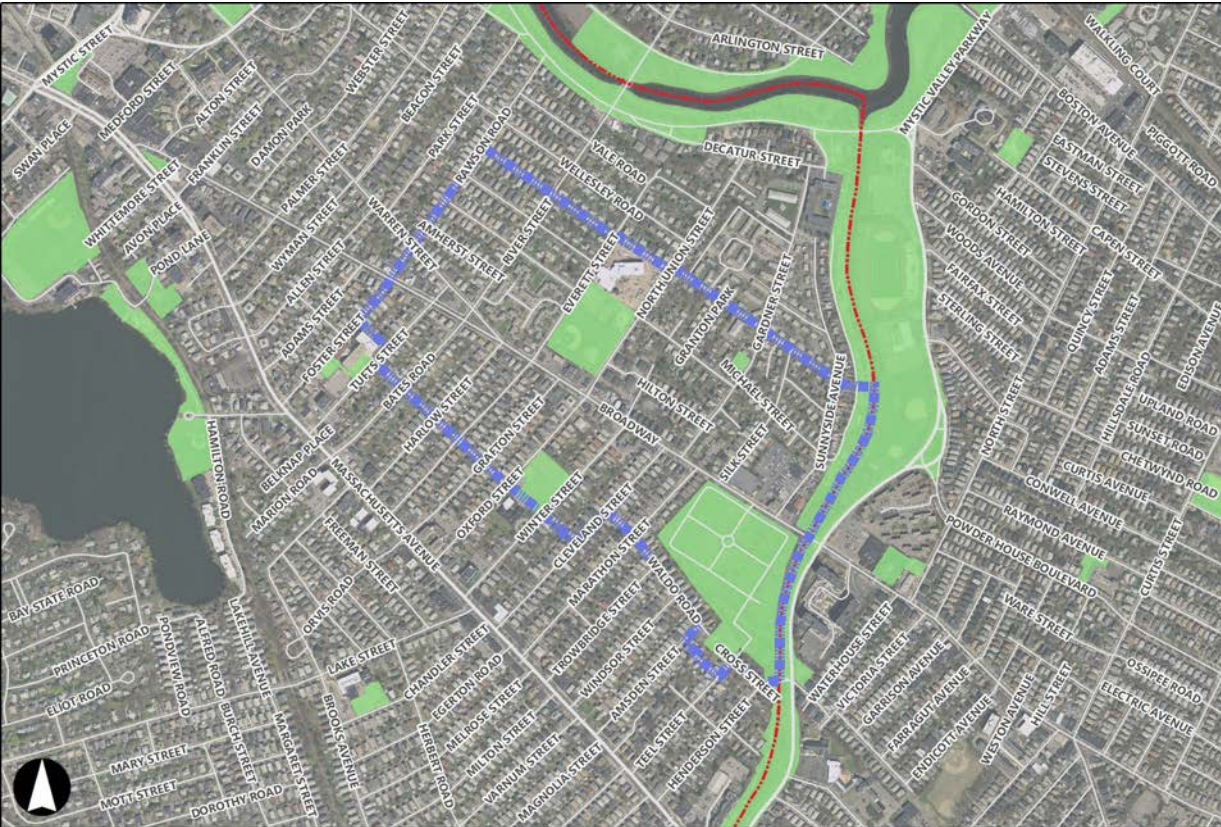


NEW VIBRANCY

- Learn to Grow Daycare
- Dunkin': most lively communal space on the corridor.
- 117 Broadway



Credit: Housing Corporation of Arlington



GREEN SPACE

Residents have access to several green spaces in close walking distance.

Recreational:

- Alewife Brook
- Crosby Park
- Lussiano Field
- Spy Pond Park

Non-recreational:

- St. Paul Cemetery
- Triangle at Broadway/
Warren St.

Lussiano Field is the largest recreational park, and is central to the study area.



