

Community Meeting

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A
COMMUNITY MEETING
FOCUSED ON DEFINING

DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR

VINNIN SQUARE



August 29TH, 2023 6:00PM



Swampscott High School - Cafeteria
200 Essex Street

This past May, Town Meeting approved zoning changes that regulate a portion of Vinnin Square located between Essex Street and Paradise Road. These zoning changes are intended to encourage future mixed-use redevelopment and investments that would strengthen the Town's commercial tax base. The adoption of "Design Guidelines" is a required component of the new zoning. The purpose of Design Guidelines is to provide direction for and help regulate the architectural, landscape and pedestrian aspects of any future redevelopment project.

The Town of Swampscott, with the Planning Board as the lead, is working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to facilitate a planning process to develop the Design Guidelines for this area. We invite Swampscott residents to join us for an interactive community meeting where you will provide feedback to help to define the Town's vision for this portion of Vinnin Square, identify priorities for Design Guidelines, and begin to establish parameters for a successful transformation of Vinnin Square properties.

If you have questions or special needs, please contact: Josh Fiala, Metropolitan Area Planning Council at (617) 933-0760 or jfiala@mapc.org



Image: Swampscottphotos.com

Vinnin Square Design Guidance Community Meeting

August 29, 2023



Design Guidance for

Vinnin Square Swampscott

Community Meeting

August 29, 2023



Photo: swampscottphotos.com

Community Meeting Agenda

1. Study Introduction

INTERACTIVE POLLING

- a. Project work plan and schedule
- b. Previous studies and zoning
- c. Regulations/applicability of design guidelines

2. Examples from the Region

INTERACTIVE POLLING

3. Study Area Current Conditions

4. Study Area Vision

INTERACTIVE POLLING

5. Study Area Priorities

INTERACTIVE POLLING

6. Study Area Design Guidance

INTERACTIVE POLLING

7. Next steps



Planning Board Study

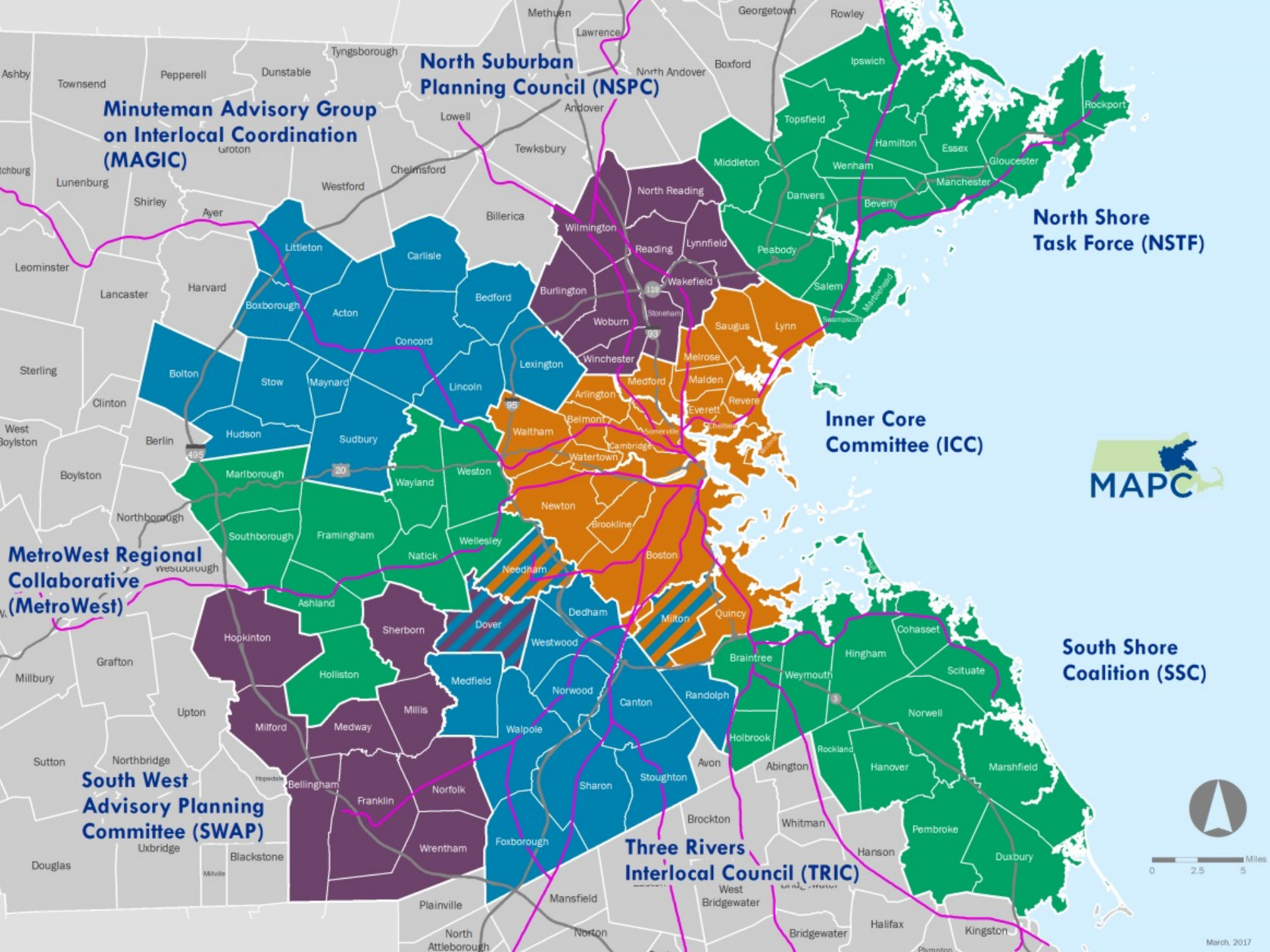
Planning Board members

- Angela Ippolito, Vinnin Square Sub-committee Chair
- Joseph Sheridan
- William Quinn
- Michael Proscia, Chair
- Edward “Ted” Dooley, Vice Chair

Marzie Galazka, Director of Community & Economic Development

Marissa Meaney, Land Use Board Coordinator





Interactive Questions

Who is in the room?



Interactive Questions

Please use your phone:



Join by Text

Send

mapcpoll

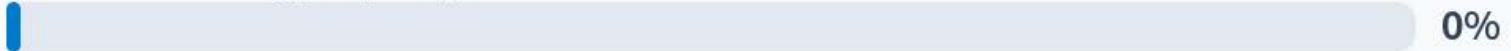
To

22333

If you don't want to use your phone, we have paper surveys

Where do you live relative to Vinnin Square? (choose one)

On an abutting property



Within a short walk (10-15 minute walk)



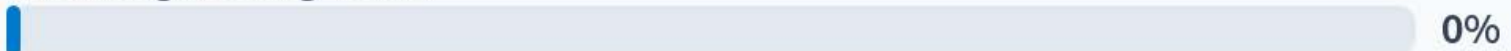
Within a short drive (5 minute drive)



Farther away in Swampscott



In a neighboring Town



How would you describe your relationship to Vinnin Square? (choose one)

Resident



Patron



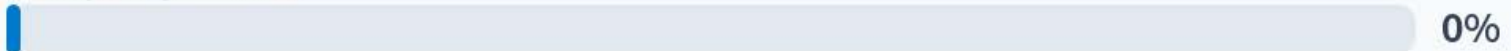
Employee (employer located there)



