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Project Overview



- GLX, Union Square Redevelopment and Somervision Plan
- Conducted a Plan Evaluation
- Adapted Case Studies from Seattle, WA & Assembly Square, MA
- Spoke with Experienced Advisors
- Address the ultimate Research Question...

To what extent do the current plans and policies enable a sustainable transit oriented development for Union Square?

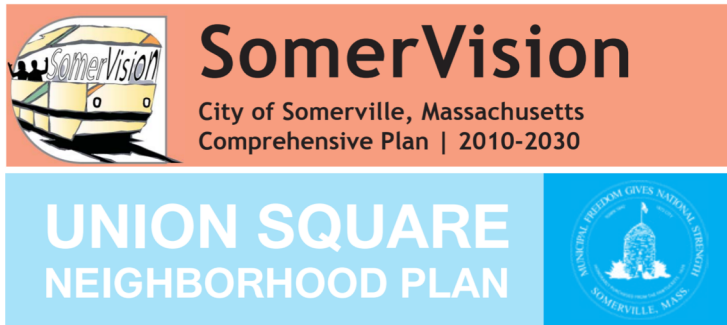
Agenda

1. Plan Analysis
2. TOD Case Study
3. Content Analysis
4. Expert Interviews
5. Conclusion

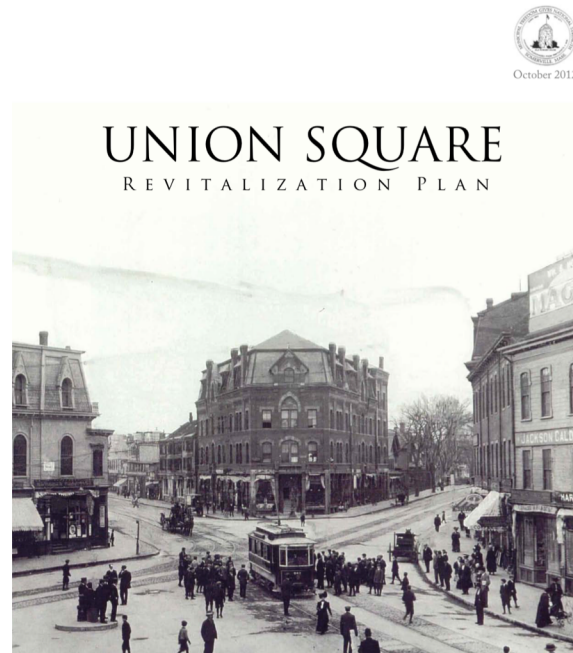
Plan Analysis



The Plans



Somerville Vision / Union Square Neighborhood Plan



Union Square Revitalization Plan



Green Line Extension

SomerVision / Neighborhood Plan



- Promote smart growth, a resilient economy, & public transit
- Foster the community spirit and their deep sense of civic pride
- Generates a wide variety of job opportunities, supporting independent local businesses, and secure fiscal self-sufficiency
- Targets
 - 30,000 new jobs
 - 125 acres of new public space
 - 6,000 new housing units (1,200 affordable)
 - 50% of trip by non-automobile

Source: City of Somerville

Union Square Revitalization Plan



- Foster the unique character of the Union Square neighborhood
- Invest and grow a resilient, diverse economy while growing employment opportunities
- Embrace public transportation while improving environmental quality

Source: City of Somerville

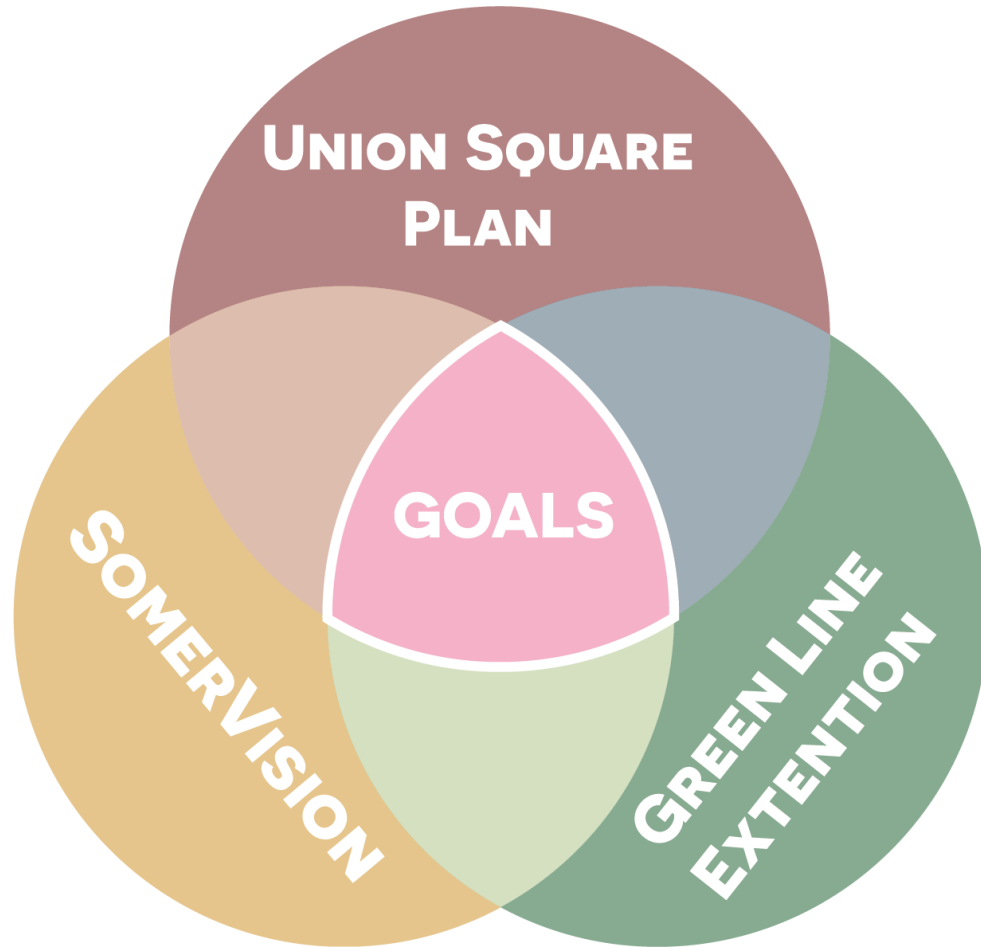
The Green Line Extension



- Improve corridor mobility & boost transit ridership
- Improve regional air quality (reduction of VMT by 25,728 miles)
- Support smart growth and sustainable development
- Create Connectivity between Cities & Combat Gridlock

Source: MBTA

Goal Similarities



- Promoting Public Transit
- Support Smart Growth & Sustainable Development
- Connectivity between Cities

TOD Case Study



Seattle



TOD Implementation, Seattle



- Vision: a proactive strategy to catalyze equitable development in all TOD areas of the City, particularly where the market is lagging and investment and economic development are needed most.
- Note: local conditions and feasibility dictate actions needed for successful TOD

TOD as an Opportunity

”... a tool for achieving equity”

City Actions:

1. Public Investments
 - a. Early infrastructure funding
 - b. Project management
 - c. Community engagement services
2. Zoning changes
3. “Matchmaking” property owners with developers

Challenges:

1. Lacking infrastructure to support TOD
2. Site control
3. Loans and subsidies (The market/funding/housing subsidies)
4. Development participation (particularly small, local, and CBOs)

