



**Urban Land
Institute**

Boston/New England



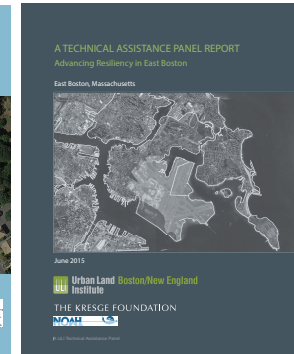
Waverley Square Belmont TAP
March 8, 2022

About ULI – the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising nearly 45,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

ULI at the local level

Boston/New England District Council covers nearly all of New England with over 1,300 Members—developers, architects, planners, public officials, financiers, students, etc.



Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs)

Belmont, MA

ULI Boston/New England is committed to supporting communities in making sound land use decisions and creating better places. A TAP brings together ULI members with a range of professional expertise to provide focused, collaborative consultation to a local government or qualifying non-profit organization.

TAP Impact on Communities:

- **82%** said their behavior and approach to **Municipal Planning and Economic Development Strategies** was affected
- **67%** said there were **increased municipal investments** related to the stated goals and recommendations of their TAP report.
- **62%** said at least **one key developable asset addressed in their TAP report had been redeveloped consistent with ULI Boston/New England recommendations**

Final Deliverable – Written report (10 - 12 weeks) will be available at <http://boston.uli.org>

PANEL SPONSOR:



The Panel

Co-Chairs

- **Sandi Silk**, Jefferson Apartment Group
- **Vickie Alani**, CBT

Panelists

- **Patrick Gallagher**, Goulston & Storrs
- **Caroline Wells**, Weston and Sampson
- **Deborah Myers**, Deborah Myers Landscape Architecture
- **Andrew Colbert**, WinnDevelopment
- **Yongjoo Kim**, CambridgeSeven

ULI Staff

- **Tim Moore**, Manager ULI Boston/New England

TAP Writer

- **Mike Hoban**



The Process

Briefing Meeting

Panelists received briefing information from the city regarding the study area including zoning, past studies, current conditions, etc.

Site Visit

On March 3rd, Panelists toured Waverley Square.

Stakeholder Interviews

On March 4th, the panelists interviewed property owners, business owners, and public officials via Zoom to better understand the needs of district tenants and the community. The panel also analyzed survey data from an additional 168 community stakeholders.



Panel Assignment: Address These Questions



- How do we make this a walkable and bikeable neighborhood that has foot traffic for businesses, motivates people to take the commuter rail or the 73 bus, and inspires people to walk to nearby amenities, such as Beaver Brook Park?
- What are the redevelopment opportunities for Waverley Square?
- Would this neighborhood be a good candidate for either 40R or could this location support the necessary multifamily requirement under MGL 40A, Section 3?

Study Area – Waverley Square, Belmont



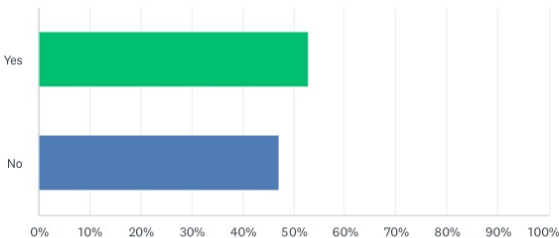


What did we hear?

Survey Results

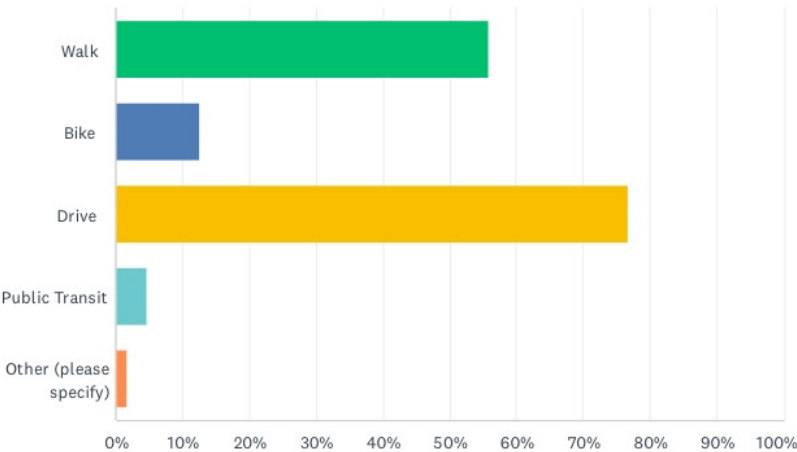
Q1 Do you live within a half mile of the Waverley Square MBTA, Commuter Rail Station?

