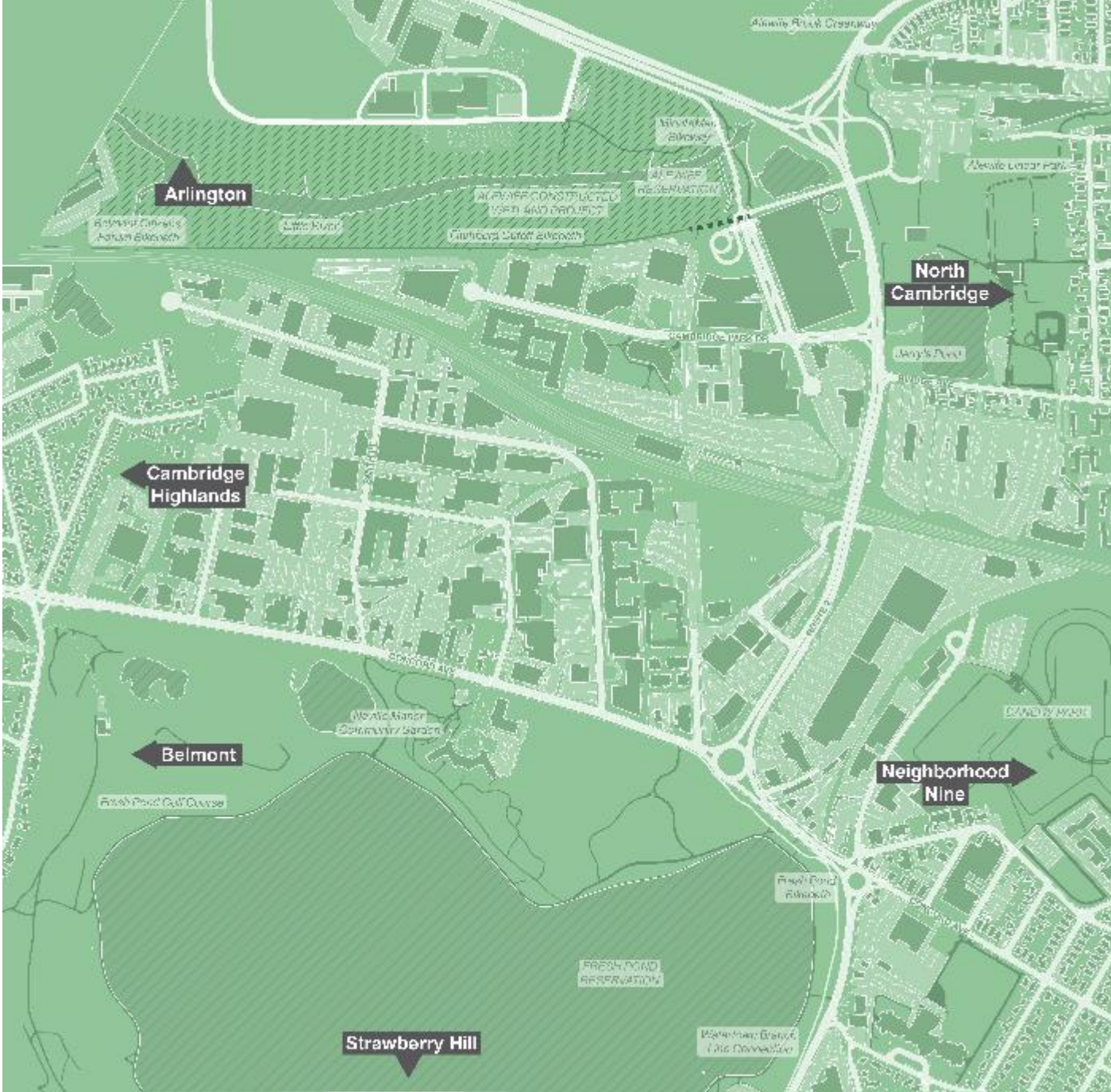


Alewife Working Group

September 15, 2016

ENVISION
CAMBRIDGE



Agenda

Summary of Visioning Workshop (July 21)

Existing Conditions: Parking and vegetation, parcel size and ownership

- Key existing conditions that illuminate challenges in Alewife

Potential Goals and Challenges

- The community has been looking for certain improvements for a long time, but inherent challenges at Alewife make those goals difficult to accomplish.

Discussion

- Vision for Alewife
- Additional Priorities

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Alewife Visioning Workshop (July 21)

- Presentation on existing conditions and propensity for change
- Individual brainstorming around values
- Small group discussion on a vision for Alewife



Alewife Workshop Key Points

Livability

- Difficulty moving to / through the area and traffic congestion
- Lack of public amenities

Diversity and Equity

- Transportation costs
- Lack of public space and amenities seen as limits to equity

Sustainability and Resilience

- Disagreement about development, especially housing.
- Well-designed density can improve sustainability
- Best approach to building in a flood-prone area

Economic Opportunity

- Desire for neighborhood retail and affordable workspaces for new businesses.

Community Health and Well-being

- Foster a sense of community
- Provide community spaces for informal interaction
- Move away from auto-oriented design.

Learning

- Emphasis on non-school forms of learning
- Alewife could leverage important ecological spaces for learning

Visions for Alewife from workshop small groups

Give the Alewife area more attractive and reliable cross-town and cross-Alewife transportation routes to connect our green spaces and help turn Alewife into a destination rather than somewhere you pass through.

To increase diversity, Alewife needs to be a great destination to attract people of all backgrounds to the area, through easy, safe and attractive access on all modes of transportation

Alewife should be connected to the rest of the city as destination for ecological learning, as well as an area conducive for residents' learning through community interaction within public spaces.

By 2030, Alewife should be greener, accessible, less ugly, and facilitate green innovation as a way to provide economic opportunity

Alewife should include easier and safer connections within the neighborhood and to others, and should host a central space where you can find small businesses and see neighbors.

We envision Alewife to be a more welcoming, walkable, accessible and safe place with opportunities to come together in public squares and buildings (i.e. YMCA, YWCA).

Draft Vision

“Alewife is a sustainable, resilient mixed-used district with convenient and safe connections within the neighborhood and to the rest of the city along with amenities that support interaction and social ties among its residents.”

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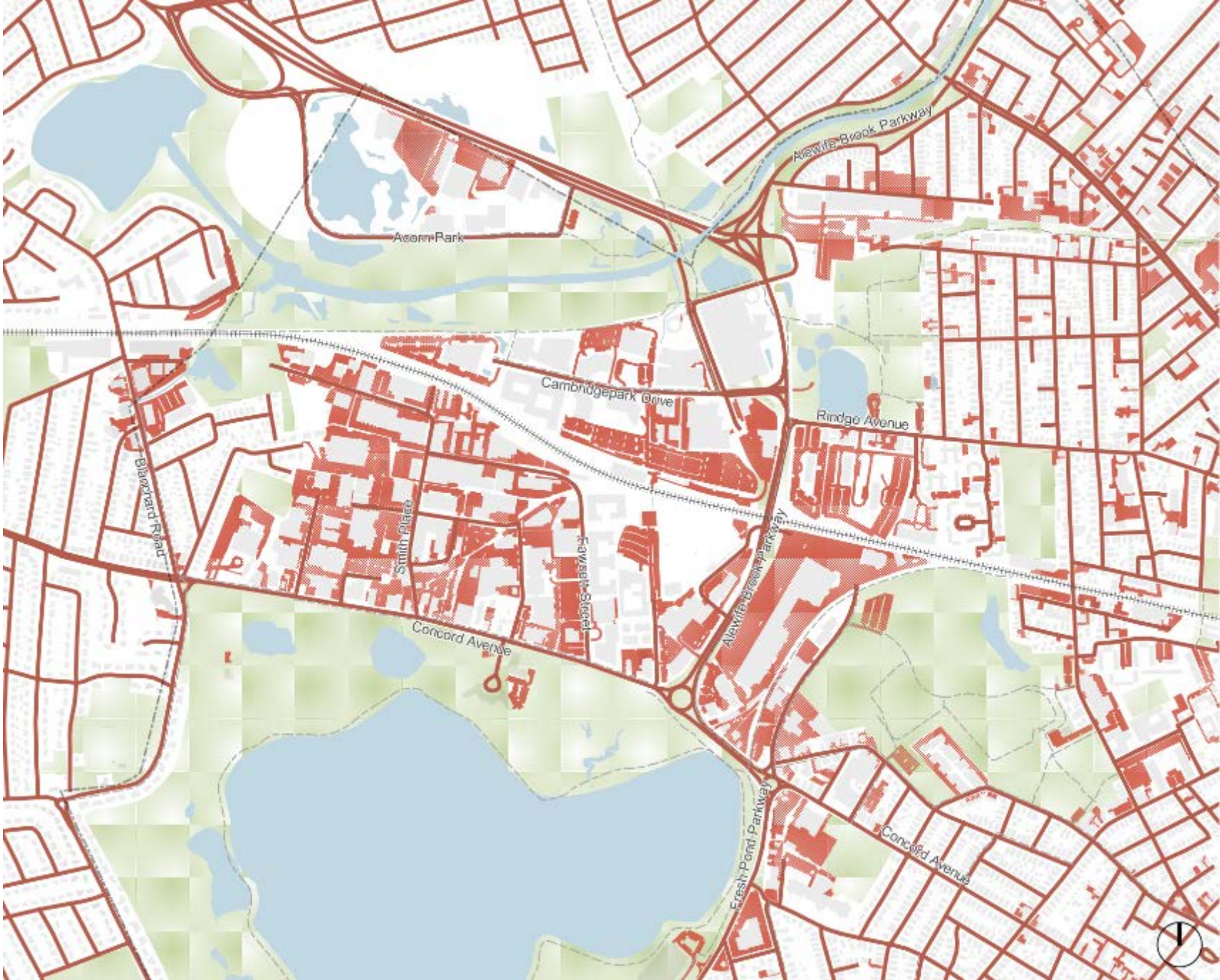
Potential Goals and Challenges

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Surface Parking Lots and Paved Streets