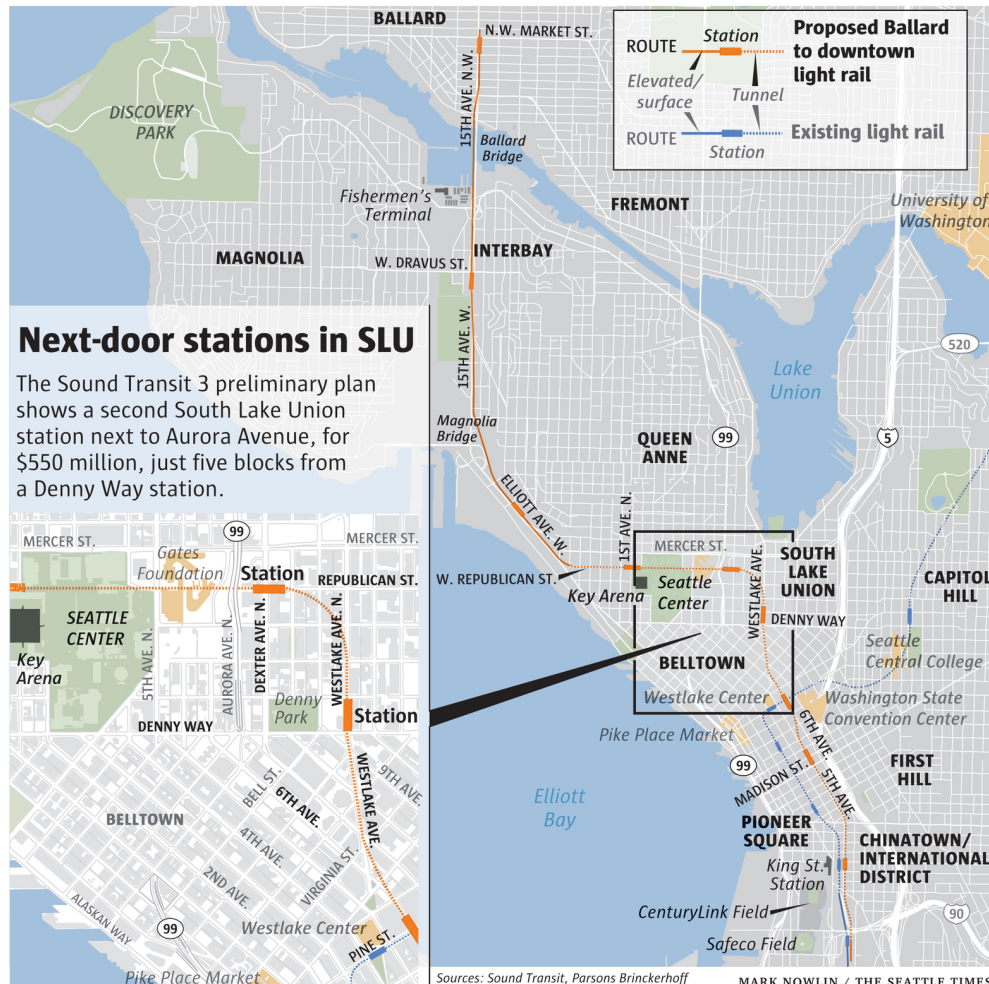
What makes TOD successful

1. City leadership, vision, and a cohesive strategy
2. Effective coordination across city departments
3. Early planning and rezoning to make TOD projects feasible
4. City focused and prioritized investments
5. City fostered strong partnerships

Seattle Context



South Lake Union, Seattle



1. Activities implemented through interdepartmental teams via city leadership
2. Property owner partnered with the city to invest in infrastructure & amenities
3. Location!
4. Targeted zoning changes
5. Public investments made by City
6. Leveraged partnerships (private & Public)

Northgate Station, Seattle



1. Mayor made project a priority and made an impact through executive decisions
2. City invested in civic facilities, street improvements, and community gardens
3. City created numerous supporting plans in addition to the comprehensive plan
4. Private/public partnerships with complimentary interests
5. Market conditions supported by multiple private development projects underway
6. Sourced funding from multiple areas
7. Activities implemented through interdepartmental teams via city leadership

Determine Site Classification:

Cultivate

Cultivating actions focus on land use regulations, infrastructure investments, and developing partnerships. Public investments and strong leadership are critical and can be leveraged for equitable development.

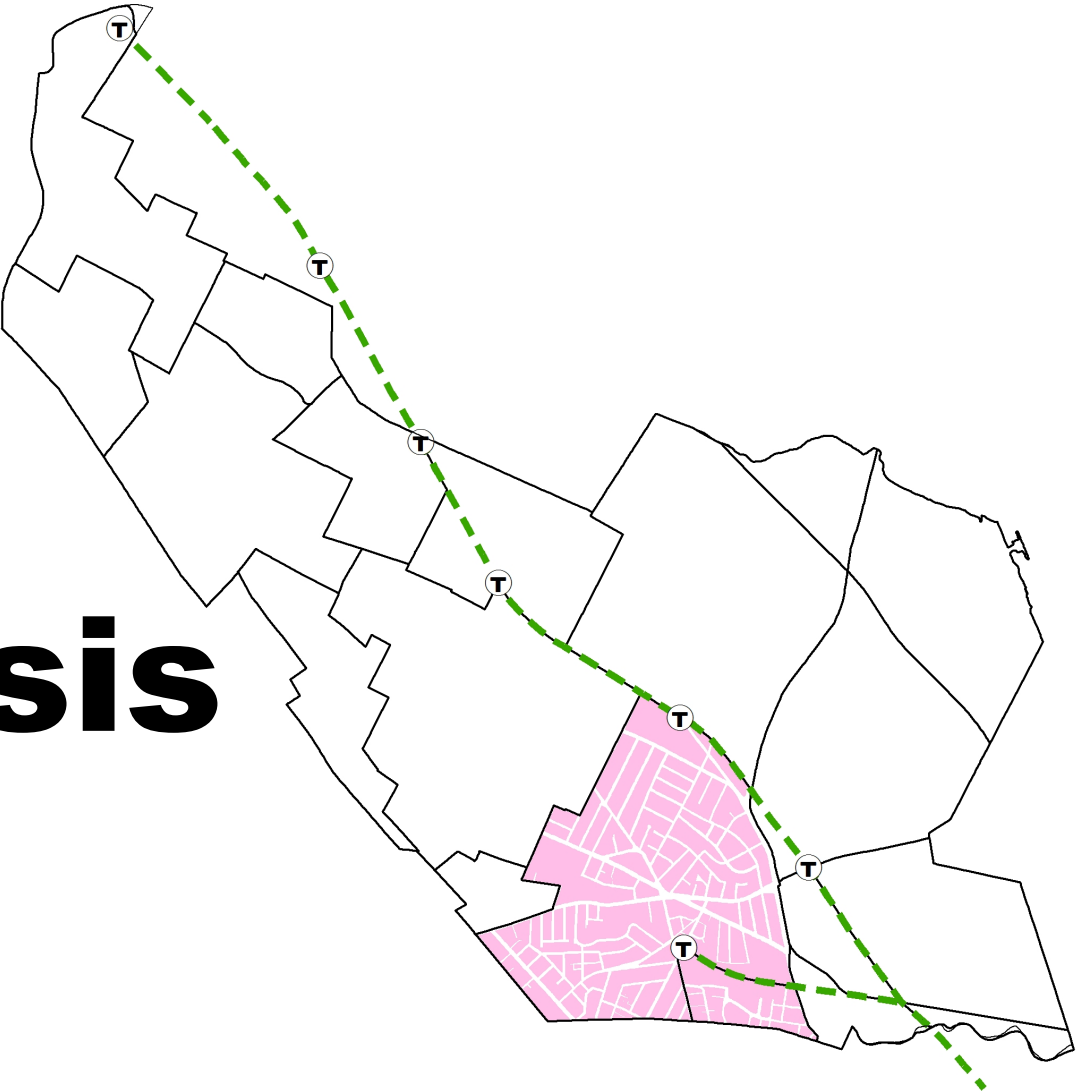
Catalyze

Catalytic actions typically cover tax exemptions or the provision of specific types of public infrastructure (i.e. plazas, utilities, amenities, etc.). These types of actions support market-making projects.

