



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CITY COUNCIL
Roundtable/Working Meeting
AGENDA
APRIL 06, 2026

Roundtable/Working Meeting	Sullivan Chamber	3:00 PM
	Cambridge City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139	
	Published March 26, 2026 @ 2:16 PM	
	Republished March 30, 2026 @ 10:15 AM	
	Republished April 2, 2026 @ 12:04 PM	

The City Council will hold a Roundtable/Working Meeting to discuss the best future uses of City-owned properties and associated redevelopment processes.

Agenda for April 6, 2026, City Council Roundtable/Working Meeting

A Roundtable/Working meeting to discuss the best future uses of City-owned properties and associated redevelopment processes.

- Opening and Introductions
- Presentation from the City
- Discussion with the City Council

I. ROLL CALL

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

VII. COMMUNICATIONS FROM OTHER CITY OFFICERS

1. A communication was received from Deputy City Manager, Kathy Watkins, transmitting a presentation regarding City-owned Property.
COF 2026-54

IX. ADJOURNMENT



City of Cambridge

COF 2026-54
FIRST IN COUNCIL
April 6, 2026

A communication was received from Deputy City Manager, Kathy Watkins, transmitting a presentation regarding City-owned Property.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Paula M. Crane".

Paula M. Crane,
Interim City Clerk



City of Cambridge

A communication was received from Deputy City Manager, Kathy Watkins, transmitting a presentation regarding City-owned Property.

City-owned Property

City Council Roundtable

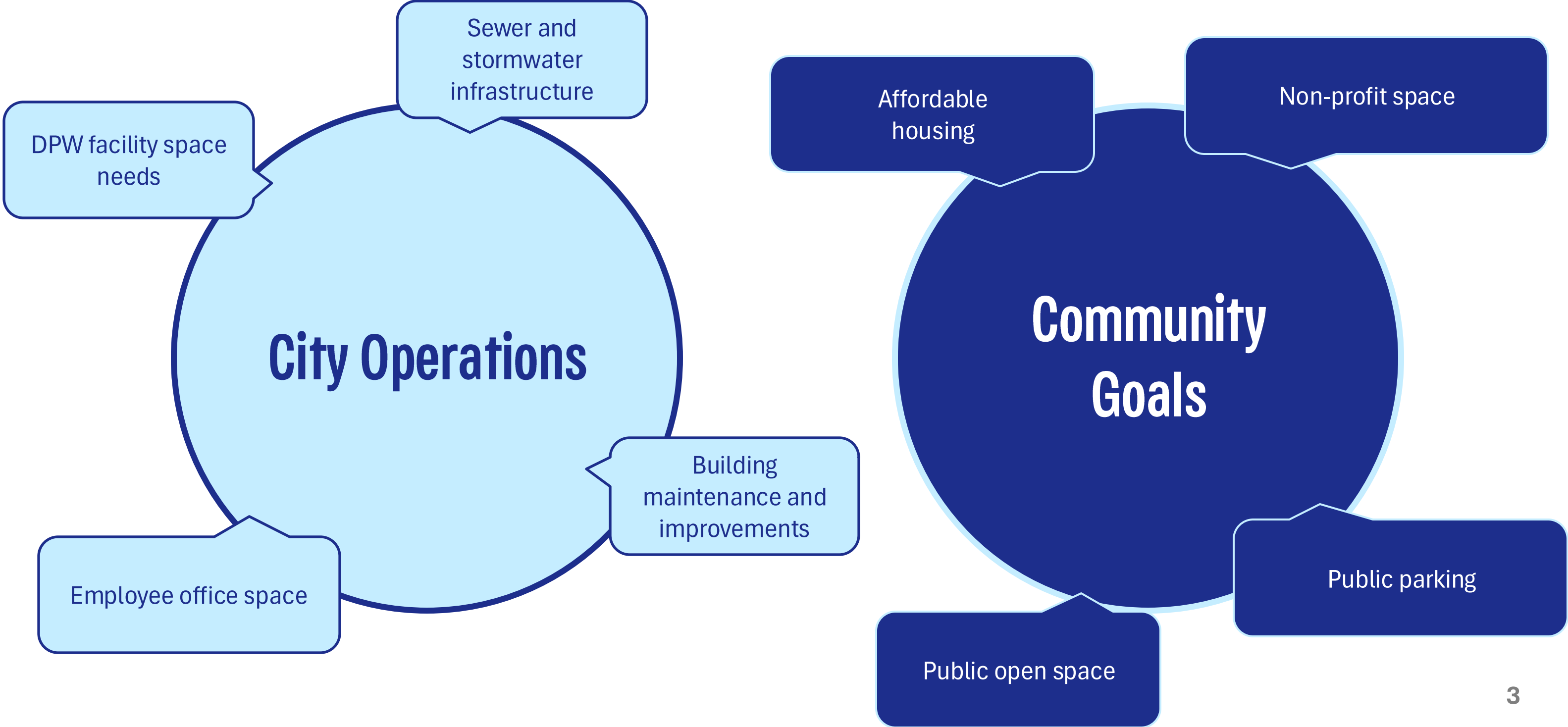
April 6, 2026



Today's Discussion

- 1 Review of Planning, Development, and Operational Considerations
- 2 Budget Context & City and State Regulations
- 3 Status Update on Select City-owned Properties
- 4 Process for Continued Evaluation of City Portfolio
- 5 Discussion

Meeting Priorities with City-owned Properties



Planning Framework

Objective: To best use City assets to realize community goals and support city operations