Parking lot for Lahey Building, Broadway.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

- Flooding along Alewife Brook
- Urban heat island effect
- Stormwater Contamination

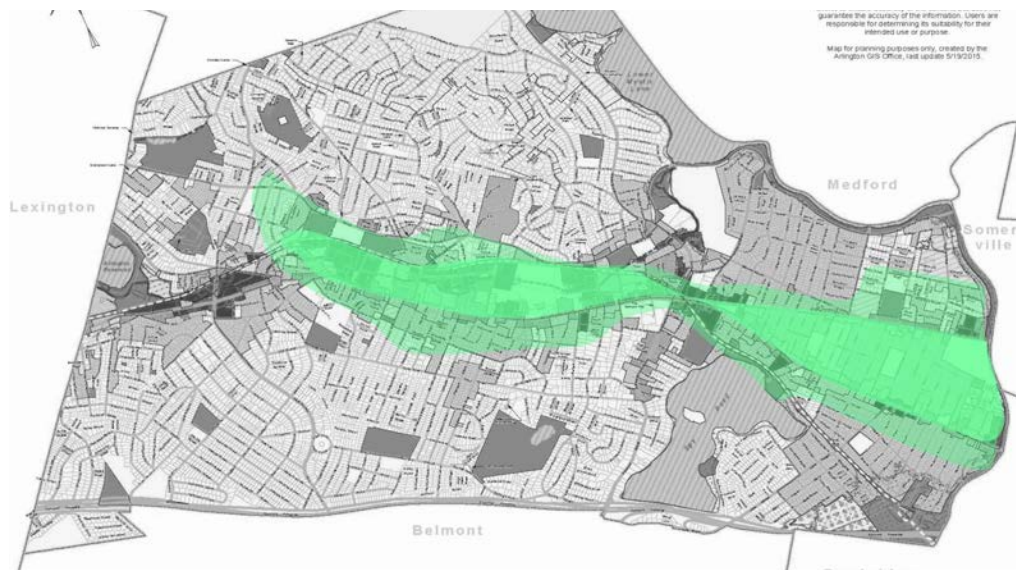
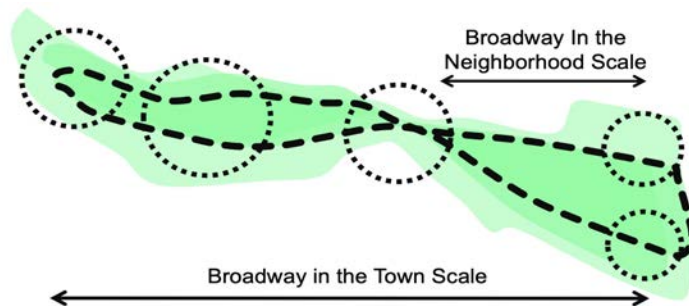
Any changes to neighborhood should address high volume of impermeable surfaces and the patchy tree canopy

WHAT WE'VE HEARD

- Community members appreciate the **calm neighborhood character** but desire **more things to do nearby**.
- They agree Broadway can & should facilitate **better street life**.
- Broadway can accommodate denser development such as 4-5 story structures, but 10 stories would be excessive.

“Why don't we have the kind of coffee shops and restaurants that others have?”

*“It'd be great to bring more of the **vibe of Arlington Center** down here.”*



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER RECOMMENDATIONS

FROM “GRAB & GO” TO “COME & STAY”

- **Activate the ground floor**, through improvements to the built environment and **encouraging street-frontage retail spaces** for restaurants and small businesses
- Encourage **temporary & tactical activation of streetscape**, such as parklets, street festivals, etc.

ACTIVATE LUSSIANO FIELD

- Engage future developments to provide **visual and physical access to the field** from Broadway
- Create **bike parking and public spaces**, and renovate facilities

PRESERVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT

- **Preserve and expand the existing tree canopy**
- Ensure that **new construction responds to current & future climate hazards**.

06

Focus Sites





Lussiano Field

- Lussiano Field
- Arlington Food Pantry
- East Cambridge Savings Bank
- Dunkin'

"Gateway" Site (Lahey Building)

- Lahey Health Primary Care
- Visiting Nurse and Community Care
- ZipWall Dust Barrier System
- Arlmont Fuel
- Cambridge Strength and Conditioning
- Boyle's Body Works

Broadway Streetscape



Understanding the Sites

Outreach · Research · Field Visits

Design Iterations

Program · Charrettes · Feedback

Concept Designs

Regional Needs

- Housing capacity
- Activities & social uses
- Leverage transportation connectivity & minimize burdens
- Enhance neighborhood character

