

The Commons at Forest Hills Station

Boston Civic Design Commission

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The Commons at Forest Hills Station

The Commons at Forest Hills Station will transform an underutilized industrial site on Washington Street into a mixed use development featuring 280 rental apartment homes, active ground floor uses and open space. The proposed Project represents the first step in realizing the long term goal of a reconnected neighborhood by transforming a nearly vacant, aging, and contaminated post-industrial site which was used for 100 years as a petroleum product distribution depot, into a lively and dense residential community with retail and community uses. Since the Site is almost completely disconnected from the nearby residential neighborhoods, the Project will need to create its own sense of place through a density of residents and associated uses to create a “there there.” It will need to be a destination that operates on both a regional scale as a Transit Oriented Development, and at a local scale, as a neighborhood destination and source of added residential life.

The Project is strategically located a short walk from the Forest Hills MBTA Station which provides Orange line subway and commuter rail service, and it is in close proximity to many area parks and commercial amenities on Centre/Green Street. Building on these assets, the Project will provide significant public realm enhancements including approximately 8,750 SF of publicly accessible open space along Washington Street, new street trees, lighting, and a dedicated bike lane on Washington Street. Ultimately the design strives to create a magnet for increased pedestrian activity in the area.

The Project is consistent with goals of the 2010 Forest Hills Improvement Initiative and the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association Planning Principles by providing new multi-family housing. The Project balances the need for density and a sense of place by creating a variety of distinct edge conditions and a collage of four buildings. Building “A” is a T-shaped building on the southern part of the Site with 5 stories of apartments over ground-floor commercial/retail space and parking. Buildings “B”, “C”, and “D” are attached and sited on the northern portion of the Site, separated by a small buffered parking area and driveway, located above a Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) easement. Building B contains five stories of apartments above the ground level parking garage. Building C is a U-shaped building that ranges in height from five down to four stories as it approaches the Burnett Street neighborhood. Building D is a three story townhouse scaled building that forms the main frontage



Summary

- **280 Rental Apartments**
- **37 Affordable Apartments**
- **7,960 SF Commercial, Retail and Amenity Space**
- **250 bicycle parking spaces**
- **169 Resident Vehicle Parking Spaces (0.6 spaces/unit)**
- **16 Commercial Vehicle Parking Spaces**
- **2.5 Floor Area Ratio**
- **42,393 SF open space**

on Washington Street with exterior unit entries lining the street. The majority of the street edge will be at this three story elevation in order to establish the appropriate residential scale and a consistent base-line height. This podium is punctuated by the taller elements of the upper floors that appear in intervals and are set back from the Burnett Street neighborhood. The presence of these taller components on Washington Street is measured to enhance the sense of place by revealing the density of its occupation and to animate the streetscape at a larger scale.

The character of the Project is residential in its scale and urbanism, expressed in a contemporary architectural language. Buildings A and B are larger and contain more public elements at their ground levels and deploy material strategies consistent with their mixed uses. The ground floor commercial/retail/amenity elements and the public lobbies will use glass storefront and metal frame elements suitable for an urban public space. The upper portions of

Buildings A and B combine brick and cementitious panels arranged in an expression that celebrates their size and multi-family occupancy. The overall design intent is to harmonize the various pieces at different scales and uses through a variety of facade treatments. These elements of different scale and the different buildings are distinguished in color, (this phrase does not make sense to me) material, fenestration, and detailing. While the Project will be recognizable as a whole, the intent is to create enough difference along its length to foster the sense of variety that one finds in a traditional urban setting.