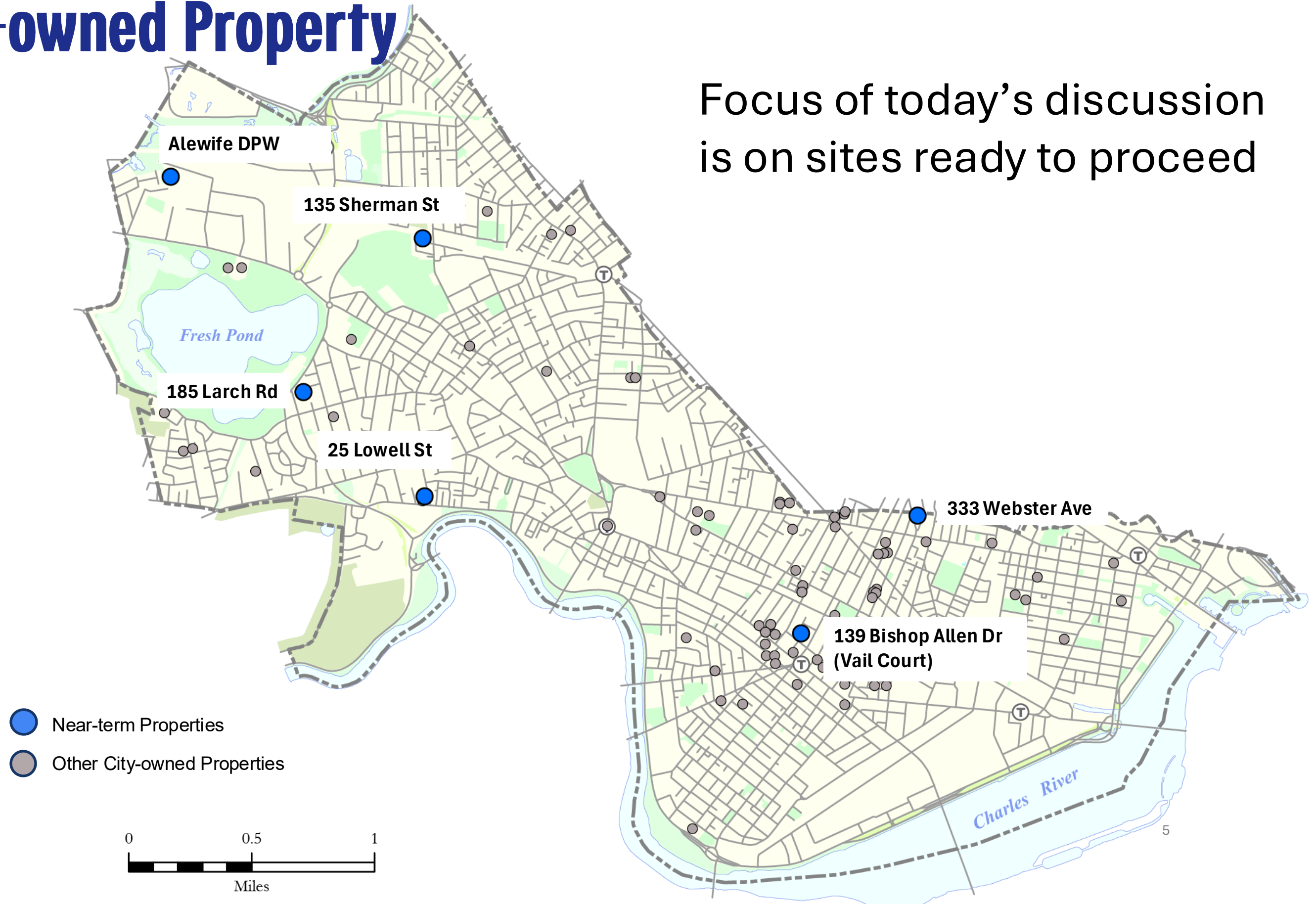
- Community engagement feedback



- Public Investment Planning

City-owned Property

Focus of today's discussion is on sites ready to proceed



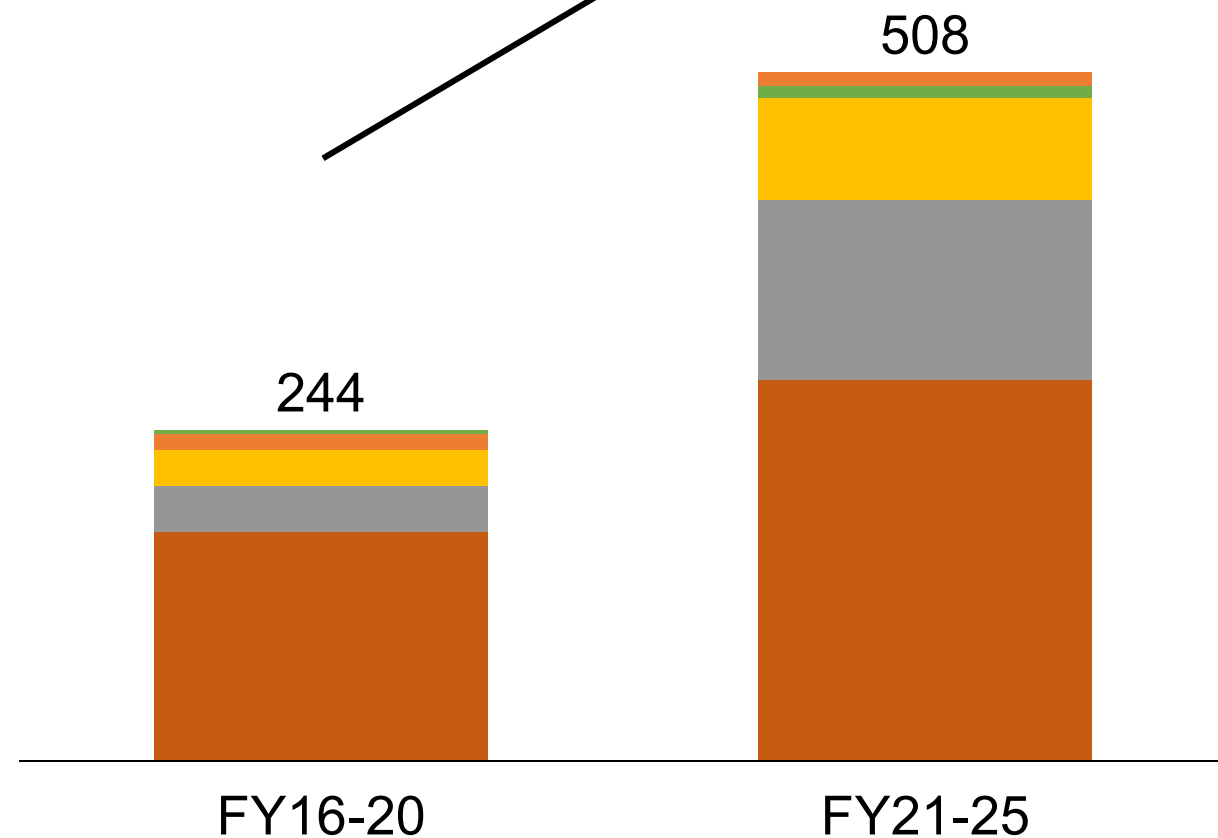
Budget Context

We have also invested in school, open space, streets, and municipal building infrastructure projects across the City

Cambridge tax-supported bond issuances over time, total bonding over five years (\$M)

- School Improvements
- Open Space and Paths
- Streets (i.e., Cycling Safety Ordinance, Complete Streets)
- Municipal Buildings
- Large School Projects (e.g., King Open, Tobin Montessori and Darby Vassall Schools)

15.8% Compound Annual Growth Rate



DPW Simard Building, office renovations, rooftop solar panel installation, and geothermal well drilling

We expect to invest ~\$150M in municipal buildings in the next five years given current building conditions and decarbonization efforts

- Many of the City's non-school buildings are **at or close to exceeding their extended life cycle**
 - Average age of 98 years for offices and 77 years for others
- Aging buildings lead to **declining performance, increased risks, and rising ownership costs**
- The Capital Building Projects Department has established a **disciplined, data-driven and strategic approach** while continuing to grapple with the scale of the needs
- Many of these projects also contribute to the **City's decarbonization efforts** in compliance with the Net Zero Action Plan and Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance (BEUDO)

Example projects



Lafayette Sq. Firehouse, critical improvements to address failing apparatus bay floor slab

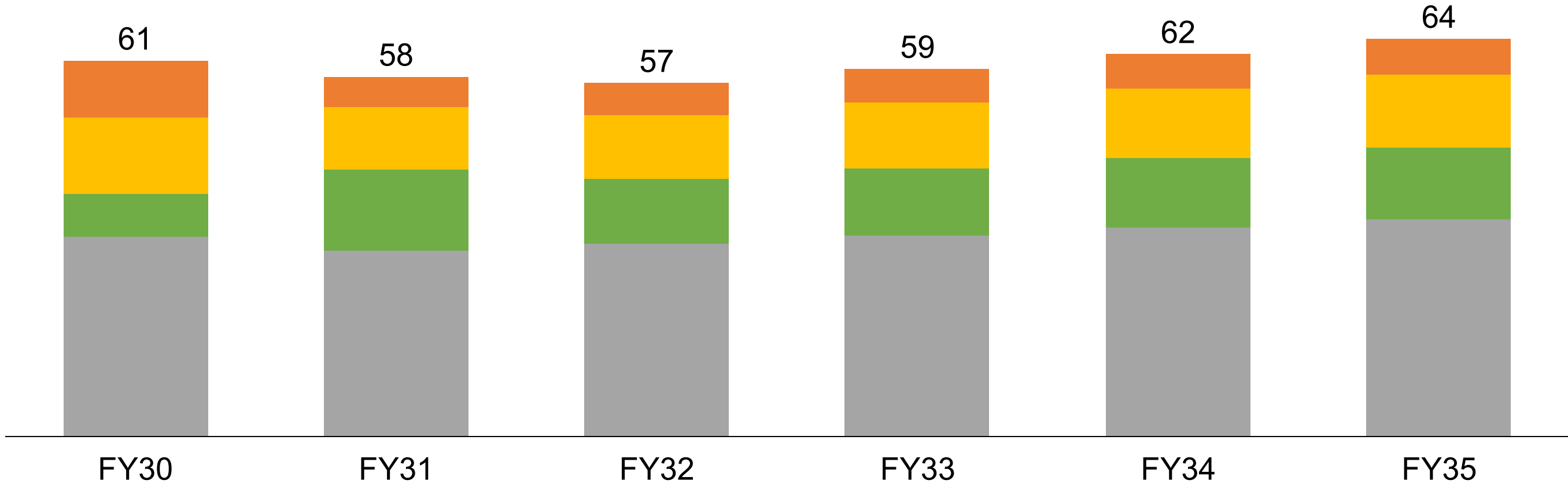


Moses Youth Center, HVAC upgrade and accessibility and plumbing improvements

Beyond FY29, we have set aside minimum required bonding amounts for each project type after we complete existing commitments

Cambridge projected tax-supported bond issuances (\$M)

- School Projects
- Streets (i.e., Cycling Safety Ordinance, Complete Streets)
- Open Space and Paths
- Municipal Buildings



City & State Regulations

City Requirements for disposition (sale or lease) of city property

City Disposition Ordinance. 2.110.010 ensures

- city property is used in a way that best serves the public purpose
- fair market value is received for the private use of public property
- city property is disposed of without favoritism

City Disposition Ordinance. 2.110.010 requires

- preparation of a report evaluating alternative uses for the parcel
- Planning Board Hearing on the report
- City Manager and Planning Board recommendations to City Council
- City Council hold a public hearing
- 2/3 vote of City Council

Transfer of property to the Affordable Housing Trust is exempt from the ordinance but does need a council vote to transfer property. Transfers to Cambridge Housing Authority or Cambridge Redevelopment Authority are required to follow ordinance.

State Requirements for disposition (sale or lease) of city property

G.L. c.30B requires an open and fair competition

- If you dispose of property for less than the fair market value, you must define a valid public purpose to be achieved. Primary purpose must be to promote the public welfare. And you must structure an open, fair and competitive disposition process to accomplish your public purpose.

G.L. c.30B requires

- solicit proposals
- establish the criteria and terms for sale or lease
- evaluate bids to award contract for property
- City can identify use restrictions or other restrictions, but can't specify a single user

Transfer of property to the Affordable Housing Trust, Cambridge Housing Authority or Cambridge Redevelopment is exempt from this process but does need a vote of council to transfer property.

State Requirements for changes to protected park land, Article 97

Article 97 is a constitutional amendment passed in 1972

- protects dedicated open space – deed, grant restriction, etc.
- provides that land or easements subject to Art. 97 shall not be used for other purposes or disposed of without a two-thirds roll call vote of the Legislature
- Cambridge has used this process most recently for the Tobin School and Inman Square

Article 97 requires

- notification
- alternatives analysis
- identification and dedication of replacement land
- city council pass homerule petition to send request to state legislature. EEA reviews package before forwarding to legislature where it needs a 2/3 majority to pass.