Answered: 168 Skipped: 0



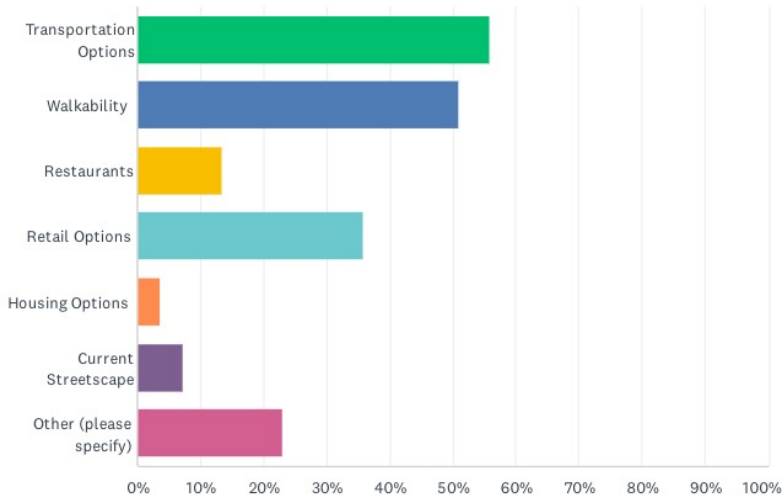
Q2 How do you typically travel to Waverley Square? (Please select all that apply)

Answered: 168 Skipped: 0



Q3 What are things that you like today about Waverley Square? (Please select all that apply)

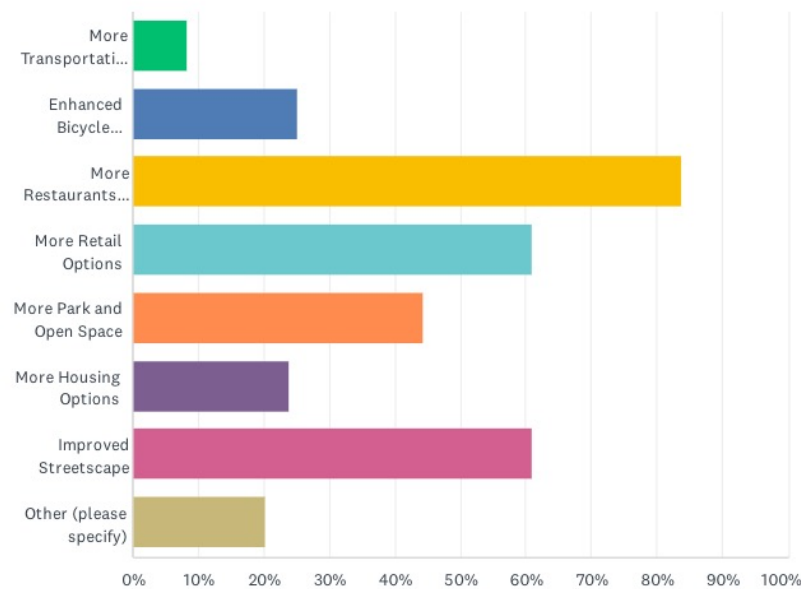
Answered: 165 Skipped: 3



Survey Results

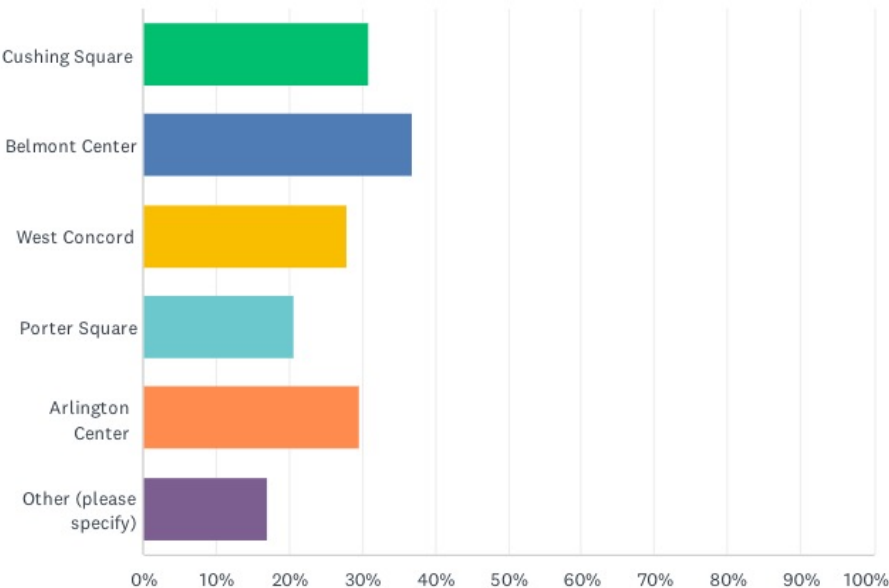
Q4 What are things that you wished you could change about Waverley Square? (Please select all that apply)