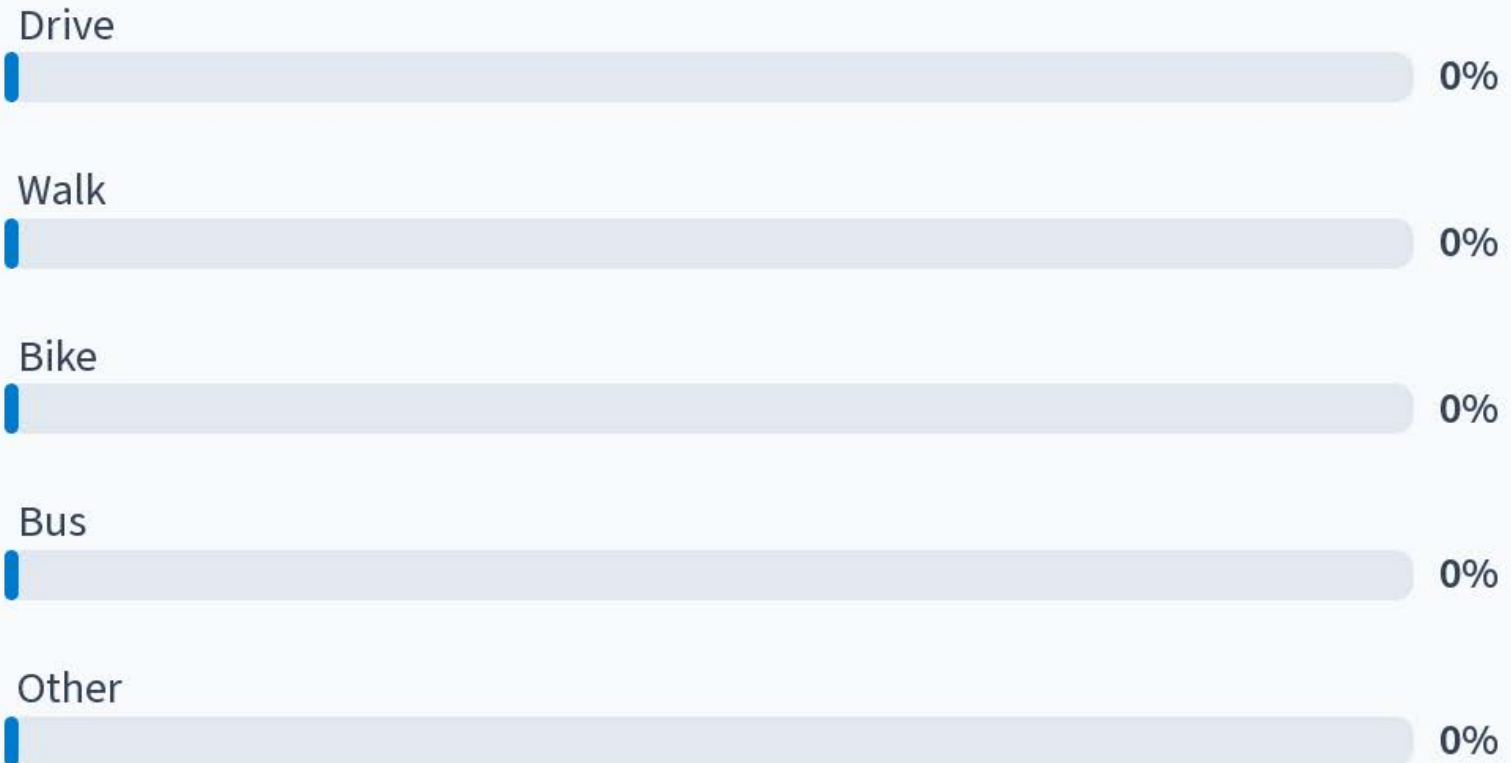
Business owner



Property owner



How do you normally get to Vinnin Square?



How frequently do you visit Vinnin Square? (choose one)

At least once per day



At least once per week



At least once per month



At least once per year



1

Study Introduction

Vinnin Square Design Guidance



Project Overview

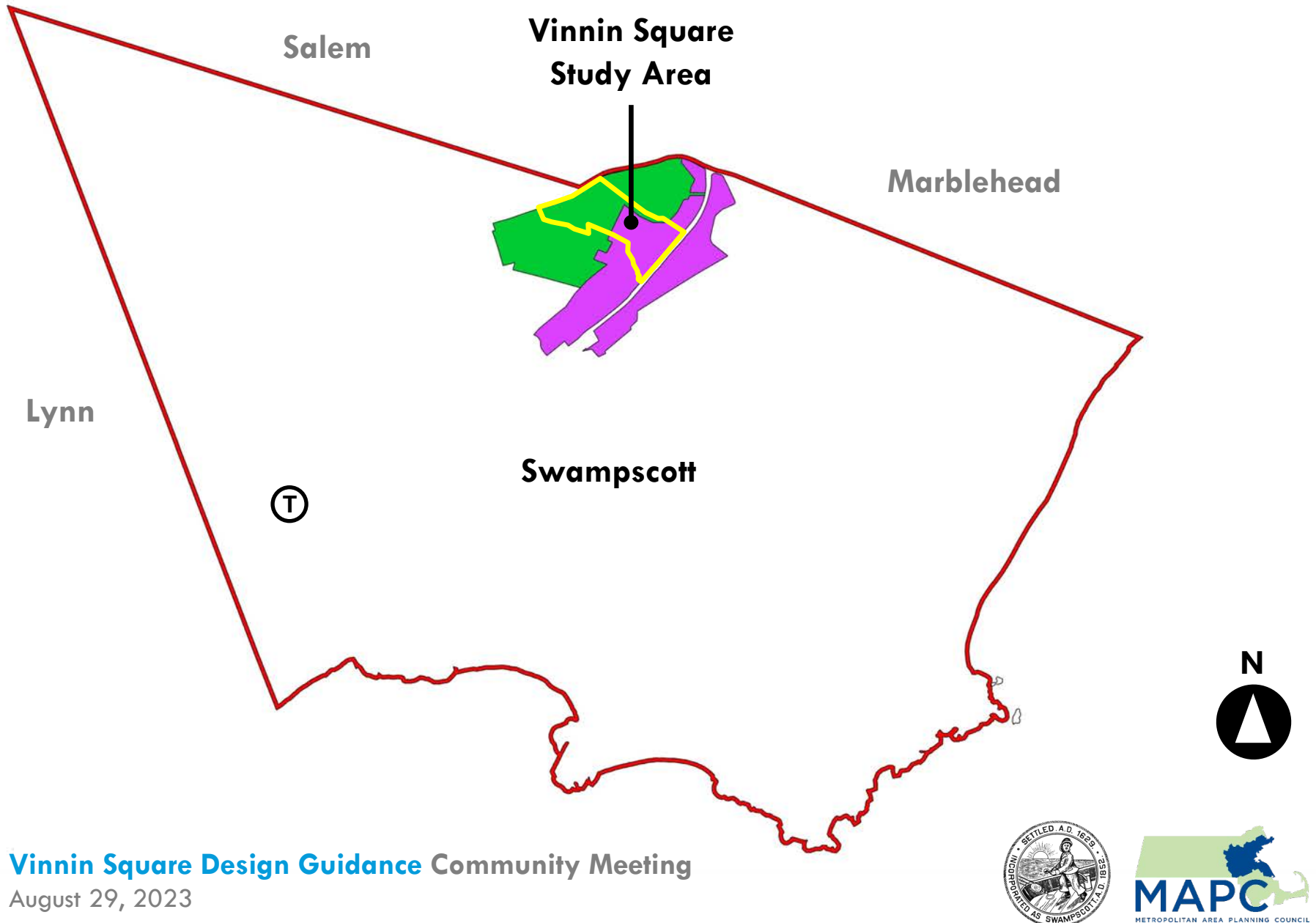
Articulate a shared vision for Vinnin Square that is consistent with the recently adopted zoning and define and prepare district design standards and guidelines.

Swampscott's Master Plan (2016) states:

“A reimagined, revitalized, walkable Vinnin Square serves as a regional destination for North Shore shoppers and workers with improved multi-modal transportation access and appropriately scaled mixed use retail, residential and office space that attracts much needed business, jobs, and increased consumer spending to town.”