Transfer of property to the Affordable Housing Trust, Cambridge Housing Authority or Cambridge Redevelopment are **not** exempt from this process.

Near-term Projects

City Operations



ALEWIFE DPW



333 WEBSTER AVE

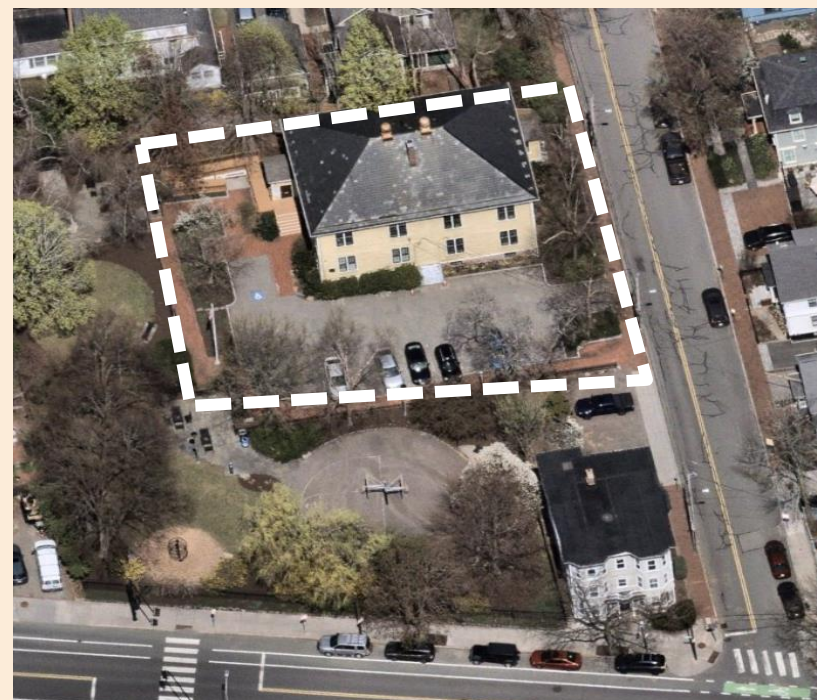


135 SHERMAN ST

Community Goals



**139 BISHOP ALLEN DRIVE
(VAIL CT)**



25 LOWELL ST



185 LARCH RD

City Operations

DPW Space Needs

2020 Program Study identified significant issues with condition and lack of operating space to meet DPW space needs.

10-Year Journey to Address Outstanding Needs:

- Condition of existing spaces such as 147 Hampshire Street and the Salt Shed
- Operating space to support safe workspaces and house equipment and storage
- Police and Fire Garages

Currently Controlled Properties	
147 Hampshire St	2.8 ac
Salt Shed	0.4 ac
New St	0.2 ac
Golf Course Tree Farm	0.2 ac
Fort Washington	0.4 ac
TOTAL	4.0 acres
Temporarily Leased Space	
52 Mooney St (Alewife)	4 ac
Future Properties for DPW	
Alewife DPW (City-owned)	1 ac
Webster Ave then Sherman St	1 ac
NEW TOTAL	6.0 acres



DPW Operations



Map prepared by Brendan Monroe on March 18, 2026. CDD GIS C:\Projects\Planning\CityOwnedLand\Map3_DPWSites.mxd

Alewife DPW

Alewife

SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- Leasing 4 acres at 52 Mooney Street
 - 100,000 sf yard
 - 6,500 sf garage
 - 30,000 sf workshop / storage
 - 6,000 sf office
- Land owned by Healthpeak and included in large planned development



129,029

Site Area (sq ft)

IB-2, C-1,

Zoning District

AOD-Q

PUD

VACANT

Current Use

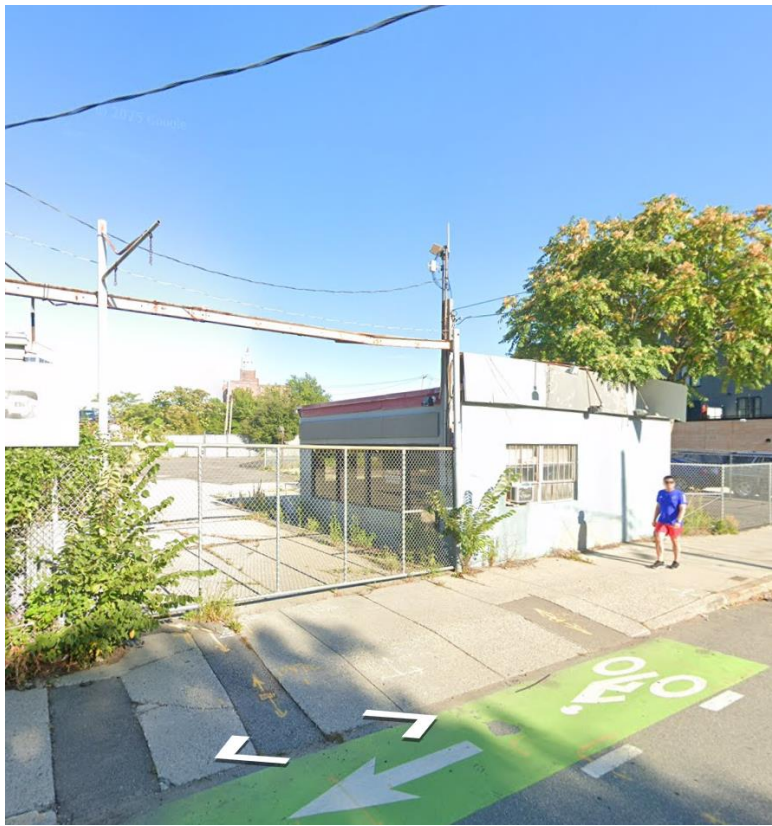
18

Alewife DPW

Alewife

- As part of PUD Special Permit and in exchange for additional height, Healthpeak pursuing large land conveyance to City for permanent DPW facility to support Streets and Sewers Division
- Community process prioritized DPW site at this location
- Strong support from adjacent Cambridge Highlands neighborhoods





333 Webster Ave

Wellington-Harrington

SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- Currently vacant parcels
- Buildings recently demolished
- Current use as DPW Forestry Division
- Site available for housing development once DPW function is relocated to Sherman St

N/A

Gross Building Area (sq ft)

34,695

Site Area (sq ft)