Answered: 167 Skipped: 1



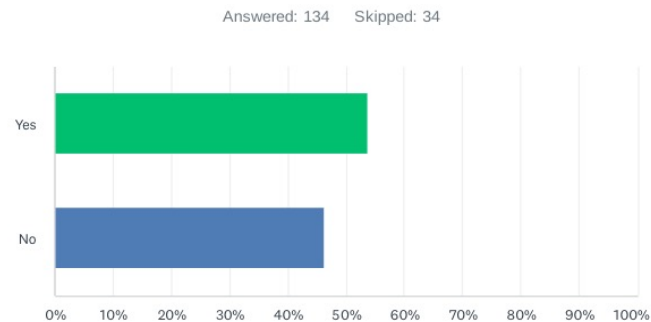
Q5 What type of regional center would you like to see Waverley Square become? (Please select all that apply)

Answered: 165 Skipped: 3

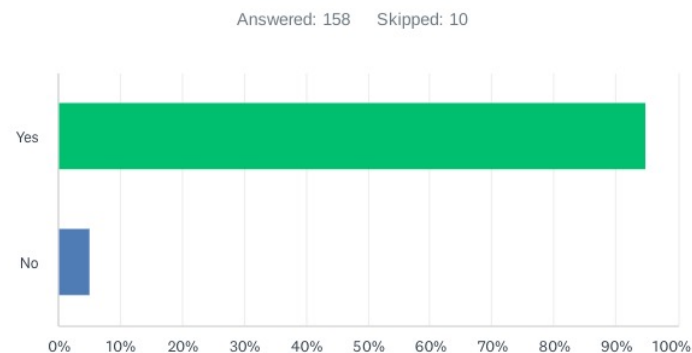


Survey Results

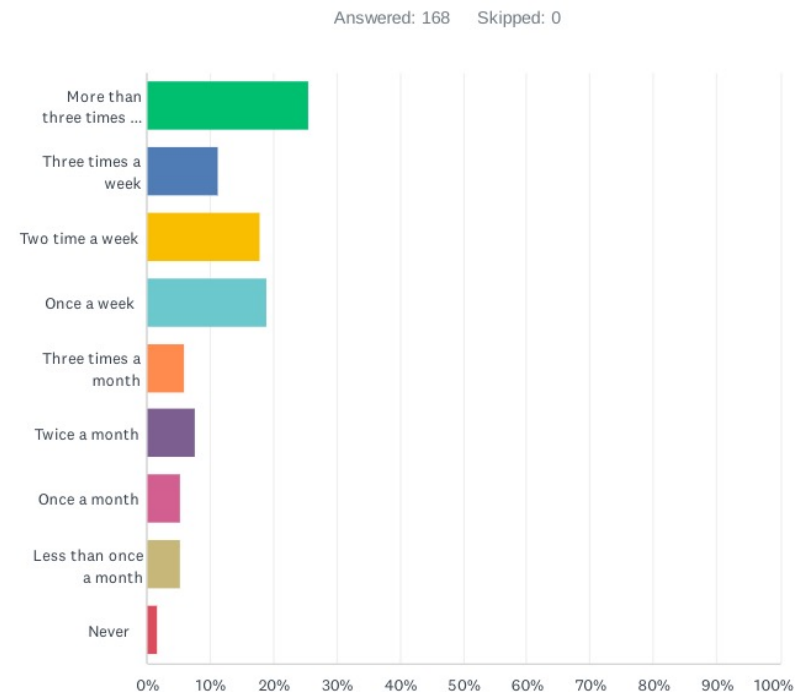
Q6 If you answered “Housing Options” in questions 3 & 4, would you support more housing development in Waverley Square, including the development of multifamily housing?



Q7 If you answered “Retail Options” in questions 3 & 4, would you support more economic development in Waverley Square?



Q8 How often do you typically visit Waverley Square?