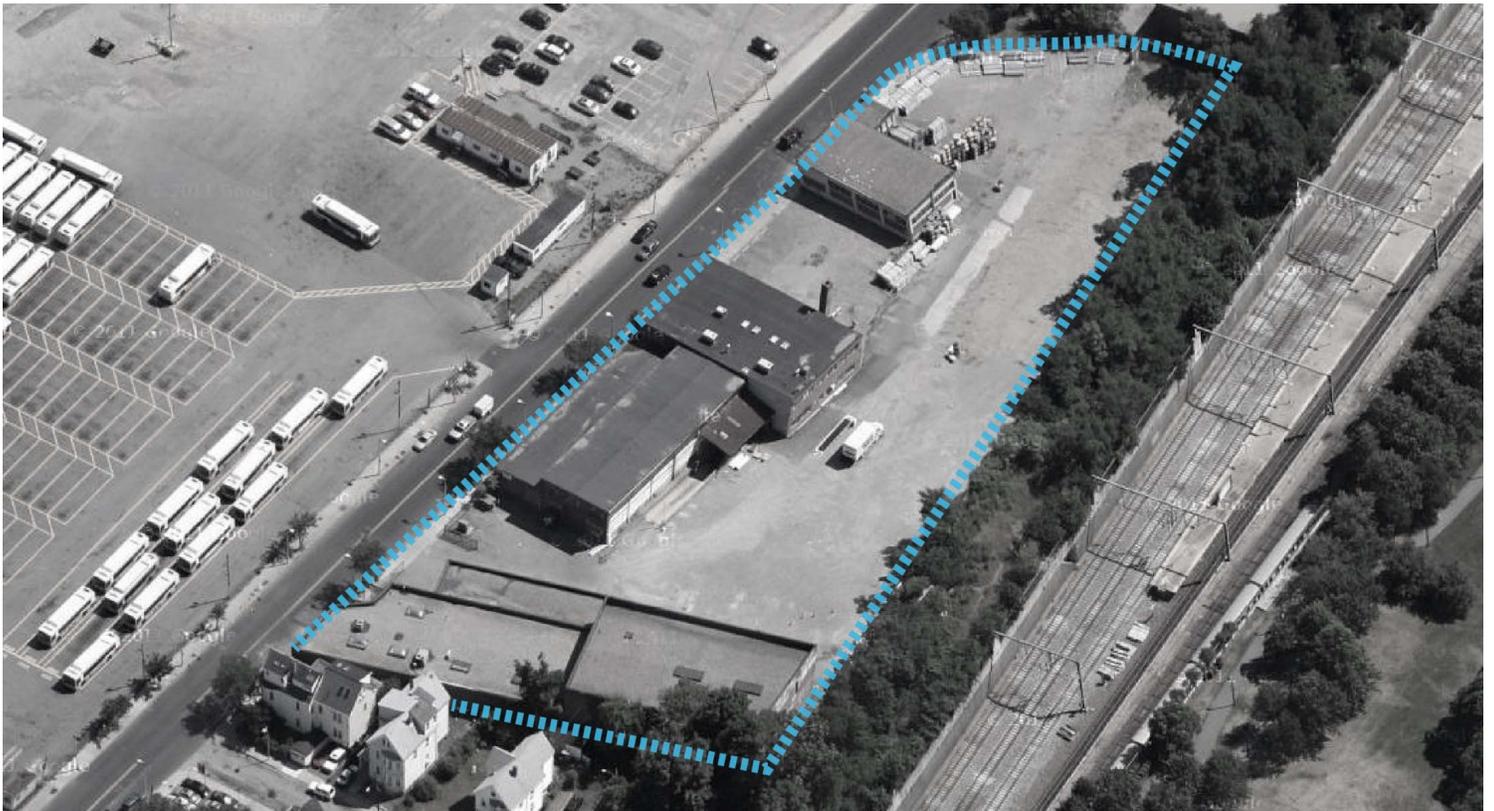
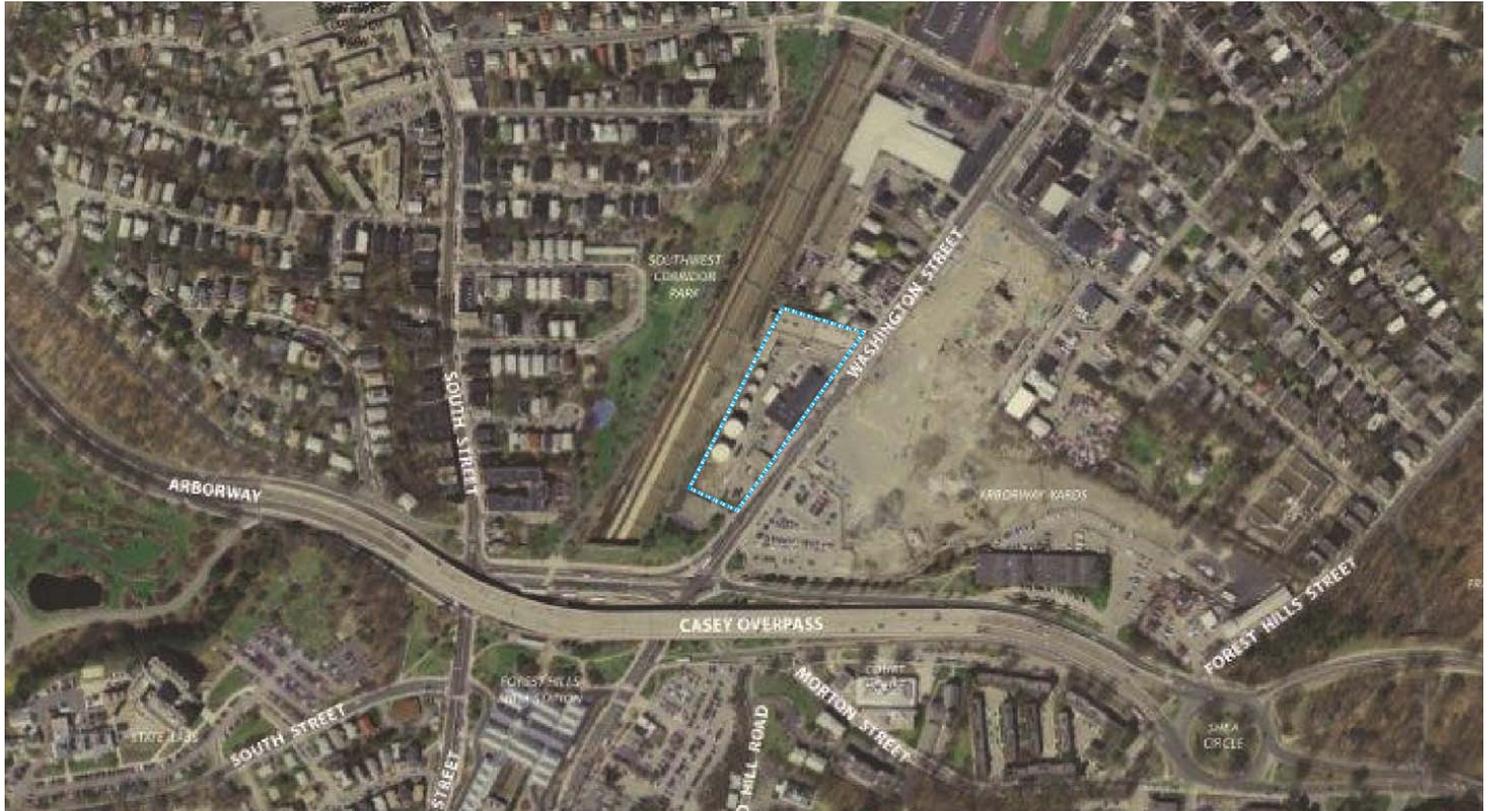
The Project will incorporate a variety of green building measures and will be LEED certifiable with a goal of LEED Silver. (elaborate a bit on this as it sounds like this is a focus for them) Courtyards, private decks, a common roof deck, and greenspace at the rear of the buildings are designed to provide private open space amenities for residents.