Grow

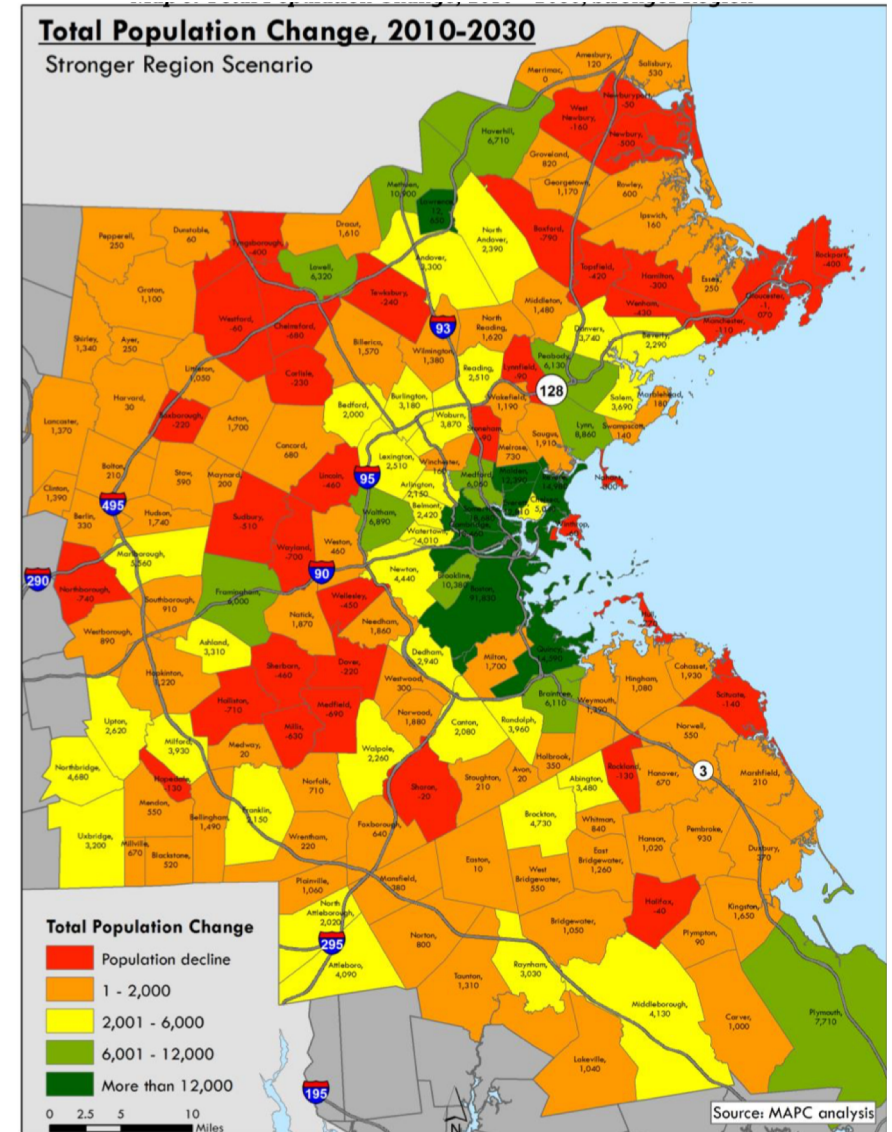
Growth actions focus on dealing with the challenges of success, such as the need to invest in the equity, infrastructure and services required to support higher densities of people, employees, and visitors.

Content Analysis



Population Growth

Scenario Comparison			
	2010	Status Quo, 2010 – 2040	Stronger Region, 2010 - 2040
Population	4,458,000	+ 6.6%	+12.6%
Households	1,719,000	+ 17%	+23%
Housing Units	1,827,600	+ 17%	+24%
Percent Multifamily	51%	48% of new units	62% of new units
Labor Force Population	2,516,000	+0.4%	+6.9%



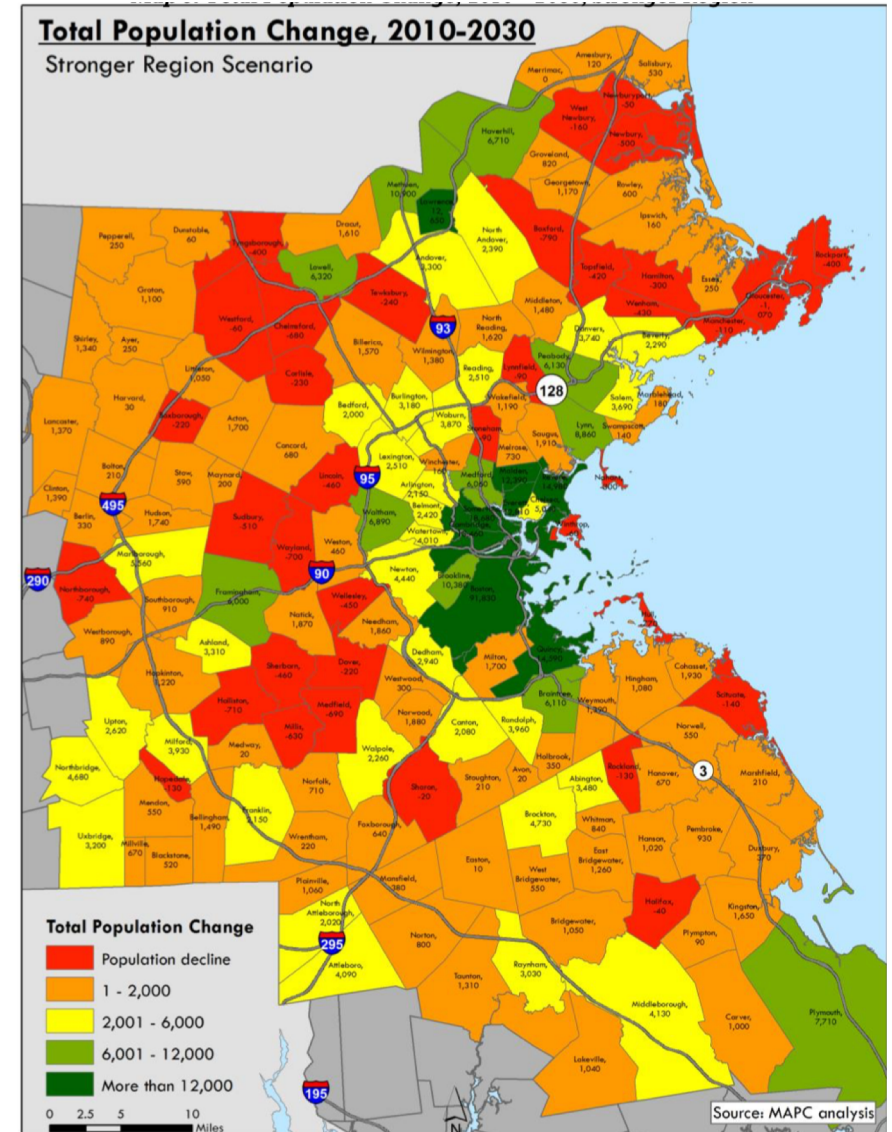
Population Growth

Challenge:

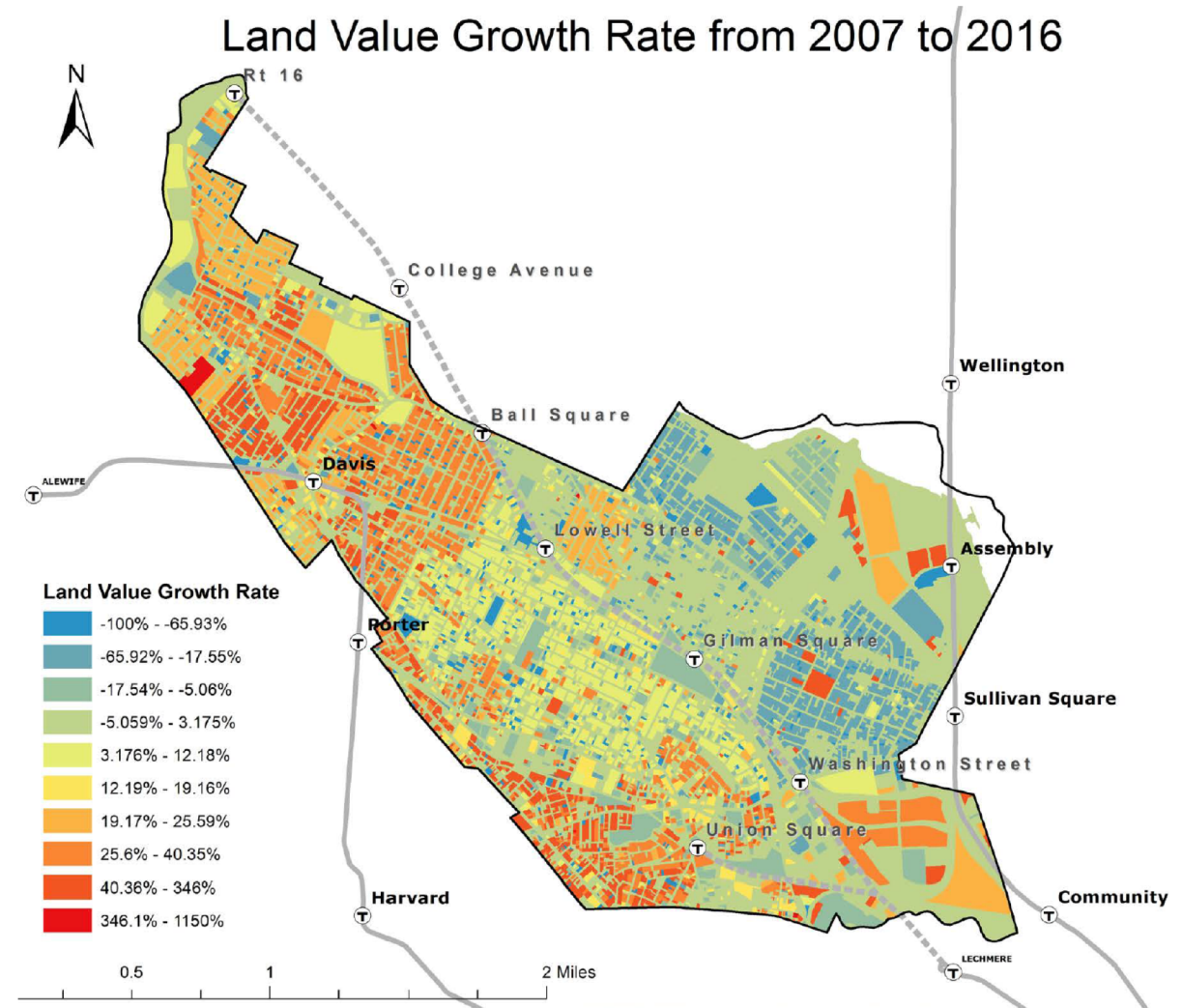
Increased burden on infrastructure and demand for housing and jobs.