Existing Conditions

- Gateways to Waverley Square



Assets and Opportunities

Location

- Transportation node
- Village feel
- Proximity to schools
- Proximity to services
- High activity



Community

- Good schools
- Engaged population
- Family friendly



Assets and Opportunities

Site Conditions

- Good visibility



Economics

- Strong tax base



Challenges

Location

- High traffic
- Wide pedestrian crossings
- Lack of retail opportunities
- Lack of restaurants
- Lack of wayfinding signage
- No noticeable of transit signage

Community

- Negative views on density
- Desire to keep things as they are



Challenges

Site Conditions

- Lack of gateway signage
- Underutilized parking
- No ADA accessibility for train stop
- Lacks programming
- No sense of arrival at a destination



Economics

- Low train ridership
- Lack of business mix
- Zoning not conducive to attract restaurants (parking and licensing hurdles)





Recommendations

Recommendations

How do we make this a walkable and bikeable neighborhood that has foot traffic for businesses, motivates people to take the commuter rail or the 73 bus, and inspires people to walk to nearby amenities, such as Beaver Brook Park?

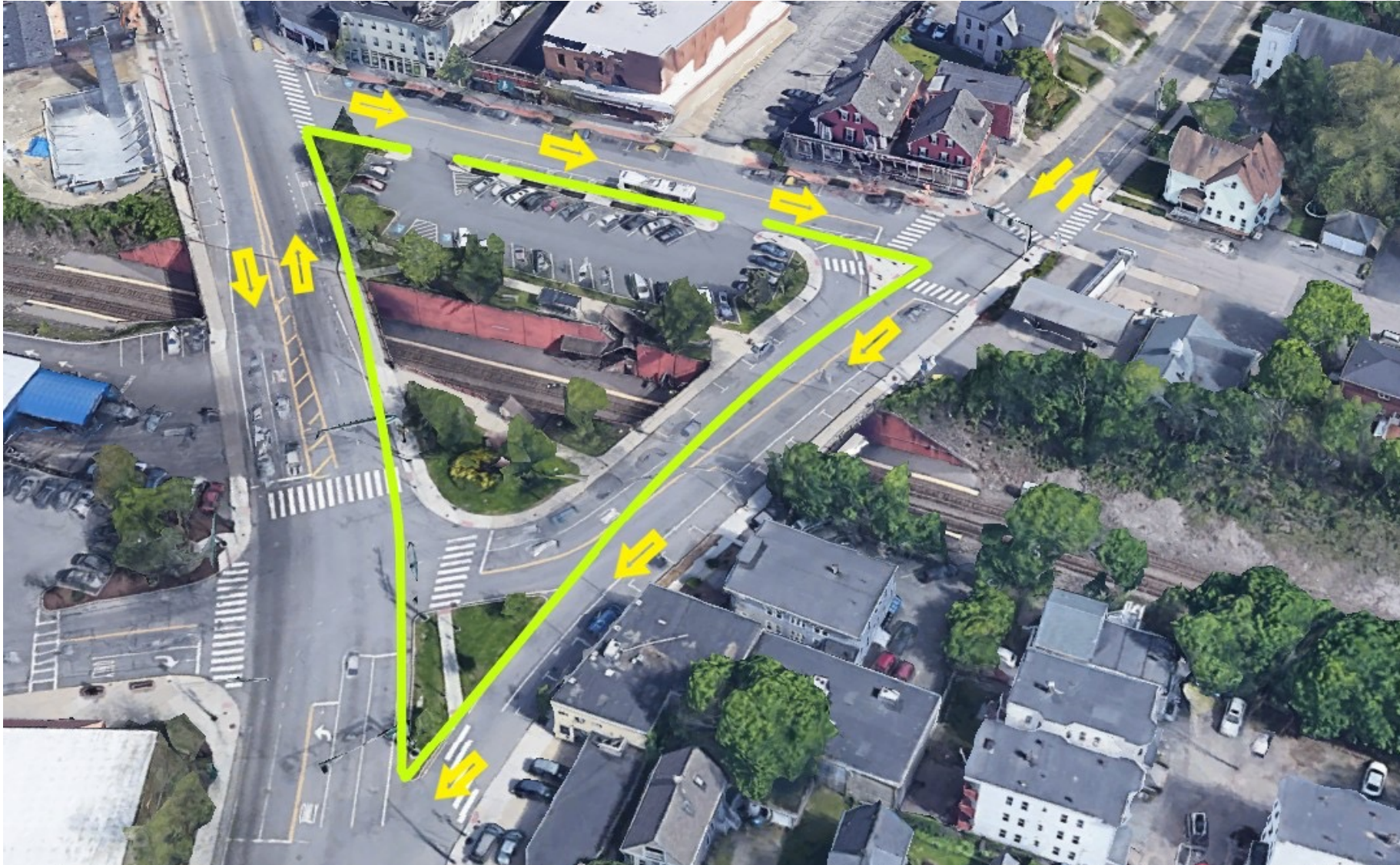
To address the question above at Waverley Square, the panel suggests the following recommendations

Parking and Transportation

- Explore the ability to create one way travel northbound on Lexington and eastbound on Church Street through the square.
- Remove traffic islands at the south side of Lexington and Church Street and at Lexington and Trapelo Road to improve the pedestrian realm.
- Work with area business owners to create shared use agreements for parking and create signage so that people know where hidden parking lots are.
- Install bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, wayfinding signage, and distinctive crossings so that walkers and bikers are expected and welcome.