N/A

Parking Spaces

CAM-12

Zoning District

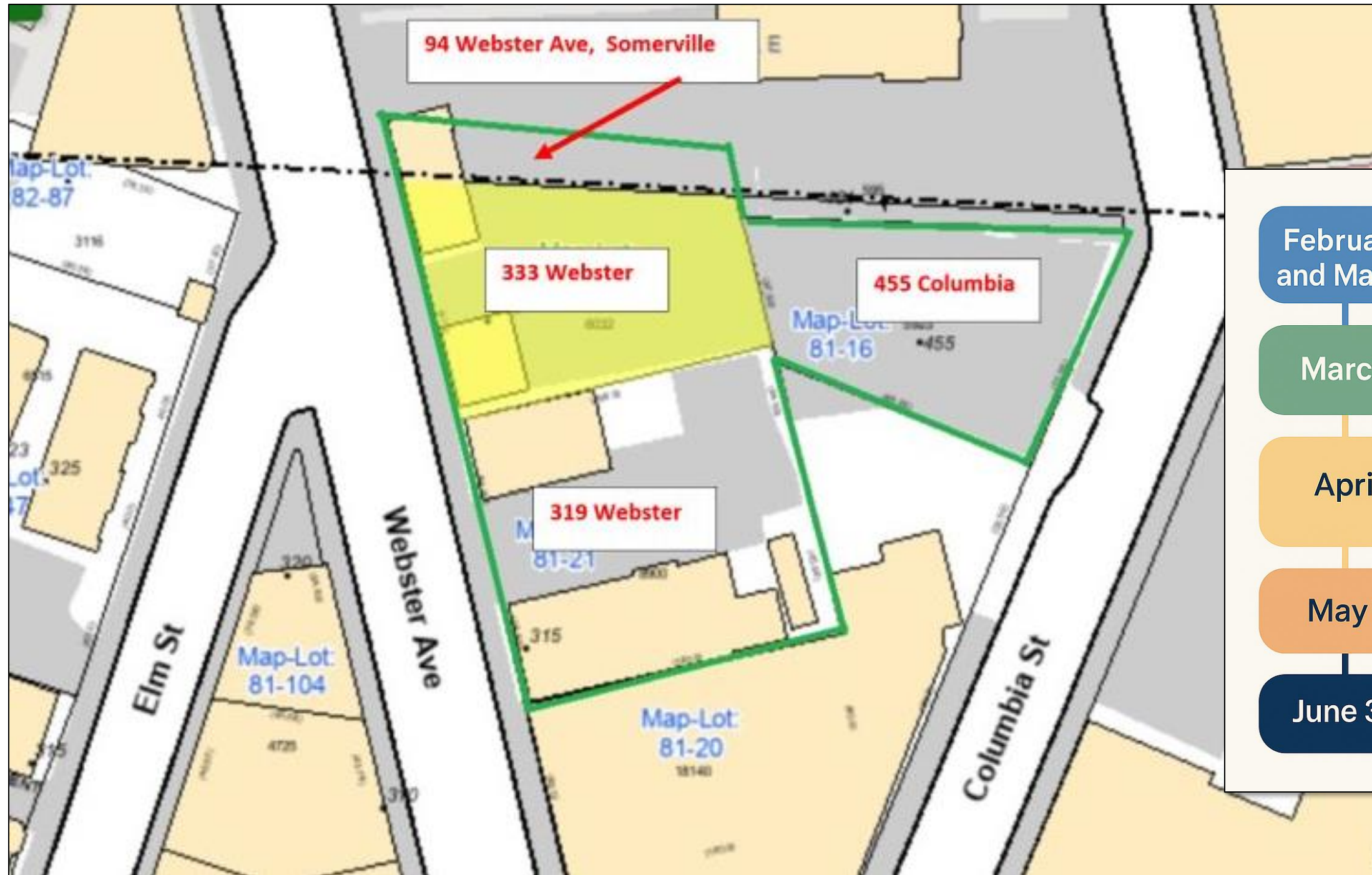
N/A

Number of Stories

GOV OPS

Current Use

333 Webster Ave



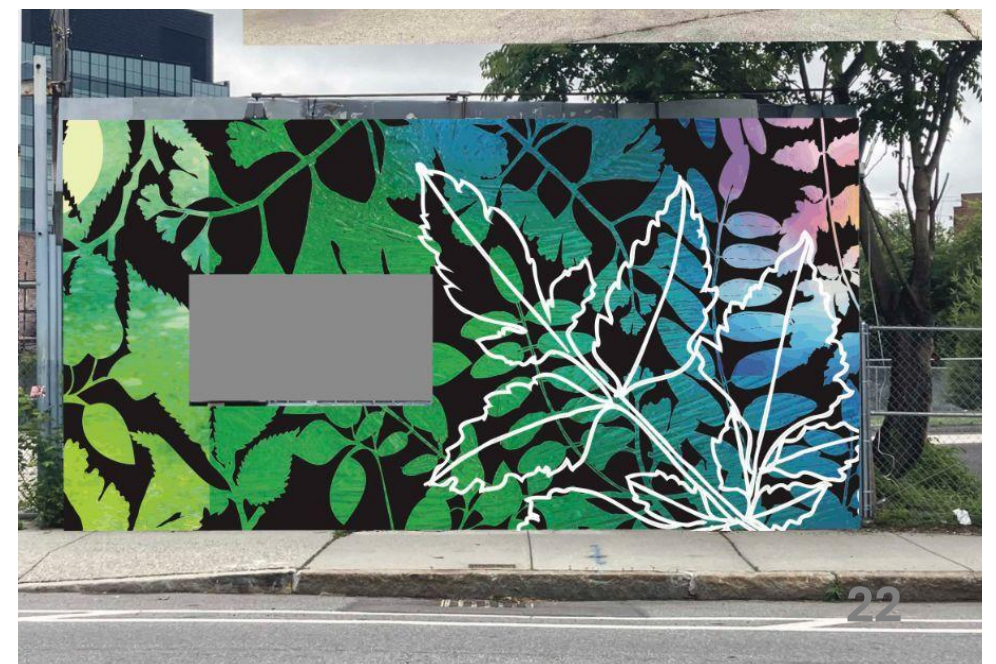
February and March	Shop Drawing review
March	Utility work & soil borings
April	On-site Community drop-in and Triumph mobilizes for sitework (foundations)
May 1	Modular unit delivered
June 30	Completion and move-in

Total Useable Area **0.80 acres – 34,695 Square Feet**

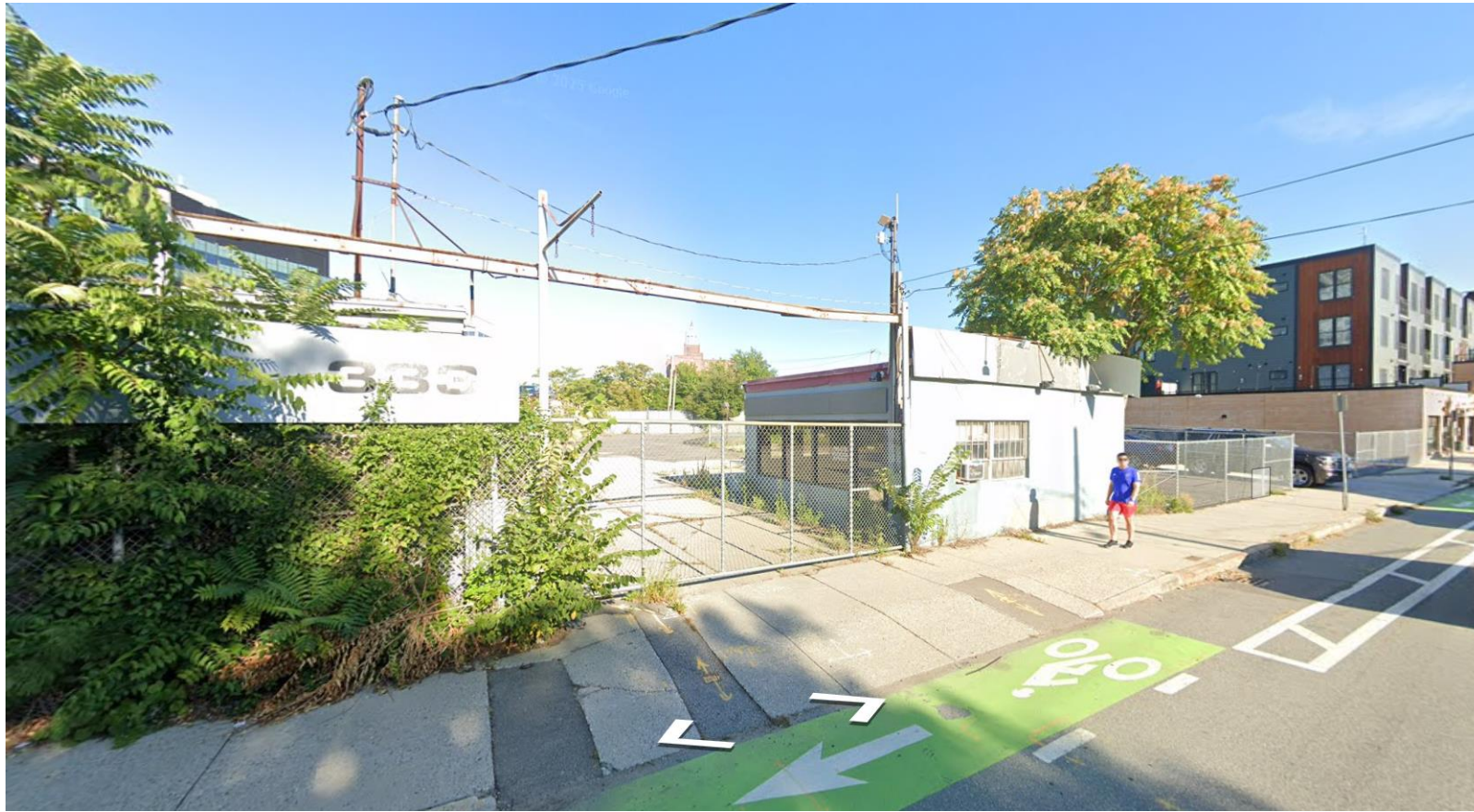
Area in Cambridge 28,855 Square Feet

Area in Somerville 5,840 Square Feet

333 Webster Ave



Mural for Building Along Webster Avenue



333 Webster Ave

Wellington-Harrington

Future Use Considerations

- Near Term DPW – Forestry Division
- Once DPW can relocate Forestry Division to Sherman St, this parcel would be available for housing

N/A

Gross Building Area (sq ft)

34,695

Site Area (sq ft)

