



CULTURAL ASSET MAP & BROADWAY CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

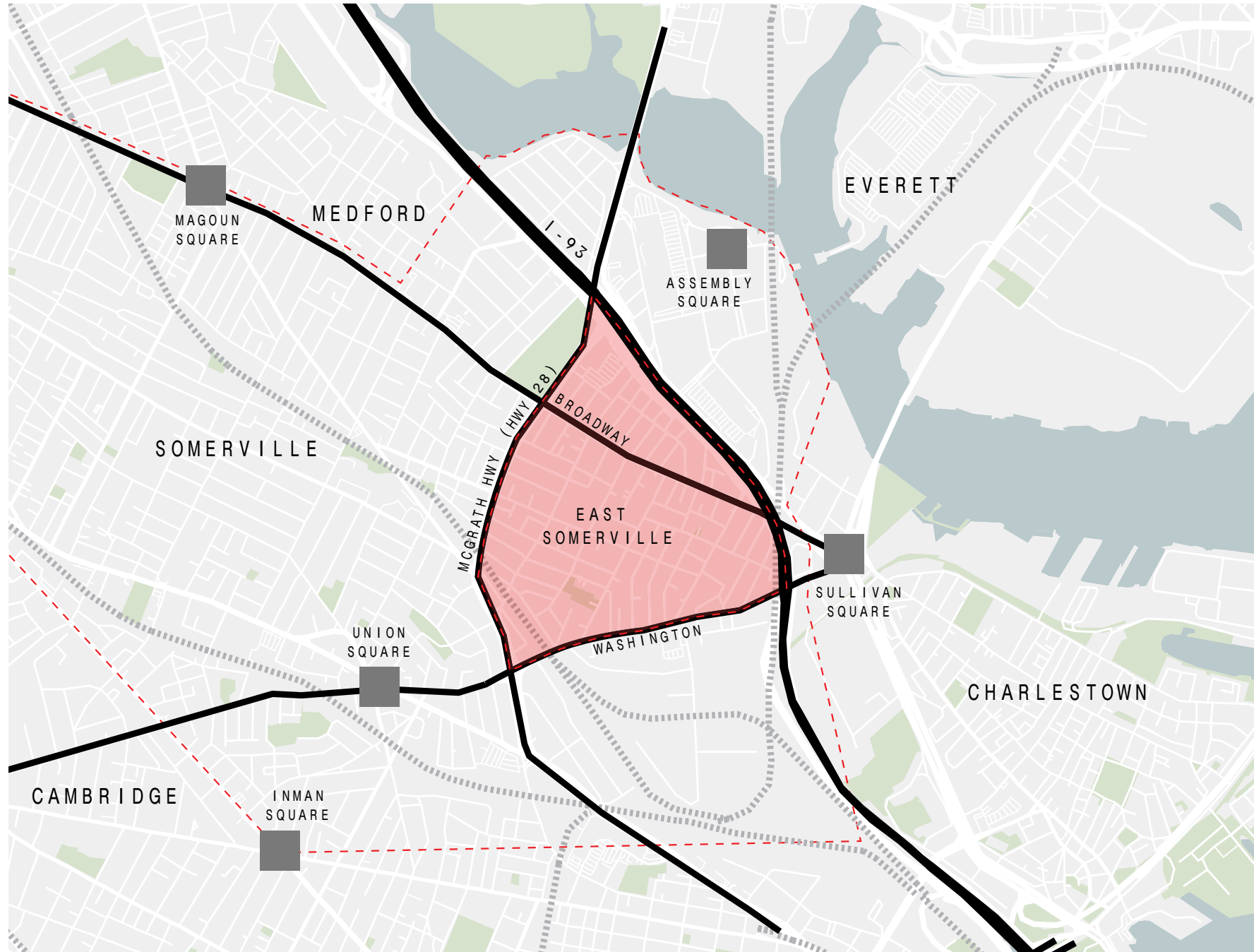
East Somerville, MA
January 2020



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THIS IS EAST



Alexander Zink, Marissa Pearson, Jennifer Atwood, Junko Yamamoto, Shreeya Shakya, Ngaire Stuart Gongora, and Jonah Prada on a site visit

PAYETTE PROJECT TEAM

- Alexander Zink
- Charles Garcia
- Jonah Prada
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- Marissa Pearson
- Mark Scott
- Ngaire Stuart Gongora
- Sean Hurley
- Shreeya Shakya

SPECIAL THANKS



- Jennifer Atwood, *Director*
- Cory Mian, *Board Member*
- Devon Moos, *Board Member*

“Our mission is to improve the life of our community by building investment, connection and pride in our main street.”

- East Somerville Main Streets

EAST SOMERVILLE CULTURAL DISTRICT



"Welcome" Mosaic by Emily Bhargava and members of the Council on Aging (2013)

The East Somerville Cultural District is a hub for diversity, culture, dining and art. All along Broadway from McGrath to Lombardi, the Cultural District showcases Somerville's unique creativity and rich immigrant history with authentic small business experiences and international culinary offerings.