Solutions:

Plans implementing new transit and infrastructure to accommodate, house and employ new people



Land Value Change



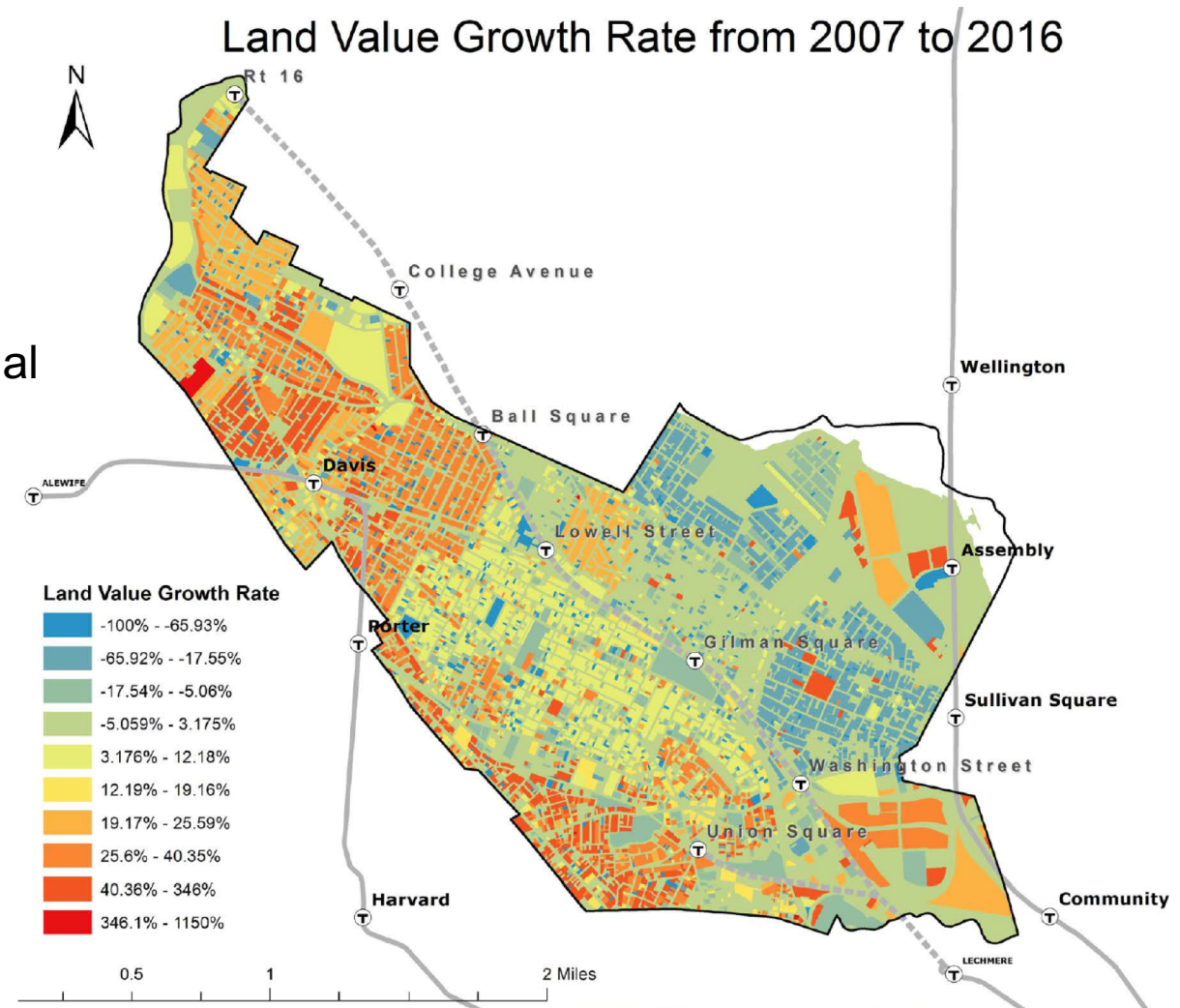
Land Value Change

Challenge:

Land value increase raises cost of residential and commercial rent and can cause displacement.

Solutions:

Plans address some zoning for small commercial spaces and affordable housing



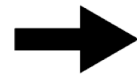
Small Business Characteristics



Number of
Small Businesses

173

2015



151

2018

Business Owner Characteristics

White	35%
Asian	10%
Hispanic/Latino	45%
Indian	6%
Other	4%

2014 SCC Field Projects Team- Business
Owner Survey Results (Tufts University) 28
Owners & 3 Manager

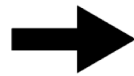
Small Business Characteristics



Number of
Small Businesses



2015



2018

Challenge:

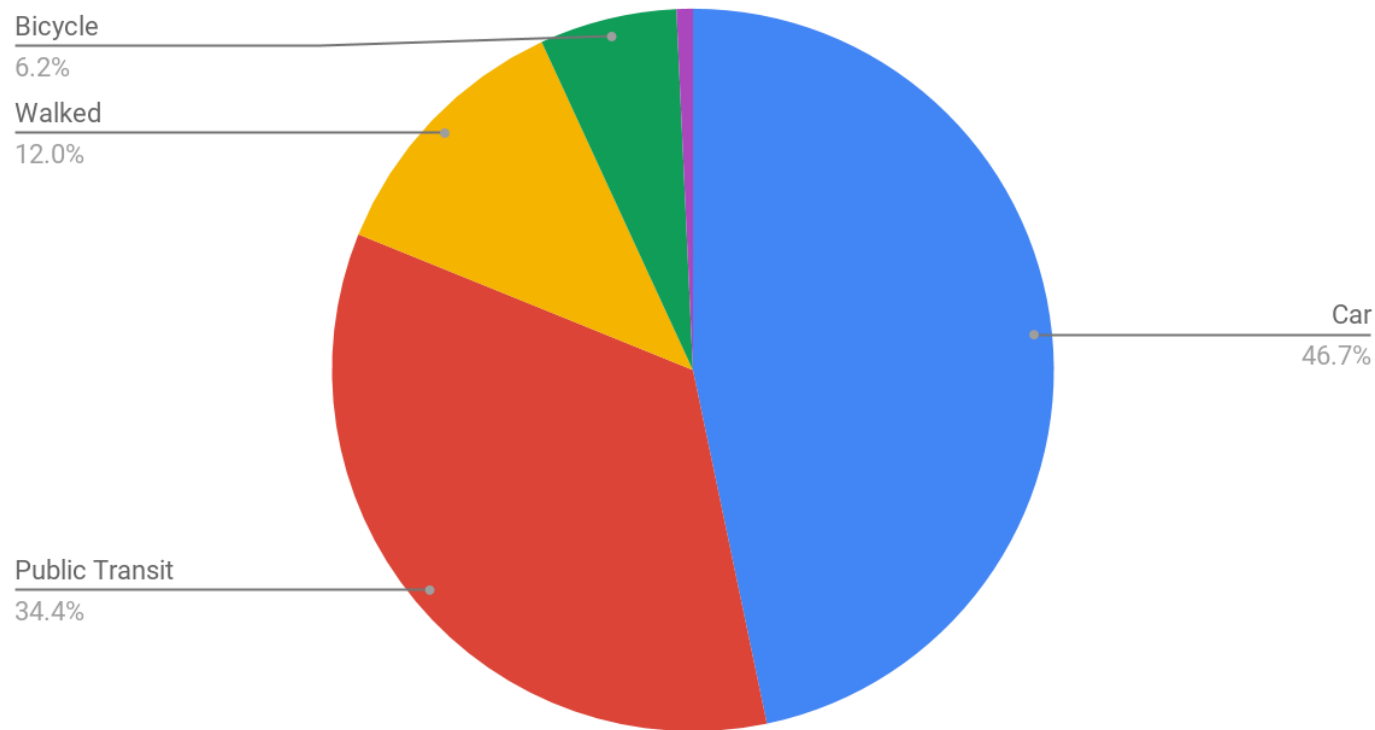
Small businesses make up an important part of the “character” of Somerville, losing them is detrimental