Study Area



Zoning Change

- May Town Meeting approved zoning changes that regulate a portion of Vinnin Square located between Essex Street and Paradise Road
- Intended to encourage future mixed-use redevelopment and investments that would strengthen the Town's commercial tax base
- Adoption of “Design Guidelines” is a required component of the new zoning
- Purpose of Design Guidelines is to provide direction for and help regulate the architectural, landscape, and pedestrian aspects of future redevelopment



Study Summary

Task 1 – Previous Study and Existing Conditions Analysis

- 1.1 Review previous studies and zoning
- 1.2 Existing conditions base drawing and analysis
- 1.3 Site visit and photos

Task 2 – Definition of a District Vision and Guidelines

- 2.1 Initial components of district vision and guidelines (Community Meeting)
- 2.2 Follow-up community survey



Study Summary

Task 3 – Outline of Design Guidelines suitable for adoption by Planning Board

- 3.1 Detailed Guidelines outline
- 3.2 Review and refinement

Task 4 – Draft Design Guidelines

- 4.1 Preliminary Draft
- 4.2 Review and Refinement

Task 5 – Final Design Guidelines

- 5.1 Final Design Guidelines document
- 5.2 Final Presentation of Design Guidelines



Open Question

**Questions or comments
regarding the Study Introduction?**



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Examples from the Greater Boston Region

Vinnin Square Design Guidance



Examples

- **Woburn Village** – Woburn, MA
- **Nobscot Village** – Framingham, MA



Examples – Nobscot Village (previous)

- Aging strip mall years in decline
- Large surface parking lot at street



Examples – Nobscot Village (previous)

- Reconfigured site plan, CVS as remaining tenant



Examples – Nobscot Village (proposed)

- Repositioning property with mixed-use development
- Retail and 158 housing units (1, 2, 3-bedrooms)



Examples – Nobscot Village (proposed)



Examples – Nobscot Village Guidelines

FRAMINGHAM NOBSCOT VILLAGE DESIGN

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Cover Image: Village Green at Pinehills in Plymouth MA



Examples – Nobscot Village Guidelines

2. Sites

Multi-modal circulation

Every investment in Nobscot Village should improve the character and sense of place while strengthening the pedestrian environment and walkability. The site principles and guidelines are intended to enhance attractiveness and retain long term property values by promoting multiple ways to get around.

Principles

- Site design and layout should place buildings to provide definition to public street frontages and to define blocks and streets internal to a large development site
- Site design and layout should create new circulation connections both internal to the site and connecting to adjacent streets, access ways, trails, and sidewalks
- Site design and layout should correspond to the surrounding context including adjacent properties, open spaces, trail connections, streets, corners, and other unique characteristics. Where the context is inconsistent with the guidelines, a new pattern should be established to conform with the design guidelines
- Site design and layout should position parking to be concealed by buildings, streetscape, and open spaces. Parking should not be the primary and most visible feature of the site plan



A site design and orientation of the building

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Guidelines

- Building massing should frame and emphasize amenities such as plazas and open spaces and conceal parking and service areas
- The ground floor should be taller than the upper floors with a minimum height of 12'
- The addition of a lower level porch, awning or covered entry area can be used to reduce the overall scale of the building
- The use of upper level setbacks to reduce the perception of building height is encouraged - upper level should step back from the front facade a minimum of 5'
- Reduce scale of large buildings by breaking building massing into the appearance of several smaller connected building forms with distinct roof lines, varying building heights, and variation in building materials
- Building massing and character should define a clear base, middle, and top to add visual interest and a traditional approach to the building form



Building massing designed to break down the scale of a large building by stepping back a portion of the facade and adding a covered porch



Building massing that responds to the context of a corner site using form and materials to highlight the corner of the building



Variation in the height, roof form and massing add visual interest and reduce the scale of the building while integrating multiple tenants

Framingham Nobscot Village Design Guidelines

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Examples – Woburn Village (previous)

- Anchors remained
- Two-thirds of the retail space was vacant



Examples – Woburn Village (proposed)

- Create village-like setting where people want to spend time
- 175,000 SF commercial and 350 housing units



Examples – Woburn Village (proposed)



Examples – Woburn Village



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Examples – Woburn Village Guidelines

Woburn Mall Smart Growth Overlay District Design Standards



City of Woburn
2018

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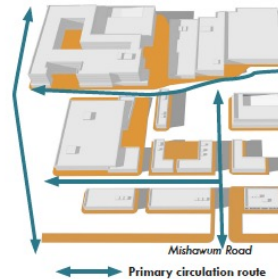
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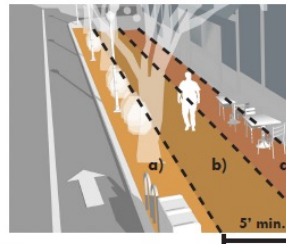


Examples – Woburn Village Guidelines

1. Sidewalk locations. To ensure connectivity for all modes of travel, all primary means of circulations within the WM-SGOD (i.e., streets as defined in Section 3.1.1) shall have a sidewalk or walking path on at least one side, connected by crosswalks.



2. Sidewalk configuration. Sidewalks shall have a minimum clear width of 5'. Sidewalks shall be widened to accommodate street trees, landscaping, and outdoor furnishing and amenities as practicable. Sidewalks shall be continuous and uninterrupted at driveways and curb cuts to reinforce priority for pedestrians.



a amenity zone

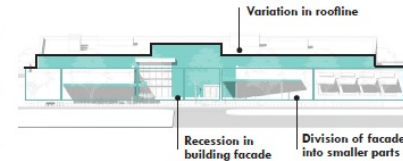
b circulation zone

c

4. Sidewalk materials. Sidewalks shall be constructed of high quality, durable materials, such as concrete and stone pavers. Sidewalks must be maintained for smooth and accessible surfaces. Because it can pose difficulty to certain pedestrians, brick is not permitted as a primary sidewalk material. Ornamental brick banding is permitted.



1. Facade length and articulation. Buildings or portions of a building with wide facades shall be divided into smaller parts through pronounced variation in the primary wall plane. Façade length shall be articulated at least every 75'. This may be accomplished through the division of the building facade into smaller parts, variation in the cornice or roofline, or projections or recessions in the building facade.

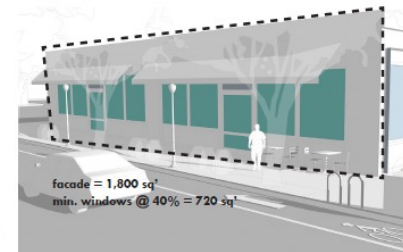


2. Facade design. Blank wall surfaces greater than 20' are prohibited if visible from streets or other public areas. Any side of the building that has frontage on a sidewalk or street shall include windows, doors, murals or other architectural articulations.

Blank walls visible from public areas > 20' in length are prohibited



3. Windows. Active ground floor uses shall be visible to contribute to district vibrancy. Building facades facing a primary street as defined in Section 3.1.1 shall have at least 25% of the overall façade in transparent windows. At least 40% of the ground floor façade for commercial usebuildings less than 10,000 sf and at least 35% for commercial buildings greater than 10,000 sf shall have transparent windows on the side facing the primary street as defined in Section 3.1.1. primary building façade as defined in section 3.1.2. For purposes of this requirement only, ground floor façade shall be defined as the area that is 12 feet above the finish floor elevation of the building. Ground floor storefront windows shall be typically more frequent and taller than upper stories, matching a ground floor which is typically taller than other levels. Glass in the storefront should be clear, as opposed to reflective, tinted, or mirrored.



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Other Regional Examples

- **Market Street and Commons, Lynnfield, MA**
- **Hanover Crossing, Hanover, MA**
- **Assembly Row, Somerville, MA**
- **Other examples?**



Open Question

**Questions or comments
regarding the examples?**



Interactive Question

Do you have other strip mall transformations that you feel are good examples?