East Somerville is the densest and most diverse neighborhood in the city. This diversity is reflected in East Somerville's Cultural District with a vast area of international restaurants - a culinary journey full of authentic foods, colors and smells from Ethiopia, El Salvador, Italy, Brazil and Mexico - all easily accessible from the Sullivan Square station on MBTA Orange Line.

The District features many public murals created by artists from all over the world and from within East Somerville itself. It is also home to Mudflat, a clay studio for students and artists of all ages and skill levels from just learning to professional artists.

The East Somerville Cultural District is home to a number of social service organizations and non-profit organizations that are dedicated to serving the community and seeing it thrive. The Cross Street Center houses the Council on Aging, which provides programs for seniors; Teen Empowerment which engages low-income, urban youth; and the Somerville Homeless Coalition's Project Soup food pantry. The Somerville Public Library - East Branch has many free monthly programs, including Story Hour, ESL classes, craft projects, music workshops, puppet shows and more. You might even catch Somerville's Poet Laureate there - an East Somerville local.

Connexion hosts a monthly community meal where all are welcome to break bread with East Somerville community members. Connexion is also home to Somerville's Boy and Girl Scouts, Farmer Dave's CSA, ESL classes and community programs like Puppet Palooza - produced by the Somerville Arts Council.

The district also encompasses Chuckie Harris Park a terraced green space and playground with an oversized slide, play areas, and community garden plots. Built on an old parking lot, this playground features a water spray feature, "a mountain" with a giant slide, play equipment, a lawn, a community garden, café seating, 70 trees and a rain wall that doubles as a platform for a movie screen.

The East Somerville Cultural District has a year-round calendar of public events and programs for all ages. The showcase event of the East Somerville Cultural District is the annual SomerStreets Carnival festival the first Sunday in June. Carnival brings three stages of live music, cultural performances and food and craft vendors to the district each year. Other popular annual public events happening in the district include Somerville Art's Council's annual Porchfest and Illuminations light tour and East Somerville Main Street's Dancing in the Streets, Halloween Block Party, Foodie Crawl, and much more!

CULTURAL ASSET MAP



LEGEND

Community	Restaurants/Food	Retail	Public Art
6. Somerville Council on Aging Project SOUP Food Bank Teen Empowerment	1. Louis 29. Mount Vernon Restaurant & Pub	3. Maya Sol Mexican Grill 9. Taqueria Montecristo 20. Recino's Cafe 22. Taqueria Tapatio 10. Fat Hen	13. Painted Switchbox (Elisa Hamilton) 15. Library Mosaic (Laura Smith & Mudflat, 2015) 17. Mural (Angurria, 2018) 26. Mural (Calo Rosa, 2019) 27. Mural (David Zayas, 2018) 30. Mural (Brian Hart, 2019) 31. Mural (Nate Swain & Laura Smith, 2015) 32. Mural 33. Mural (Meagan O'Brien, 2019) 34. Mural (Nate Swain, 2015) 36. Mural (Nate Swain)
7. Connexion Church	2. Pasteleria Vitoria Broadway 12. Rei Da Pichana 18. Gauchao Brazilian Cuisine	24. Vinny's Ristorante 35. Deano's Pasta Inc. 38. Friends Pizza	
14. Somerville Public Library East Branch	11. La Brasa 19. Rincon Mexicano Somerville 25. Los Paisanos Restaurant 28. Taco Loco Mexican Grill	16. Ole Cafe	
21. Mudflat Ceramic Studios	8. Fasika Ethiopian Restaurant	5. Lotus Xpress	
23. Saint Benedict Parish			
37. Edgerly Education Center Next Wave/Full Circle Alternative Schools			
39. SomerViva: Office of Immigrant Affairs			
40. East Somerville Community School			
41. Monte Sinai Hispanic SDA Church			
42. Prospect Hill Academy Upper Elementary			
43. East Somerville Main Streets (ESMS)			