Further, in keeping with its urban setting, the Project looks to provide efficient vehicular circulation that minimizes the surface area of the site devoted to parking. The surface parking lot is set back far off the street and screened behind landscaped areas. The garage parking is hidden behind decorative architectural screening and the building façade.

It is anticipated the Project will evolve from a stand-alone, destination-oriented development into a consistent and lively gateway to a two-sided Washington Street corridor. As such, the architectural variety along the buildings' length anticipates a future when it will appear more as a stretch of urban fabric than a singular project.



Forest Hills, Jamaica Plain



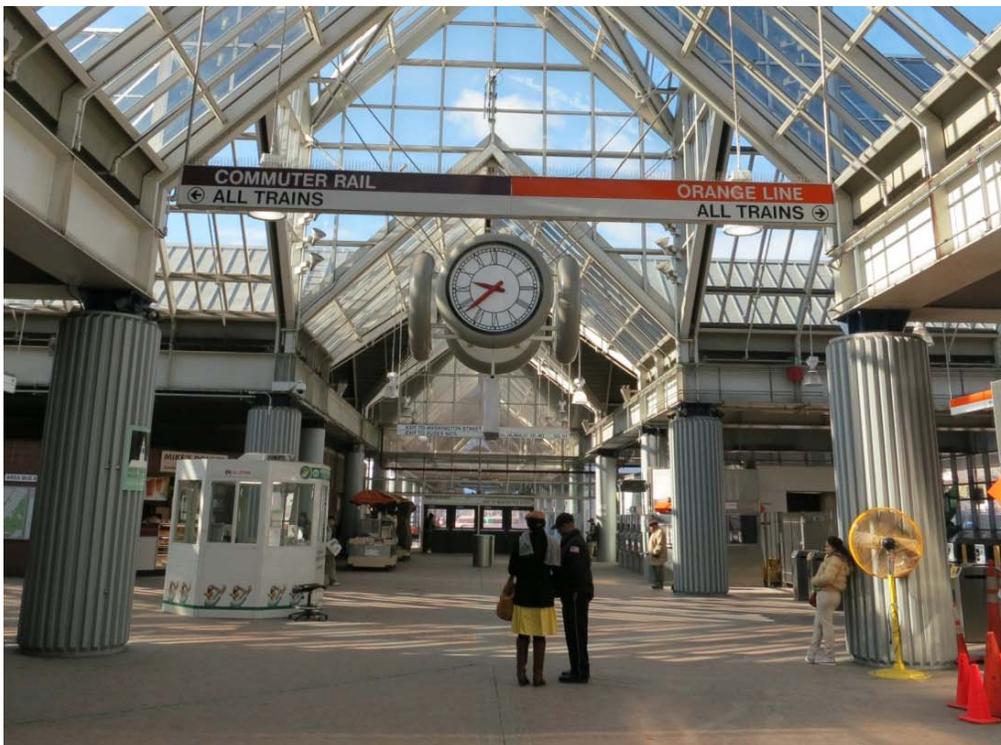
Former Hughes Oil Site



- “Placeless” industrial area with few amenities
- Close to, but disconnected from, area assets such as the MBTA Station, parks, and Jamaica Plain activity centers.
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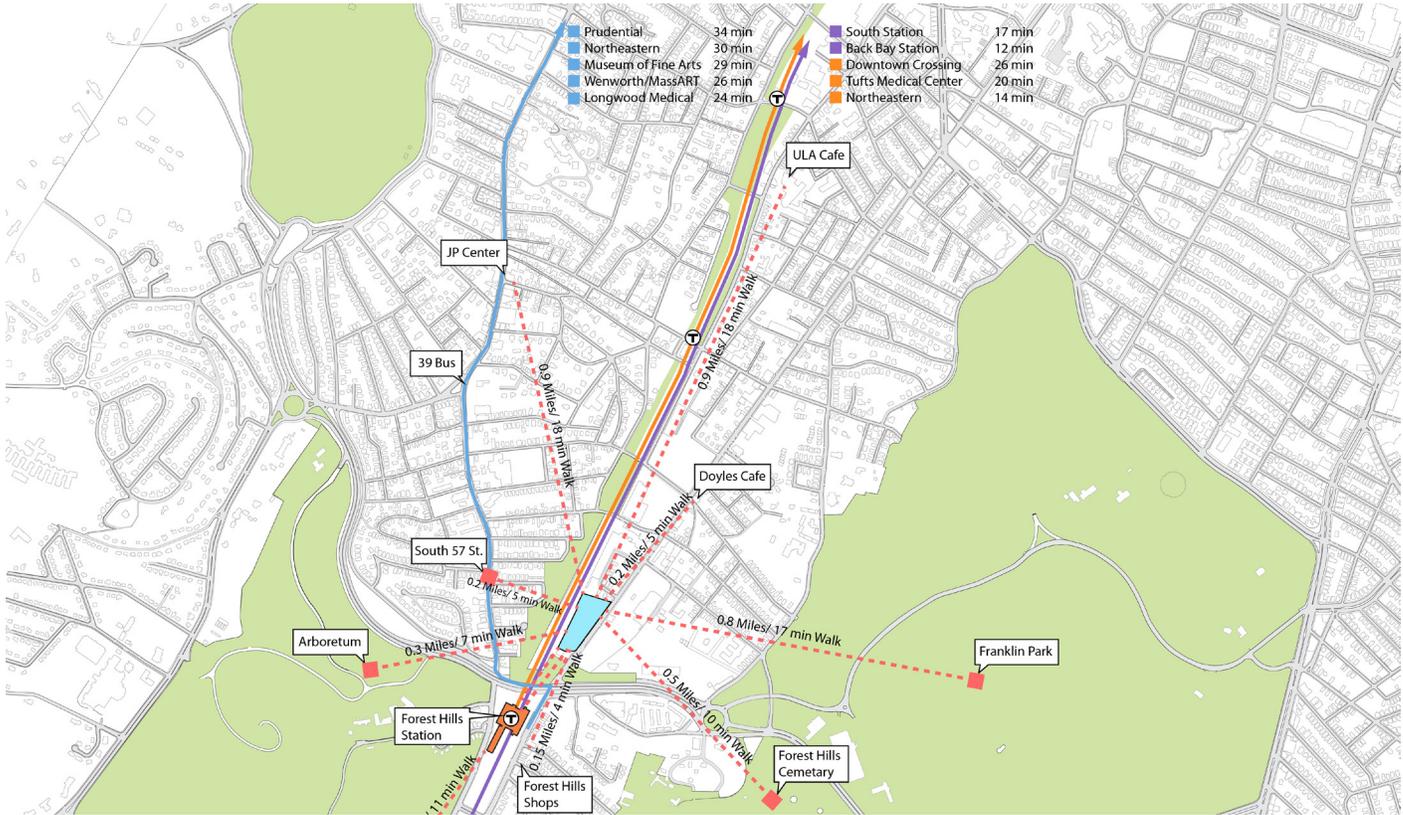