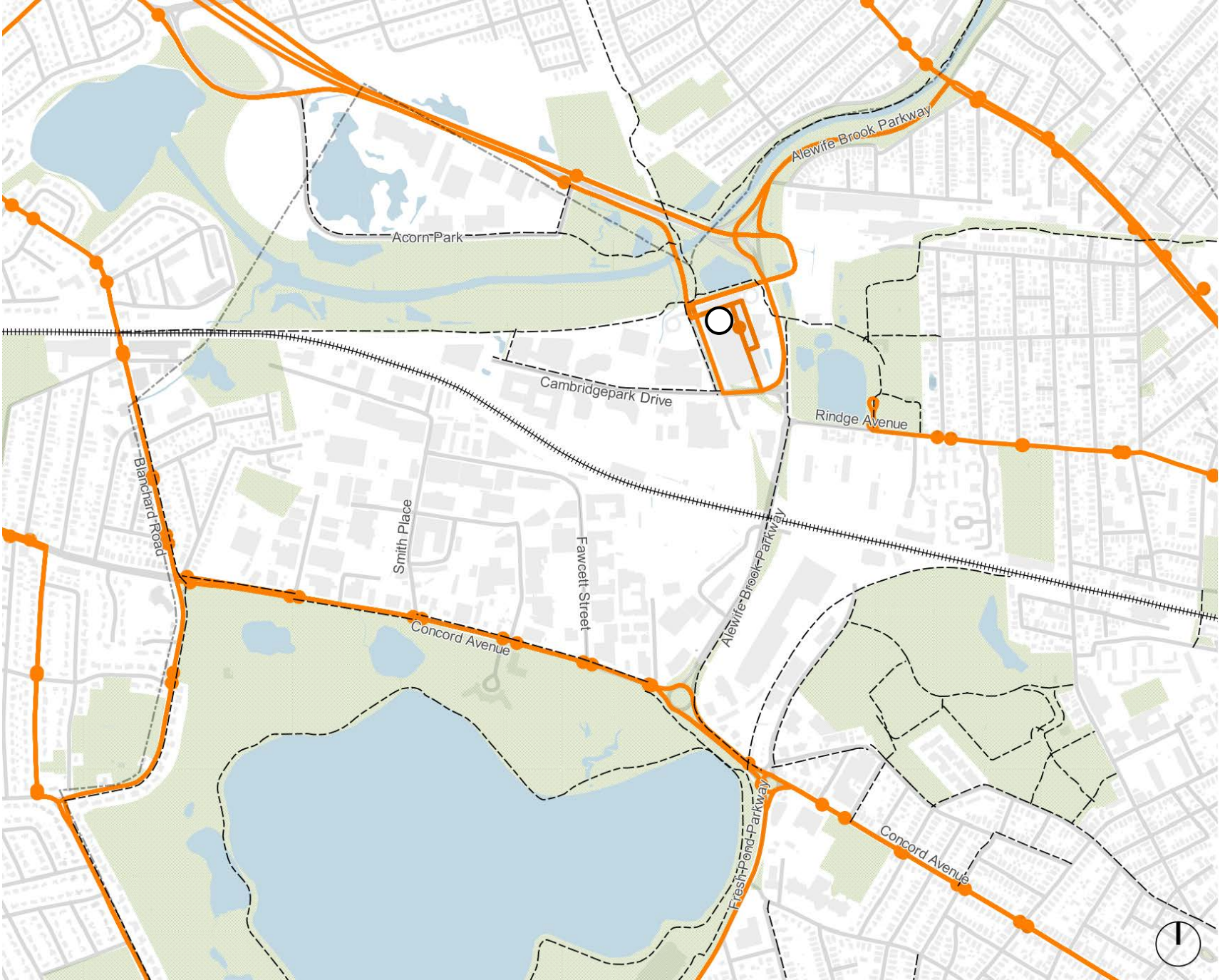


Tree canopy



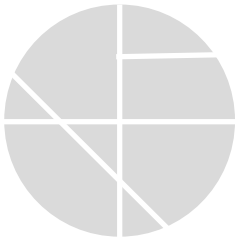
Sustainable Transportation Infrastructure

- Transit**
- MBTA Alewife Station
 - ++++ Commuter Rail
 - MBTA Bus
 - MBTA Bus stops
 - - - Bike Lane



Intersection density helps create walkability

Intersection Density



Cambridge
Average:
426/mi²



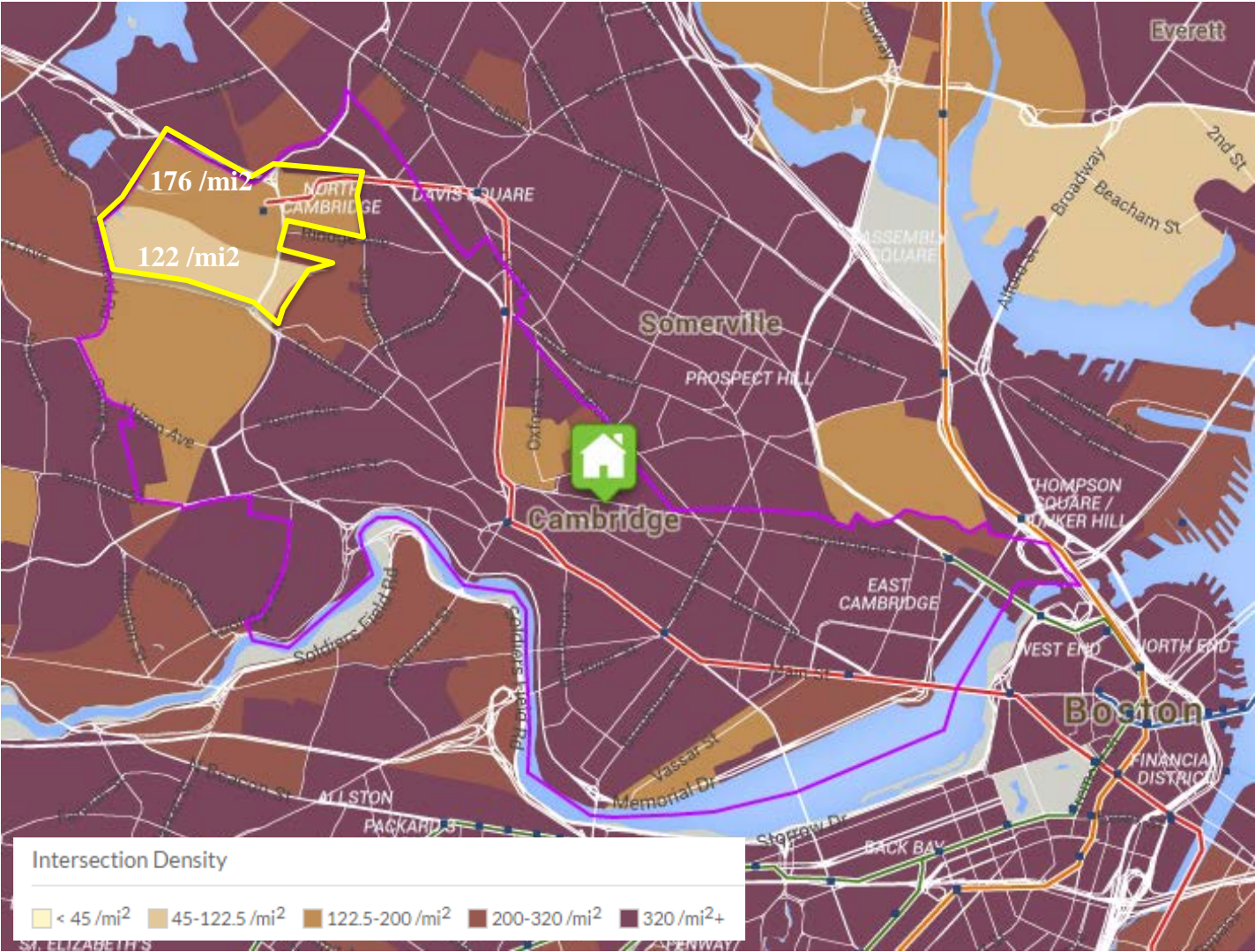
Alewife
Station Area
176/mi²



Best Practice:
Central Sq.
1,224/mi²






Alewife Concord Ave
@Brook Pkwy:
122/mi²

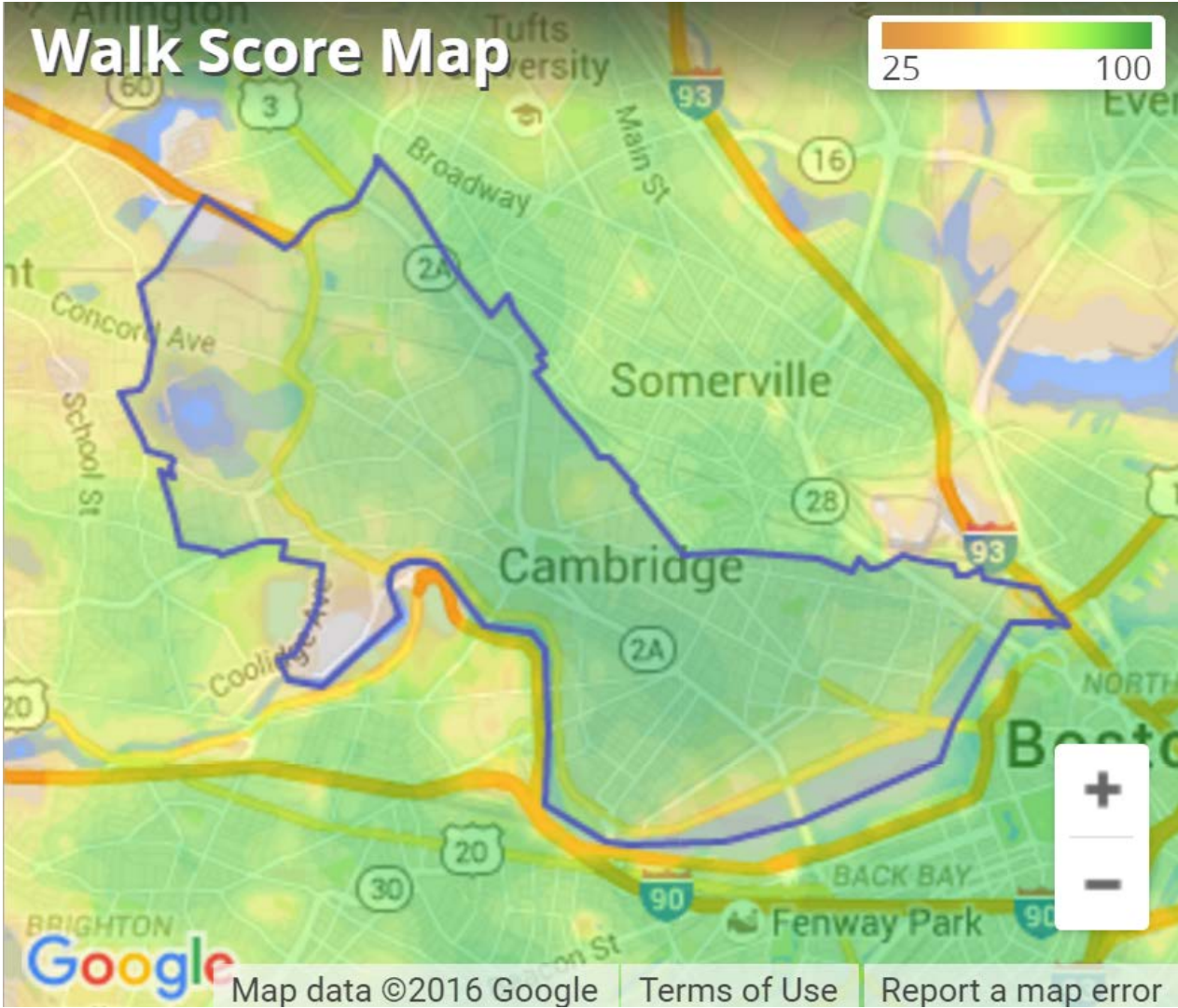


(Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology)