Site Needs

- Ingress/Egress
- Financial & regulatory viability



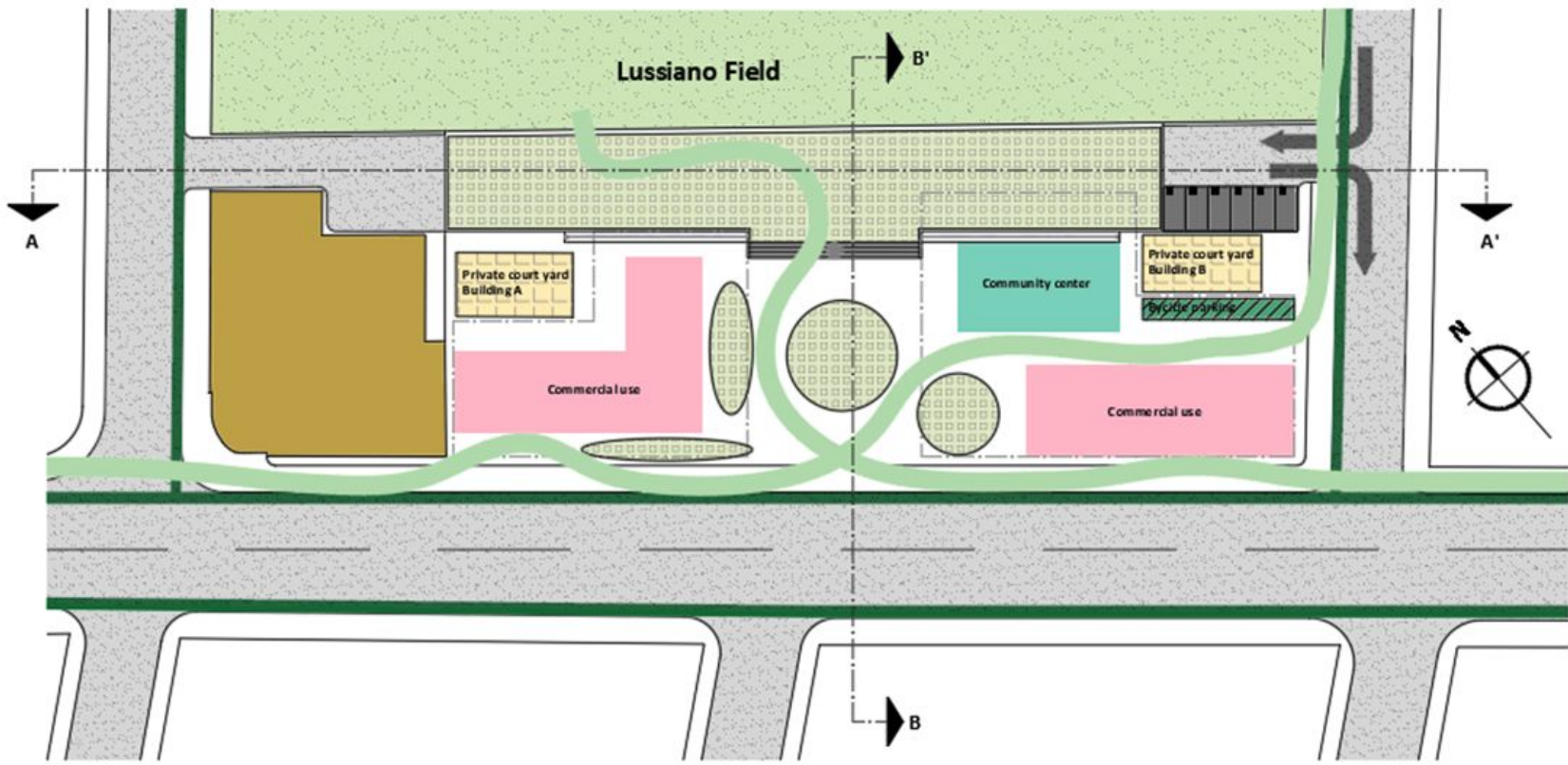
i.e., the designs presented here.

These are not development proposals. These represent **our vision of the sites' best possible, real-world use**, to benefit the Broadway corridor as a whole.