Clay artists at work



Finished pots awaiting glaze



Iconic entrance sign

SUPPORTING THE ARTS

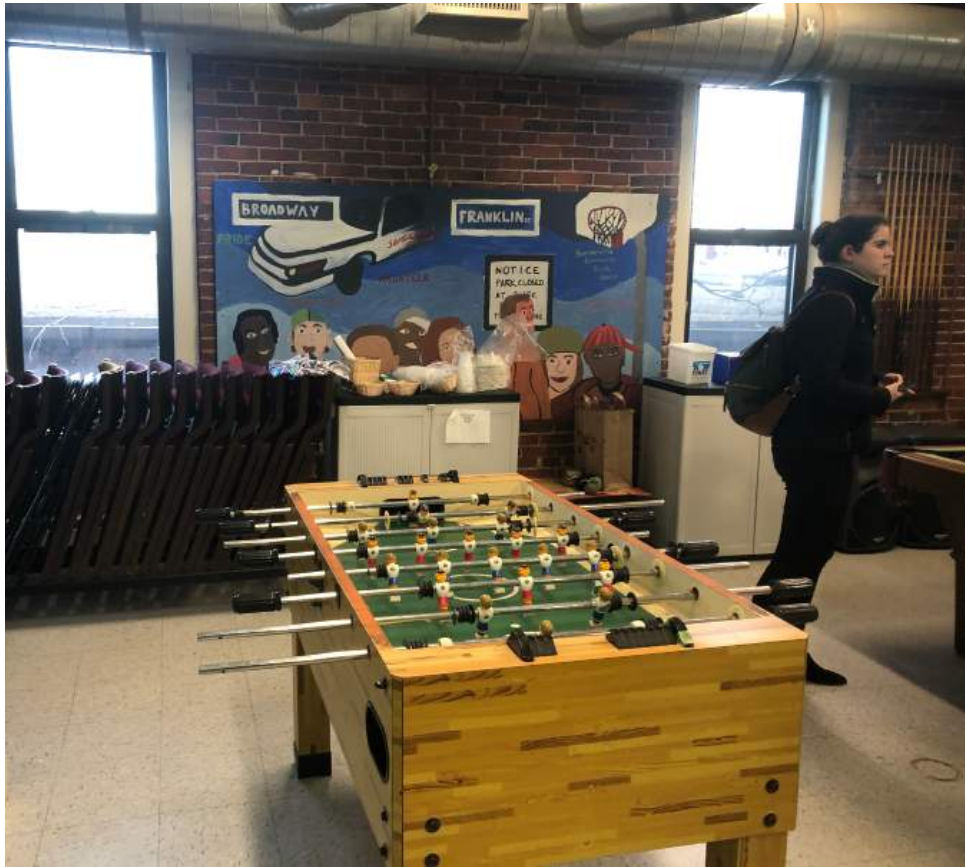
Mudflat Ceramic Studios is a clay studio for students and artists of all ages and skill levels drawn from throughout metro Boston. It offers classes, workshops, outreach programming and events, as well as providing a mix of studio rentals for 38 professional clay artists.

Additionally, East Somerville is the home of an array of murals, mosaics, and other public artworks. New arts is added annually with support from and in collaboration with the **Somerville Arts Council** and **East Somerville Main Streets**.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES



Teen Empowerment meeting space and activities



DIRECT COMMUNITY SUPPORT

A converted fire station serves as the home for three important community support organizations:

The **Somerville Council on Aging** provides access to fitness and wellness activities, social events, educational programs, transportation, and support services.

Project SOUP is a food pantry that has been in operation for more than 50 years, providing food assistance and resources for the homeless.

Teen Empowerment is a nonprofit organization that empowers urban youth to create youth-led social change by hiring and training youth as community organizers, and organizes initiatives to address community issues.

Additionally, **SomerViva: Office of Immigrant Affairs** is located on Cross Street near the Broadway commercial district and provides critical support services for the diverse immigrant community of East Somerville.



Converted Fire Station now serves multiple community organizations



Formal dining at Fat Hen



Fasika Ethiopian Cuisine



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Mount Vernon Restaurant & Pub has been in business for 80 years

RESTAURANTS & RETAIL



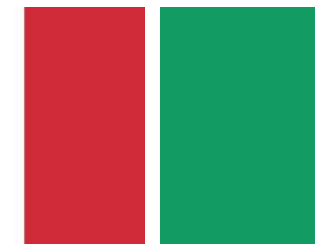
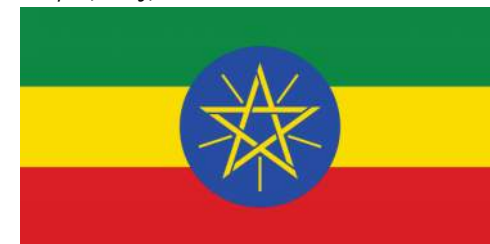
DIVERSE FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESSES

The length of Broadway in East Somerville is home to a diverse mix of restaurants and retail establishments - 48% of which are immigrant owned.

East Somerville is a destination for food-lovers from the Boston area looking for a variety of cuisine and service from fast casual to formal dining.

Each September, East Somerville Main Streets organizes a **Foodie Crawl** during which visitors can experience cuisine from around the world.

A sampling of some of the nationalities represented by the restaurants in East Somerville. From left to right: United States, Portugal, Brazil, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Italy, Ireland





Calo Rosa, 2019

CULTURE OF PUBLIC ARTWORK

The East Somerville community has actively supported and participated in the creation and maintenance of extensive works of public art - especially large-scale murals that provide beauty and color to the neighborhood.

Many of the murals use community artists, and others highlight cultural iconography that relates the heritage of the neighborhood's inhabitants.