Alewife – Walking, transit, bike

	Walk score	Transit score	Bike score
			
Cambridge Average	88	72	93
Alewife	68	68	92
Central Square	98	73	99
East Cambridge	90	84	94

(Source: www.walkscore.com/)



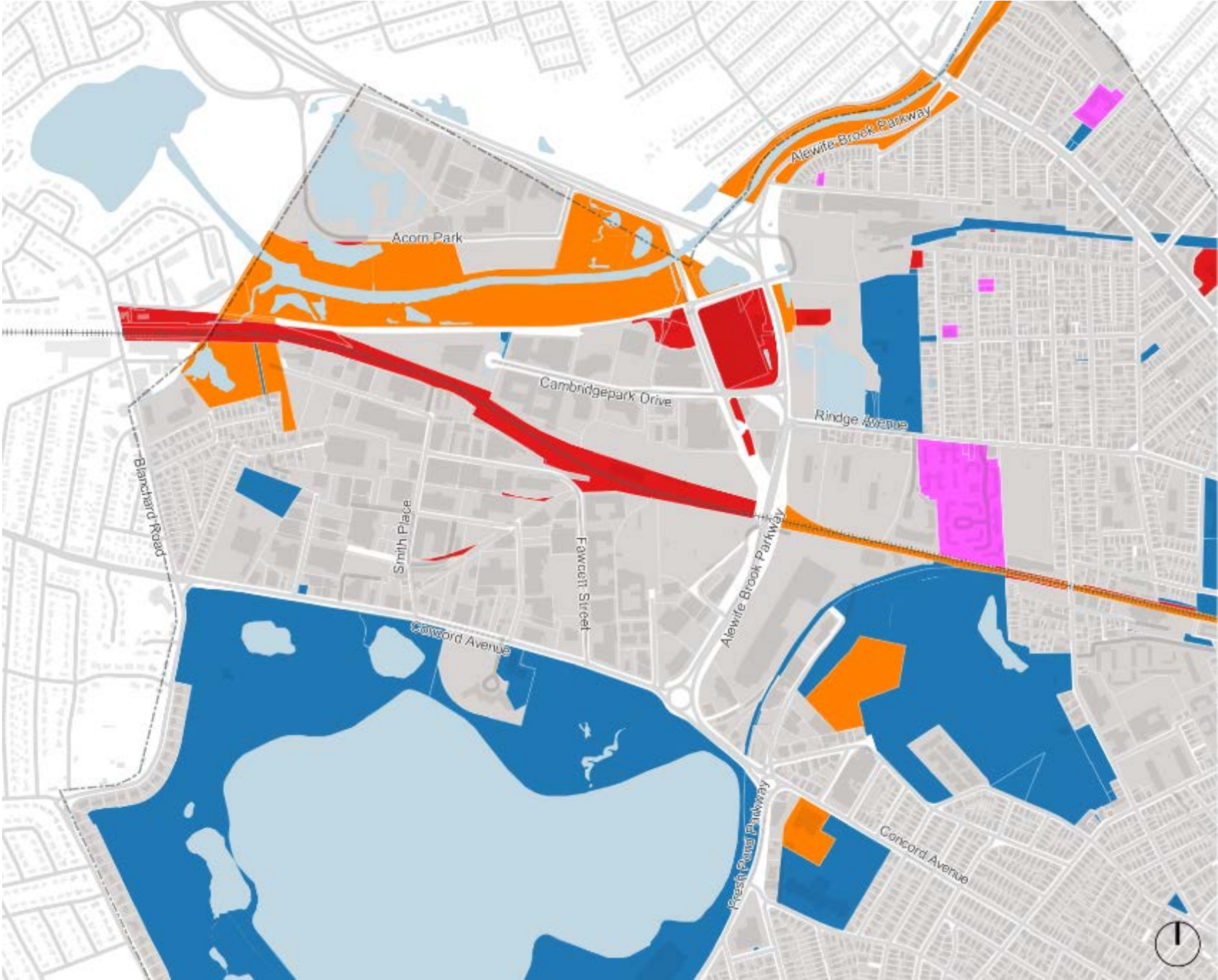
Land Ownership

Public vs Private

Land Ownership

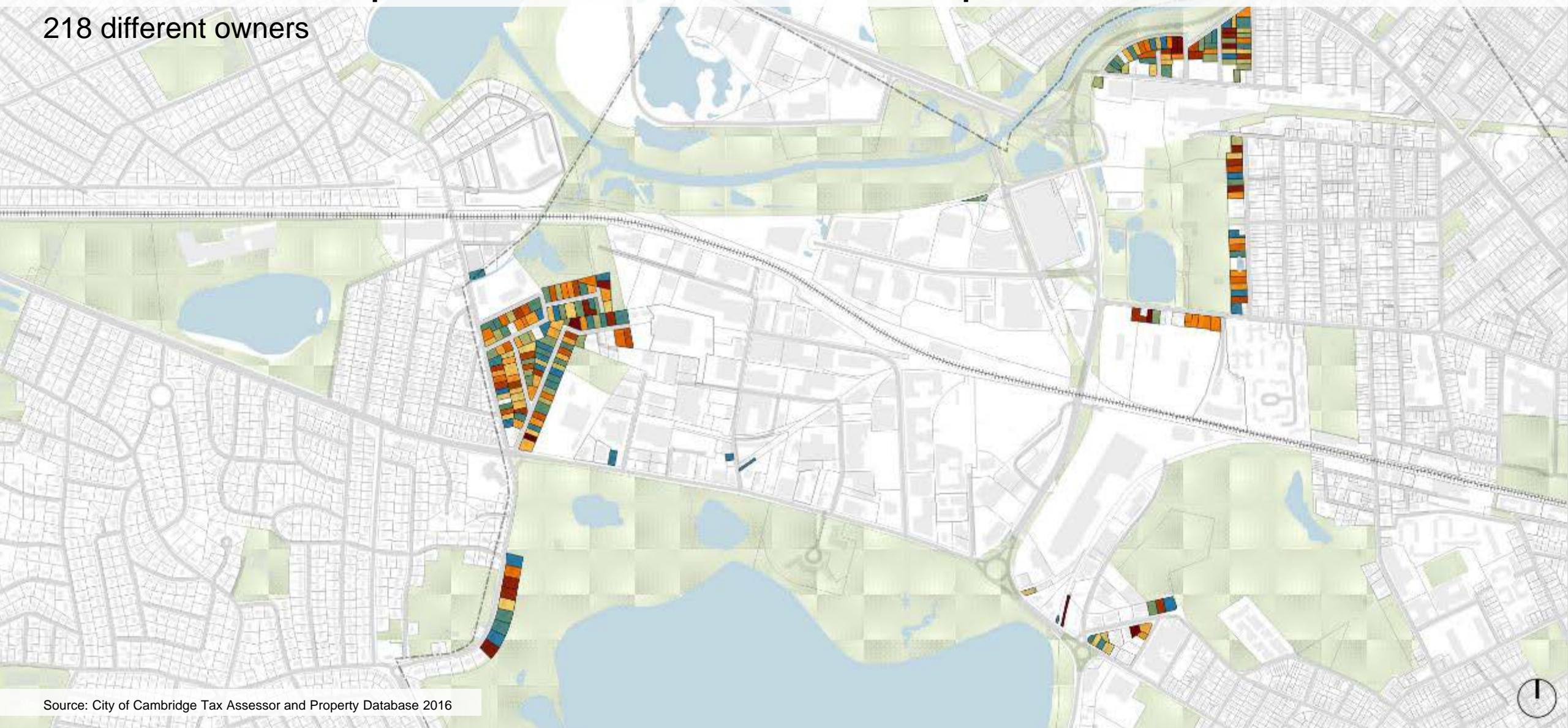
- Private
- City of Cambridge
- MBTA
- Commonwealth of MA
- Cam. Housing Authority

Source: City of Cambridge Tax Assessor and Property Database 2016



Land Ownership - Parcels under 12,000 sq. ft.

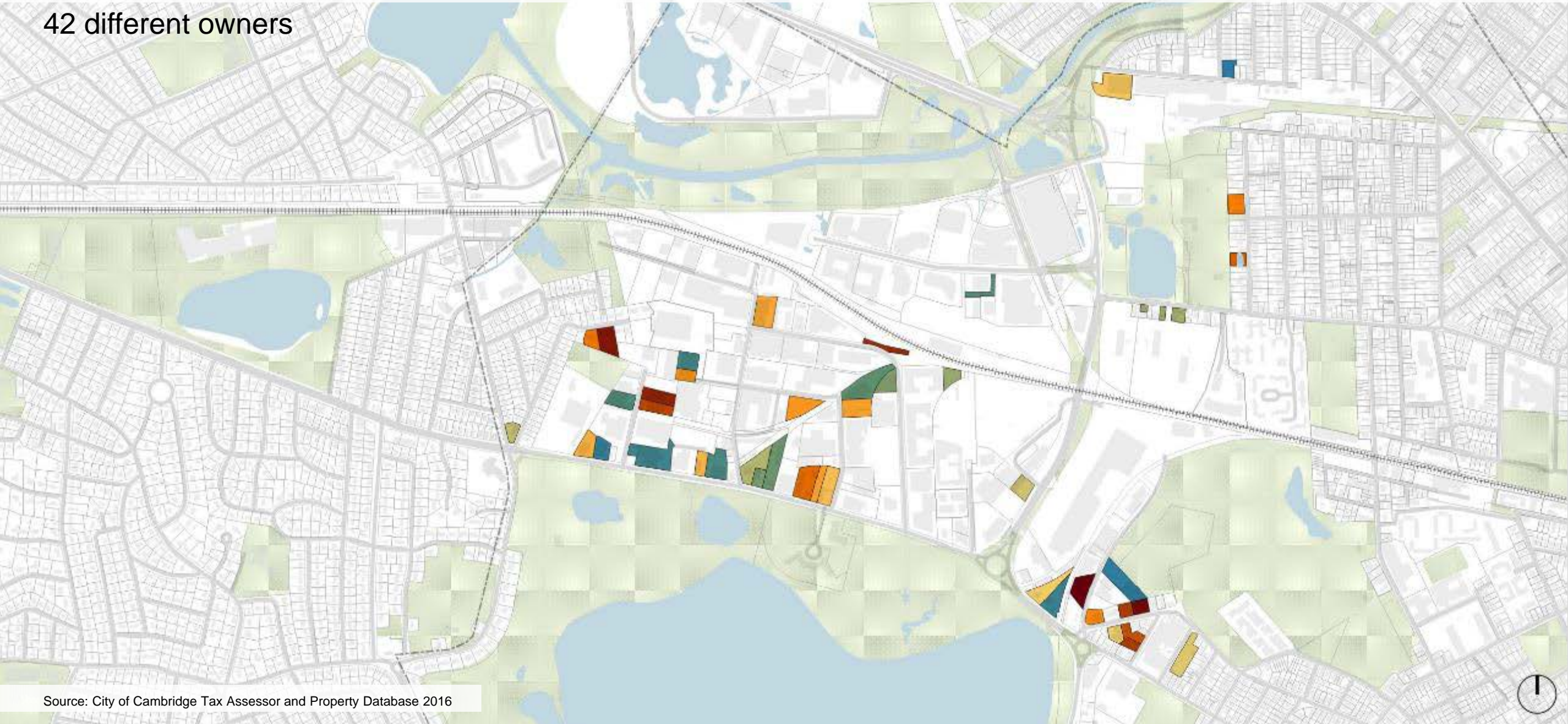
218 different owners



Source: City of Cambridge Tax Assessor and Property Database 2016

Land Ownership - Parcels between 12,000 and 50,000 sq. ft.