Solutions:

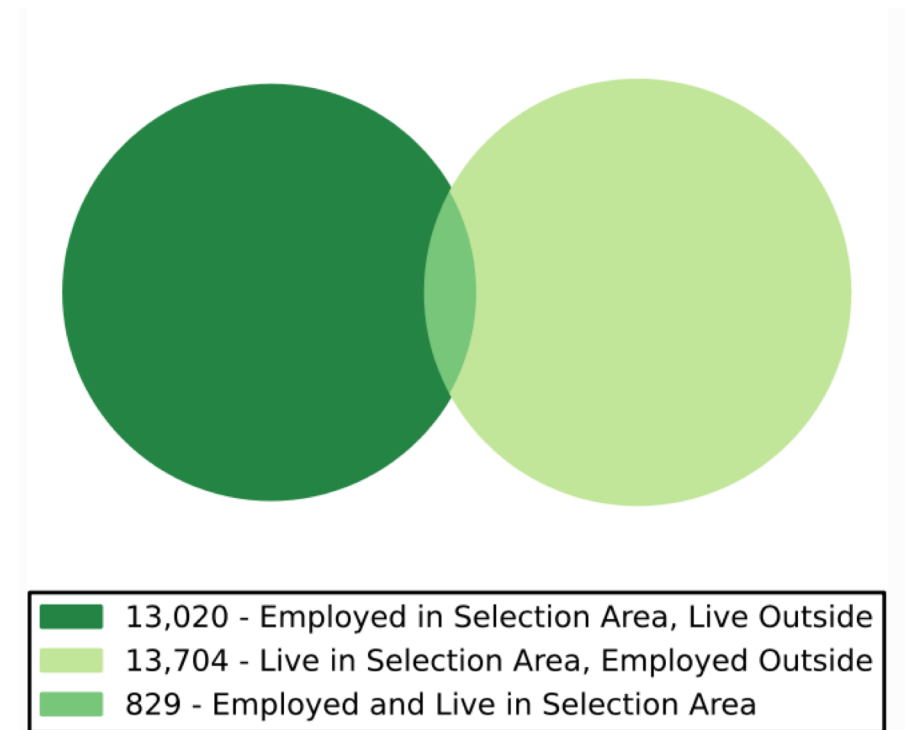
Zoning amendments for smaller commercial spaces to ensure affordability.

Movement of People

Means of Transportation to Work (US Census Bureau 2016)



Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2015



Movement of People

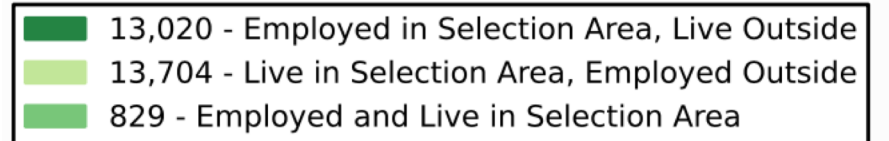
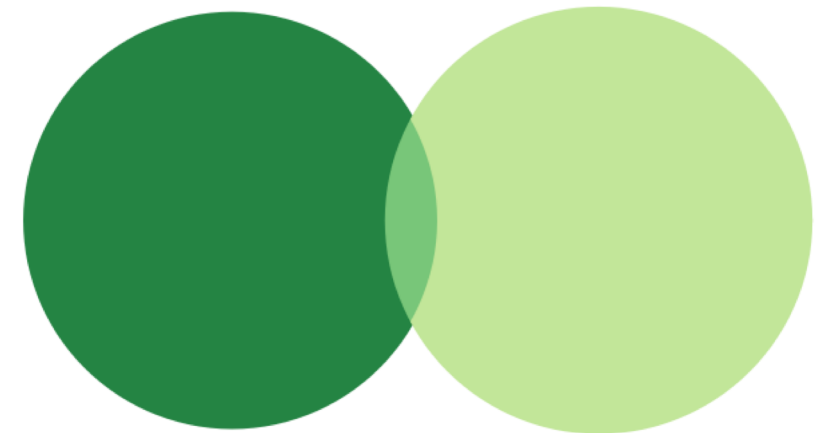
Challenge:

A lot of people move in and out of Union Square on a daily basis, a large portion using a car

Solutions:

Introduction of transit should increase ridership

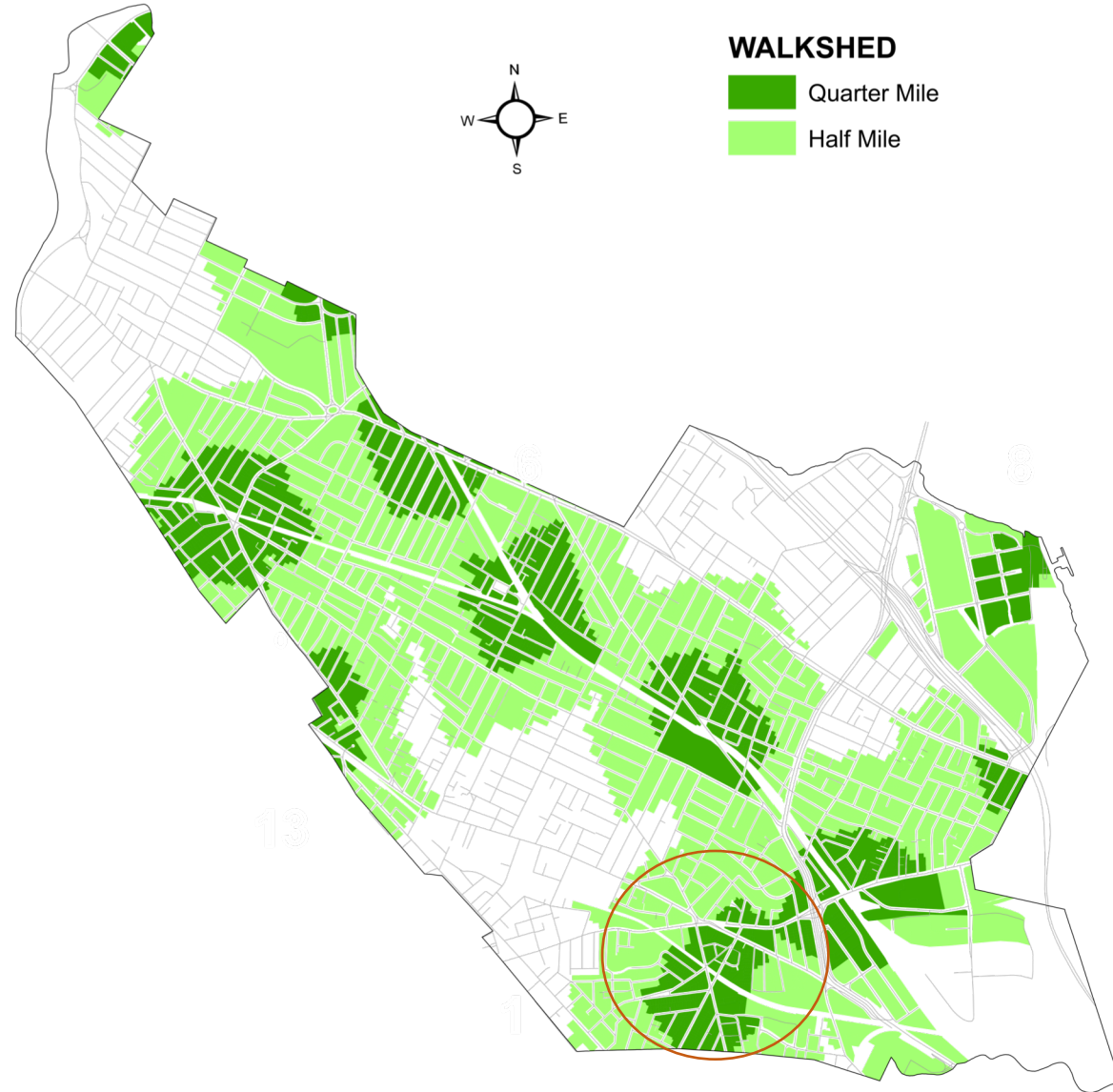
Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2015