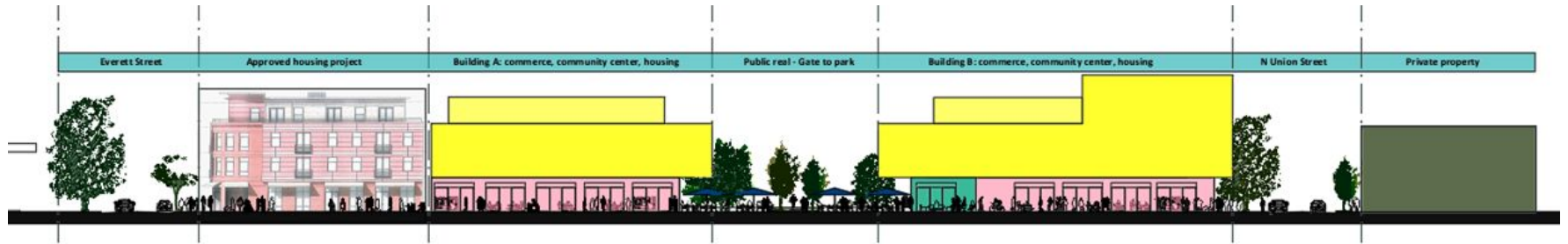




GENERAL PLAN ----- GROUND LEVEL

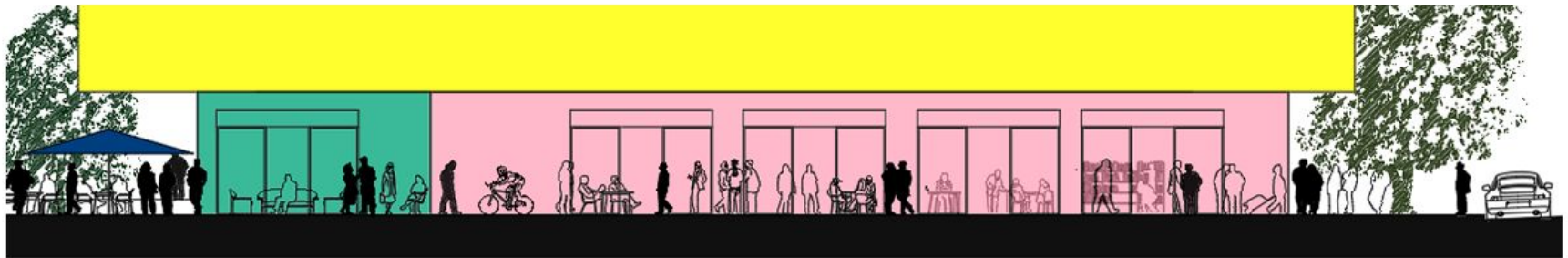


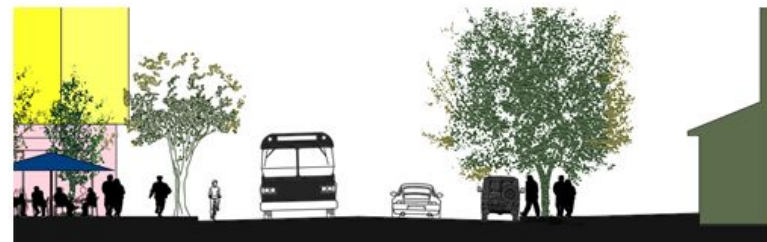