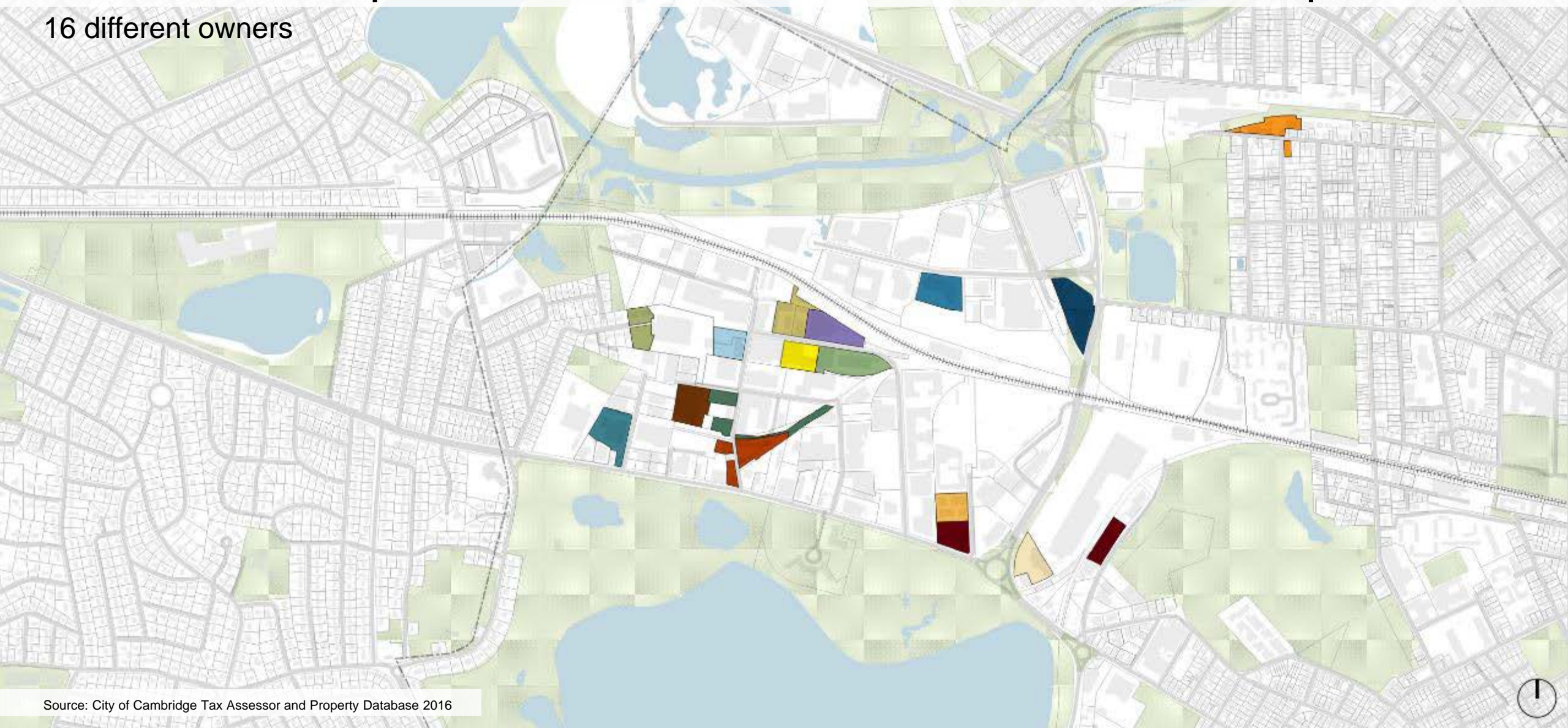
42 different owners



Source: City of Cambridge Tax Assessor and Property Database 2016

Land Ownership - Parcels between 50,000 and 100,000 sq. ft.

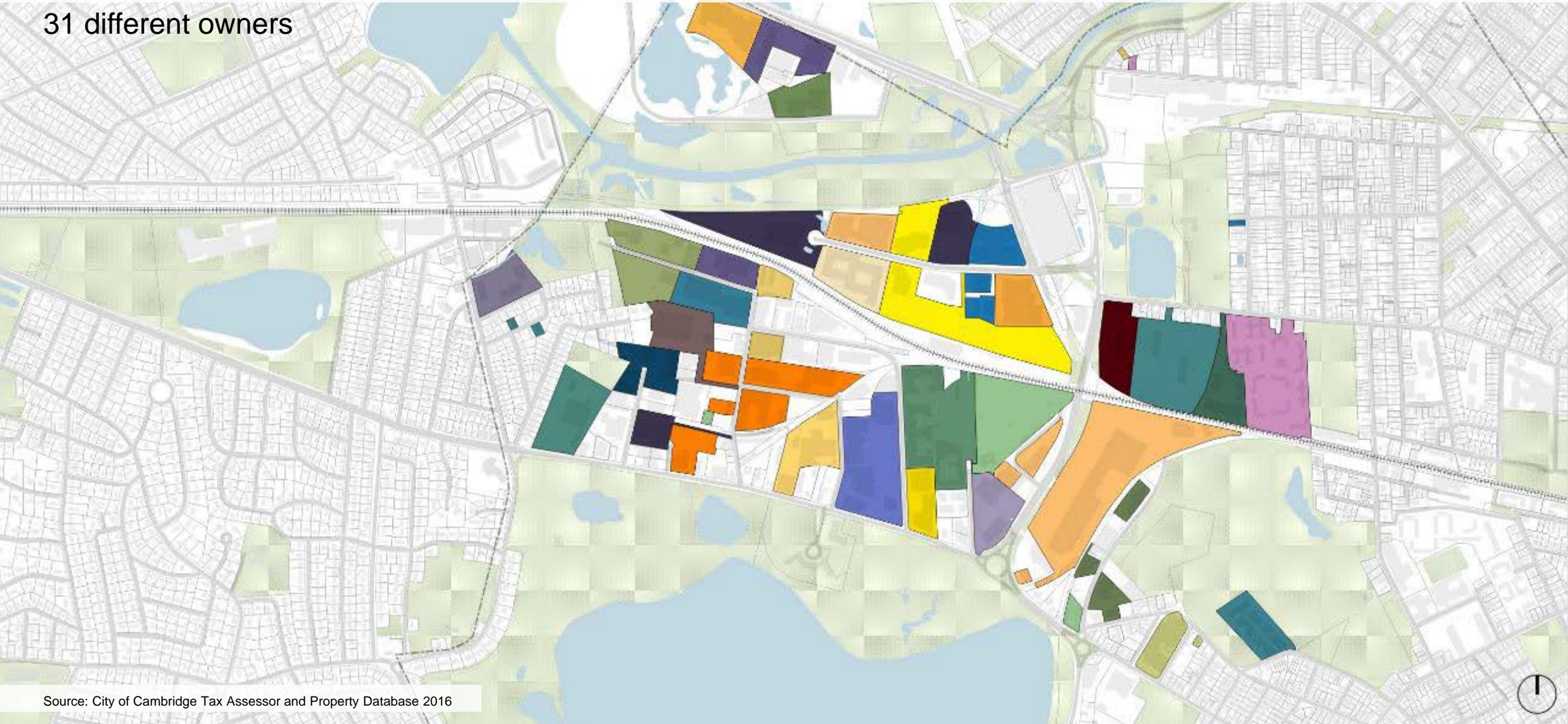
16 different owners



Source: City of Cambridge Tax Assessor and Property Database 2016

Land Ownership - Parcels between 100,000 and 1,000,000 sq. ft.

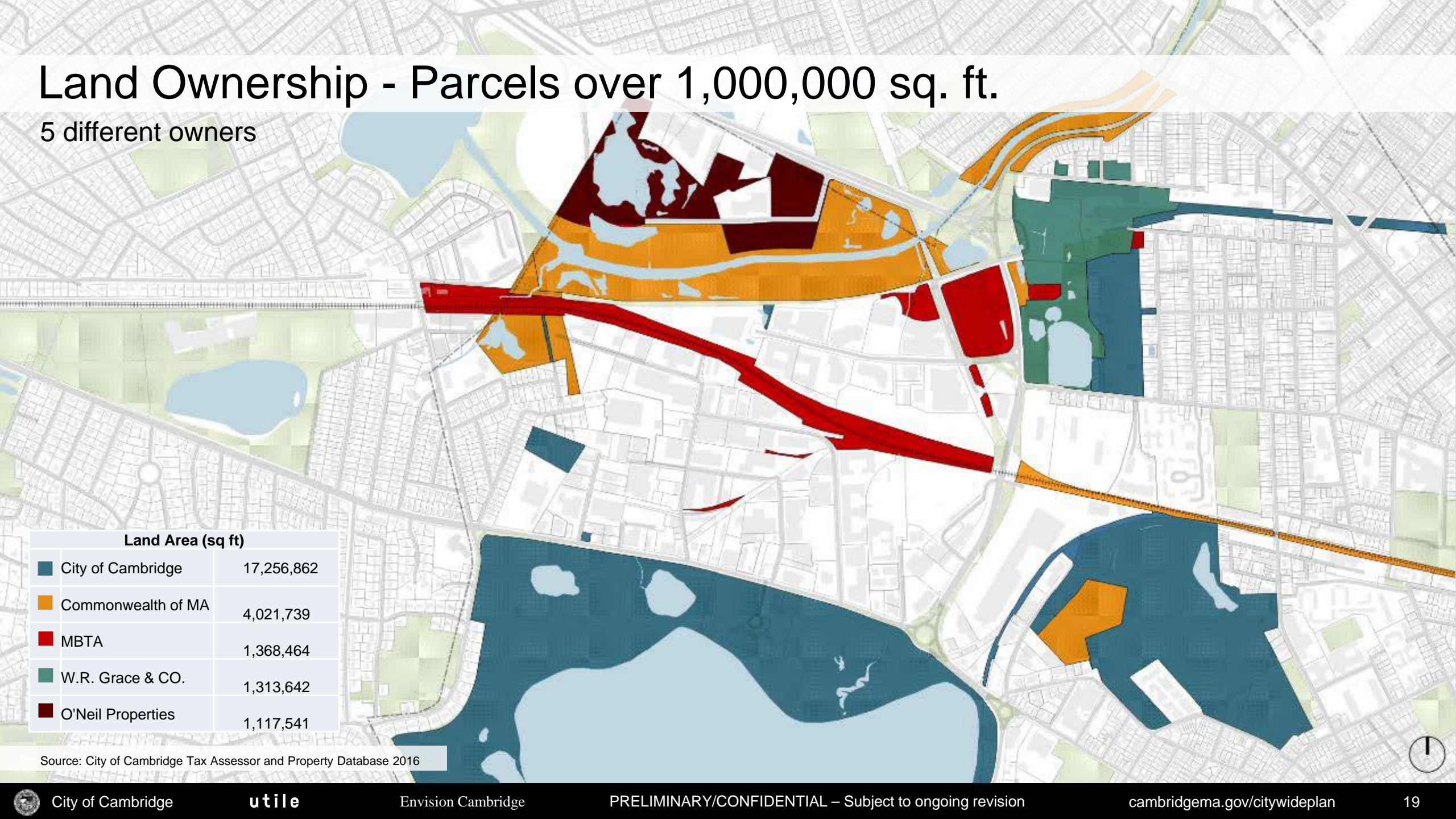
31 different owners



Source: City of Cambridge Tax Assessor and Property Database 2016

Land Ownership - Parcels over 1,000,000 sq. ft.