Do you have other strip mall transformations that you feel are good examples? (enter text)

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

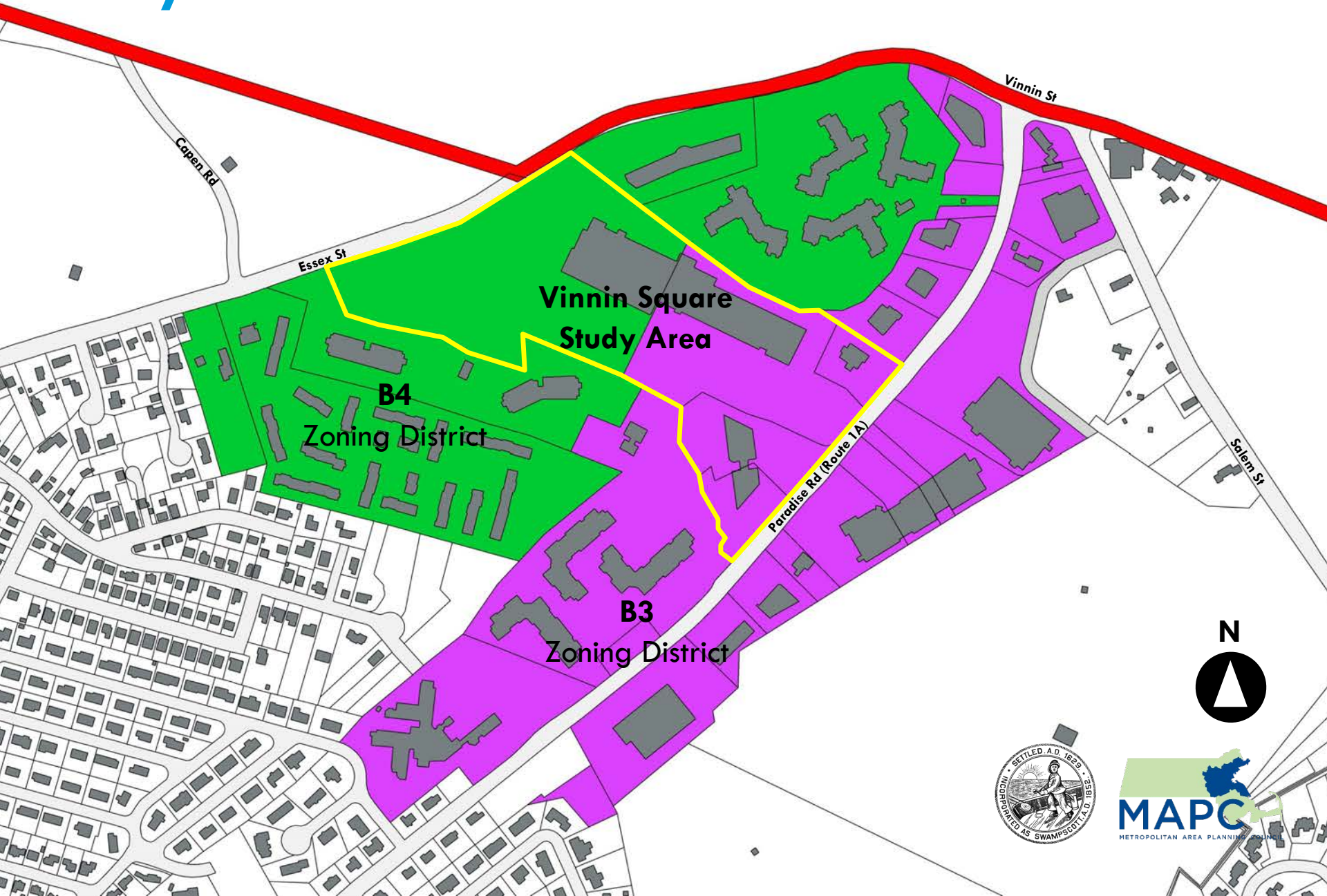
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Study Area Current Conditions