By taking the above actions, the footprint of the park will be expanded and the pedestrian experience will be improved by limiting two-way traffic and mid-street stopping points.

Recommendations – Proposed Waverley Square Expansion & Traffic Flow



Recommendations

What are the redevelopment opportunities for Waverley Square?

To address the question, the panel envisioned Waverley Square to serve as a traditional square, a destination amenity where local families and guests gather to enjoy the vibrancy of the neighborhood. The panel explored best practices to position Waverley Square as a neighborhood amenity that will serve as a facilitator for business attraction, retention and expansion in the neighborhood by attracting additional pedestrian and bicycle traffic to the area.

To achieve the desired result, the panel has the following recommendations.

Recommendations

Placemaking

- Define Waverley Square and make it a place with a 'town green' at the center
- Celebrate Waverley Square's character
- Mural and art installations at the MBTA station and along the community path
- Signage including
 - MBTA – T
 - Parking
 - Wayfinding signage for neighborhood amenities and key retailers
 - Gateway signage for Waverley Square on light posts
- Consistent and Unique crosswalk design for traffic calming

Activation Opportunities

- Food truck nights
- Farmers Market
- Café & food kiosks
- Music series

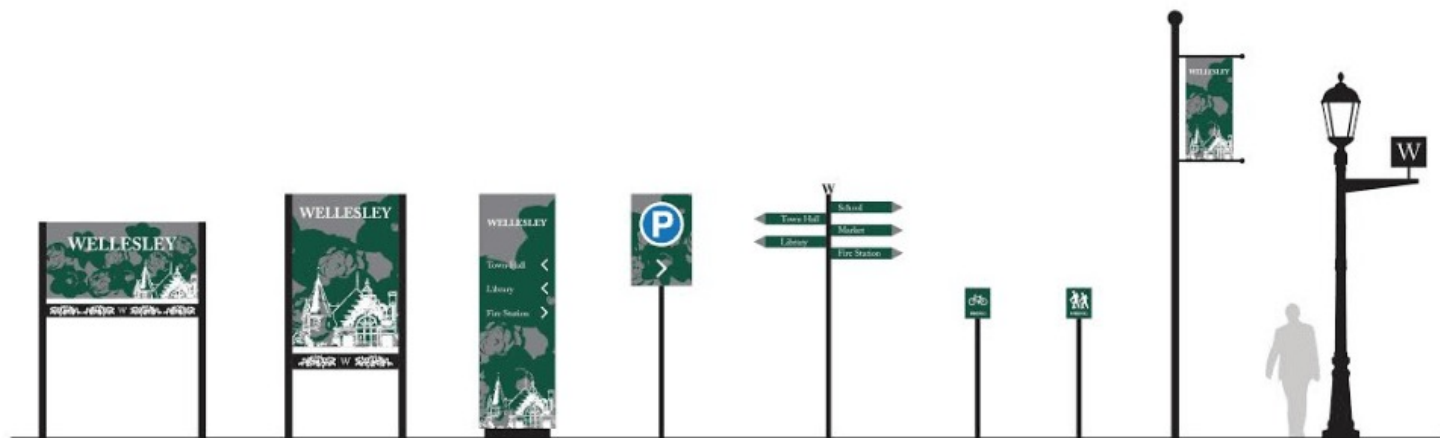
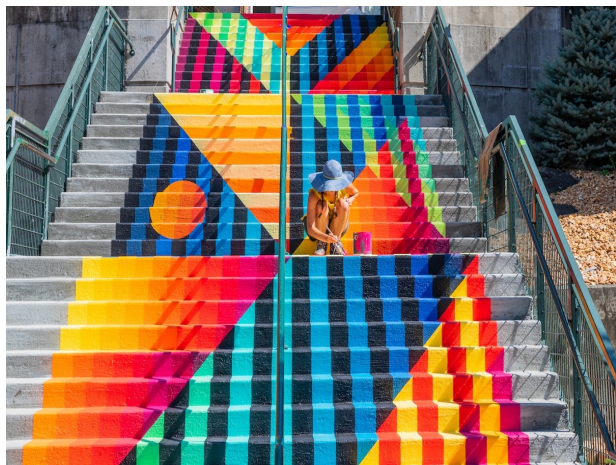
Recommendations