Transit Oriented Development



- Well-positioned: close to Forest Hills Station, the Southwest Corridor Park and the Arnold Arboretum.
- Harness potential of mixed-use, Transit Oriented Development to make a “there there.”

Transit Oriented Development



Relevant Planning Principles

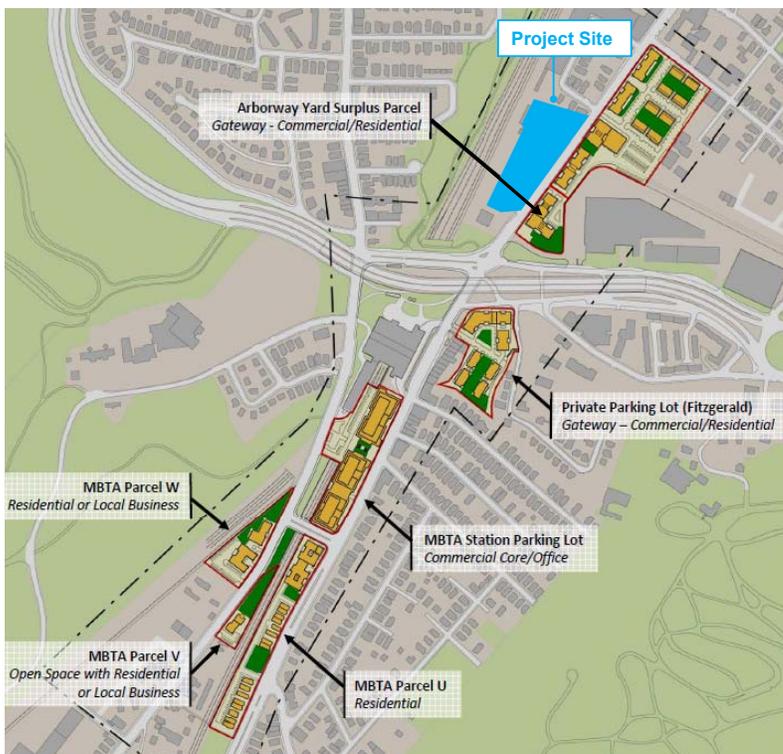
Stony Brook Neighborhood Association Survey, 2012



- Majority (60% of respondents) want active street frontage
- 73% of respondents want to see small parks, courtyards or green space
- 63% of respondents want to see pedestrian accommodations such as wide sidewalks

Relevant Planning Principles

Forest Hills Improvement Initiative, 2008



- Guidelines that emerged from a Community Vision for publicly owned parcels
- Promotes dense commercial and residential development