5 different owners



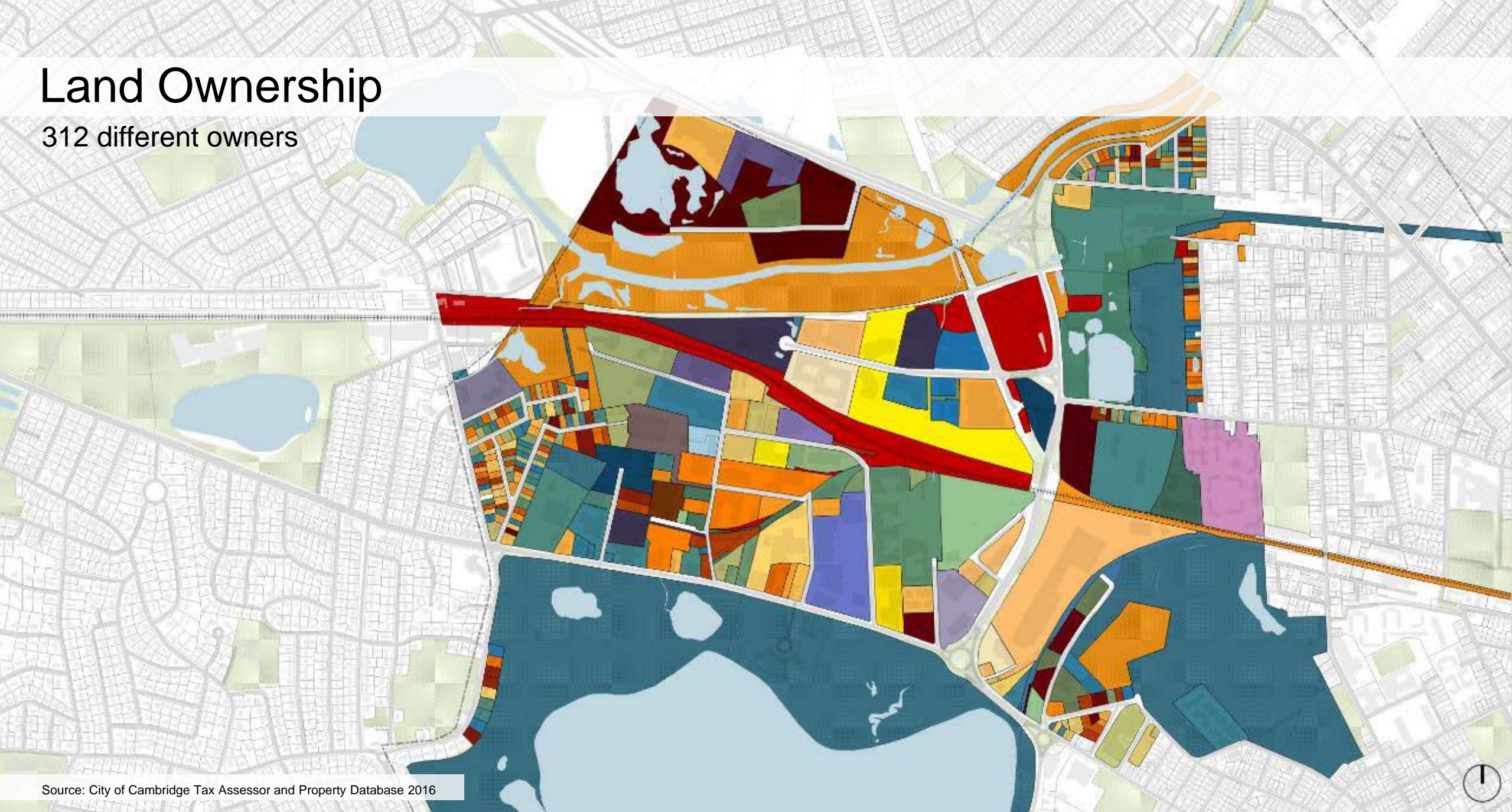
Land Area (sq ft)	
City of Cambridge	17,256,862
Commonwealth of MA	4,021,739
MBTA	1,368,464
W.R. Grace & CO.	1,313,642
O'Neil Properties	1,117,541

Source: City of Cambridge Tax Assessor and Property Database 2016



Land Ownership

312 different owners



Source: City of Cambridge Tax Assessor and Property Database 2016

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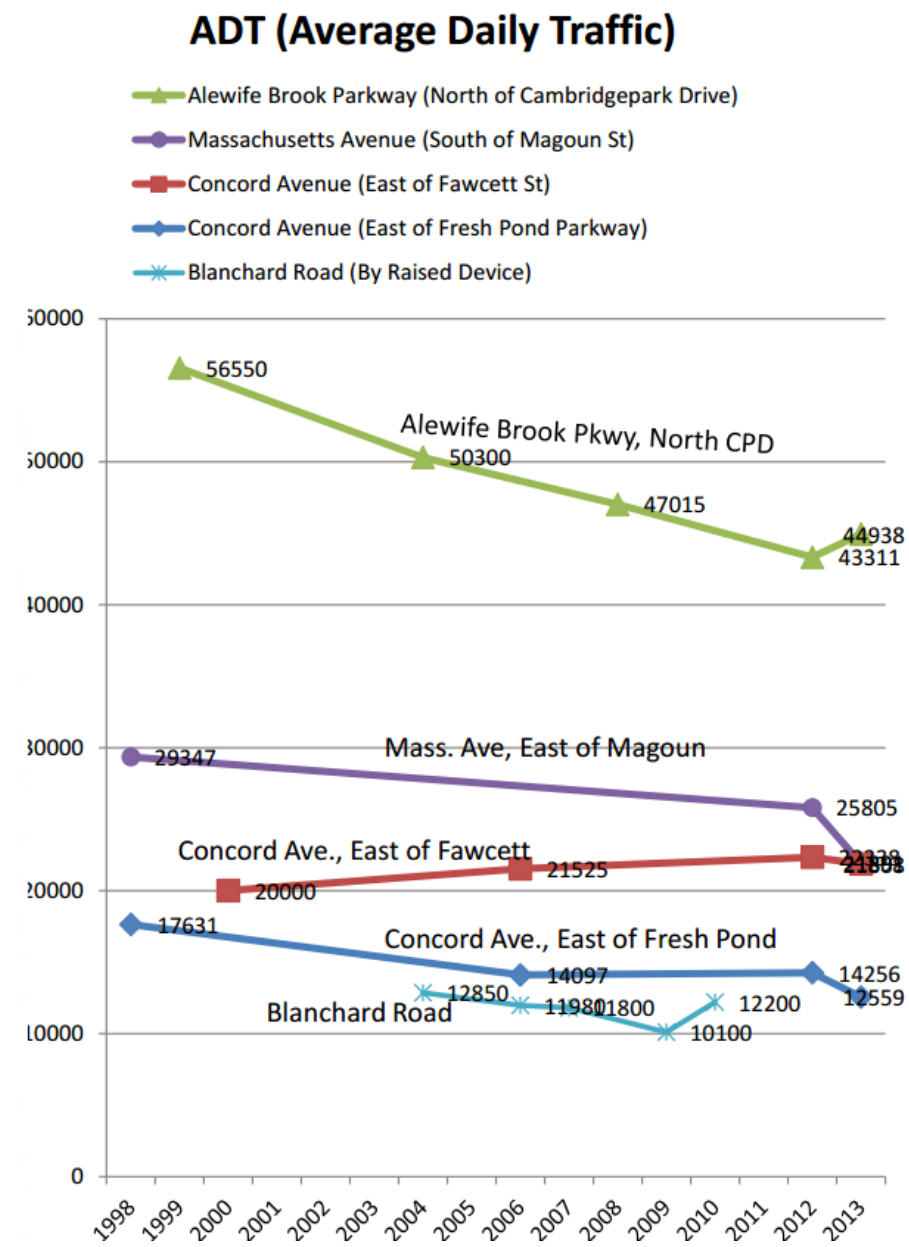
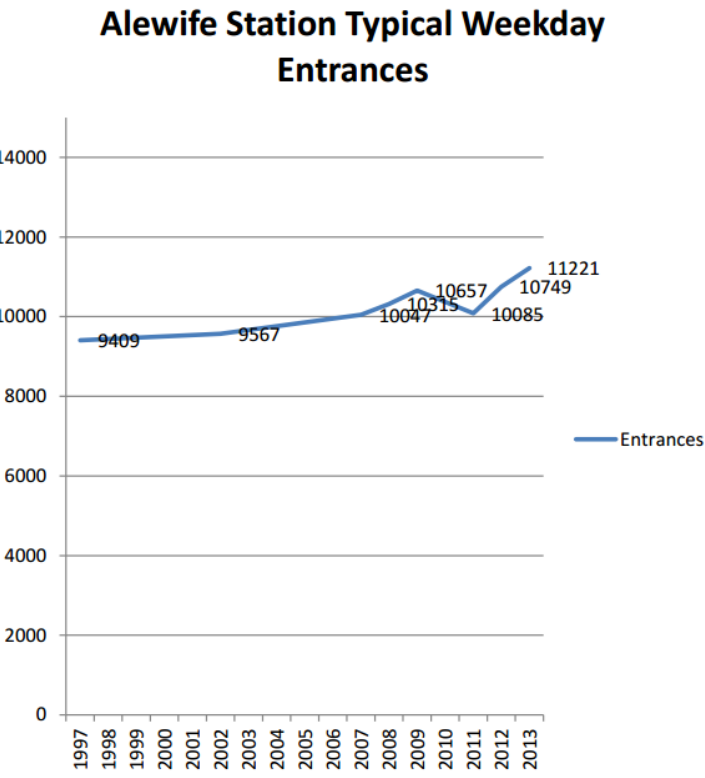
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Mobility

- Ridership at Alewife T increasing
- Auto traffic plateauing
- Still, driving is dominant mode choice



Mobility

- Fewer people are driving at new developments than expected.

	Assumed	Observed
AM Peak Hr.	0.26 trip/unit	0.25 trip/unit
PM Peak Hr.	0.30 trip/unit	0.16 trip/unit

- Assumed – 8 Alewife Residential Projects
- Observed – Driveway counts at 3 existing projects (30 Cambridgepark Drive, 87 New Street, and 25-39 Wheeler Street)
- Fawcett St - drive is less than we assume and Transit is more.