N/A

Parking Spaces

CAM-12

Zoning District

N/A

Number of Stories

GOV OPS

Current Use

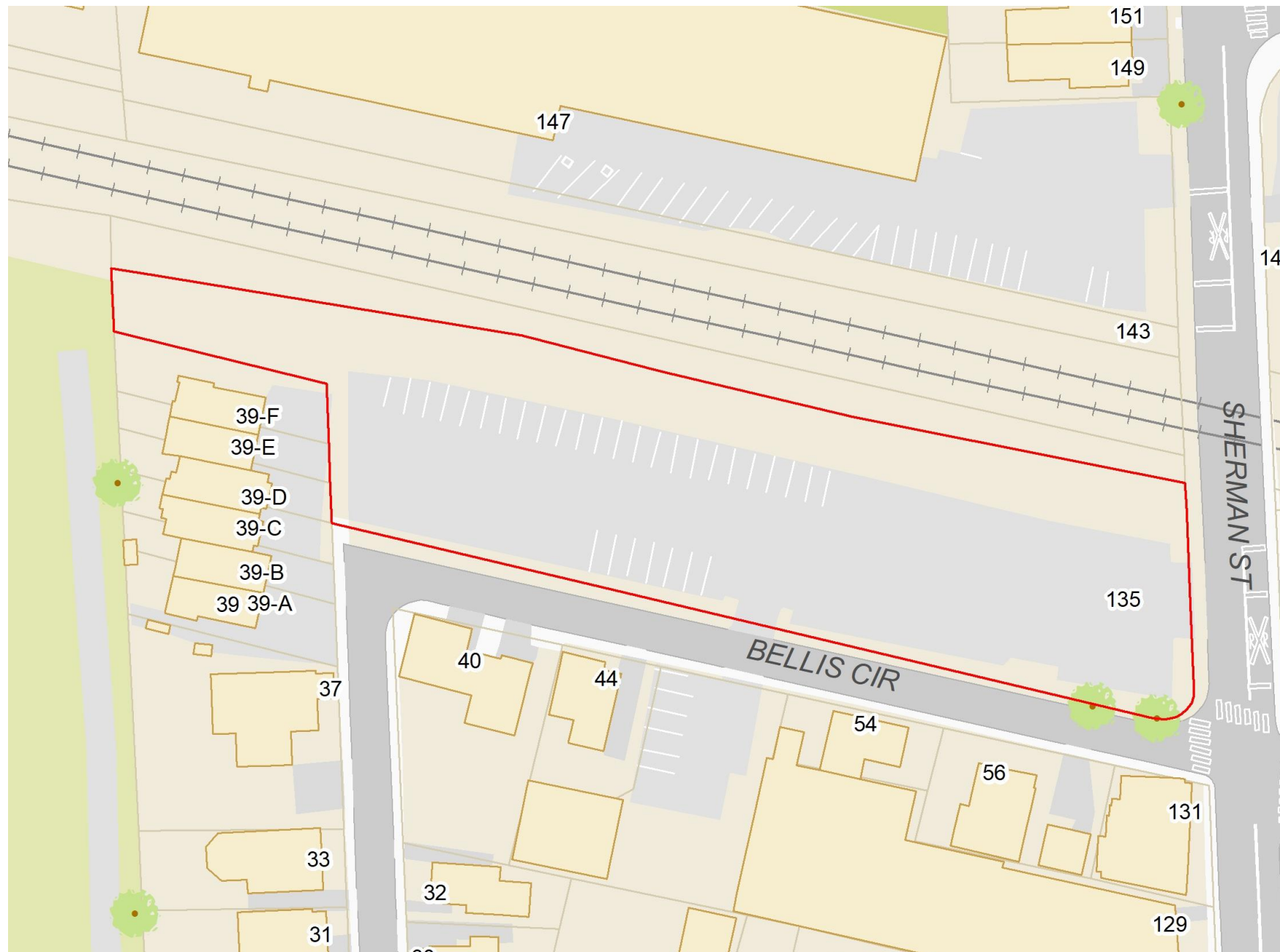


135 Sherman St

North Cambridge

SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- Vacant surface parking lot
- Located at the regulator for the City's most active Combined Sewer Overflow Location, 401A



N/A

Gross Building Area (sq ft)

40,693

Site Area (sq ft)

84

Parking Spaces

C-1

Zoning District

N/A

Number of Stories

PARKING

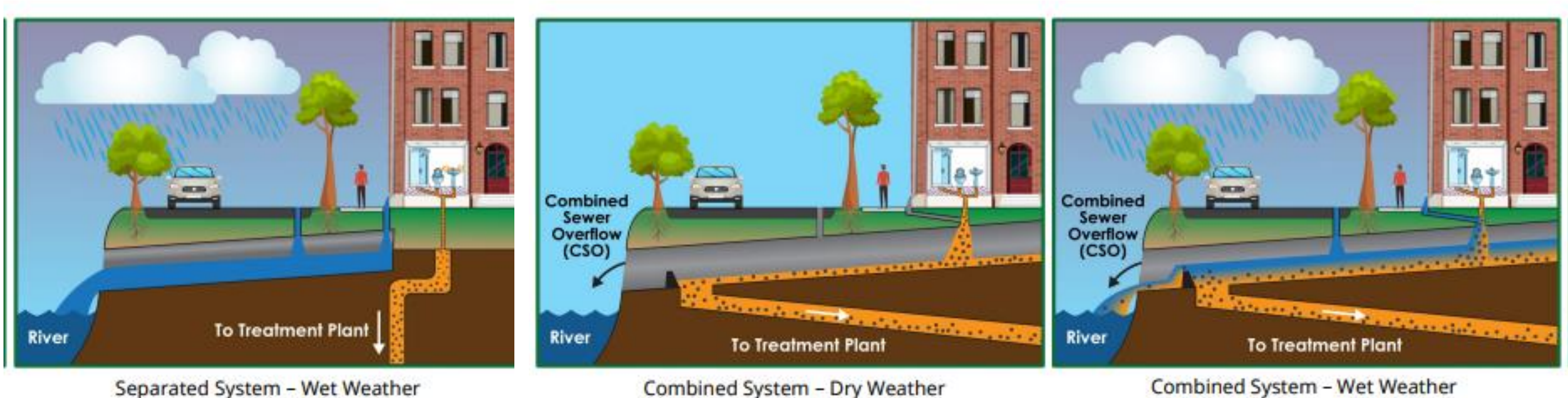
Current Use

Combined Sewer Overflows

135 Sherman St

North Cambridge

City Investing in Infrastructure to Reduce Combined Sewer Overflows



- Meet regulatory requirements
- Improve water quality in Alewife Brook
- The regulator for the most active CSO, CAM 401A, is located near 135 Sherman St
- Storage reduces CSOs and is most effective when located in close proximity to the regulator

135 Sherman St

North Cambridge

Site Considerations

- 2.1M gallon storage tank eliminates CSOs from this area in 2050 Typical Year as soon as it is completed.
- DPW ideal to collocate with storage tank, whereas housing is not a great fit on a site with this scale of city-owned underground infrastructure
- Support DPW Parks and Forestry Divisions, which would open up 333 Webster Avenue for housing
- Include a bike / ped connection from Danehy to Sherman St



- Placed underground, on the east end of the parcel
- Made of concrete
- 170' long by 70' wide
- Holds 2.1-million gallons (MG)



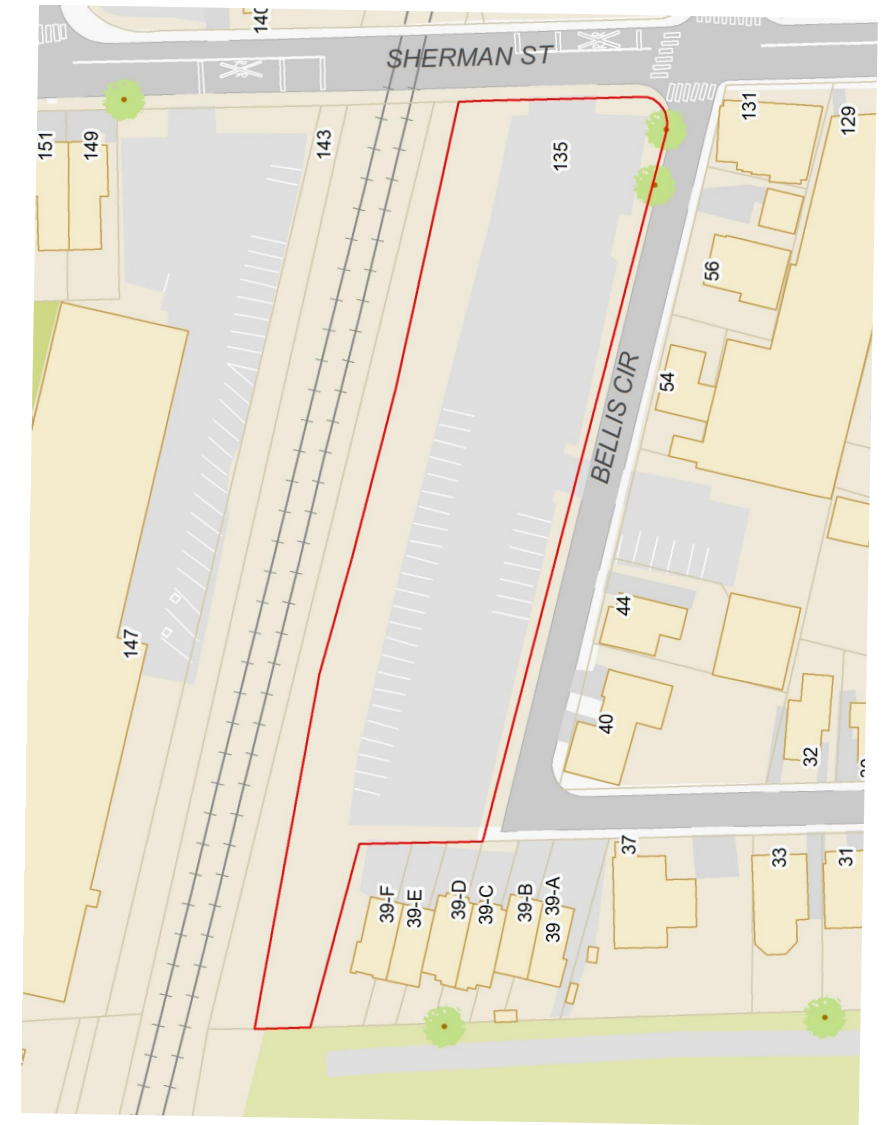
**Concept, only. Not final design.*

135 Sherman St

North Cambridge

Next Steps

- Community meeting in June
- Share more details about the overall goals of the CSO program and the benefits of locating the tank at this location
- Share tank alternatives with the community to highlight the value of this location.
- If constructed storage in streets, it would require **5,000 lf of tank** on Sherman between Rindge & Walden; and on Rindge between Sherman to Alewife Brook Parkway. Cost, utility conflicts, maintenance and constructability are significant concerns.