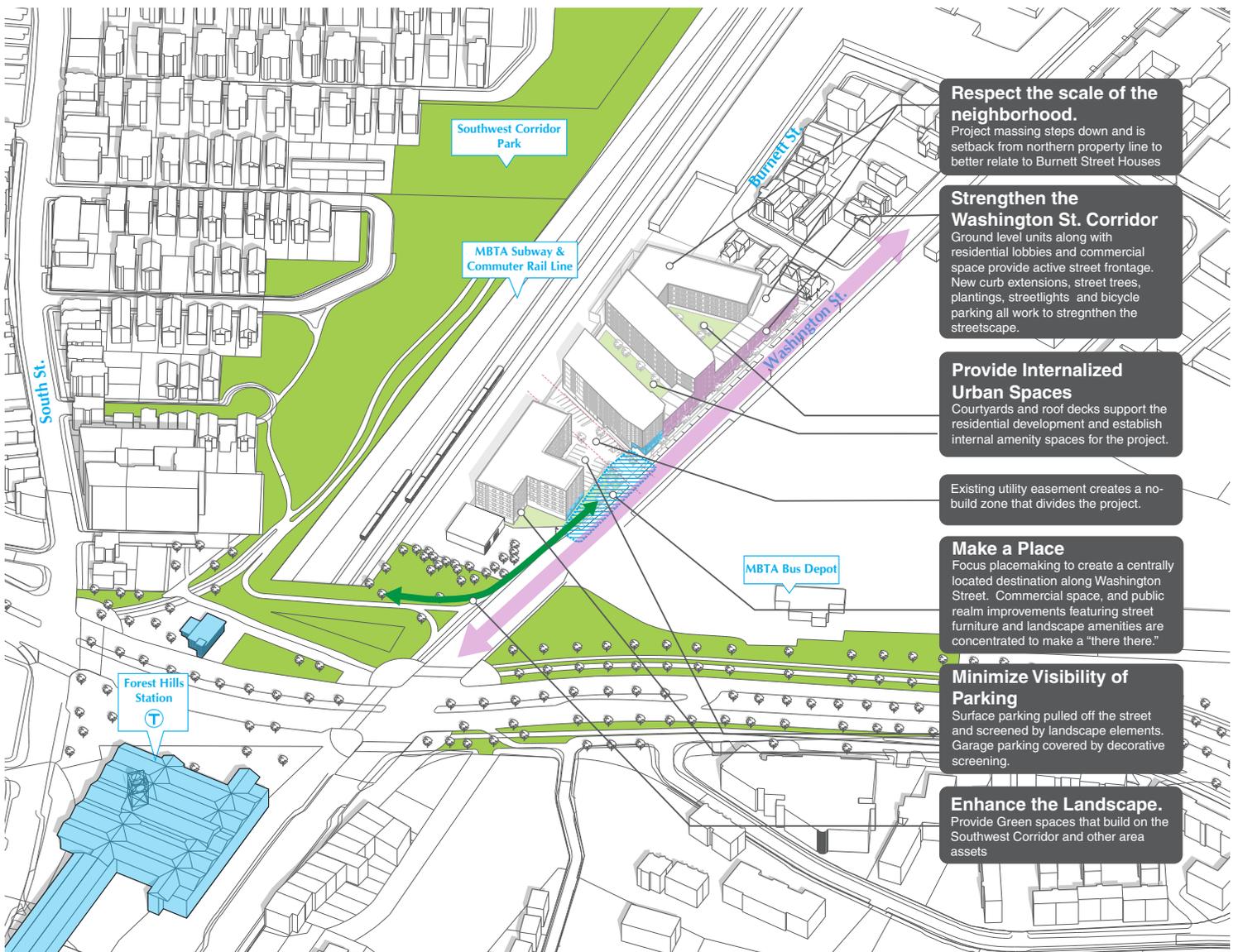
Vision

Create a dense, mixed use development that features a variety of housing types that provide an attractive and healthy place to live

Foster a viable, focused public realm that serves as a magnet on a reimagined Washington Street Corridor

Establish a presence and sense of place that can anchor additional investment in the neighborhood

Leverage proximity to public transportation to transform a post-industrial site and reduce automobile dependency



Respect the scale of the neighborhood.
Project massing steps down and is setback from northern property line to better relate to Burnett Street Houses

Strengthen the Washington St. Corridor
Ground level units along with residential lobbies and commercial space provide active street frontage. New curb extensions, street trees, plantings, streetlights and bicycle parking all work to strengthen the streetscape.