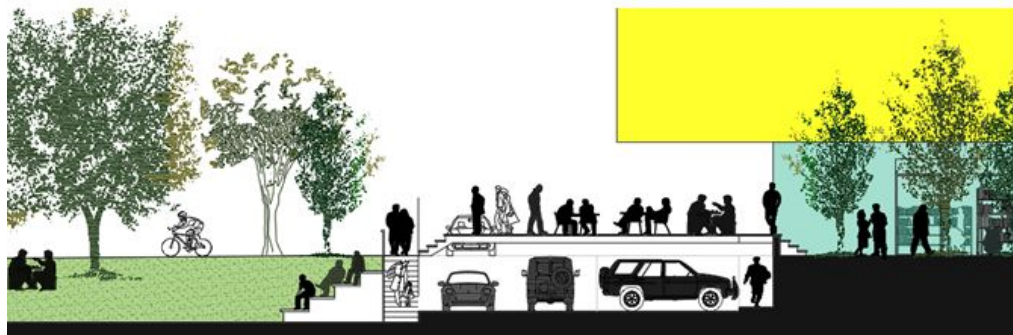
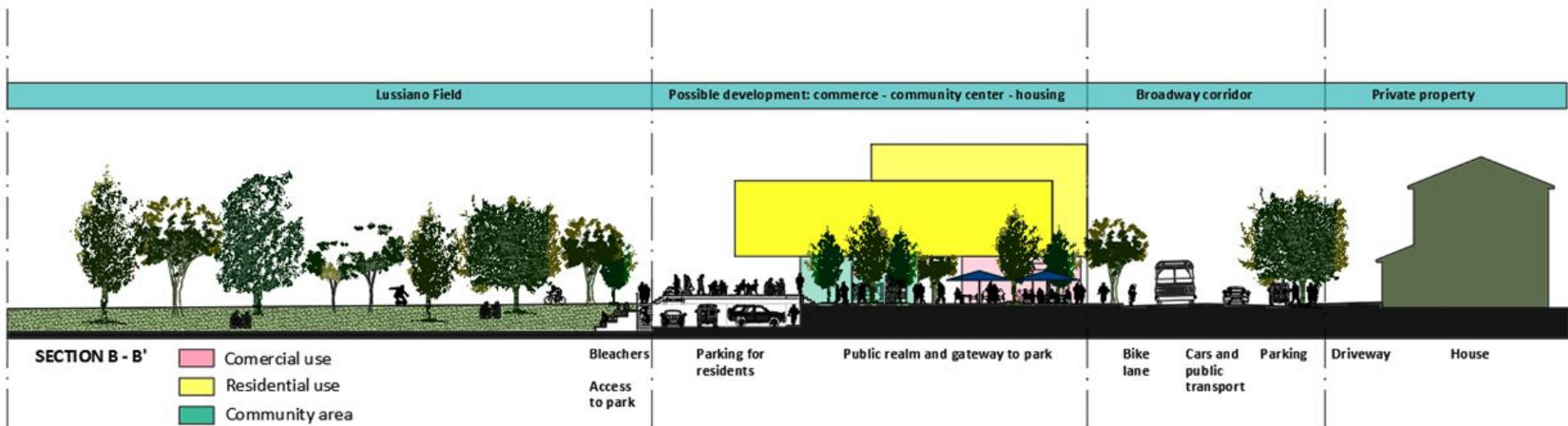
- New buildings
- Public realm
- Possible circulations
- Bicycle lanes
- Bicycle parking
- Private court yards