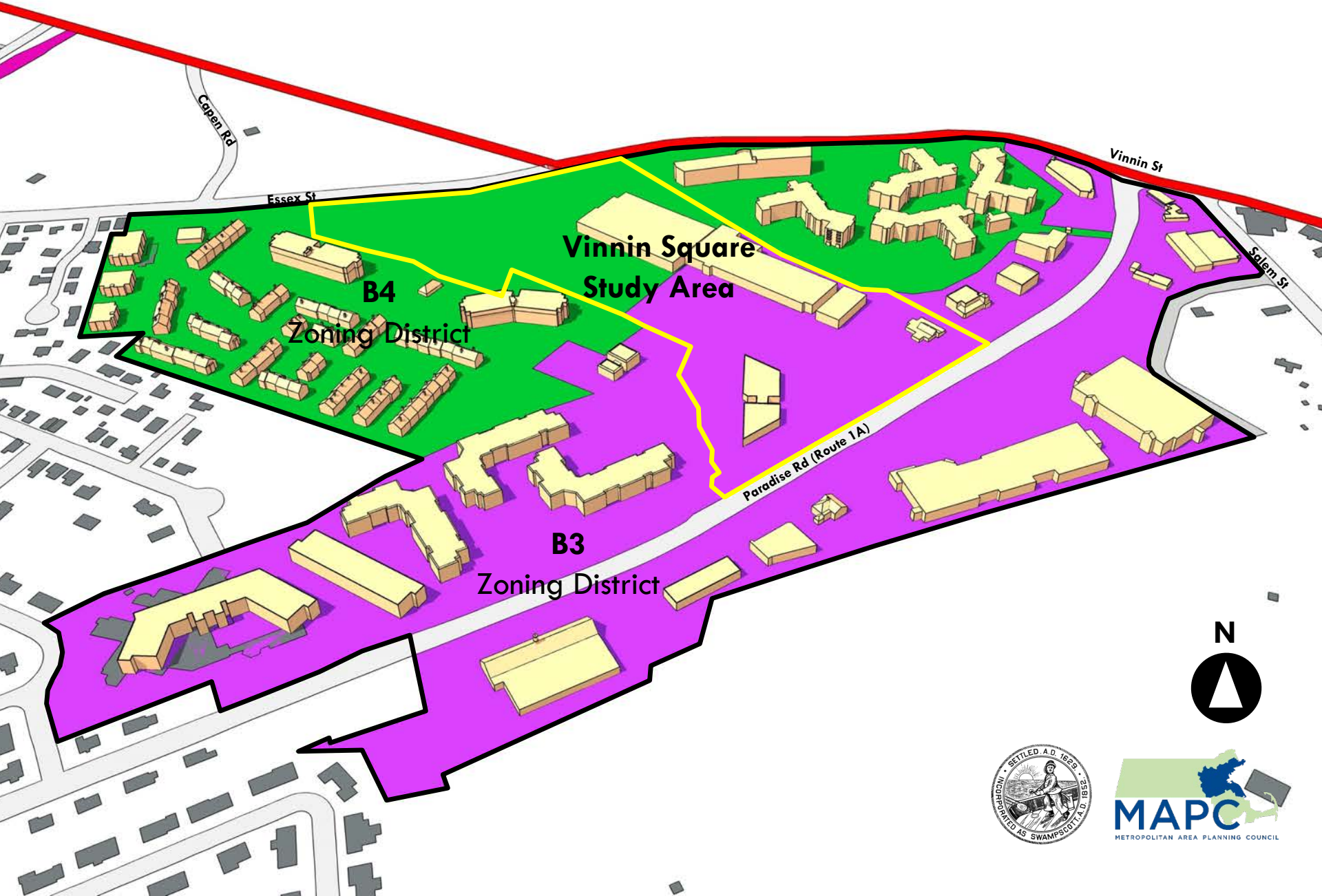
Vinnin Square Design Guidance



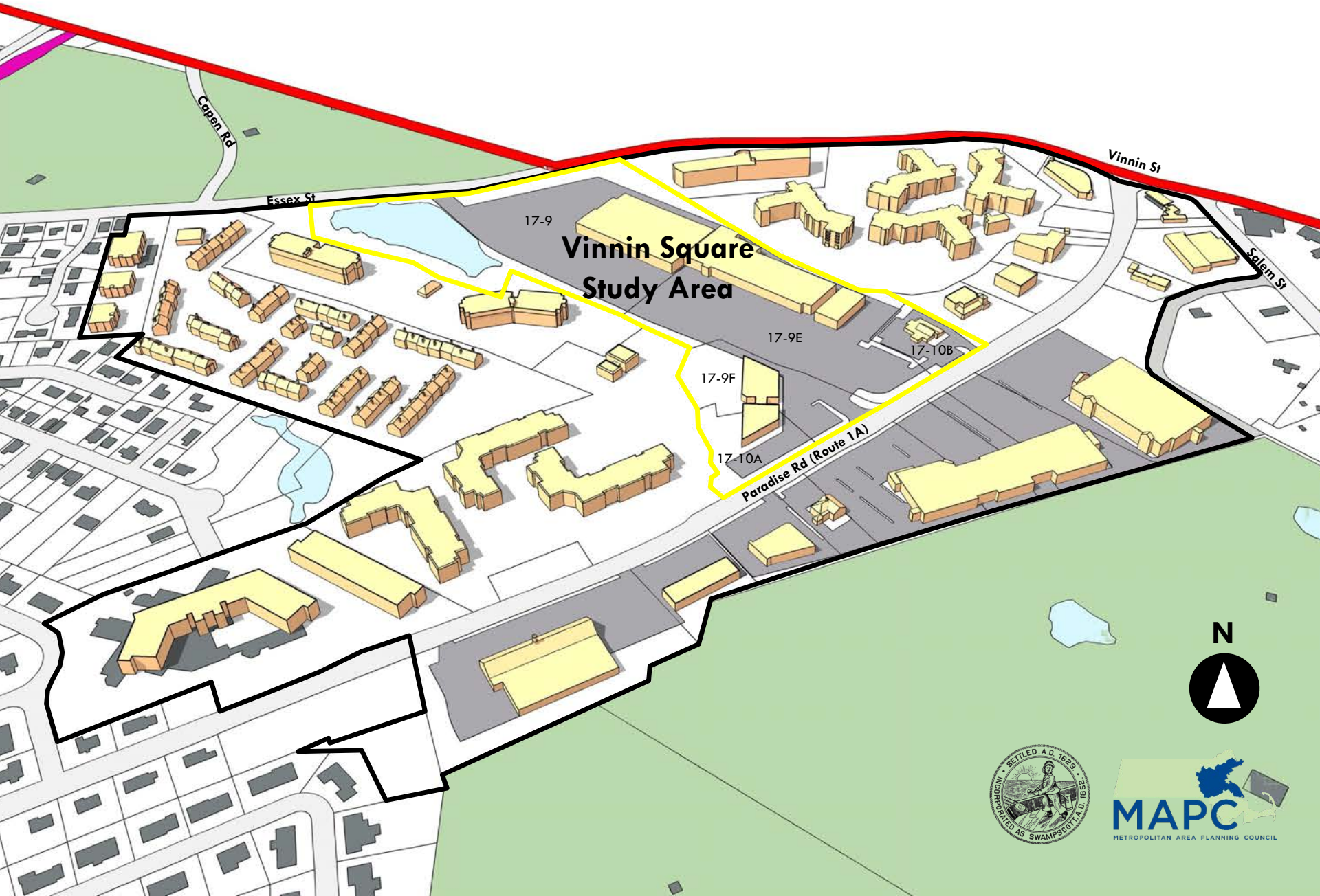
Study Area



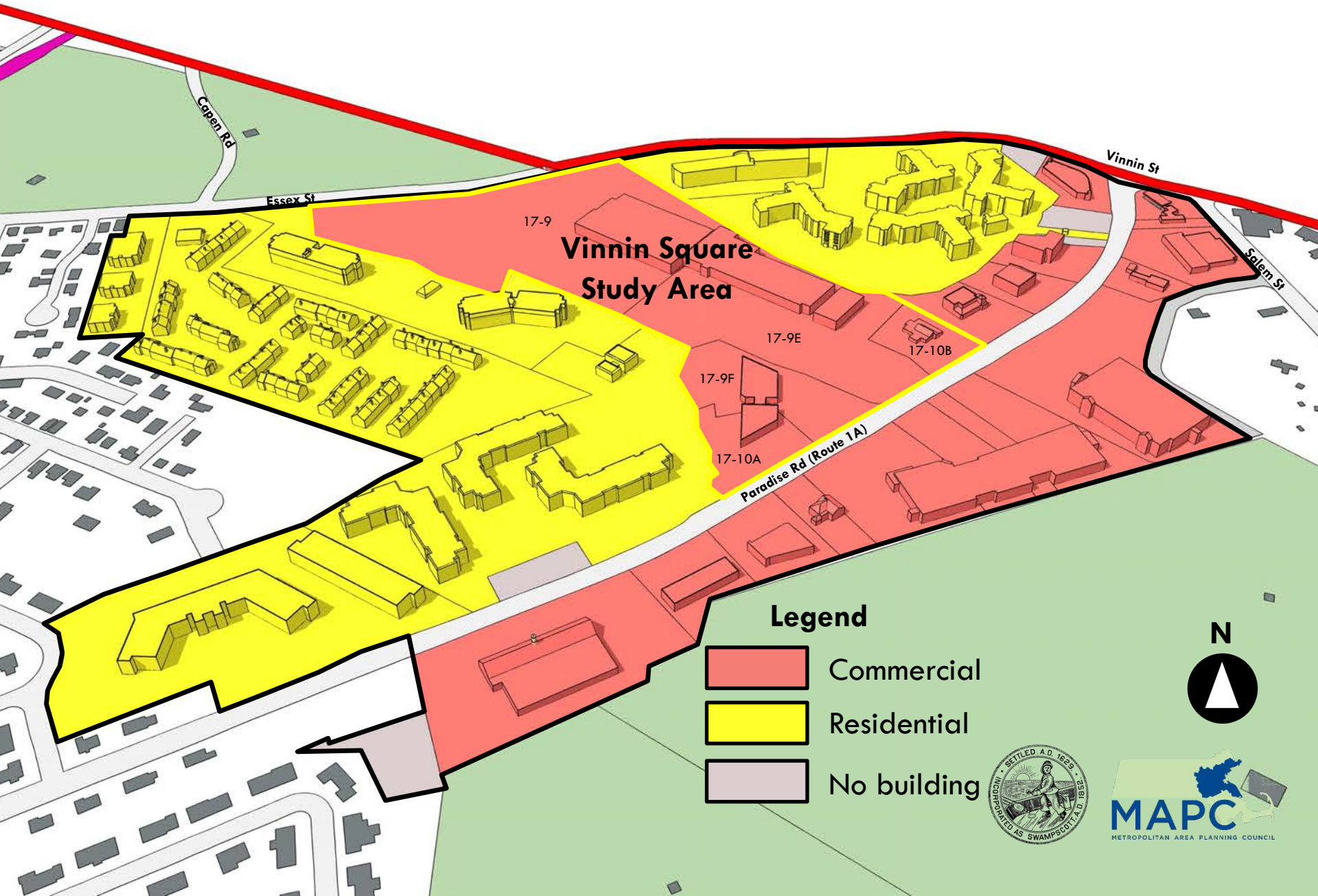
Study Area



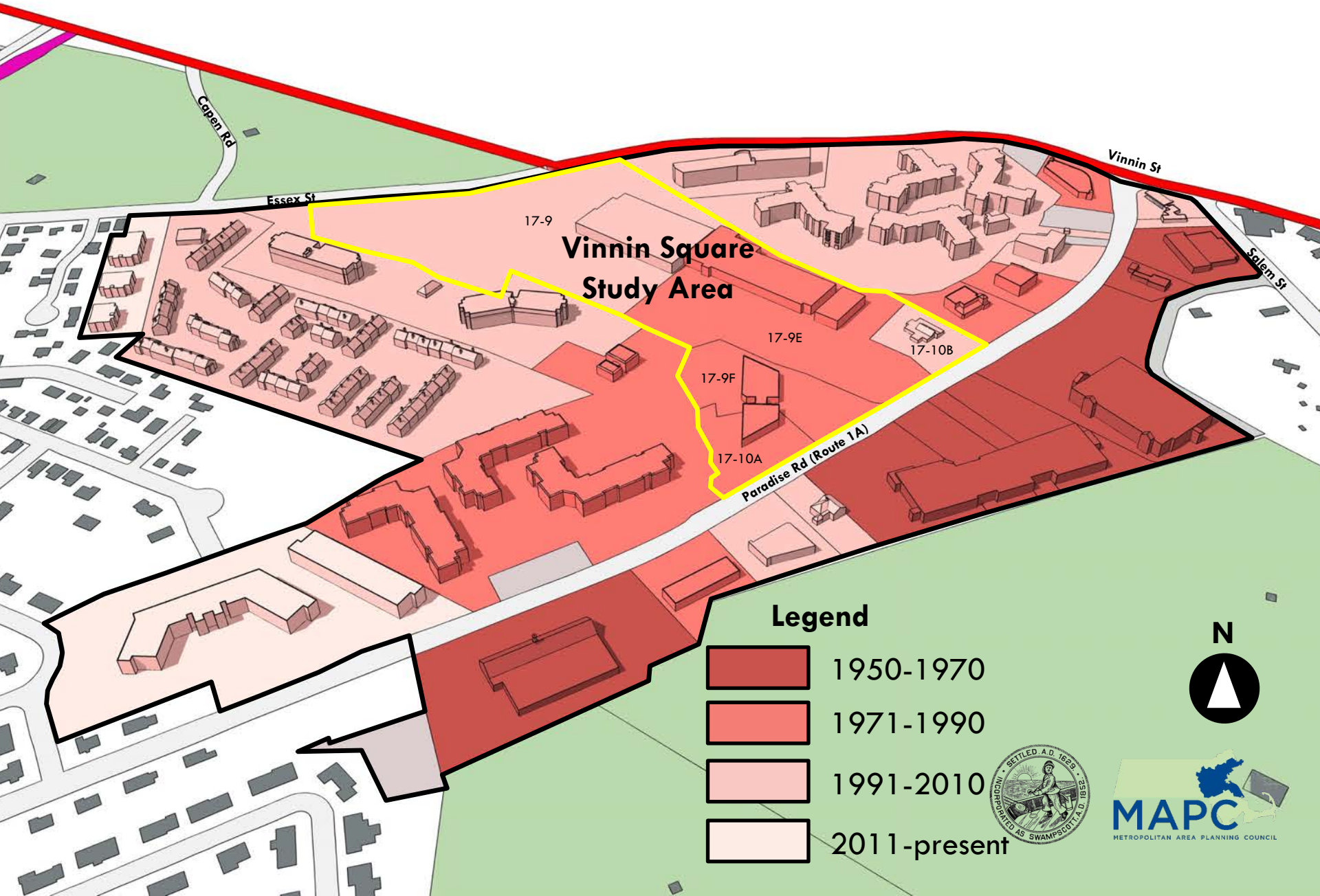
Study Area



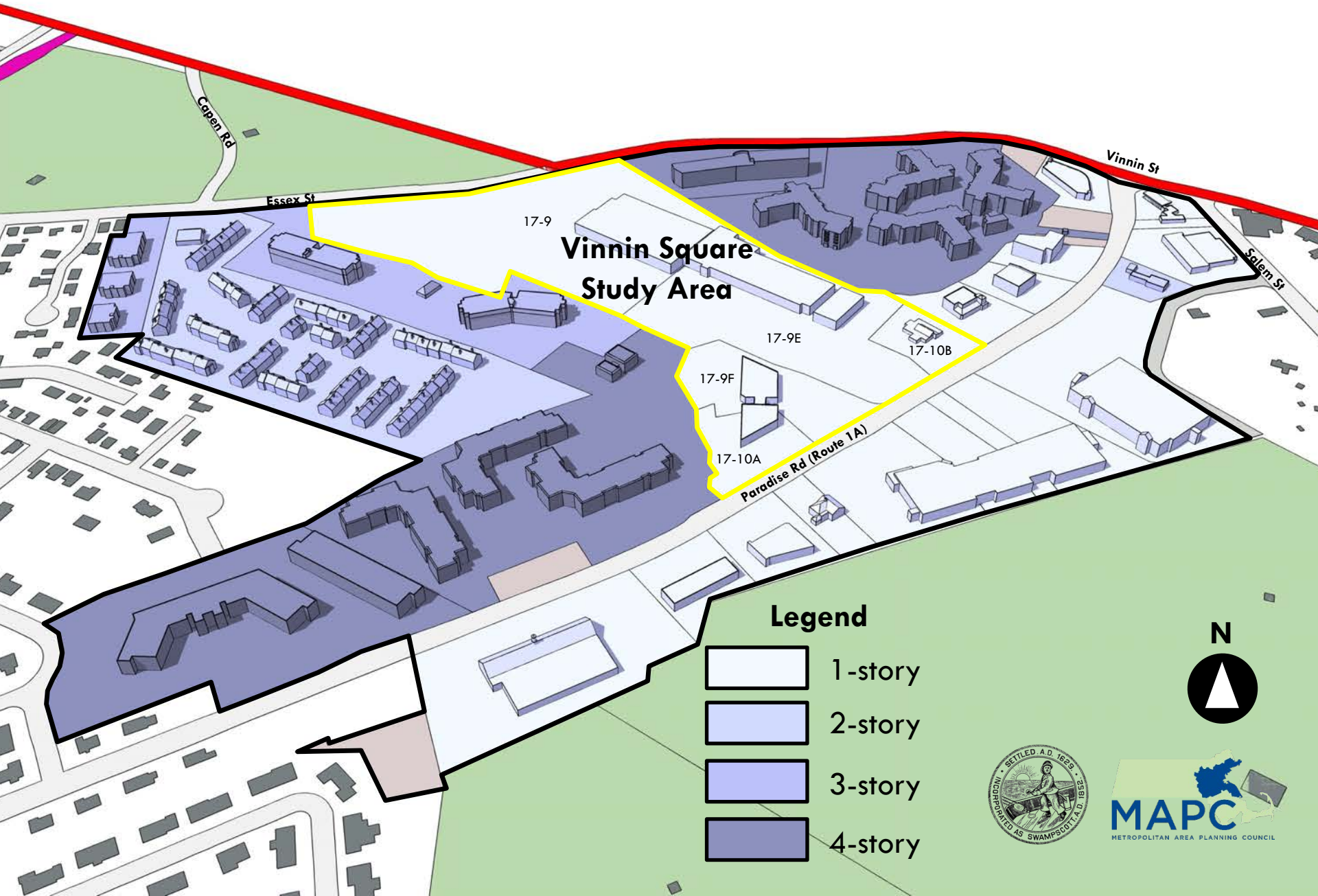
Study Area – Land Use



Study Area – Year Built



Study Area – Building Height



Open Question

**Questions or comments
regarding the Study Area Current
Conditions?**



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Study Area Vision

Vinnin Square Design Guidance



Previous Studies

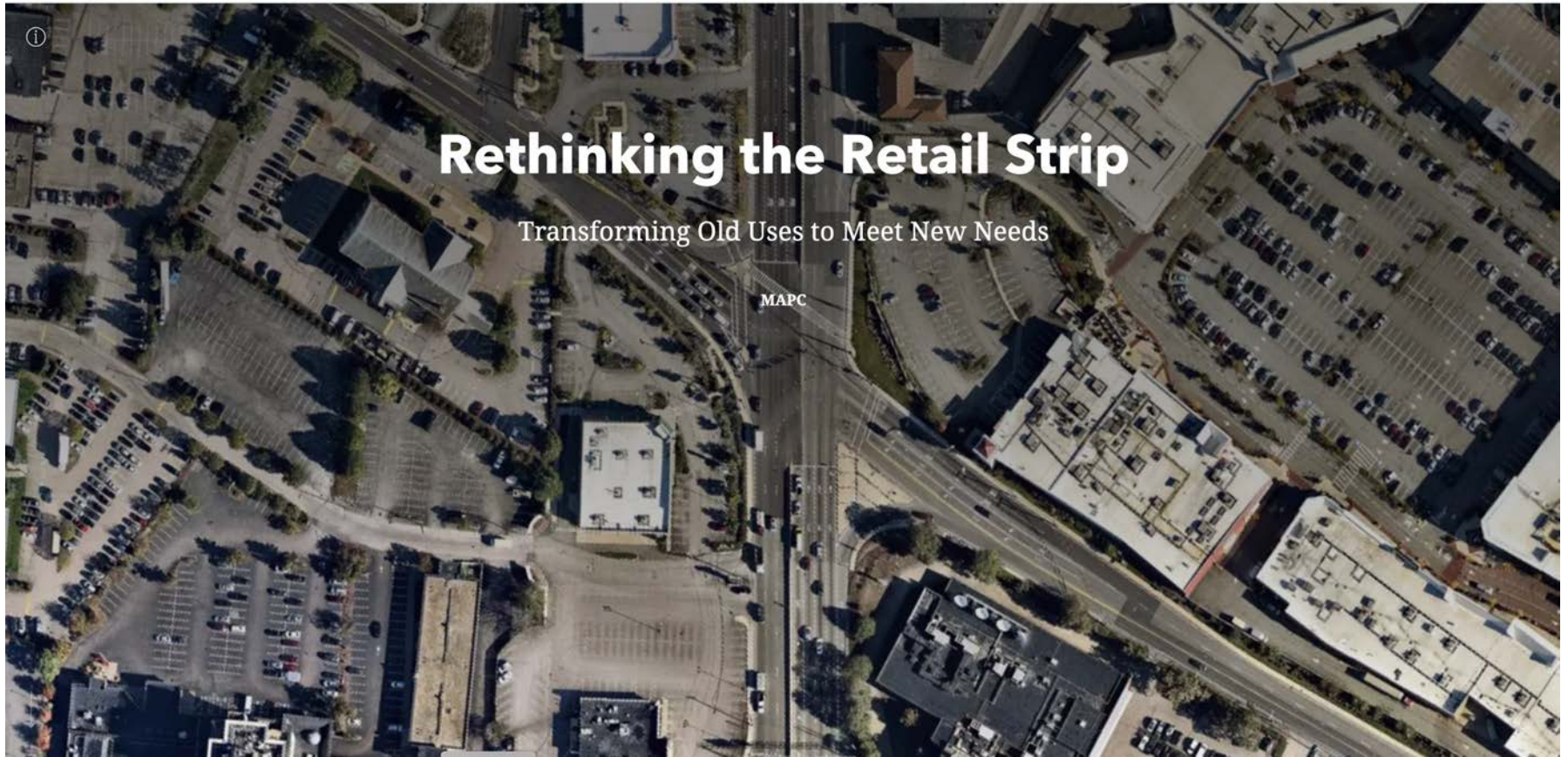
- Swampscott Master Plan (2016)
- Swampscott Zoning Bylaw
- Swampscott Smart Growth (40R) Overlay Design Standards
- Swampscott Downtown Humphrey Street Design Guidelines
- Livable Community Workshop for Swampscott (2013)
- Marblehead Smart Growth District Design Standards (example)
- Rethinking the Retail Strip (2022)



Rethinking the Retail Strip

- Recent MAPC Study

Rethinking the Retail Strip



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Rethinking the Retail Strip Study