Provide Internalized Urban Spaces
Courtyards and roof decks support the residential development and establish internal amenity spaces for the project.

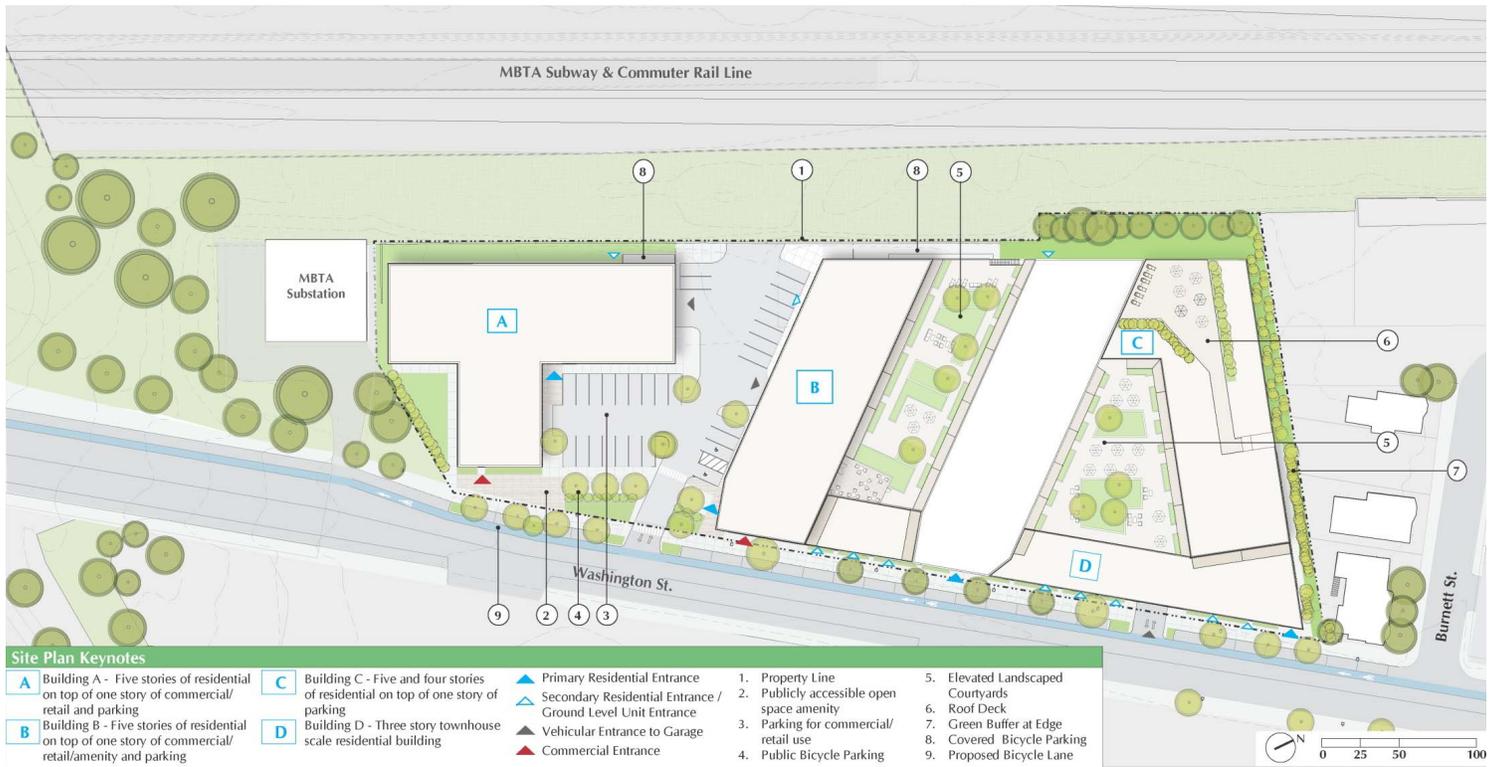
Existing utility easement creates a no-build zone that divides the project.