Moreover, artists have specifically targeted areas that might otherwise be seen as undesirable, such as the highway underpasses at I-93 and electrical switch boxes on the Broadway median.



Angurria, 2018



Nate Swain, 2015



Nate Swain & Laura Smith, 2015



David Zayas, 2018

PUBLIC ART



Brian Hart, 2019



Anonymous

Elisa Hamilton



Meagan O'Brien, 2019



Unattributed





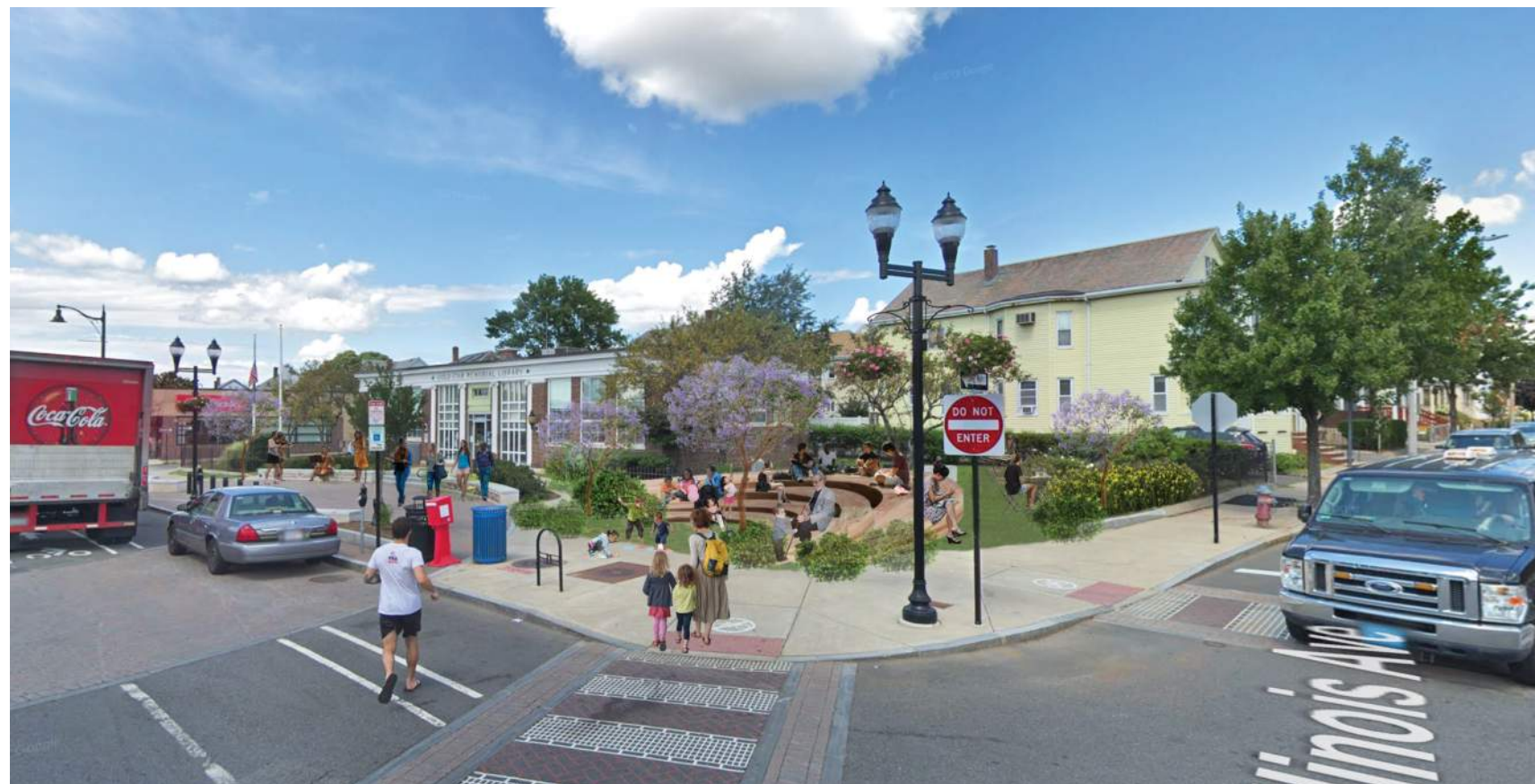
East: This proposal suggests the revitalization of the lot and greenery adjacent to 93. As one emerges from the underside of the highway it would be a welcoming reprieve from the highway infrastructure. With a more organized landscape plan and additional planters, flowers, and a green ivy back drop to the off ramp of 93 a formal entry point to the neighborhood can be established. A public bike rack could be located next to the current Blue Bike facility to make this a more accessible intersection and not simply for those using Blue Bike or Zip-car services. Additional street art could signal the entrance to the East Somerville neighborhood and highlight the nearby existing murals.