BROADWAY ELEVATION

- Commercial use
- Residential use
- Community area



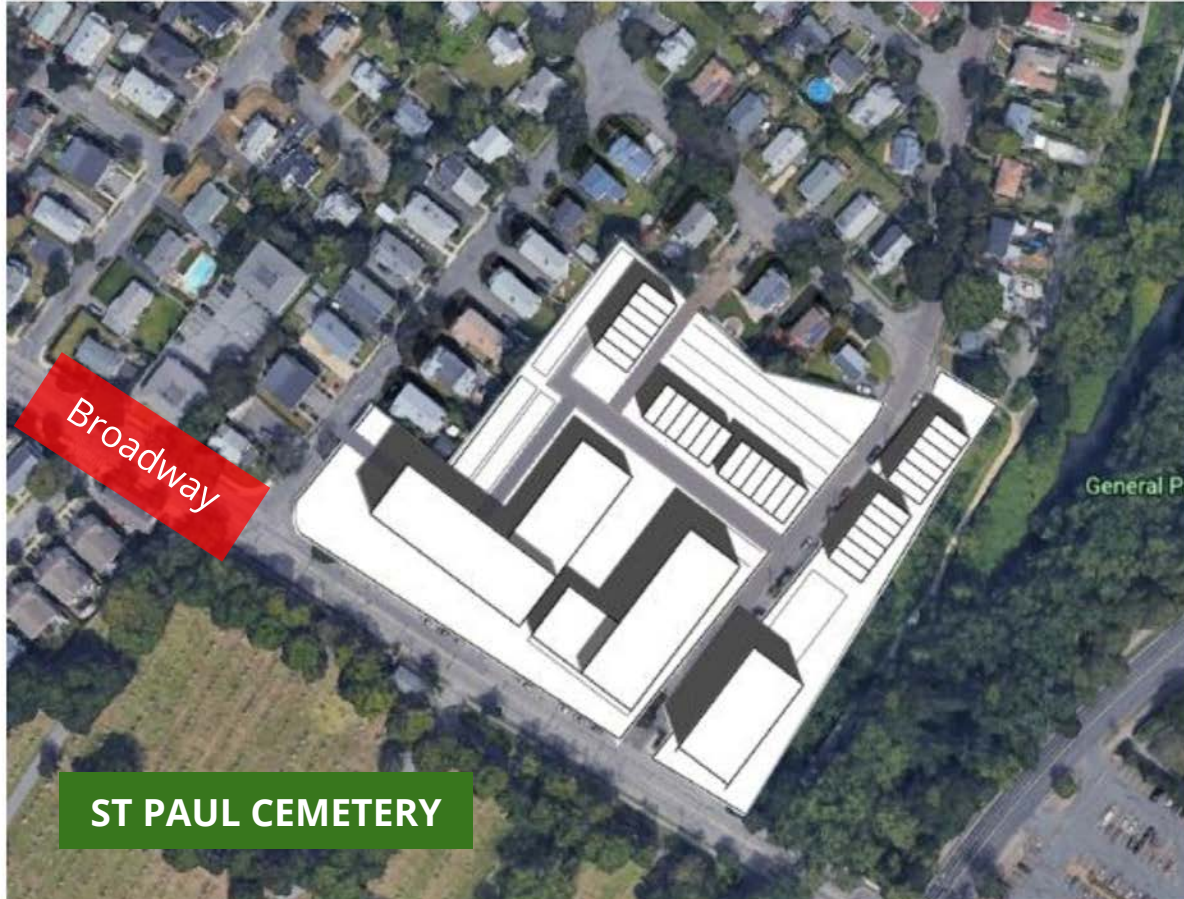




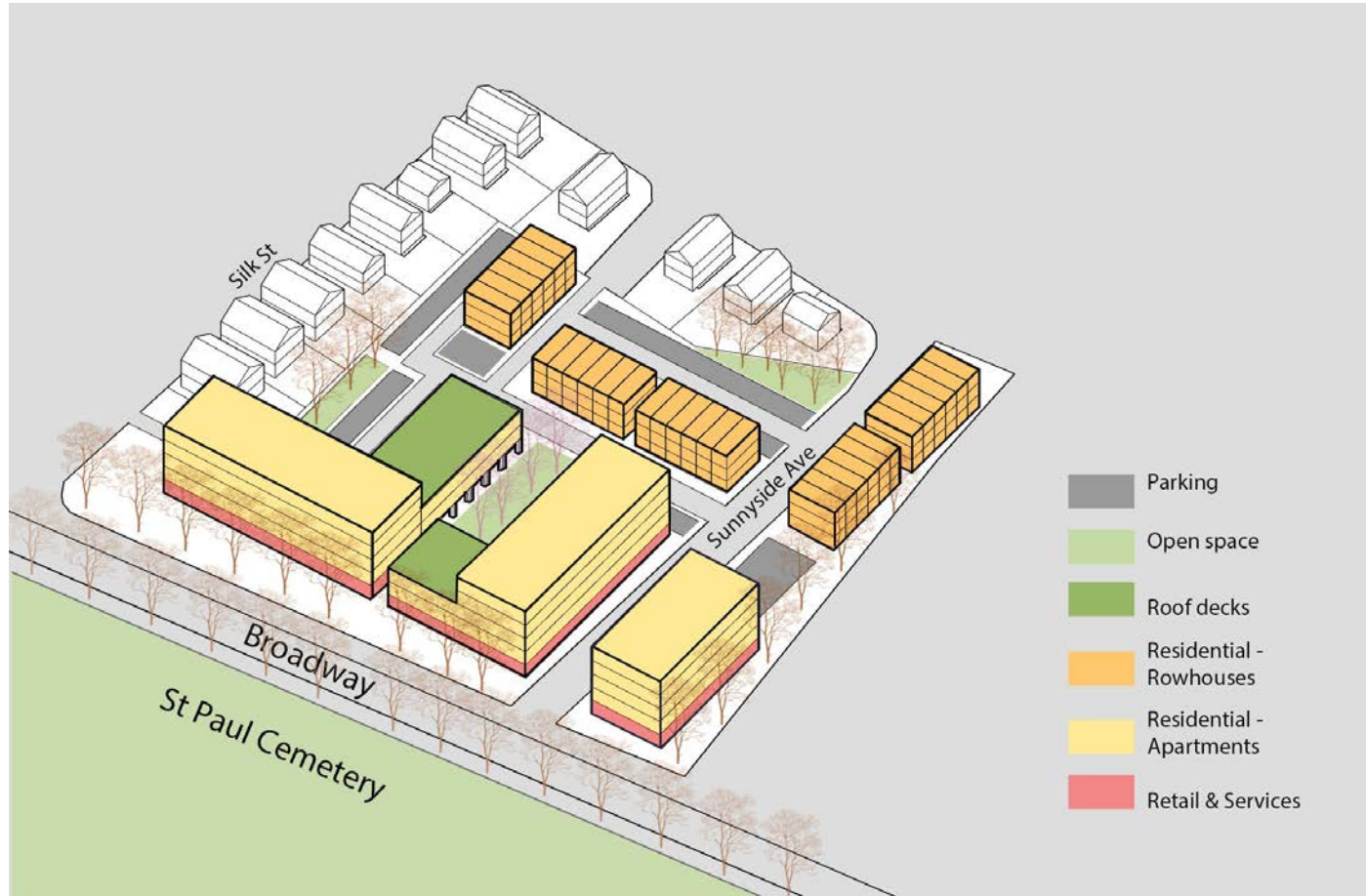
A case in a Bustamante Park, Santiago de Chile
Library, café and restaurant in a building serving as a doorway to the park.