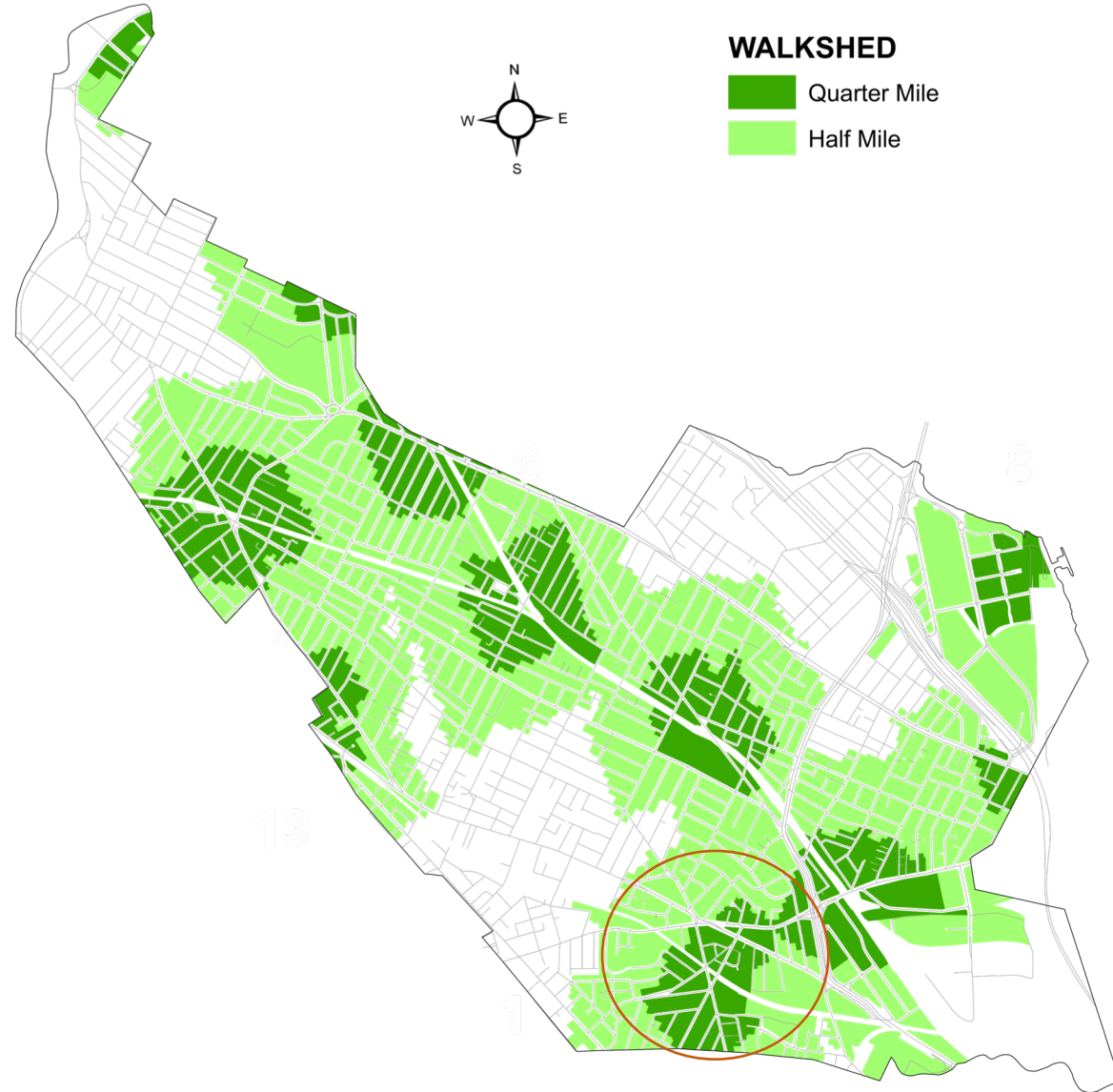
Transit Access

Estimated Ridership on the GLX

Station	Estimated Daily Ridership
Ball Square	1808
College Avenue	2384
East Somerville	1118
Gilman Square	3608
Lowell Street	1814
Union Square	4430