Mobility

Auto Traffic

- **Goal:** Less congested, fewer cars.
- **Challenge:** Most traffic is regional, moving through Cambridge.

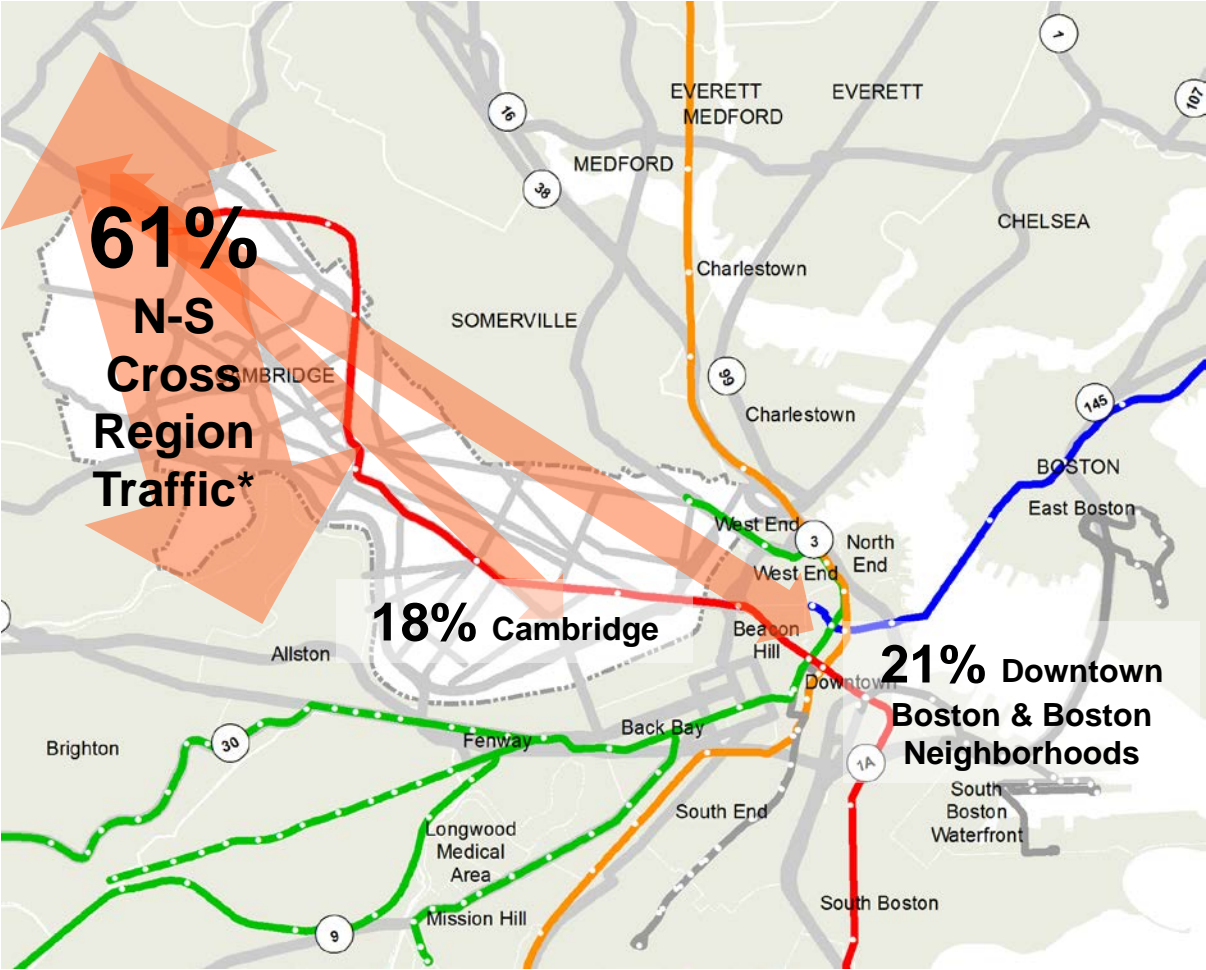


Traffic at Alewife Brook Parkway

Mobility

Auto Traffic

- **Goal:** Less congested, fewer cars.
- **Challenge:** Most traffic is regional, moving through Cambridge.



Allocation of Cambridge traffic by origin and destination.
(Source: City Council Transportation Committee, Boston Regional MPO Transportation Model
*Includes Allston-Brighton, Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury, Roslindale, Hyde Park and Mattapan

Mobility

Active Transportation

- **Goal:** More and better routes for walking and biking, both within Alewife and to other neighborhoods.
- **Challenges:** Few places where developing new rights-of-way is easy. Railroad acts as barrier between Triangle and Quadrangle.



Fitchburg Cutoff Bikepath, Alewife Triangle

Urban Form

- Industrial park and suburban retail character is longstanding.
- Persisted in face of change across the rest of the city



Spineli Place



Fresh Pond Mall

Urban Form

- New development has prompted urban form that's *more* consistent with the rest of the city
- Development hasn't produced the change residents and neighbors would like to see.



Fawcett Street

Urban Form

Mix of Uses

- **Goal:** Community with convenient mix of uses that accommodate daily needs of residents. Emphasis on adding active uses at the street level.
- **Challenge:** Active uses do not support themselves, and street-level uses vulnerable to flooding.



Urgent care and orthodontics on Concord Ave. Useful, but not the sorts of uses the community is looking for in retail spaces.

Urban Form

Character of streets and buildings

- **Goal:** Introduce a “look and feel” that is more inviting and conveys an urban sensibility through building alignment and “street wall.”
- **Challenge:** Business case for look, feel, and function of urban characteristics not always clear in Alewife. Many community members object to market’s preferred building types

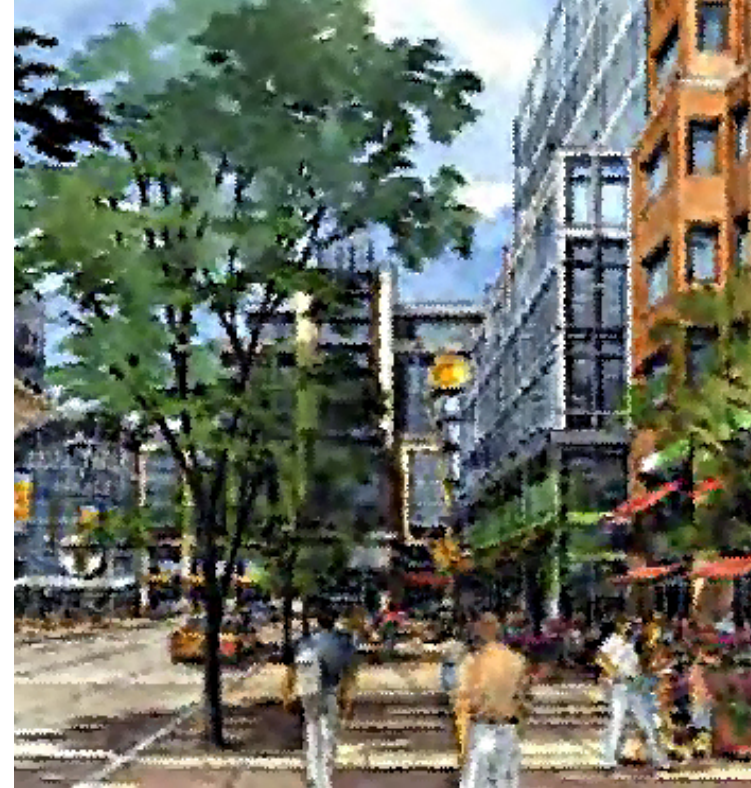


Smith Place, Alewife Quadrangle

Urban Form

Public Space

- **Goal:** Have something like a public square in a walkable neighborhood retail, where the community can informally meet and cultivate neighborliness through everyday interaction.
- **Challenge:** Fragmented private ownership with no small publicly-owned parcels. No obvious sites or mechanisms to create public square.



Rendering of mixed-use area that allows for informal community contact
(Source: Concord-Alewife Planning Study, November 2005)

Community Interaction

- Households tend to be smaller in Alewife than in much of Cambridge.
- Fear of being a “bedroom community.”

Average Household Size



Source: 2014 American Community Survey 5-year block group estimates

Community Interaction

Public Amenities

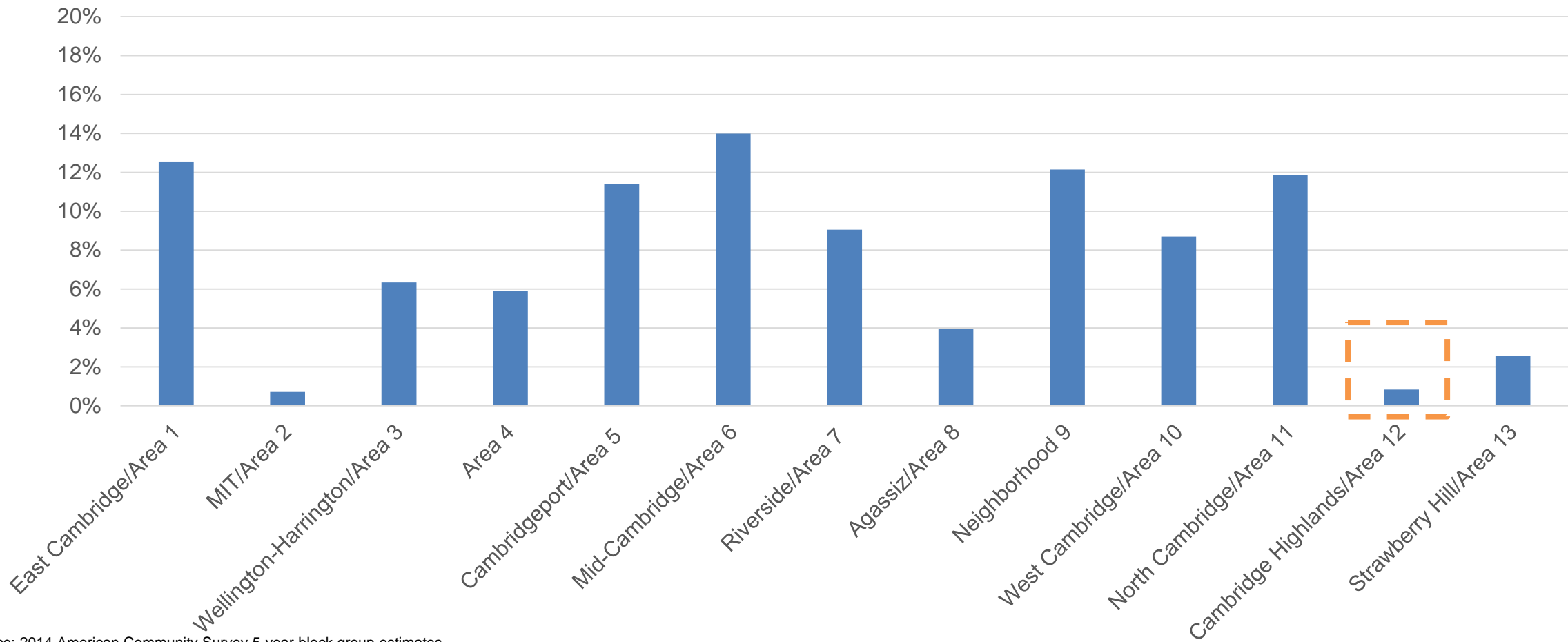
- **Goal:** Add public amenities – like a library or community center – that community can gather around and grow in.
- **Challenge:** Community amenities gravitate to high-population areas and stable residential neighborhoods.