- Recent MAPC Study

Site Score

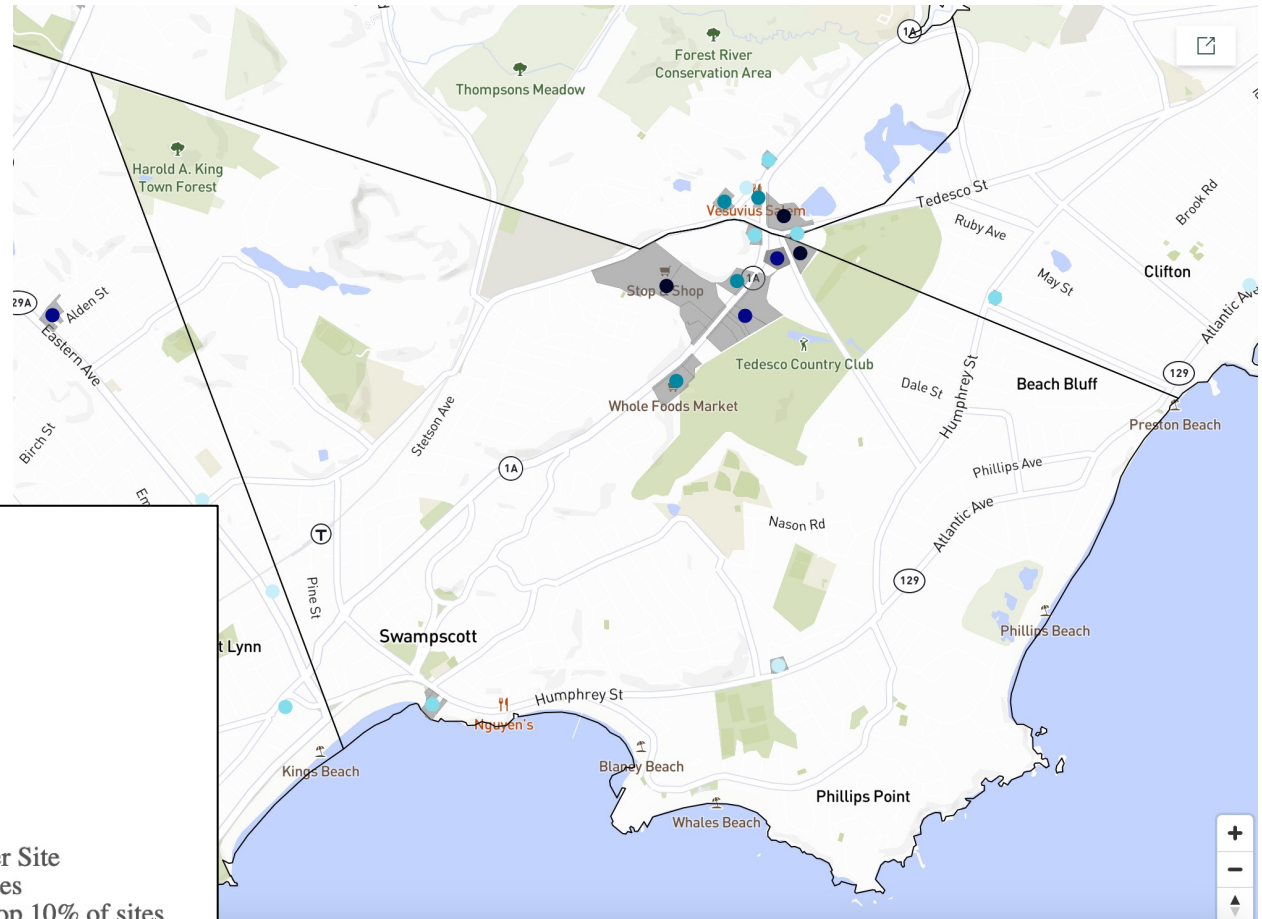
- Most Favorable
- Very Favorable
- Favorable
- Less Favorable
- Least Favorable
- 📌 Highlighted Site

Potential Retail Retrofit Sites in

MAPC Region

Summary Statistics

3,028 Sites
8,750.0 Acres Sites Area
883 Sites Near MBTA Transit
\$370,516 Average New Tax Revenue Per Site
125,095 Potential Units, top 10% of sites
\$586,395,680 Potential New Tax Revenue, top 10% of sites



Rethinking the Retail Strip Study

- **Specific Recommended Zoning Actions**
 - Allow (but don't require) mixed-use and other housing typologies
 - **Establish clear design standards:** In order to ensure walkability and a strong pedestrian realm, zoning should include clear design guidelines or standards. This could be done through form-based codes (see the Scituate example), mandatory design standards, or advisory design guidelines. In the case of form-based codes or design standards, requirements should be articulated clearly enough that compliance can be determined objectively and doesn't require subjective or discretionary decisions.
 - Incorporate affordability and diverse housing choices
 - Incorporate right-size parking strategies, especially near transit
 - Allow by-right development
 - **Promote sustainable development practices:** Compact, mixed-use redevelopment is inherently more environmentally sustainable than greenfield development. Regulations can ensure these redevelopments maximize environmental benefits. For example, regulations can require tree plantings, buffers from development near environmentally sensitive areas, and incorporation of on-site stormwater treatment and infiltration. Site plan review can ensure development promotes walkability. Incentives can be included for promoting renewable energy sources.
 - Utilize the state's 40R program



Vision Statement

Swampscott's Master Plan (2016) states:

“A reimagined, revitalized, walkable Vinnin Square serves as a regional destination for North Shore shoppers and workers with improved multi-modal transportation access and appropriately scaled mixed use retail, residential and office space that attracts much needed business, jobs, and increased consumer spending to town.”