Transit Access



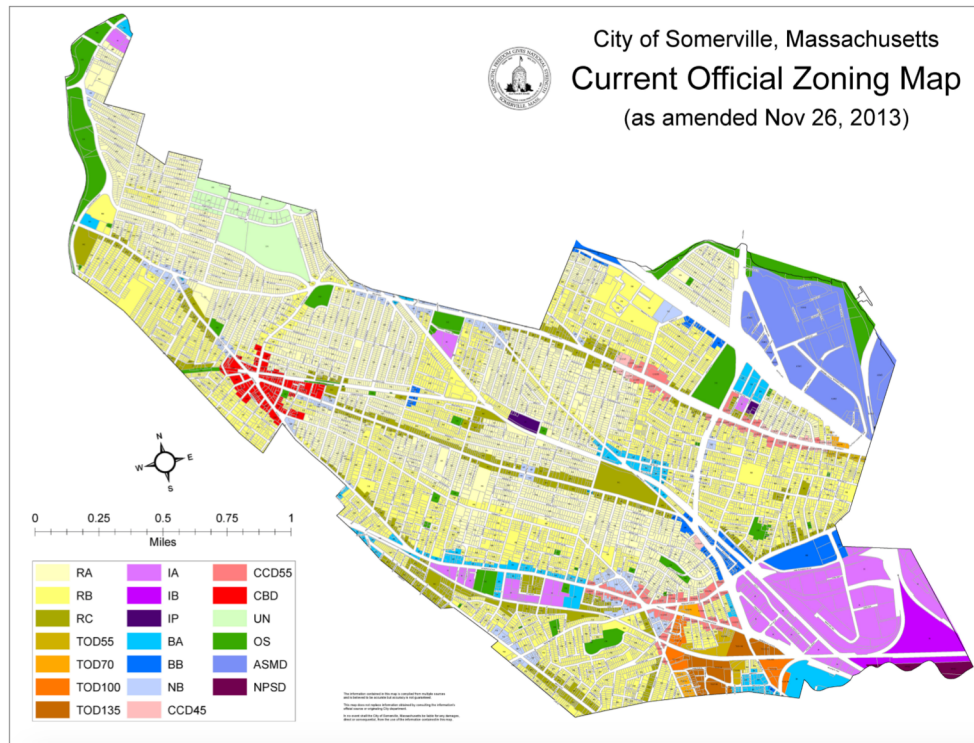
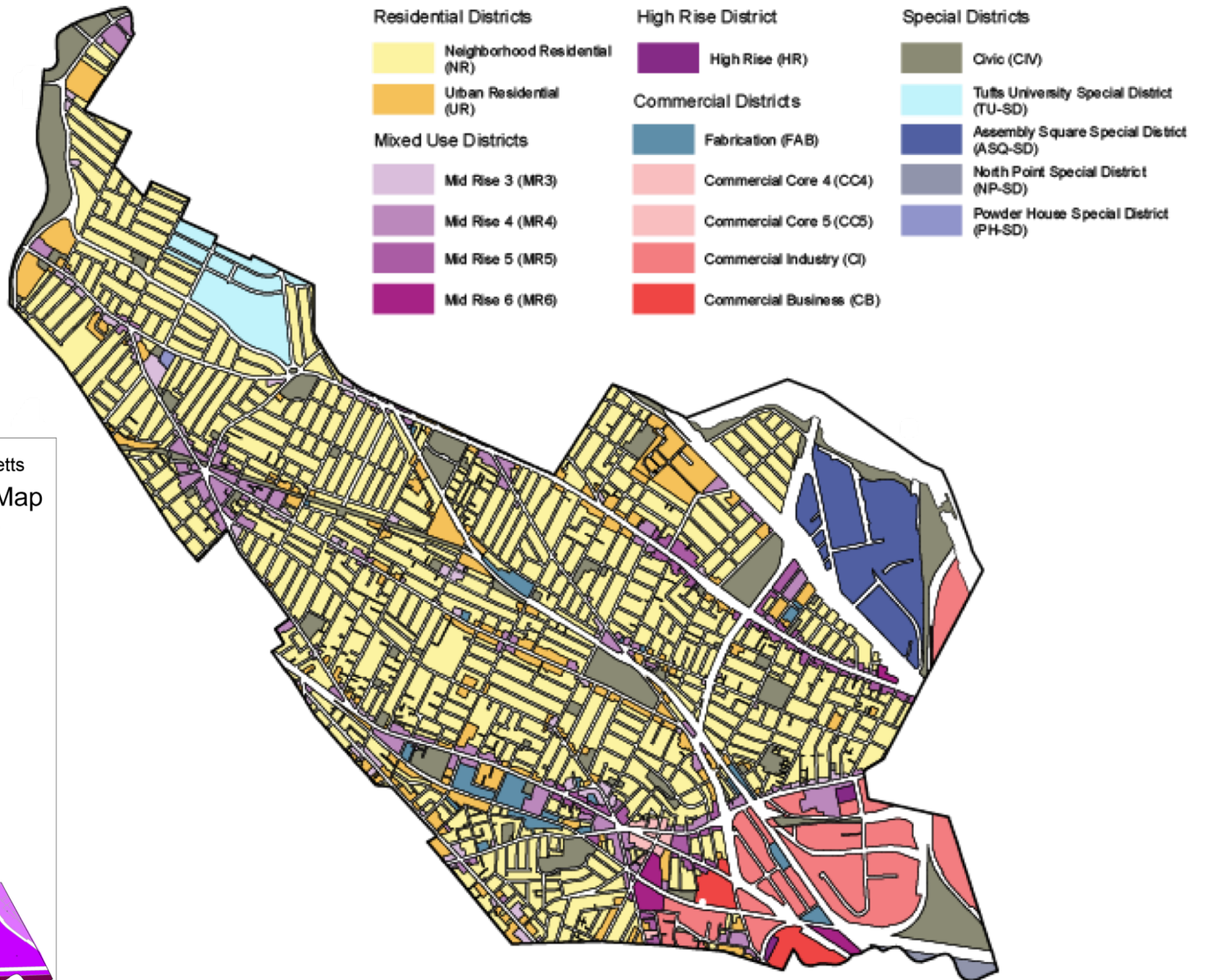
Challenge:

N/A

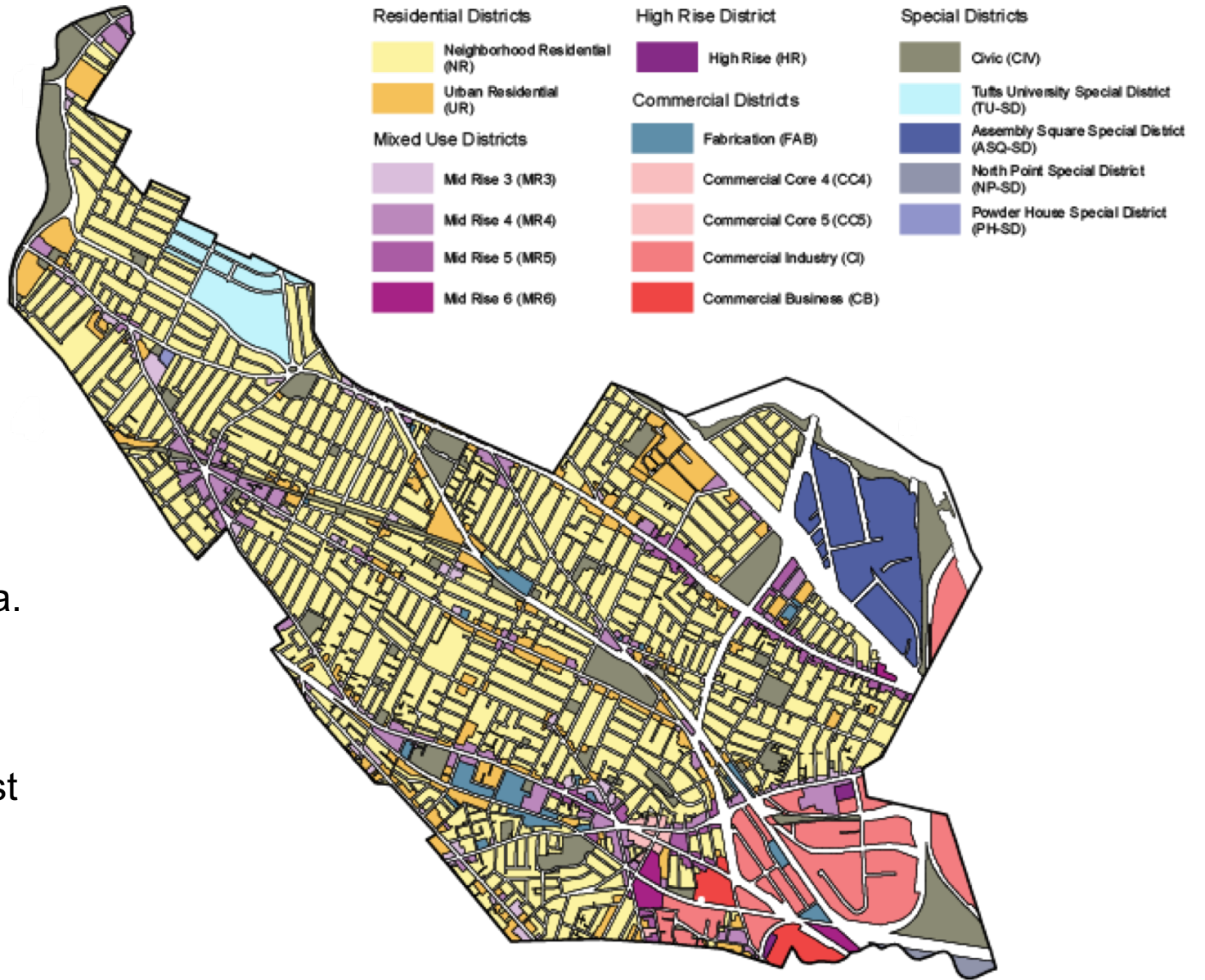
Solutions:

Increase light-rail access to Somerville is increasing access to transit for most of the city

Zoning



Zoning



Challenge:

New developments can cause unwanted issues with land use and design of the area.