Cambridge Public Library Book Mobile, c. 1970
(Source: Cambridge Public Library Collection)

Housing

- Alewife needed housing to become a dynamic, mixed-use neighborhood.

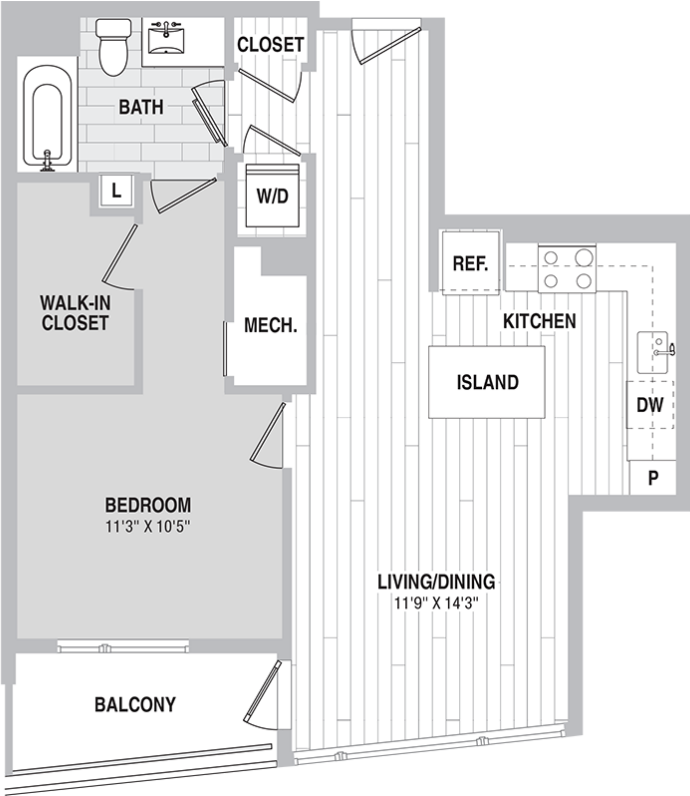


Source: 2014 American Community Survey 5-year block group estimates

Housing

Housing Size and Options

- **Goal:** Community with inclusive mix of housing options, including family-friendly housing like three-bedroom units.
- **Challenges:** Market driven to prioritize one- and two-bedroom units.

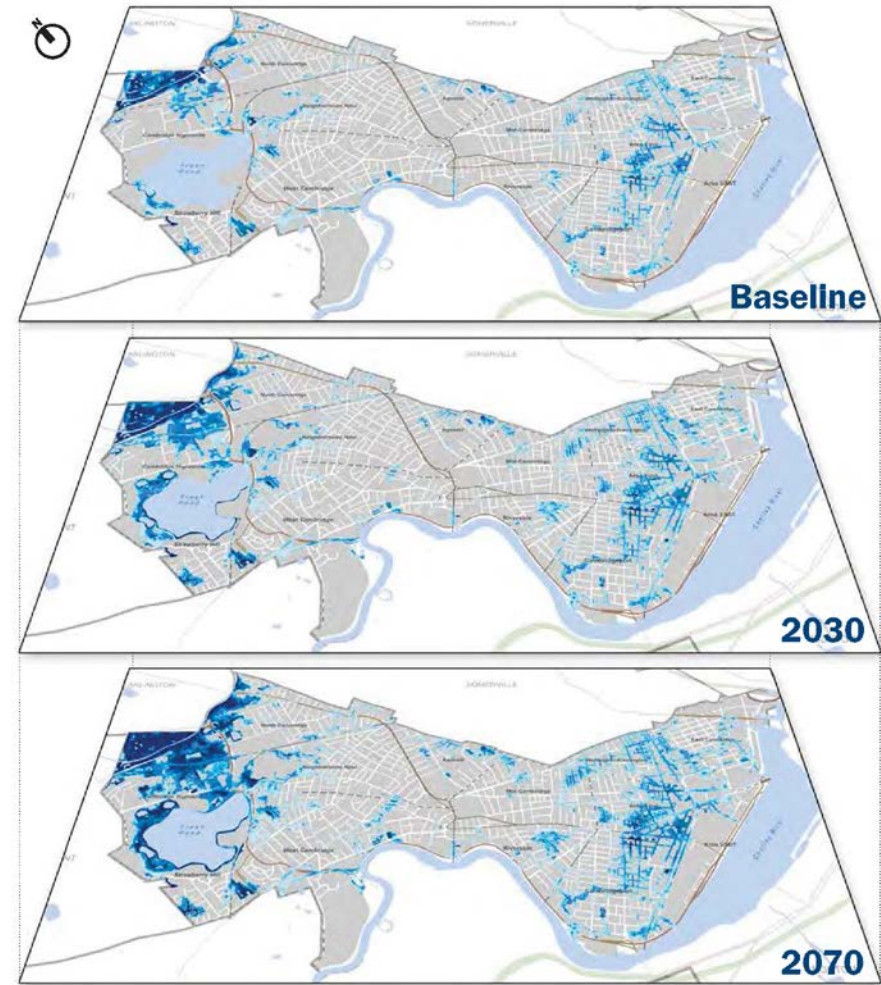


One-bedroom floorplan at Fuse Cambridge, Cambridgepark Drive
(Source: Bozzuto)

Climate and Environment

Flooding projections from CCVA

- Alewife is one of the most vulnerable zones.
- The Concord-Alewife area falls in within the Mystic River watershed.
- Impervious surfaces contribute to flooding problems (surface parking).
- Precipitation-driven flooding is likely to become more frequent, expansive, and deeper.



Depth of Flooding above Ground (feet)

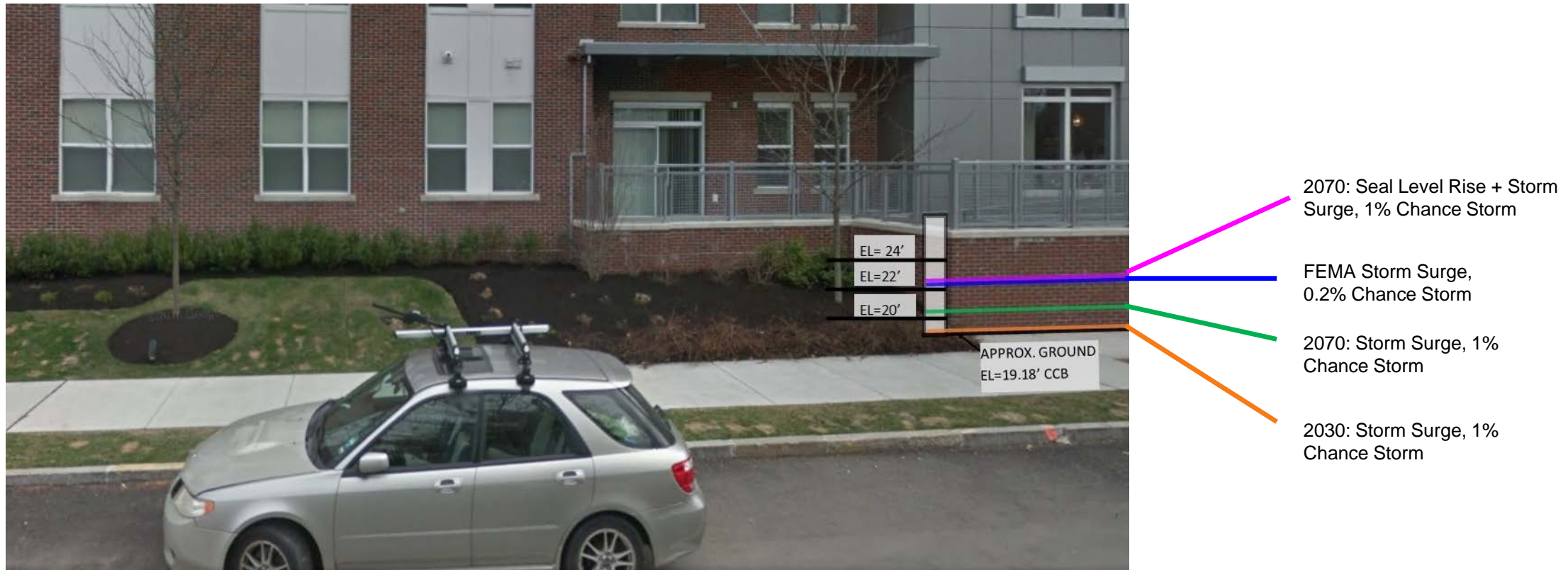


Inland Flooding – 1% Chance, 24-hour storm

(Source: Kleinfelder with manhole flooding by MWH, riverine flooding by VHB, November 2015)

Climate and Environment

- Predicted flooding and its impact at 70 Fawcett Street

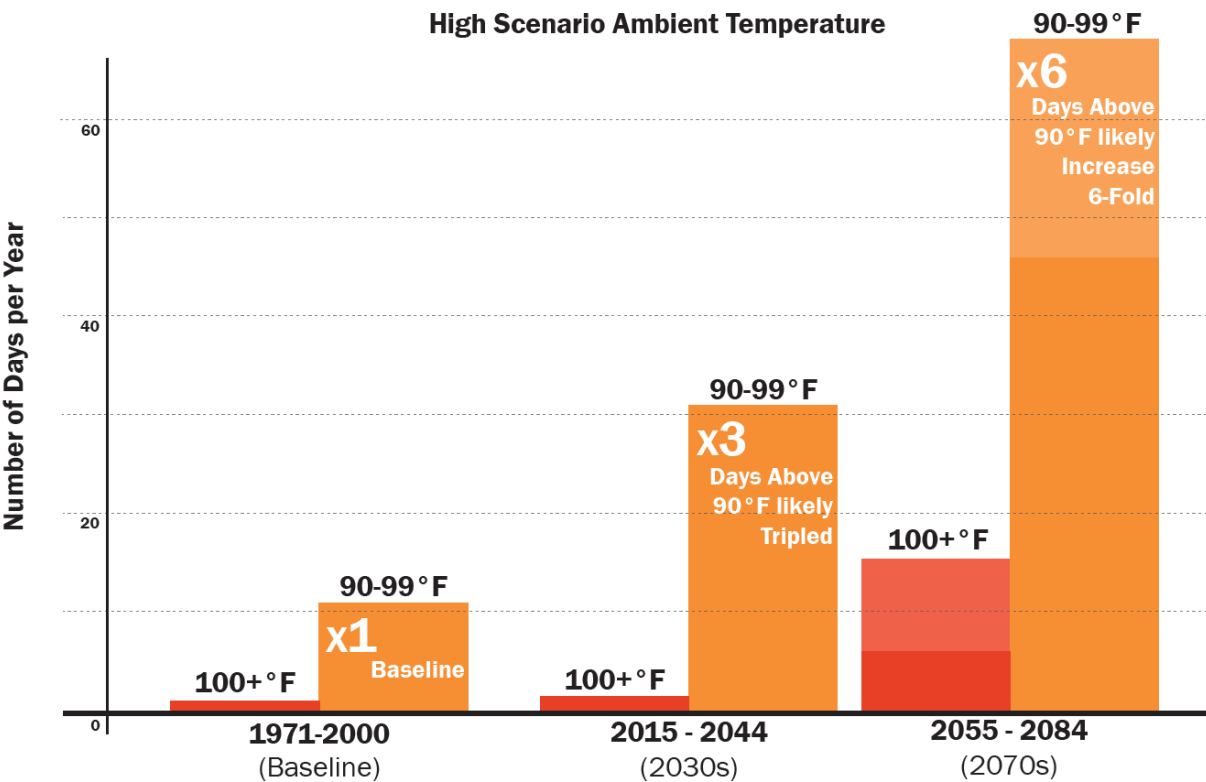


(Source: Produced by Kleinfelder for the City of Cambridge, 2016)

Climate and Environment

Temperature Projections

- By 2030, the number of days each year above 90°F could triple.
- By 2070, there could be more than 2 months in a year over 90°F.
- Extreme heat causes more deaths in the U.S. than floods, hurricanes, lightning, tornados and earthquakes. But heat-related death are preventable.