WELCOMING POINTS OF ENTRY



As one approaches the official boundaries of East Somerville there is no beacon or noticeable marker that would make it clear one has arrived. In keeping with the very active spirit of supporting and creating large scale works of public art, the following are proposed for the East and West entry points into East Somerville.

West: Currently, there is an abandoned brown field lot from an old gas station. The proposal suggests repainting pedestrian crosswalks in bright colors to draw the eye to the corner, especially for those going by via car. The heightened visibility is also important as there is likely a high children and family community that will be coming from Foss Park to the proposed venue or activity taking place, shown are an ice cream and food truck for the summer season. Low knee walls could frame the lot and be decorated with ceramic tiles from Mud Flat Studio. Both providing protection and activating the corner to on lookers. A large scale art commission is proposed as a back drop to the lot to announce the entrance to East Somerville. This key location could be the starting point for several neighborhood wide events both as a point of origin and announcing to passersby the ongoing activity.

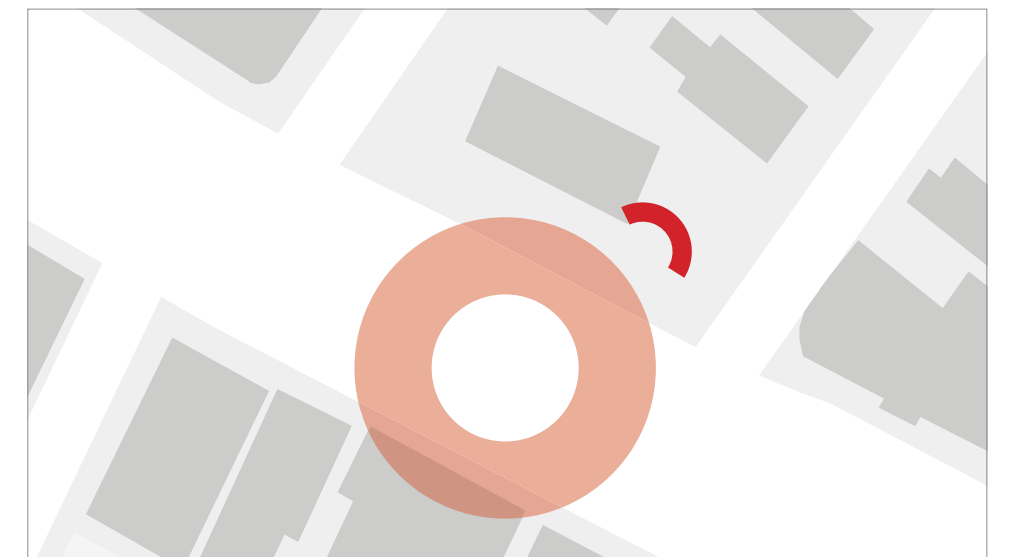


Somerville Public Library East Branch

The Somerville Public Library East Branch is one of the important cultural assets for the community. The open space in front of the entrance is marked by red-color pavement, which is part of a large circular pattern that crosses over the entire width of Broadway Street. This dynamic circle clearly identifies the location of the library as well as the center of the Broadway street's cultural district. The exterior stone benches, which are decorated with artistic clay reliefs, delineate the arc of the circle, outlining a comfortable outdoor entrance space. This outdoor space is often occupied by the local youth, whose presence reinforces the sense of community.

Despite the well-appreciated public space in the front, the side yard is underutilized due to the metal fence surrounding the yard. It visually and physically blocks the access to the space, emanating the feel of isolation. The collage illustrates the idea of removing the fences and making the area more open and welcoming for people to enter and gather. The new seating echoes the shape of the existing circle to accentuate its presence, as it is often concealed by vehicles on the street and not clearly visible. By relating to the existing circle, the side yard becomes the extension of the front space.

Opening up the side yard would greatly improve the use of the space thus streetscape. This spatial improvement would also increase the visibility of the existing artistic expressions, such as the circle and the clay reliefs, therefore, increases the value of the culturally-rich community.