Solutions:

New zoning overhaul and management of development by one entity ensures the best and most cohesive development possible

Expert Interviews



Plan Critique

Mayor Joseph Sullivan

Mayor of Braintree; MassDOT Board of Directors

- Construction will cause disruption in the neighborhood
- Impact Traffic Flows and Right of Ways
- Development will lead to Congestion
- All Temporary Challenges



Plan Critique

Terrence McCarthy

Deputy Program Manager;
Stakeholder Engagement for GLX

- Possible Displacement of Local Businesses
- Existing commerce can be vulnerable to New Residents
- Increase of Property Values
- Ethnic Identity of these businesses, more than 65% are Non-White



Conclusion

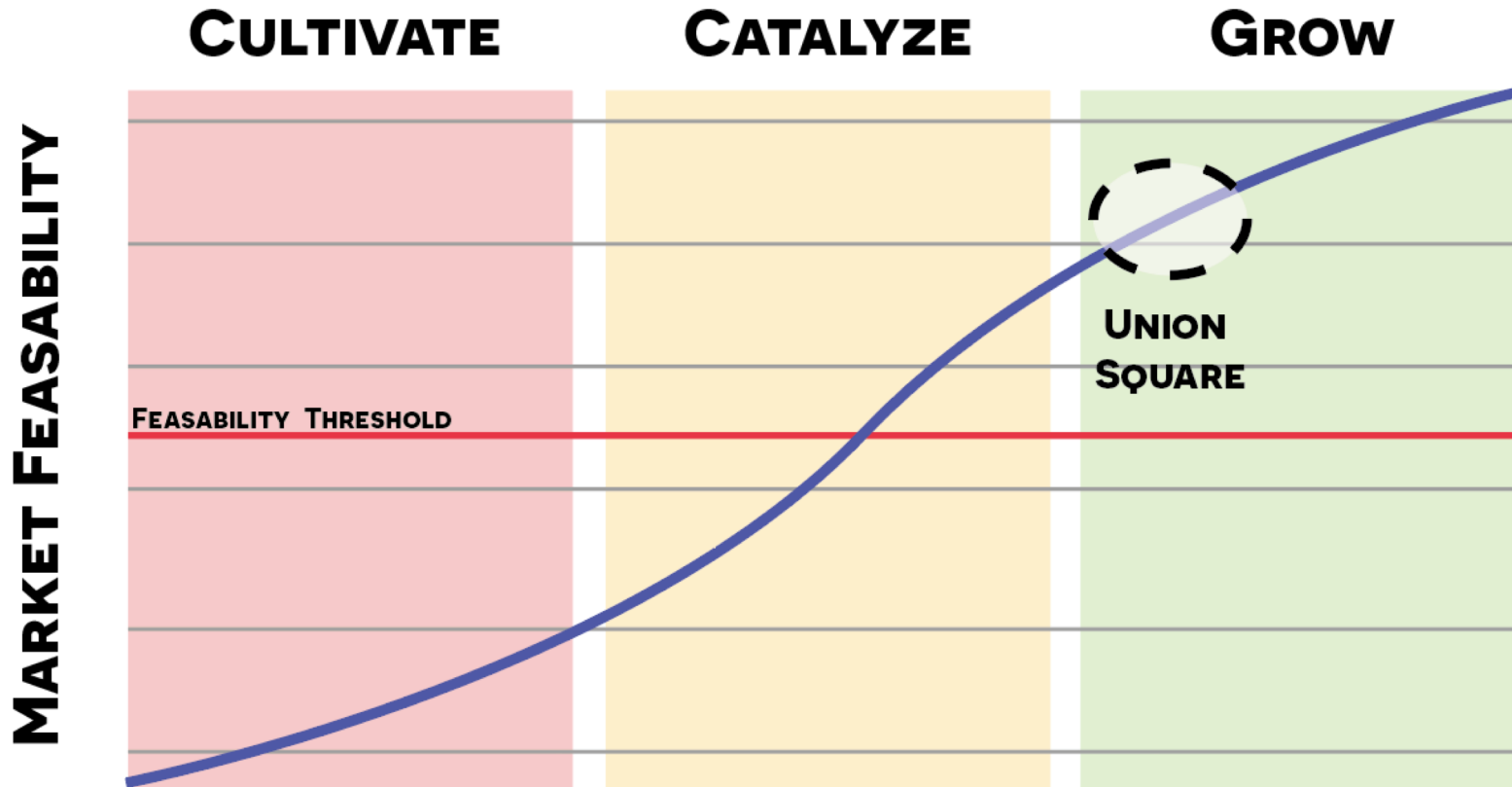


Consensus

With the many delays Somerville has been able to prepare well for the changes of the future and a new transit station. Union Square is a great example of a sustainable TOD site.

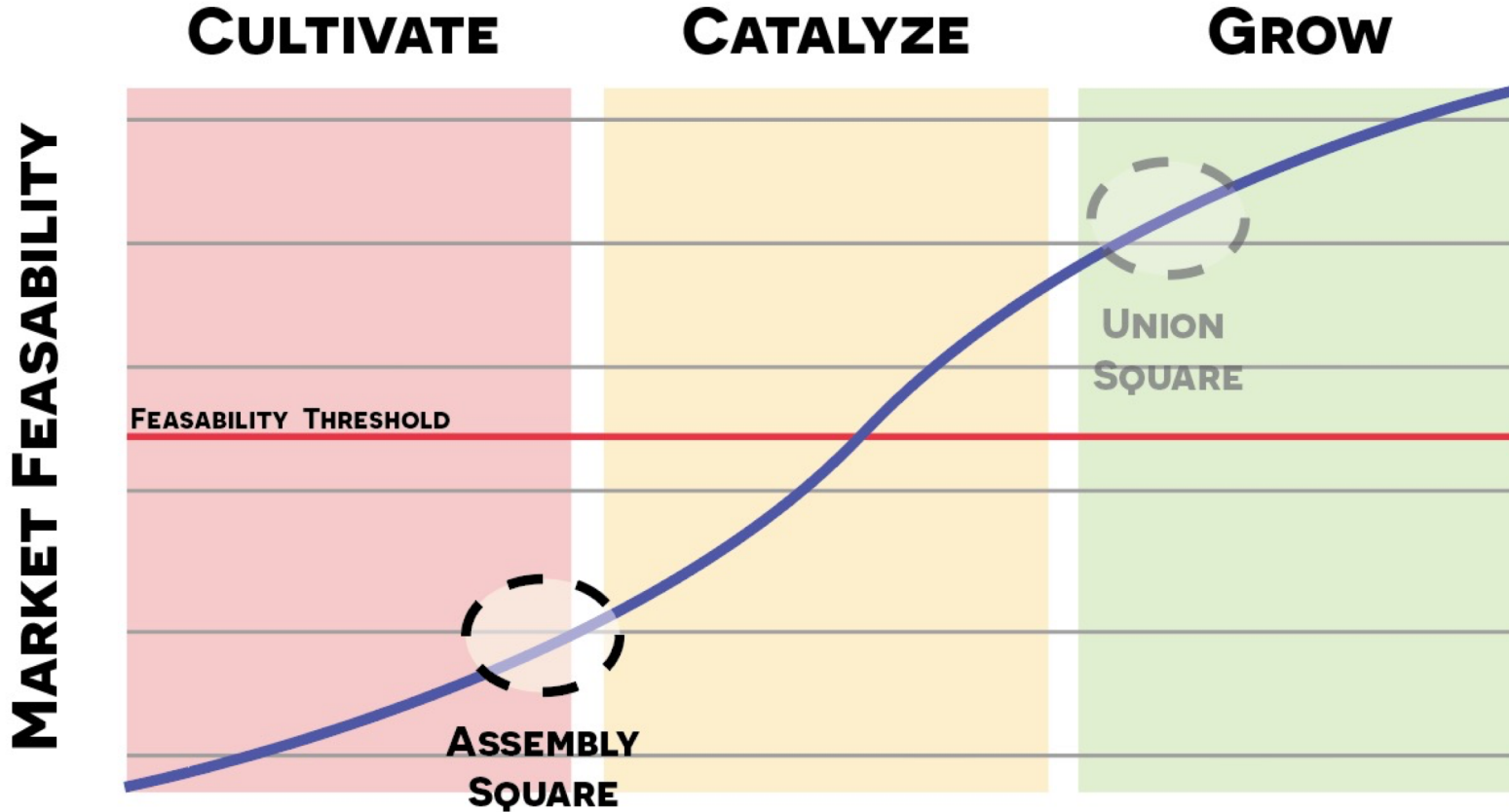


Union Square Station



- Focused on maintaining and growing partnerships
- Community links will continue to develop after construction is completed
- Zoning and infrastructure is prepared for TOD

Assembly Station



Partnerships still needed to be formed with community, land-owners/developers, and regional transit partners
Infrastructure improvements needed for surrounding streets and public realm
Zoning changes necessary to allow for mixed-used and greater density



Recommendations



- Promote affordable commercial spaces through various programs
 - Co-working spaces, commercial rent control, community land trusts.
- Promote the local business environment
 - Commerce in the Station; Vendor Approval (Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program)
 - Vacant Property Registration Ordinance

In relation to mitigating displacement and/or segregation; there is no way to mitigate everything. The goals are to treat the folks who may be affected with fairness. By offering compensation for land takings or benefits in order to steer them in the right direction. The municipalities are sensitive to these impacts, the bigger picture is to create mobility and accessibility for all riders.

-Conversation with Mayor Joseph Sullivan



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