**Concept, only. Not final design.*

DPW Space Needs – Summary

2020 Program Study identified significant issues with condition and lack of operating space to meet DPW space needs.

10 year plan to meet operational needs – improvements @147 Hampshire Street, Salt Shed, and additional space,

As we move pieces around, Webster becomes available for housing.

Currently Controlled Properties

147 Hampshire St	2.8 ac
Salt Shed	0.4 ac
New St	0.2 ac
Golf Course Tree Farm	0.2 ac
Fort Washington	0.4 ac
TOTAL	4.0 acres

Temporarily Leased Space

52 Mooney St (Alewife)	4 ac
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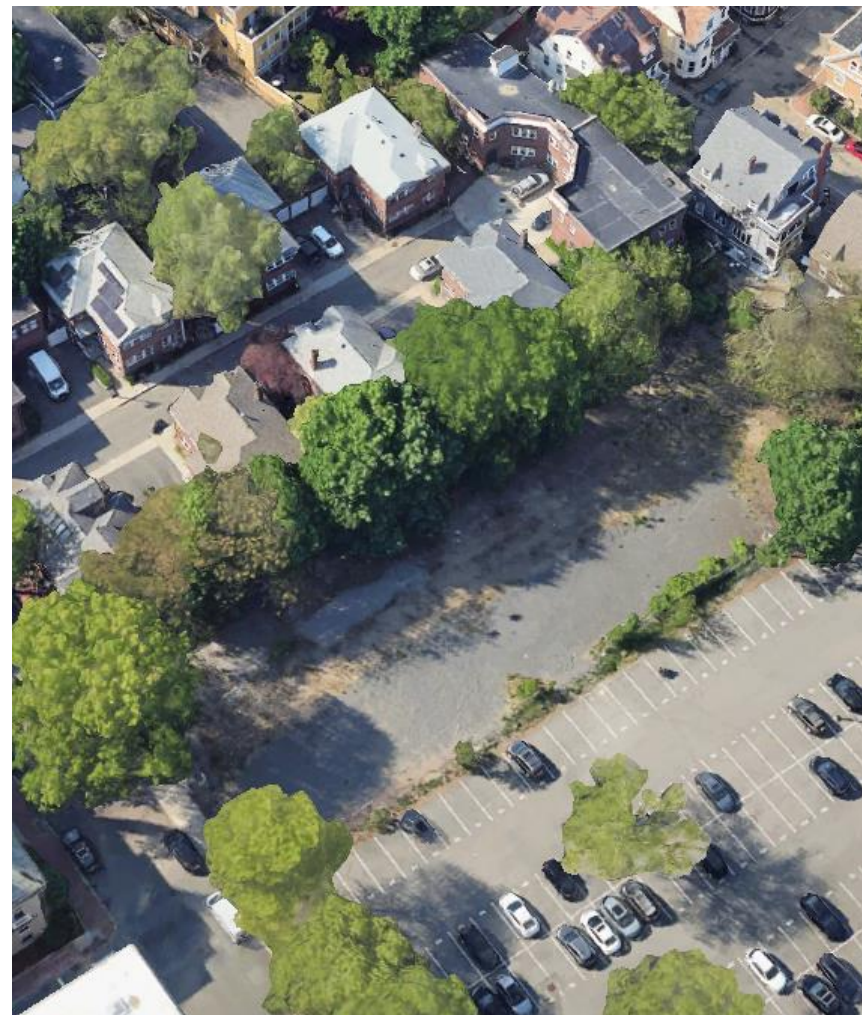
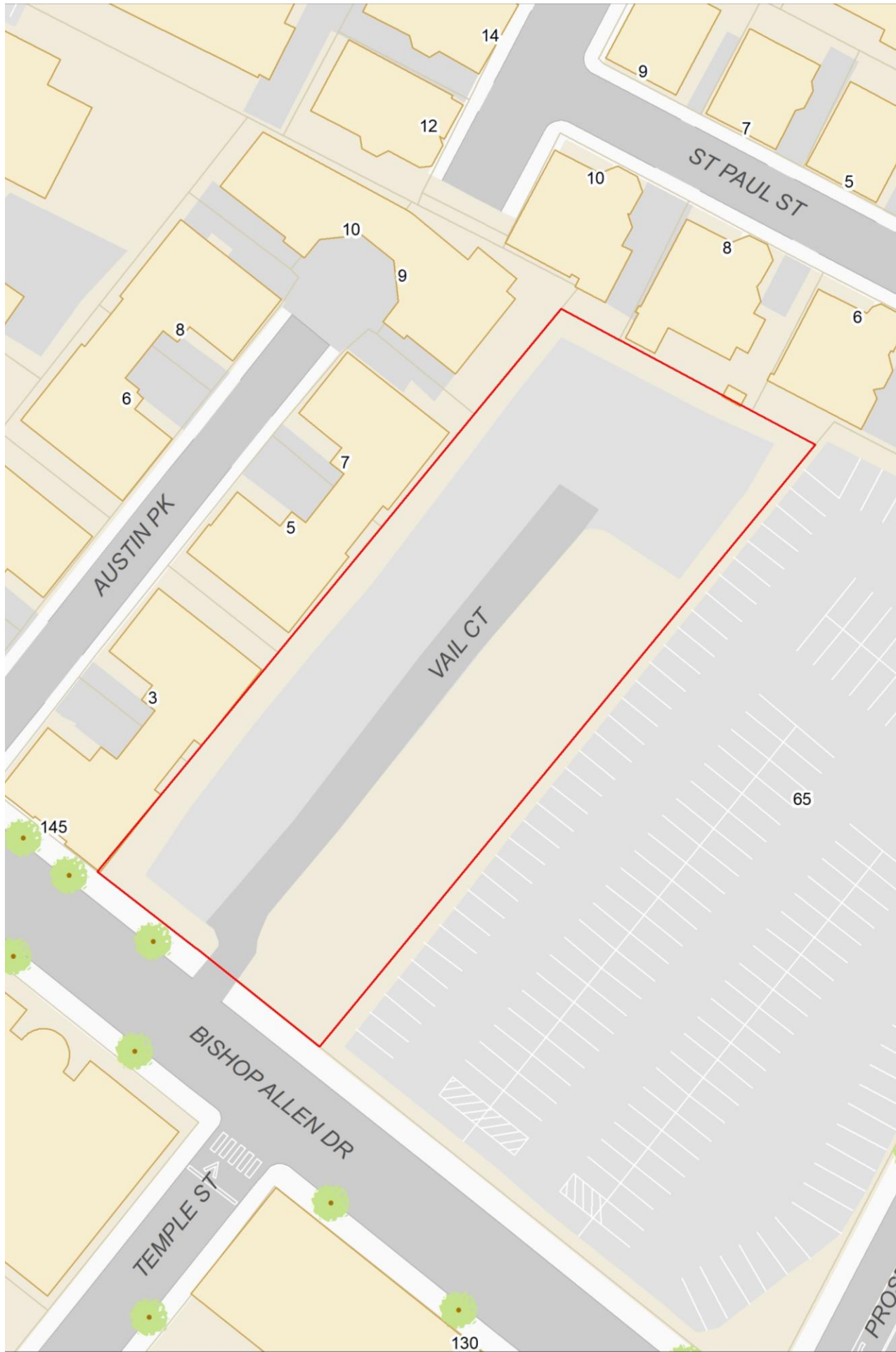
Future Properties for DPW

Alewife DPW (City-owned)	1 ac
Webster Ave then Sherman St	1 ac

NEW TOTAL	6.0 acres
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Community Goals



139 Bishop Allen Dr (Vail Court)

Mid-Cambridge

SITE CONDITIONS

- Property acquired by City in 2016 via eminent domain
- Building demolished in 2017
- Transfer to Affordable Housing Trust approved in 2017 for creation of affordable housing
- Legal settlement reached in 2025

N/A

Gross Building Area (sq ft)

29,229

Site Area (sq ft)

N/A

Parking Spaces

C-1

Zoning District

N/A

Number of Stories

VACANT

Current Use

139 Bishop Allen Dr (Vail Court)

Mid-Cambridge

- Public meeting this spring to discuss next steps for development of affordable housing
- Plan to issue RFQ to select development team that will design affordable housing, seek funding, and build new housing
- Development team will follow AHO community process as development is planned
- Community meetings late 2026 / early 2027
- Construction to start after all funding committed





185 Larch Rd

West Cambridge

SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- Former recreation property of BB&N
- Acquired in 2020 by City of Cambridge

N/A

Gross Building Area (sq ft)

177,816

Site Area (sq ft)