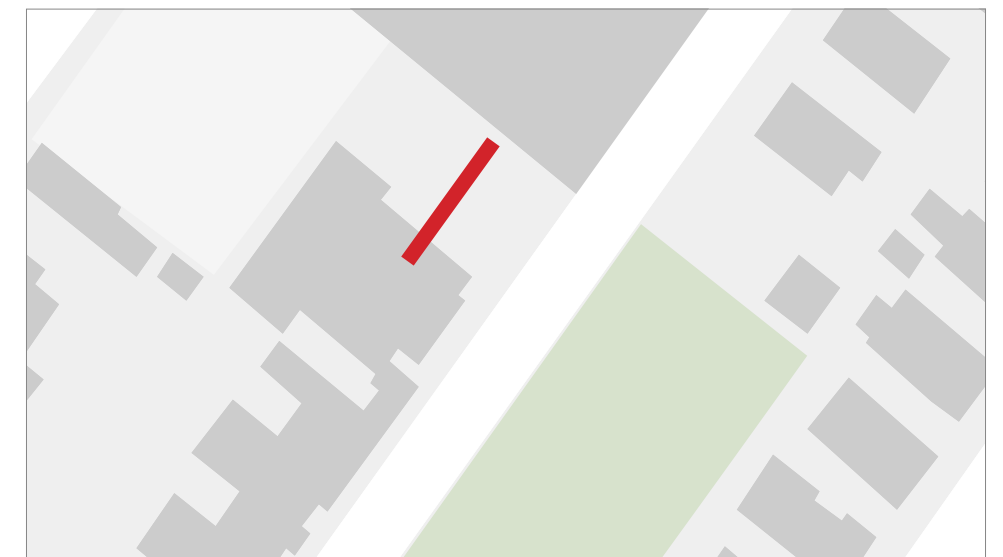


STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

Cross Street Church

The vacant church building on Cross Street is a city owned property that has the potential to be an asset for the community. There are a wide range of programmatic use that could occupy the building and extend to the open lot adjacent to it. The church has interesting characteristics with its brick façade and tall stone arches that would be worth preserving. It is one of the few historic buildings in the cultural district and rejuvenating its use could further add to the character of the community. The site also benefits from its location across the street from an already popular public asset, Chuckie Harris Park.

This collage illustrates the potential of having the church as an active community site. It is suggested that the fences around the lot could be taken out to have a more open green space that connects to the streets. The adjacent lot has an arched cover that grows out of one of the large stone arches and acts as a barrier to the equipment on the site. It also creates another pocket of public space that has a relationship to the park across the street and ends at the community mural.





2-6 Broadway (Completed)



28-44 Broadway (Architectural Rendering)



118 Broadway (Architectural Rendering)



172-180 Broadway (Architectural Rendering)

ONGOING AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT



60 Cross Street East (Construction Photo)



60 Cross Street East (Architectural Rendering)

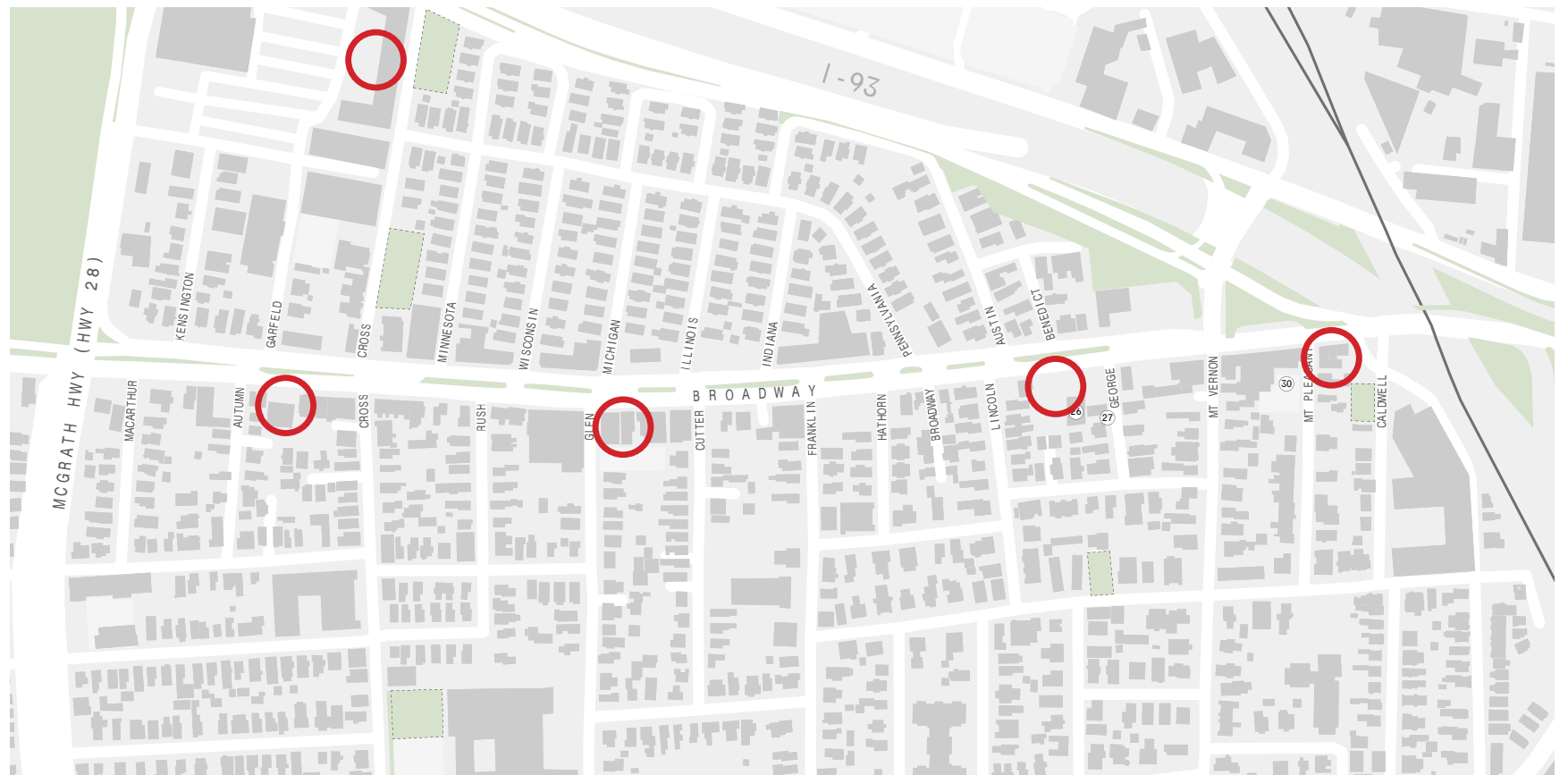
FOSTERING HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