Site and Landscape Improvements

- Consistent design guidelines for fencing within the pedestrian realm
- Landscaping & greenscaping
- Bike & pedestrian plan to define signage, lighting and crossing opportunities
- Expansion of the park edges to eliminate secondary islands, narrow streets and remove parking to create a better bike/pedestrian experience and create natural traffic calming
- Widen sidewalks to create opportunities for plantings and street furnishings encouraging outdoor dining and seating
- Use of overhead catenary lighting on Church Street to provide ambiance and the addition of a water feature to help mitigate traffic noise

Organizational & Administrative

- The creation of an administrative framework to manage parking, activations and programming
 - BID (Business Improvement District)
 - Main Street Association
 - Merchant Association



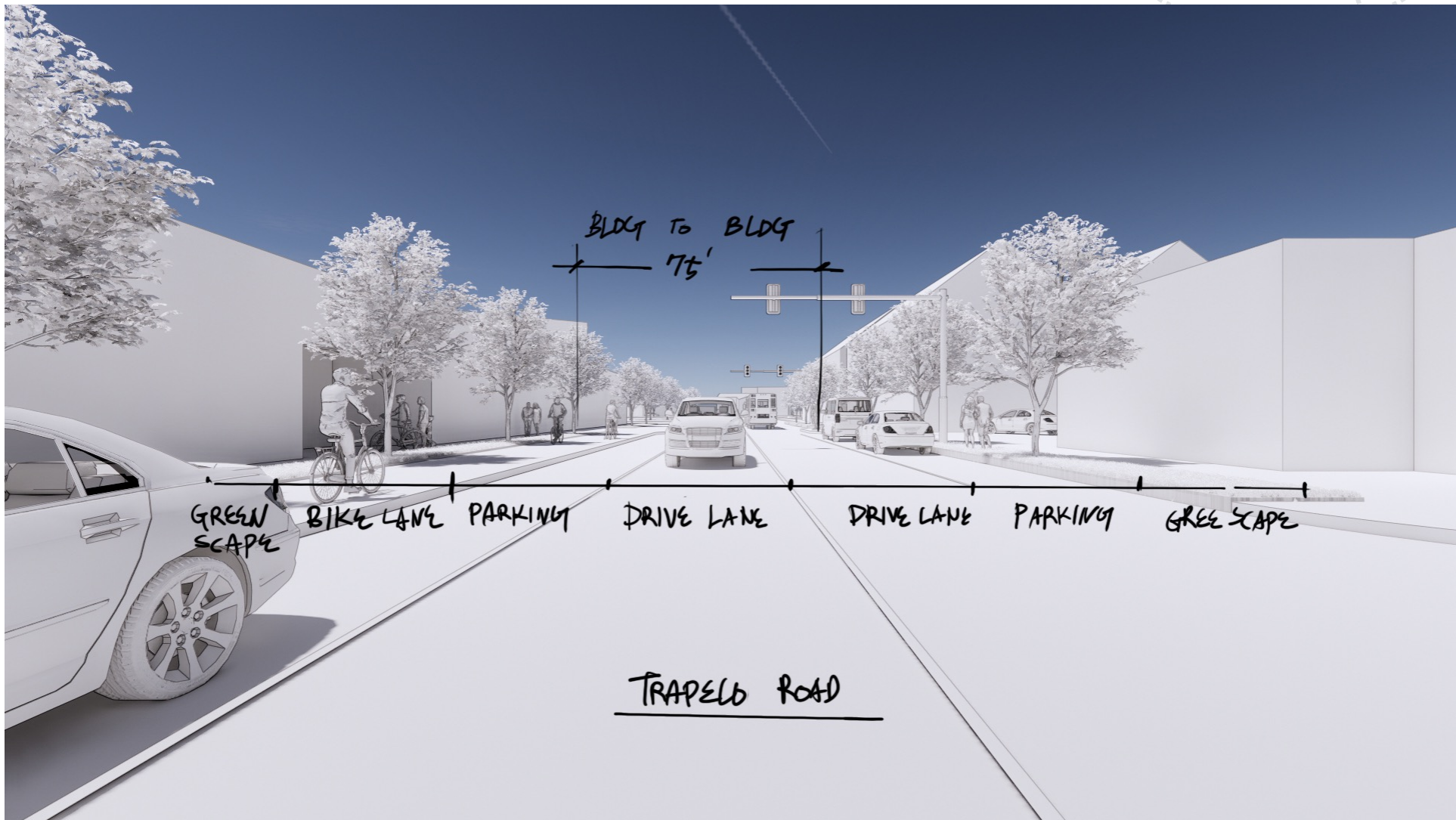
Site an



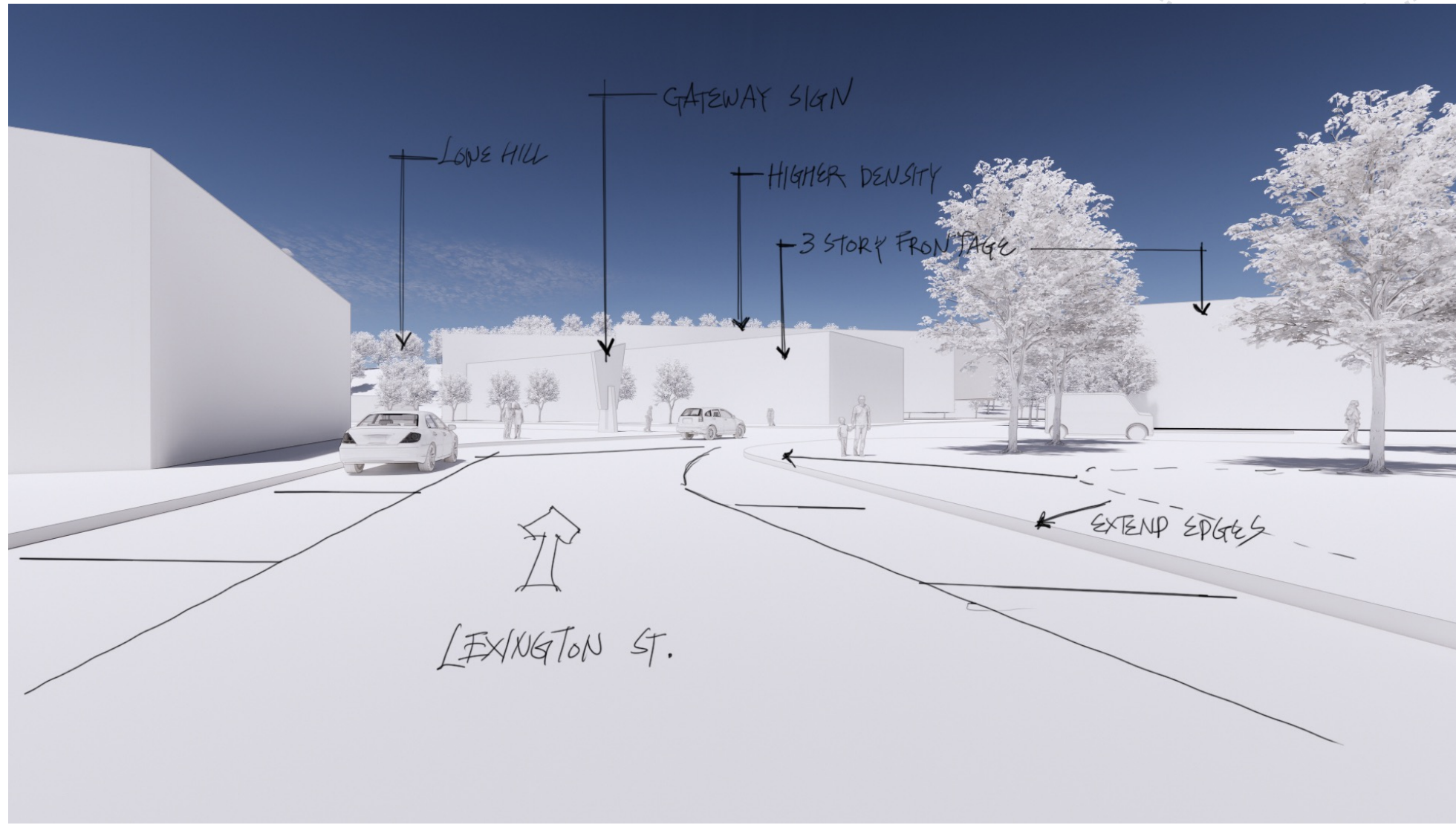
Site and Landscape Improvements- Trapelo Road Improvements



Site and Landscape Improvements- Trapelo Road View



Site and Landscape Improvements- Trapelo Road View



Recommendations

Would this neighborhood be a good candidate for either M.G.L. Chapter 40R (Smart Growth) or could this location support the necessary multifamily requirement under M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 3A (MBTA Communities)?