N/A

Parking Spaces

C-1

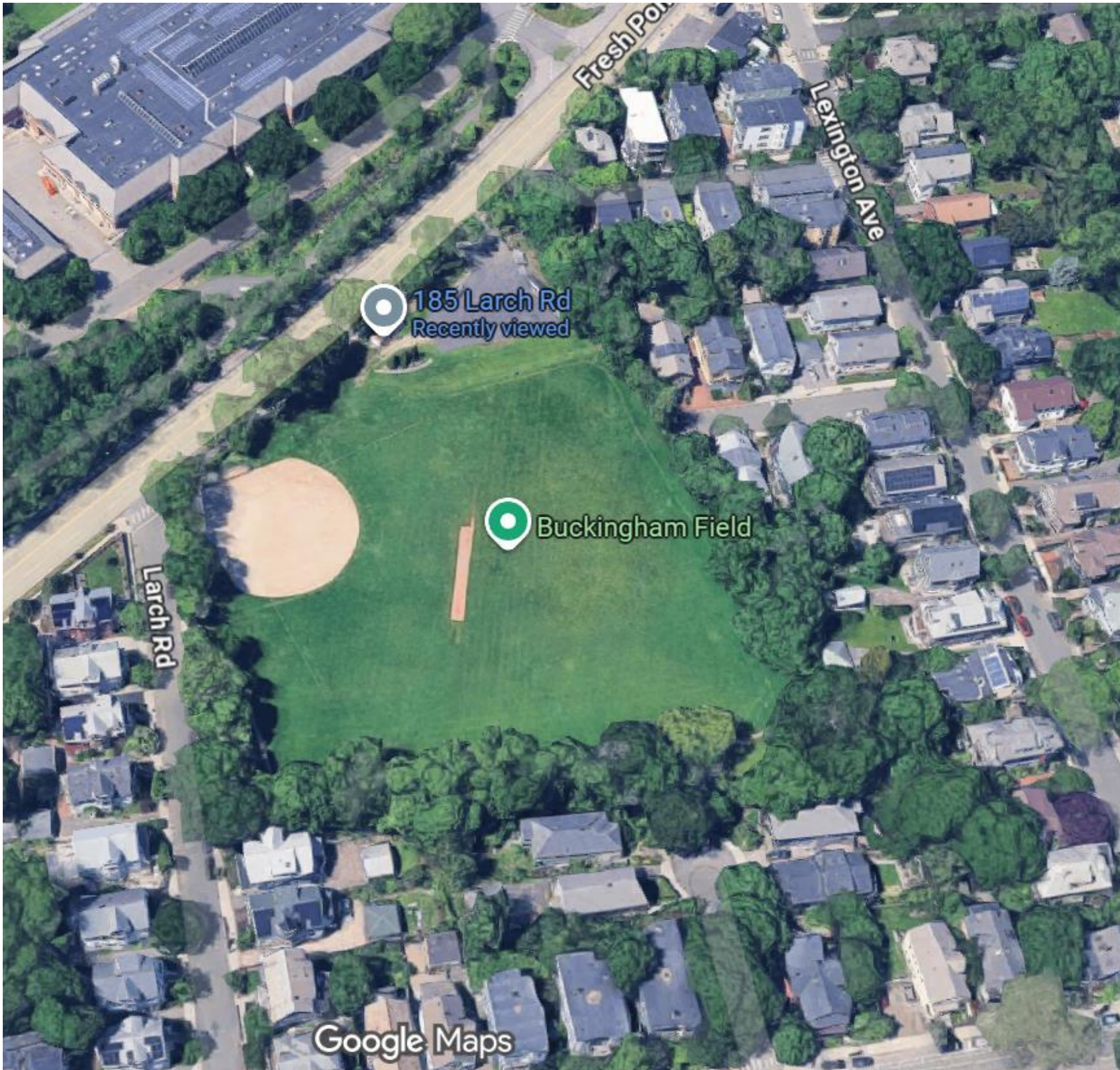
Zoning District

N/A

Number of Stories

EDUCATION

Current Use



185 Larch Rd

West Cambridge

POTENTIAL USE

- Ideal location for housing and open space
- Study potential for social housing

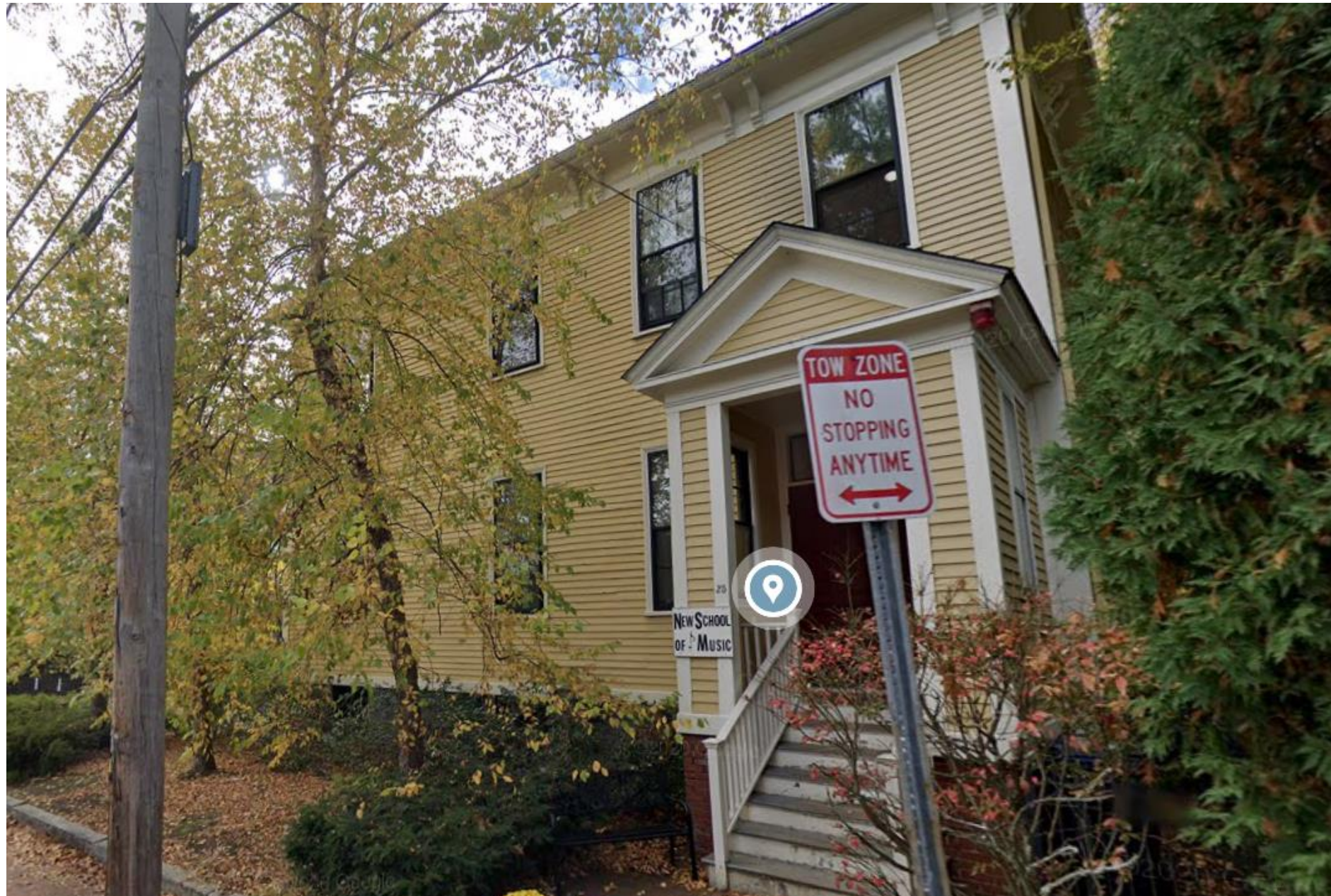


25 Lowell St

West Cambridge

SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- Historic, wood-framed schoolhouse, 1883. Used by Cambridge Schools until 1979.
- Lease agreement executed with New School of Music (NSM) in 1980, 5 year term, with a 5 year renewal. Tenant is current a tenant at will.
- Cambridge Arts Association subleases from NSM.
- NSM insures and maintains building, but there will be more significant long-term maintenance needs.



5,898

Gross Building Area (sq ft)

12,224

Site Area (sq ft)

1883

Year Built

C-1

Zoning District

34

2

Number of Stories

EDU

Current Use

25 Lowell St

West Cambridge

SITE CONSIDERATIONS

- City owns building and adjacent park parcel
 - ~12,000 square foot parcel with building and portion of parking lot
 - ~ 21,000 square foot park parcel
- Park is tucked behind parking lot with no access from Mt. Auburn Street and poor access from Lowell Street
- Park most recently renovated in 2010



25 Lowell St

West Cambridge

Option 1: Develop affordable housing

- Transfer of property for affordable housing exempt from disposition ordinance
- Renovate historic building and add infill housing in rear. Potential for 20 or more units in a neighborhood with limited affordable housing
- Well-situated next to a park, near major bus lines and Mt. Auburn Hospital
- Maintains equal or greater amount of space for park and creates improved access to the park from Lowell Street
- Requires Article 97 process



25 Lowell St

West Cambridge

Option 2: Sell to non-profit

- Sell parcel consistent with state and local ordinance, through open procurement process.
- Can set criteria for non-profit, but can not limit the organizations that could submit a proposal for use of the space.
- Maintains park in current configuration.
- If sold, the City would have no financial liability moving forward.



25 Lowell St

West Cambridge

Option 3: Maintain City ownership and lease to non-profit

- Execute new lease consistent with state and local ordinance, through open procurement process.
- Can set criteria for non-profit, but can not limit the organizations that could submit a proposal for use of the space.
- Maintains park in current configuration.
- Moderate investment / renovations would be required before executing new lease, as several of the bathrooms do not currently function.
- If leased, building will remain a liability for the City and require more significant city investment in the future, (\$12M to \$15M).