Interactive Question

**Do you agree with this vision for
Vinnin Square?**



Do you agree with this vision for Vinnin Square? (choose one)

Strongly agree



Agree



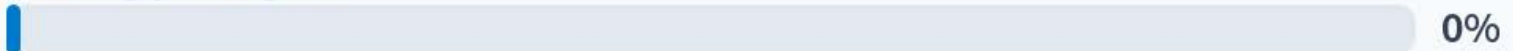
Neutral



Disagree



Strongly disagree



Interactive Questions

What is your vision for Vinnin Square?



What is your vision for Vinnin Square? (enter key words)

Nobody has responded yet.

Hang tight! Responses are coming in.

How close is Vinnin Square to your ideal vision for it today? (choose one)

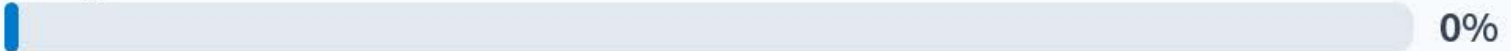
Very close



Close



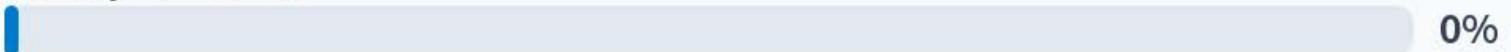
Okay



Not close



Really not close



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Study Area Priorities

Vinnin Square Design Guidance



Best Practices

- **Increased mix of uses**
- **Defined blocks and flexible circulation**
- **Enhanced sense of place**
- **Reconfigured buildings define outdoor space**
- **Reduced visual impact of parking**



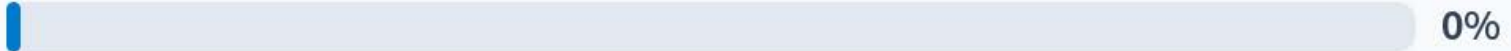
Interactive Question

What do you think is most important for repositioning Vinnin Square?



What do you think is most important for repositioning Vinnin Square? (choose one)

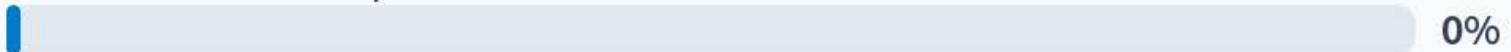
Increased mix of uses



Defined blocks and flexible circulation



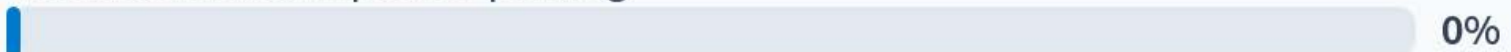
Enhanced sense of place



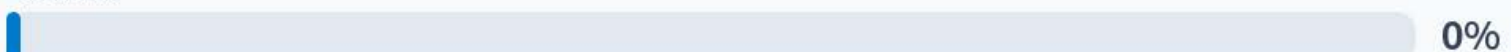
Reconfigured buildings define outdoor space



Reduced visual impact of parking



Other



6

Study Area Design Guidance

Vinnin Square Design Guidance



Type of design guidance

- **Guidelines** – offer suggestions or examples for the design topics under consideration, guidelines are not requirements, offer an additional tool for review and compliance for the reviewing Boards, typically supplement the Bylaw and do not require Town Meeting vote to adopt or revise
- **Standards** – offer design requirements that are measurable for compliance, standards are required and would be incorporated into the Zoning Bylaw and would be part of the Town Meeting vote



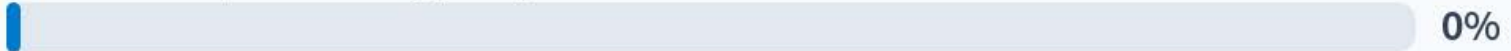
Interactive Question

**Do you have a general
preference for guidelines
(advisory) or standards
(mandatory)?**



Do you have a general preference for guidelines (advisory) or standards (mandatory)?
(choose one)

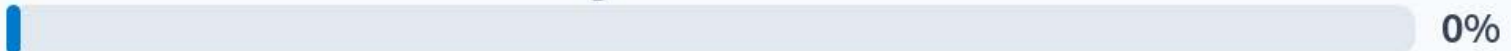
Standards (mandatory) only



Standards with some guidelines



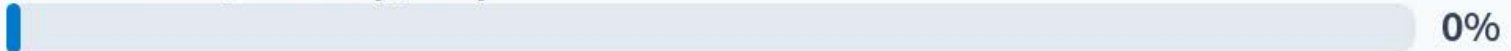
Even balance of standards and guidelines



Guidelines with some standards



Guidelines (advisory) only



Content of design guidance

- **Circulation** — Vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle improvements and amenities; loading and service
- **Site** — The location of the building, location of parking, location of access, treatment of ground surfaces
- **Frontage** — The characteristics of the space between the front of the building and the sidewalk
- **Building** — Building shape and form, treatment of ground floor, upper floors, entries, windows, architectural character, roof pitch
- **Parking** — Location of parking, access, screening, landscape
- **Signage** — Location and design of signs
- **Landscape** — Location and purpose of landscape treatments, buffers, screens
- **Other** — Sustainability, housing affordability



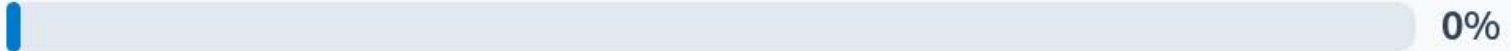
Interactive Question

**Which of these design topic areas
should be the top priority?**

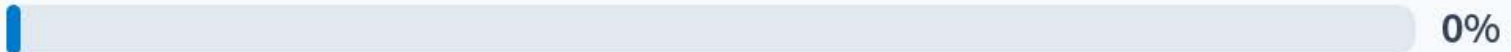


Which of these design topic areas should be the top priority? (choose one)

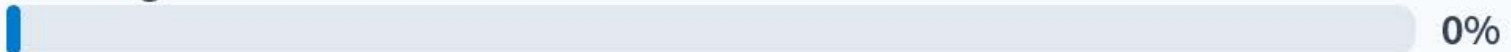
Circulation



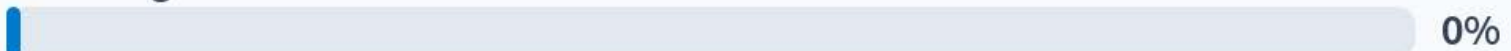
Site



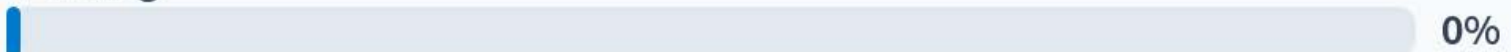
Frontage



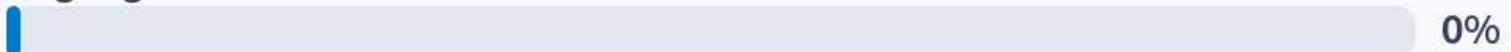
Building



Parking



Signage



Landscape



Other (sustainability, affordability, etc.)



7



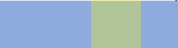








Next Steps




Vinnin Square Design Guidance



Study Summary

PROJECT TIMELINE

Task	Month					
	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Task 1 – Previous Study Review and Existing Conditions Analysis						
Task 2 – Definition of a District Vision and Guidelines						
Task 3 – Outline of Design Guidelines Suitable for Adoption by Planning Board		 				
Task 4 – Draft Design Guidelines						
Task 5 – Final Design Guidelines						

 Coordination Call
  Planning Board Meeting
  Community Meeting

Vinnin Square Design Guidance Community Meeting

August 29, 2023



Open Question

**Do you have any additional
questions or comments?**



Interactive Exercises

**Which of these design topic areas
should be included?**



Interactive Exercises

**Which of these design
characteristics should be
included?**



Online Survey

For those unable to attend:

https://mapc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e3DAsMvtTJOW7C6

Vinnin Square Design Guidance Community Meeting

August 29, 2023