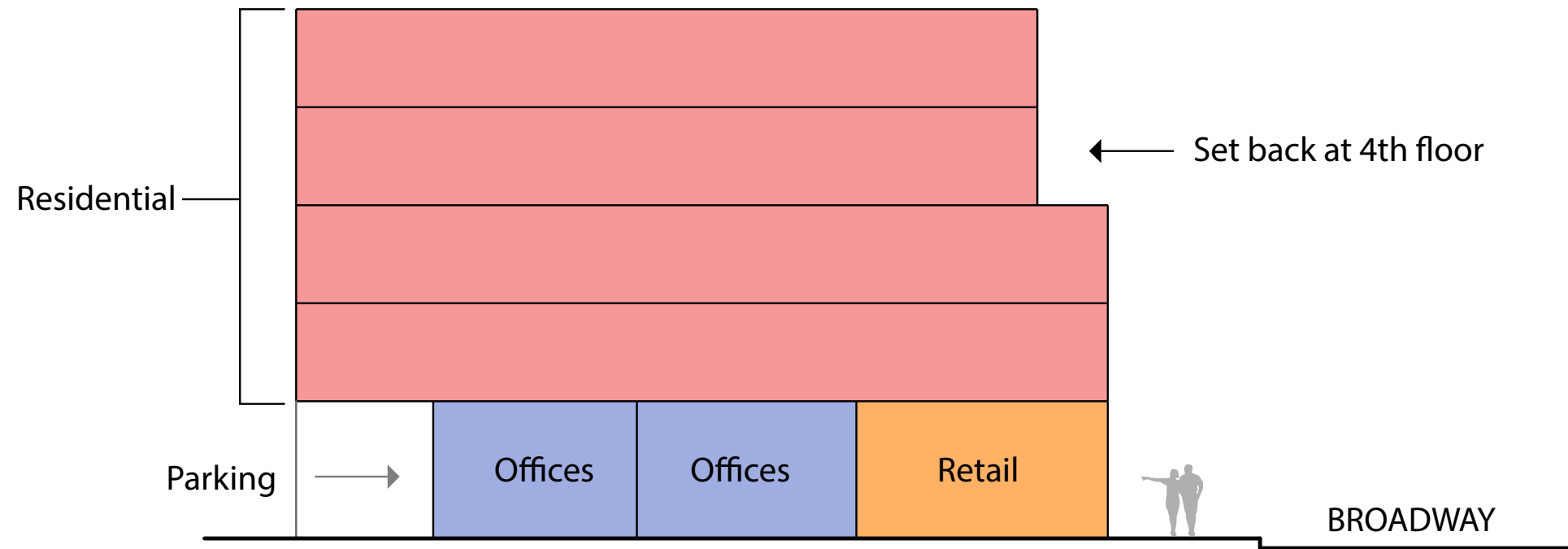
The photos and architectural renderings on this spread are of new projects that are planned for East Somerville or are already under construction. They take advantage of the increased Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in the new zoning code, which now allows for five story buildings on Broadway.

Density is not a bad thing. When done well it helps ease market demand and reduce inflation/gentrification. There is enough demand and infrastructure to support five story buildings in East Somerville but the impact on the existing streetscape and socio-economic character of the neighborhood needs to be considered.

The images and diagrams on the following pages portray guidelines for subtle massing moves and programmatic layout that we believe sets up a base strategy for any further future development taking place on Broadway.