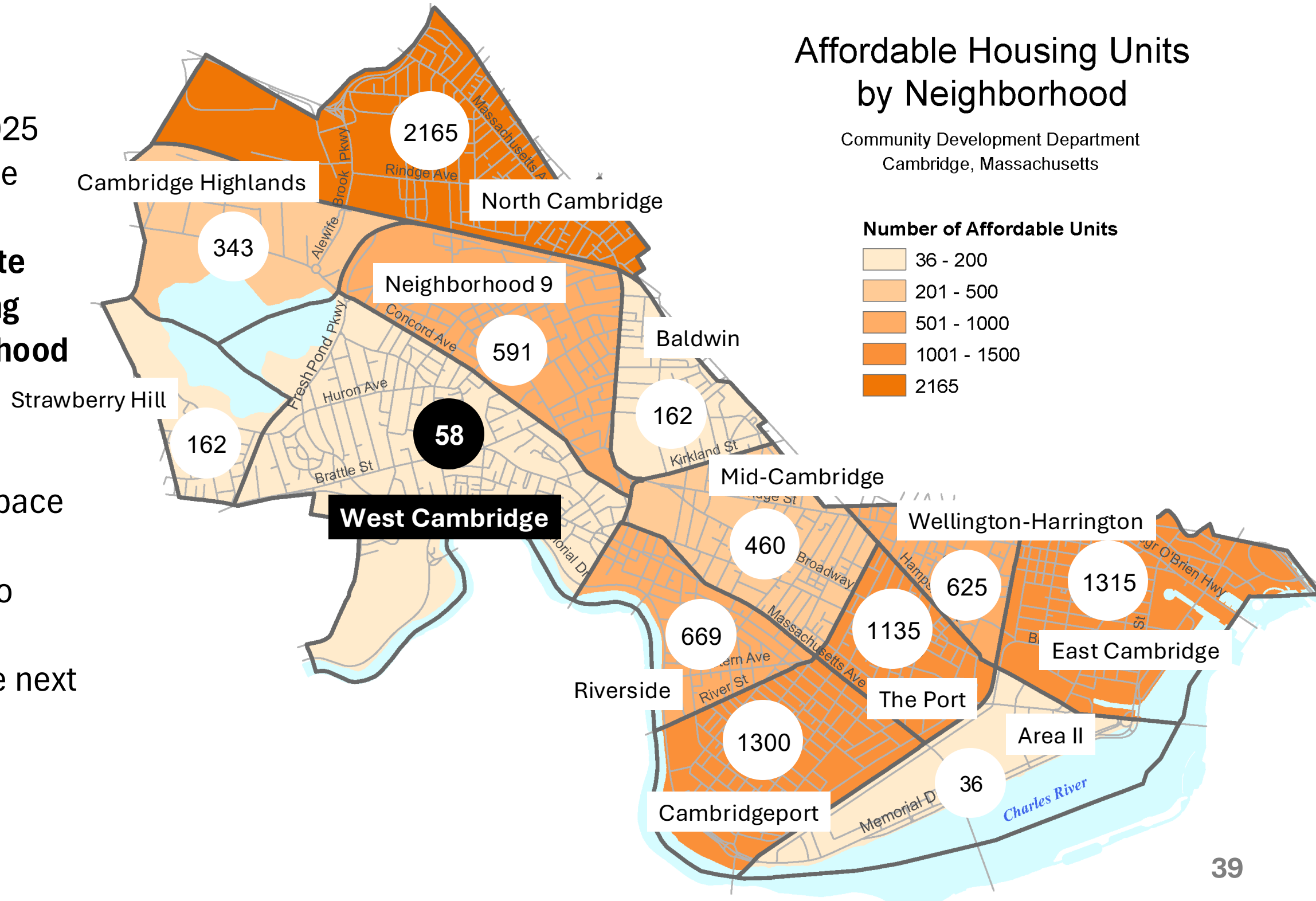


25 Lowell St

West Cambridge

As committed to in December 2025 council order response, staff have evaluated **options and are recommending using this site to create 20+ affordable housing units and improve the neighborhood connectivity to the park.**

Understanding the value of the space to NSM and Cambridge Arts Association, staff is committed to continuing to work with them to develop a transition plan over the next 3 to 5 years



Continued Evaluation of City Portfolio

Continued Evaluation of City Portfolio



INMAN SQUARE FIRE STATION



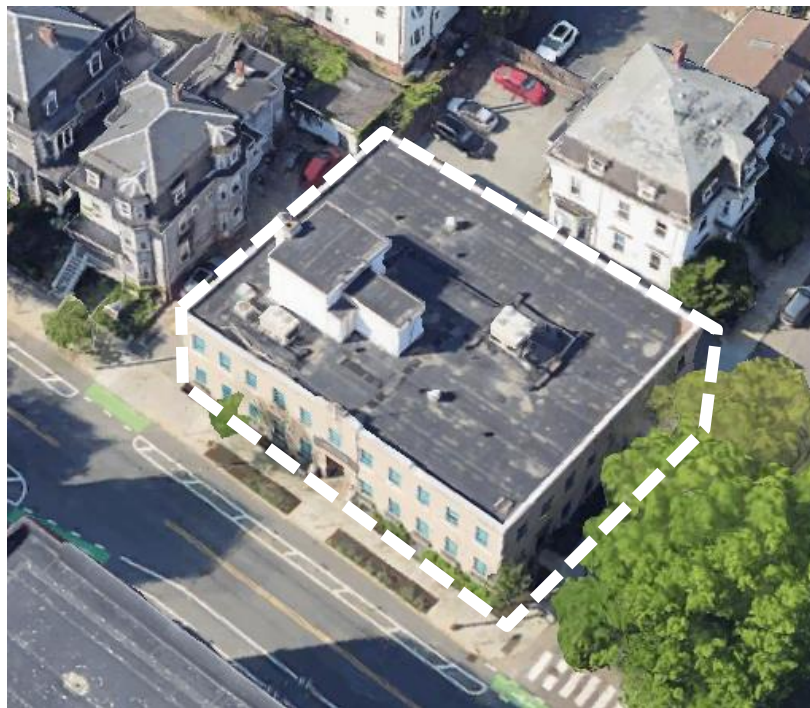
205 WESTERN AVE



689 MASSACHUSETTS AVE



51 INMAN ST



LOMBARDI BLDG



105 WINDSOR ST

Continued Evaluation of City Portfolio



84 & 96 BISHOP ALLEN DR



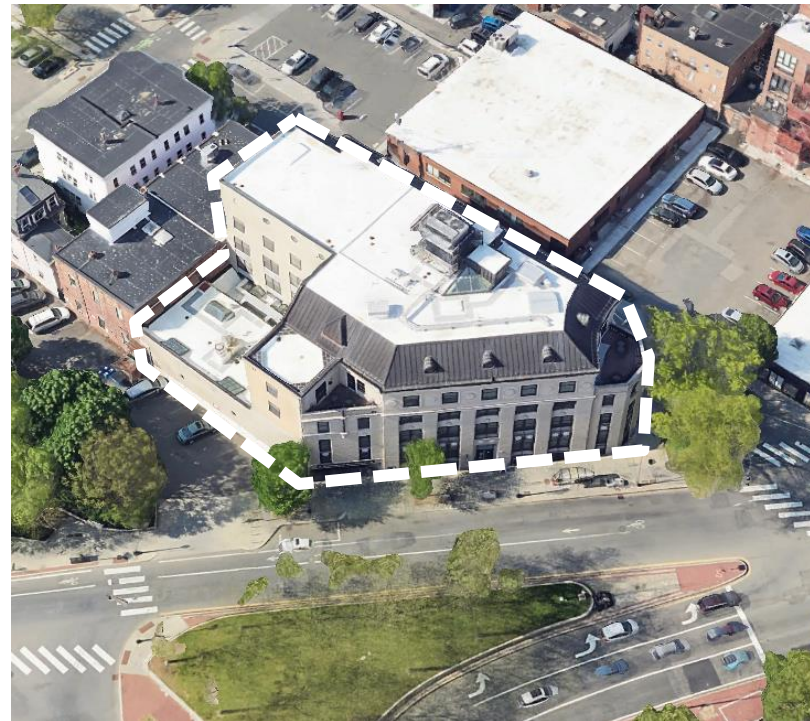
3 BIGELOW ST



260 GREEN ST/45 PEARL ST



DPW ELECTRICAL (3rd St)



ALICE K. WOLF CENTER

Broader Evaluation of City Office Building Portfolio

Will come back to council with an update in late fall 2026

- Potential savings on maintaining portfolio; considering both development costs and long-term O&M
- Potential property for community goals
- City office space – co-locate and improve public facing city services, provide improved space for employees and visitors
- Exhibition space – arts and history
- Improve energy efficiency and BEUDO requirements

Discussion

	Site	Use	Next Step
City Operations	Alewife DPW	DPW	Healthpeak special permit process and land conveyance (Fall 2026)
	135 Sherman St	DPW / Storage Tank / Bike + Ped Path Connection	Community meeting in June
	333 Webster Ave	DPW (short-term) / Affordable Housing (long-term)	Housing once DPW operations can move to 135 Sherman St
Community Goals	139 Bishop Allen Dr	Affordable Housing	AHT to select developer team (Spring 2026)
	185 Larch Rd	TBD	Study social housing (Summer/Fall 2026)
	25 Lowell St	TBD	City Council to provide feedback on future use (Spring 2026); followed by City disposition process