- Lahey Health building + mixed commercial and industrial uses
- Approx. 4 acres
- Parking lot is large, currently underdeveloped space
- Edge of neighborhood
- Proximity to Alewife Parkway = good transit and transportation access



- Lahey Health building + mixed commercial and industrial uses
- Approx. 4 acres
- Parking lot is large, currently underdeveloped space
- Edge of neighborhood
- Proximity to Alewife Parkway = good transit and transportation access



Retail

31,800 sq ft

Apartments

133,200 sq ft

A total of 140 units

Townhouses

108,000 sq ft

A total of 30 units

Parking spaces

160

Purple = flow of traffic



Retail

31,800 sq ft

Apartments

133,200 sq ft

A total of 140 units

Townhouses

108,000 sq ft

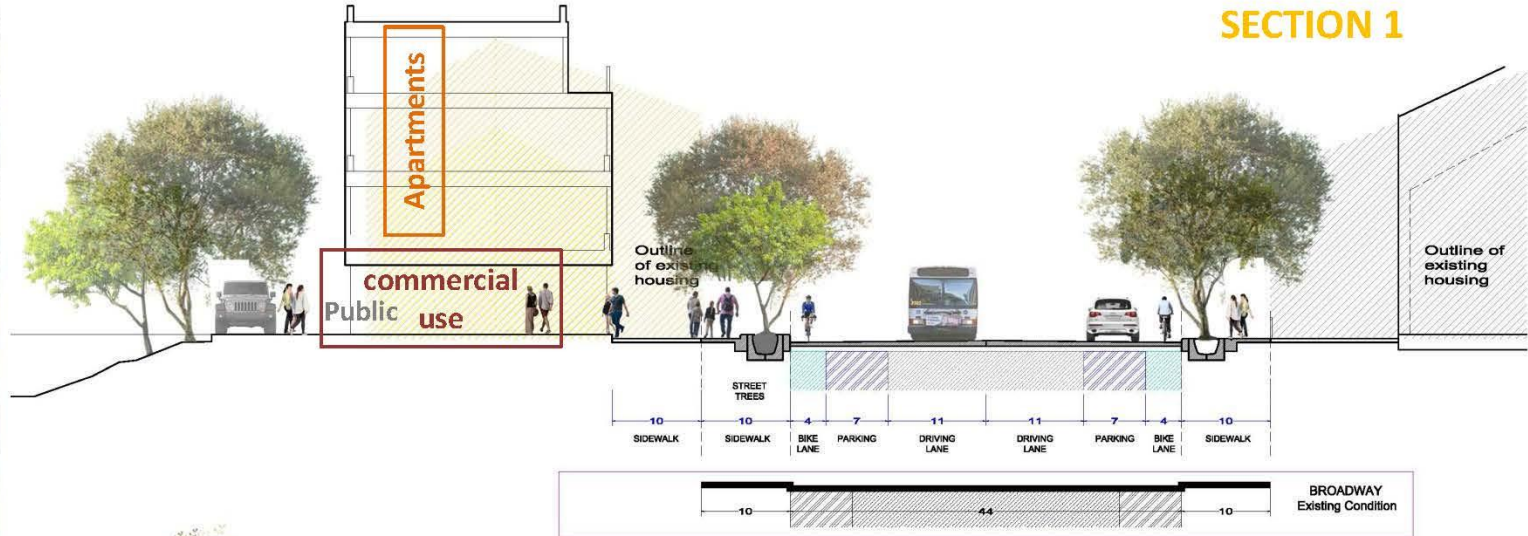
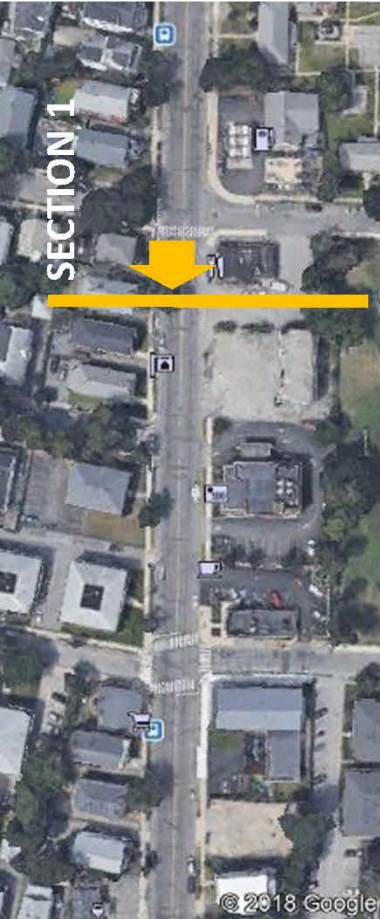
A total of 30 units

Parking spaces

160







THANK YOU



OUR HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS

INCENTIVIZE & SHAPE AFFORDABLE HOUSING GROWTH

- Review dimensional restrictions on **height & density to improve viability of affordable & mixed-income housing developments.**
- Host **community processes** about how public land may be acquired for affordable housing.
- Examine **underutilized land parcels** for redevelopment. Plan a new future for the “Gateway”/Lahey Building site and the parcels adjacent to Lussiano Field. [»Later in this presentation we present our vision for these sites.](#)

ENSURE HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE ON BROADWAY

- Ensure future development addresses **hazards from flooding and extreme weather.**
- **Ground-floor retail should contribute to streetlife.**

OUR **MOBILITY** RECOMMENDATIONS

CORRIDOR-WIDE

- Implement **bike lanes** along Broadway, potentially removing parking on one side of the street to do so.
- Make **walking routes to school safer**: improve crosswalks.
- Improve the pedestrian & transit-user environment: **bus stop shelters, benches, night lighting, tree shading**.
- Advocate for Arlington Center **Sunday service on MBTA #87 bus**.

INTERSECTIONS

- **Improve safety & traffic flow for all modes at the Sunnyside Ave. & Alewife Brk. Pkwy. intersections**, following a study. Consider a bus/bike-only lane on the eastbound approach to Alewife Brk. Pkwy.
- **Improve safety for all transportation modes at the Broadway/Warren St. intersection** through a redesign. Shorten crosswalks with curb extensions and consider realigning traffic.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER RECOMMENDATIONS

FROM “GRAB & GO” TO “COME & STAY”

- **Activate the ground floor**, through improvements to the built environment and **encouraging street-frontage retail spaces** for restaurants and small businesses
- Encourage **temporary & tactical activation of streetscape**, such as parklets, street festivals, etc.

ACTIVATE LUSSIANO FIELD

- Engage future developments to provide **visual and physical access to the field** from Broadway
- Create **bike parking and public spaces**, and renovate facilities

PRESERVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT

- **Preserve and expand the existing tree canopy**
- Ensure that **new construction responds to current & future climate hazards**.