Make a Place
Focus placemaking to create a centrally located destination along Washington Street. Commercial space, and public realm improvements featuring street furniture and landscape amenities are concentrated to make a "there there."

Minimize Visibility of Parking
Surface parking pulled off the street and screened by landscape elements. Garage parking covered by decorative screening.

Enhance the Landscape.
Provide Green spaces that build on the Southwest Corridor and other area assets

Proposed Site Plan



Landscape Plan



The Commons at Forest Hills Station





Ground Floor Plan



Typical Upper Level Plan

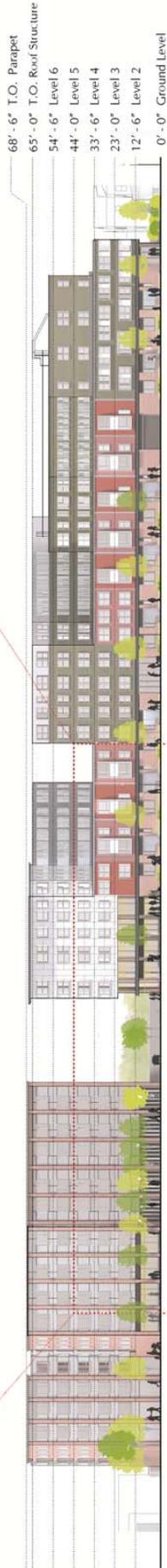


Sixth Floor Plan





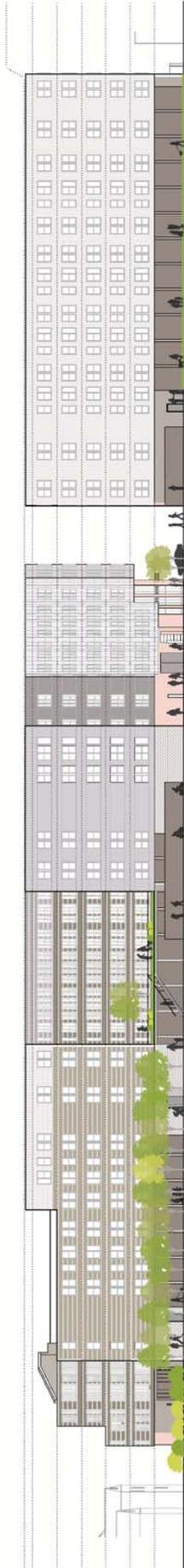
Enlarged Elevation - Washington Street



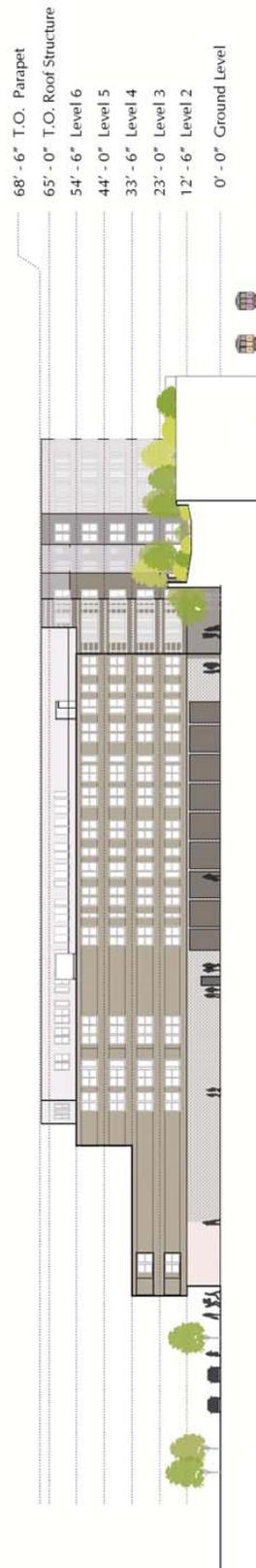
Elevation - Washington Street



Building Section - Washington Street



West Elevation - From Southwest Corridor



North Elevation - From Burnett Street



South Elevation - From MBTA Substation

68' - 6" T.O. Parapet
65' - 0" T.O. Roof Structure
54' - 6" Level 6
44' - 0" Level 5
33' - 6" Level 4
23' - 0" Level 3
12' - 6" Level 2
0' - 0" Ground Level

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