Map of future development





Existing: Mix of 1-, 2-, and 3-story buildings



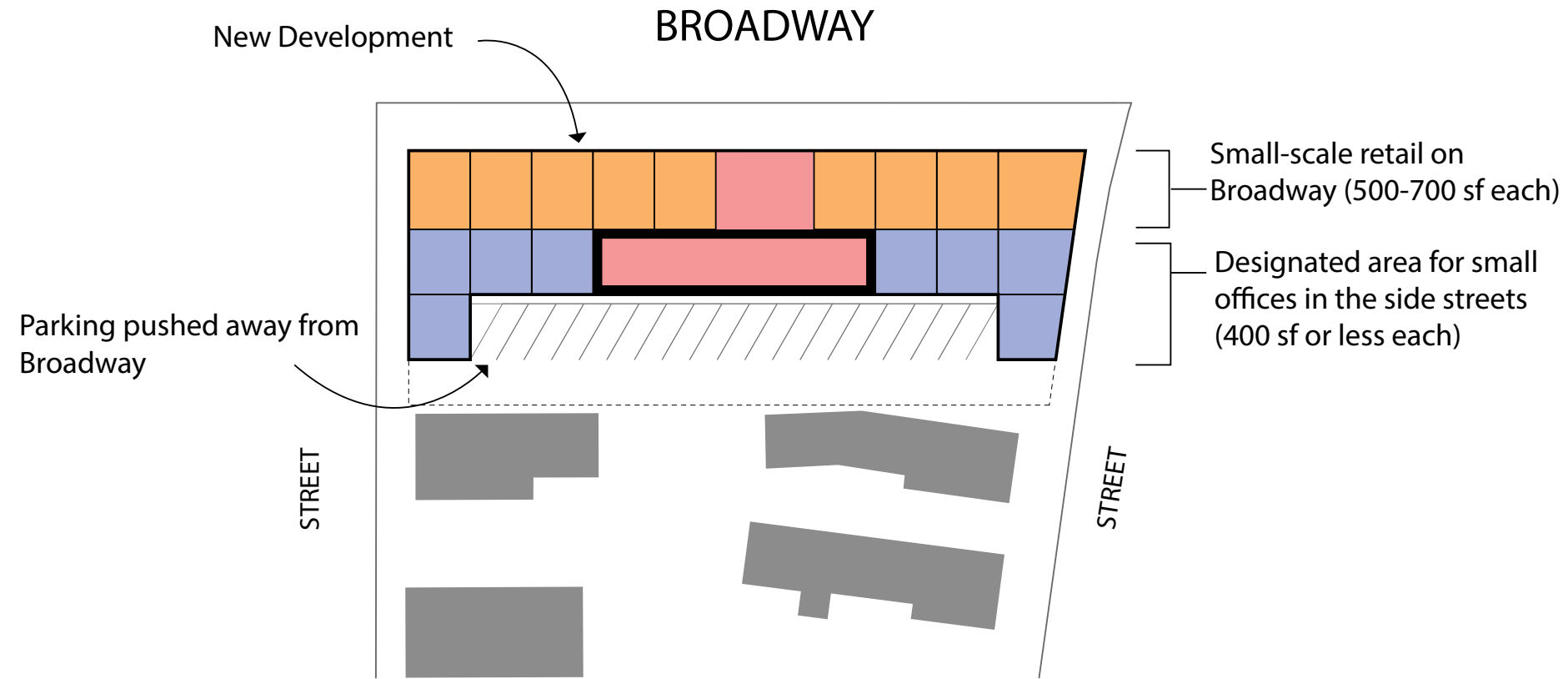
Allowed: 5-story buildings up to sidewalk edge



Recommended: Maximum of 3 stories at sidewalk edge, step back to upper floors



MANAGING DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIBLY



(Left)

A simple 10' setback on the 4th and 5th floors along Broadway can help maintain the existing Broadway streetscape which is currently has one to three story buildings. Without any setback, parts of Broadway will jump from one story buildings to five story buildings, creating an overbearing and awkward streetscape. A small upper story setback of 10' will only cut out a small portion of floor area for residential units, while also providing the opportunity for small roof terraces.

(Above)

The greatest programmatic demand is currently for residential units thus most of the new development includes three or four floors of apartments. Ground floor apartments are not desirable thus developers plan for other programs, often retail. Broadway is an established commercial street but if the first floor of these new developments are designed for large retail spaces, it can be detrimental to the community of East Somerville which is made up entirely of small businesses and restaurants. The new projects should focus retail development along Broadway to have small spaces, typically between 500-700 sf, which would be more affordable and support local businesses. Large retail spaces can often only be filled by large chains which leads to further gentrification. One of East Somerville's greatest strengths are its local business which keep money in the neighborhood and add to its character. Additionally there are currently no big retail/food chains in East Somerville.

The first floor can also be used for covered parking to meet the demands for the new residents. The parking entrances should be off of the side streets to keep Broadway intact with continuous storefronts. Another potential first floor use is for small office space located off of the side streets. There is currently a lack of small offices in the area. Having access to affordable small offices would support small community businesses and organization as well as introduce a more vibrant daytime crowd along Broadway which would in turn support the existing restaurants, rather than large corporations. This demand for small office development needs to be made clear to developers since most of the new buildings do not include office space.

2020 MLK DAY OF SERVICE



PAYETTE