Overview of MBTA Communities Requirements

- Belmont is an MBTA community, as defined under M.G.L. c. 161A, Section 1. Specifically, Belmont is designated as a "bus service community."
- Under M.G.L. c. 40A, Section 3A, every MBTA community is required to implement new zoning in which multi-family housing is allowed as-of-right.
 - The new zoning district must be at least 50 acres, located at least in part within 0.5 miles from a transit station and must allow for a minimum gross density of 15 units per acre.
 - To be compliant, Belmont's multi-family zoning district must allow for the potential development of up to 2,176 units (i.e., equal to 20% of the town's current [2020 Census] housing stock).
- As a bus service community, Belmont is required to adopt a plan that complies with Section 3A on or before December 31, 2023. Communities that do not achieve full compliance by the deadline may risk loss of state funding from the Housing Choice Initiative, the Local Capital Projects Fund, and/or the MassWorks Infrastructure Program.

Recommendations

Would this neighborhood be a good candidate for either M.G.L. Chapter 40R (Smart Growth) or could this location support the necessary multifamily requirement under M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 3A (MBTA Communities)?

Overview of Smart Growth Zoning

- Residential and mixed-use development must be as-of-right, subject to reasonable bulk and dimensional requirements (with approvals required within 120 days).
- Housing requirements:
 - 20% of residential units must be affordable to those earning 80% or less of area median income and must be deed-restricted for 30 years.
 - District must provide a minimum allowable density of: 8 units/acre for 1F homes, 12 units/acre for 2F and 3F homes, and/or 20 units/acre for multi-family.
- Incentives:
 - Municipality receives zoning incentive payment based on potential new housing creation (\$10,000 for up to 20 units, \$75,000 for 21-100 units, \$200,000 for 101-200 units, \$350,000 for 201-500 units, and \$600,000 for 501+ units);
 - Bonus payment of \$3,000 per new unit of housing;
 - Reimbursement for net cost of educating students living in new housing in Smart Growth district.
 - Preference for DHCD and other state funding.

Recommendations

Would this neighborhood be a good candidate for either M.G.L. Chapter 40R (Smart Growth) or could this location support the necessary multifamily requirement under M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 3A (MBTA Communities)?

To address the question above, the panel makes the following recommendations:

- To achieve compliance with the MBTA Communities requirements under Section 3A, Belmont should consider rezoning areas in the vicinity of Waverley Square to allow multi-family housing as-of-right, including in the corridor including Pleasant Street and certain town-owned properties to the south of the MBTA right of way. Note that other parcels would need to be incorporated to achieve the 50-acre minimum.
- Belmont could explore using a 40R Smart Growth overlay district to promote the development of new housing in the Waverley Square area. This could be separate from or in conjunction with any rezoning to achieve MBTA Communities compliance (with the added bonus of municipal incentive payments under Chapter 40R).
- Independent of MBTA Communities compliance and the potential use of 40R, Belmont should consider rezoning Waverley Square to promote building heights of up to 3 stories along all primary street frontages (Pleasant, Trapelo, Church street) that front on Waverley Square, to unlock potential redevelopment opportunities.

Recommendations – Proposed Zoning Overlay



Recommendations – Proposed Zoning Overlay





Funding & Resources

Supplemental funding and financing resources

- **MassDevelopment/Commonwealth Places** – A collaborative initiative between MassDevelopment and the crowdfunding platform Patronicity, Commonwealth Places provides a funding mechanism for *community-driven placemaking projects* throughout Massachusetts. Also helps to incentivize private investment. MassDevelopment also provides help with brownfields, site readiness, and technical assistance for a variety of projects, and provides financing assistance (tax-exempt bonds, bridge financing, loans, etc.)
- **CPA (Community Preservation Act)** – Helps communities preserve *open space* and *historic sites*, create *affordable housing*, and develop outdoor *recreational facilities*.
- **Shared Streets and Spaces Grant (MassDOT)** - Provides funding to municipalities and public transit authorities to quickly implement *improvements to plazas, sidewalks, curbs, streets, bus stops, parking areas, and other public spaces* in support of public health, safe mobility, and strengthened commerce.

A grayscale background image showing a person from behind, raising their right hand in a meeting or presentation setting. Other people are visible in the background, slightly out of focus.

Q&A

Waverley Square, Belmont TAP
March 8, 2022



Urban Land Institute Boston/New England