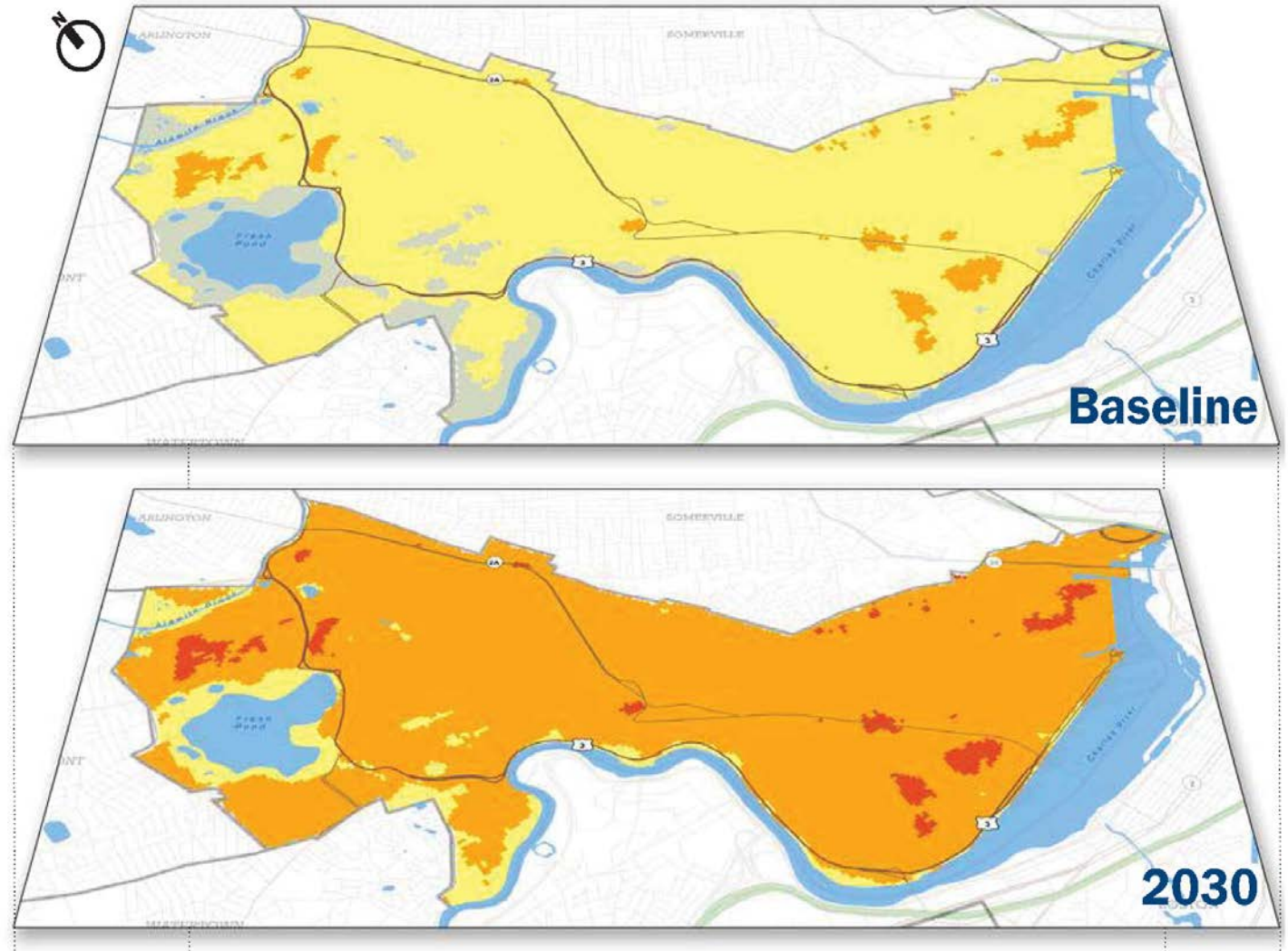


(Source: Produced by Kleinfelder based on ATMOS research, November 2015)

Climate and Environment

Temperature Projections

- Alewife is among the most vulnerable parts of Cambridge



Heat Island Map (Heat Index)

(Source: Produced by Kleinfelder based on ATMOS research, November 2015)

Climate and Environment

Greening

- **Goal:** Add trees and other vegetation, building on nearby parks and bringing Alewife up to par with other neighborhoods
- **Challenge:** other than redevelopment, no clear mechanism for greening Alewife’s uncommon amount of privately owned, impervious (paved) areas.



Spinelli Place, Alewife Quadrangle

Climate and Environment

Prepare for Extreme Weather

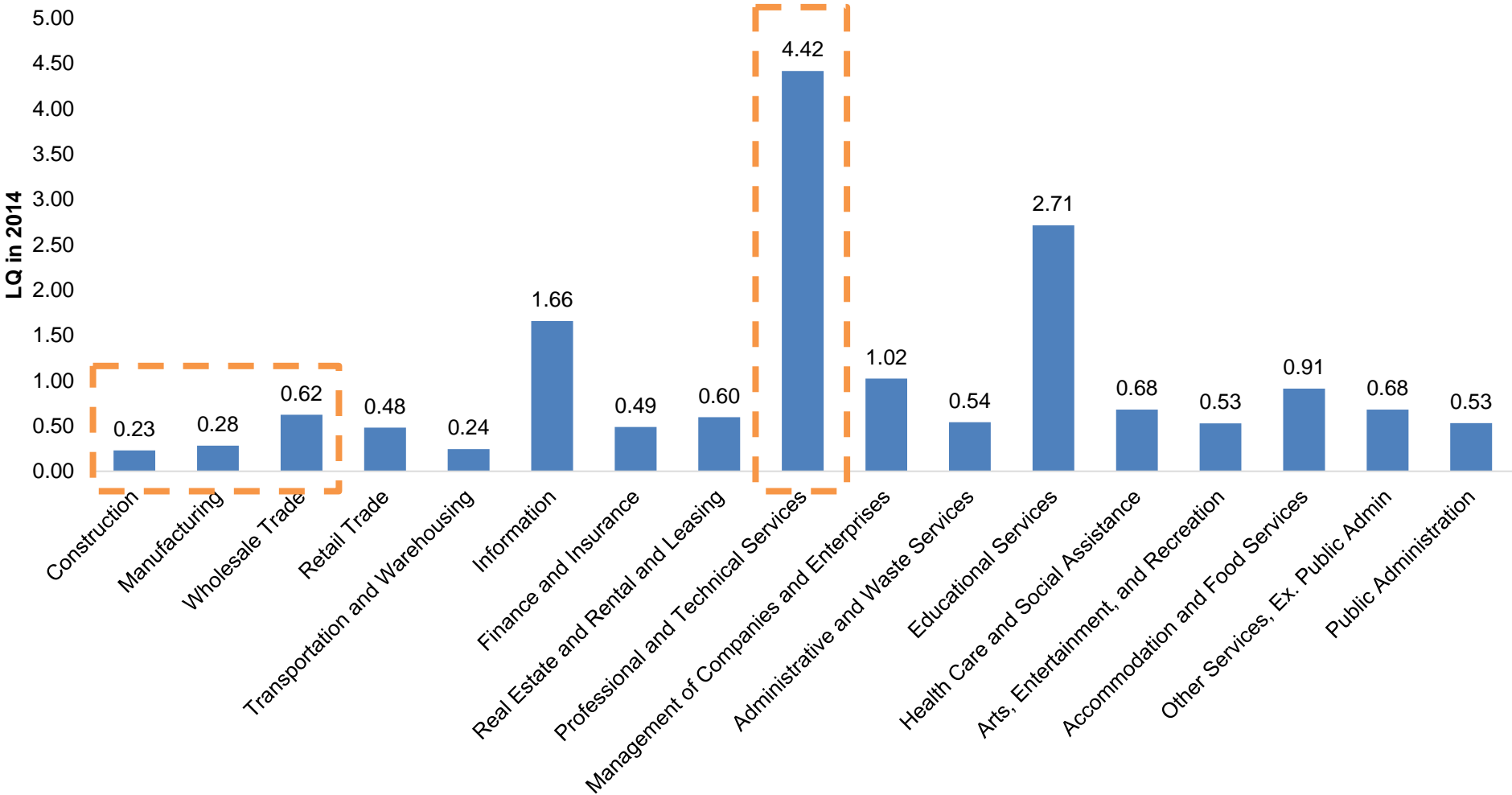
- **Goal:** Redesign buildings and infrastructures around risks of flooding events and extreme heat.
- **Challenges:** Must incentivize private property owners to develop often costly infrastructures with shared benefits



Flooding on Fawcett St / 2014.
(Source: <https://freshpondresidents.org>)

Economy

- Sectors traditionally found in Alewife are no longer clustered in Cambridge, but sectors emerging in Alewife are clustered here.



Source: 2014 American Community Survey, 5-year group estimates

Economy

Space for small businesses and startups

- **Goal:** Community that enables innovative businesses to gain a foothold and become part of Cambridge's economy.
- **Challenges:** Affordable commercial space under pressure from higher-value uses and higher demand for existing space.



West Cambridge Science Park, 767C Concord Ave.
(Source: West Cambridge Science Park)



Iggy's Bakery
(Source: Energy Sage)

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Guiding Questions

What would you add to the draft vision for Alewife?

“Alewife is a sustainable, resilient mixed-used district with convenient and safe connections within the neighborhood and to the rest of the city along with amenities that support interaction and social ties among its residents.”

Are there additional community priorities and concerns for the plans focus areas?

Mobility

Climate and Environment

Community Interaction

Urban Form

Housing

Economy