

Gilman Square community update

Wednesday, February 1st, 2023

Office of Strategic
Planning and Community
Development

Department of
Infrastructure and
Asset Management

Somerville Arts
Council

Zoom Instructions

- All participants will join Zoom with muted microphones.
- Please rename yourself to include your first name and last name.
- If you have technical questions, you can send written comments to the host (Ben Demers) through the chat box or email bdemers@somervillema.gov.
- If you have any questions about the content of today's meeting, we will host a Q&A at the end of the meeting, but feel welcome to send in questions ahead of time to be answered during that Q&A.

Meeting goals

Communicate updates from City departments regarding the Gilman Square area and the Homans site in particular.

Answer questions related to the topic areas discussed, and advertise future channels for engagement.

Agenda

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 6-6:10 | Translation services overview |
| 6:10-6:20 | Introduction and review of agenda |
| 6:20-6:35 | Mobility-related updates |
| 6:35-6:40 | Public art updates |
| 6:40-6:50 | Flood mitigation infrastructure updates |
| 6:50-6:55 | Homans site development potential |
| 6:55-7:05 | Temporary activities in Gilman Square |
| 7:05-7:30 | Q&A |

Neighborhood partners

Gilman Square Neighborhood Association (GSNA)

Email: gilmansquaresomerville@gmail.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GSNAneighbors>



Gilman Square Civic Advisory Committee (CAC)

Email: Contact Ben Demers

(bdemers@somervillema.gov), who can forward all communications to CAC members



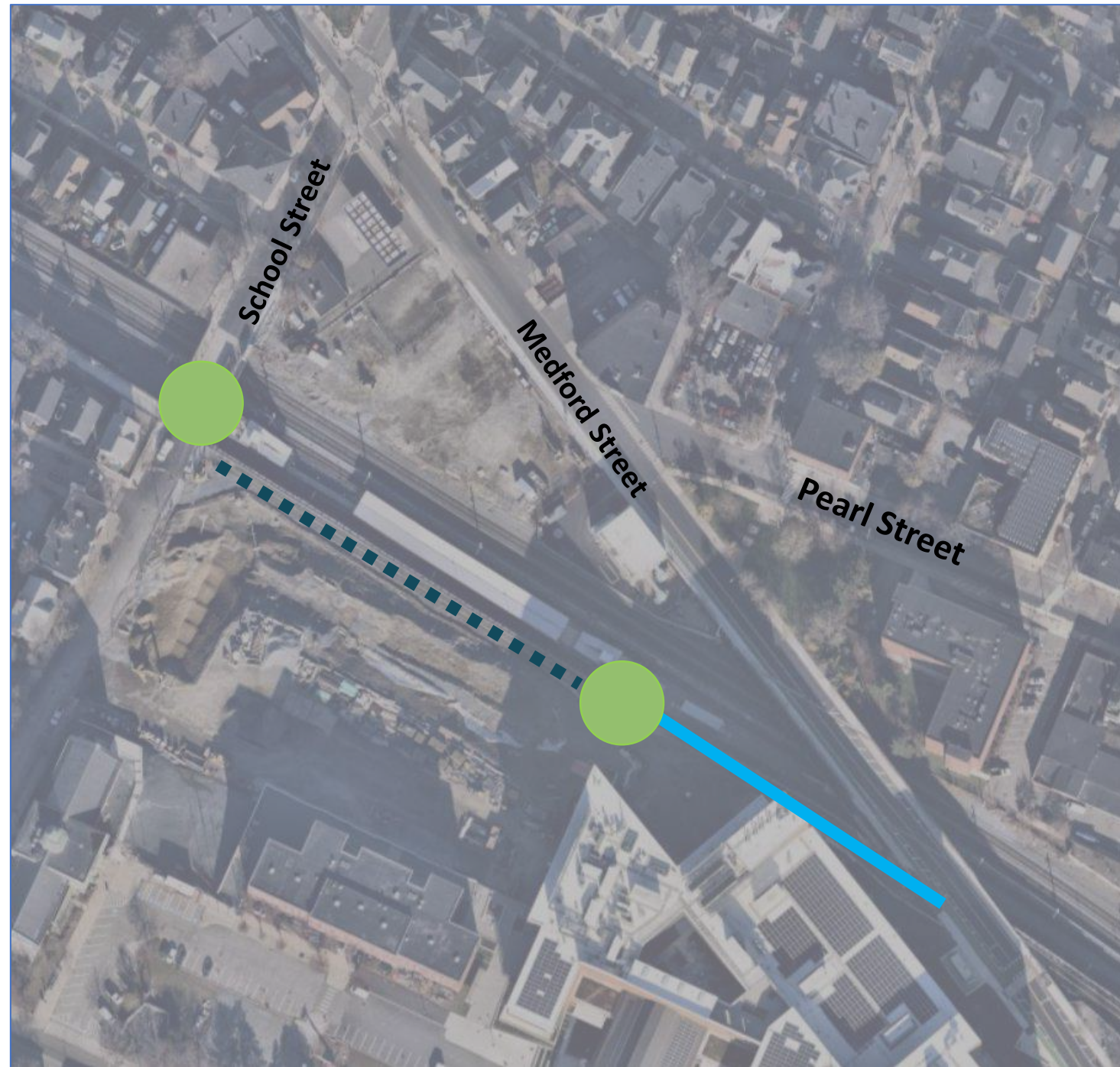
What's happening related to the Green Line and
Community Path Extension?

Mobility in Gilman Square – Station Opening

 Station Entrance

 Community Path

 Closed
Due to High School
Construction



Mobility in Gilman Square – Community Path

Status

- Green Line Extension Contractor (GLX-C) is finalizing community path construction
- City and MBTA are finalizing legal process for maintenance agreement
- Opening in Spring 2023; until then path remains officially closed and GLX-C will monitor the fences to prevent access to the path



Detour

- To allow for High School Construction

Mobility in Gilman Square – Streetscape

Present

- 60% Construction Documentation

Next Step

- 100% Construction Documentation
 - Incorporate comments
 - Coordinate with Homans site development



Public art

TPSS Building

Status:

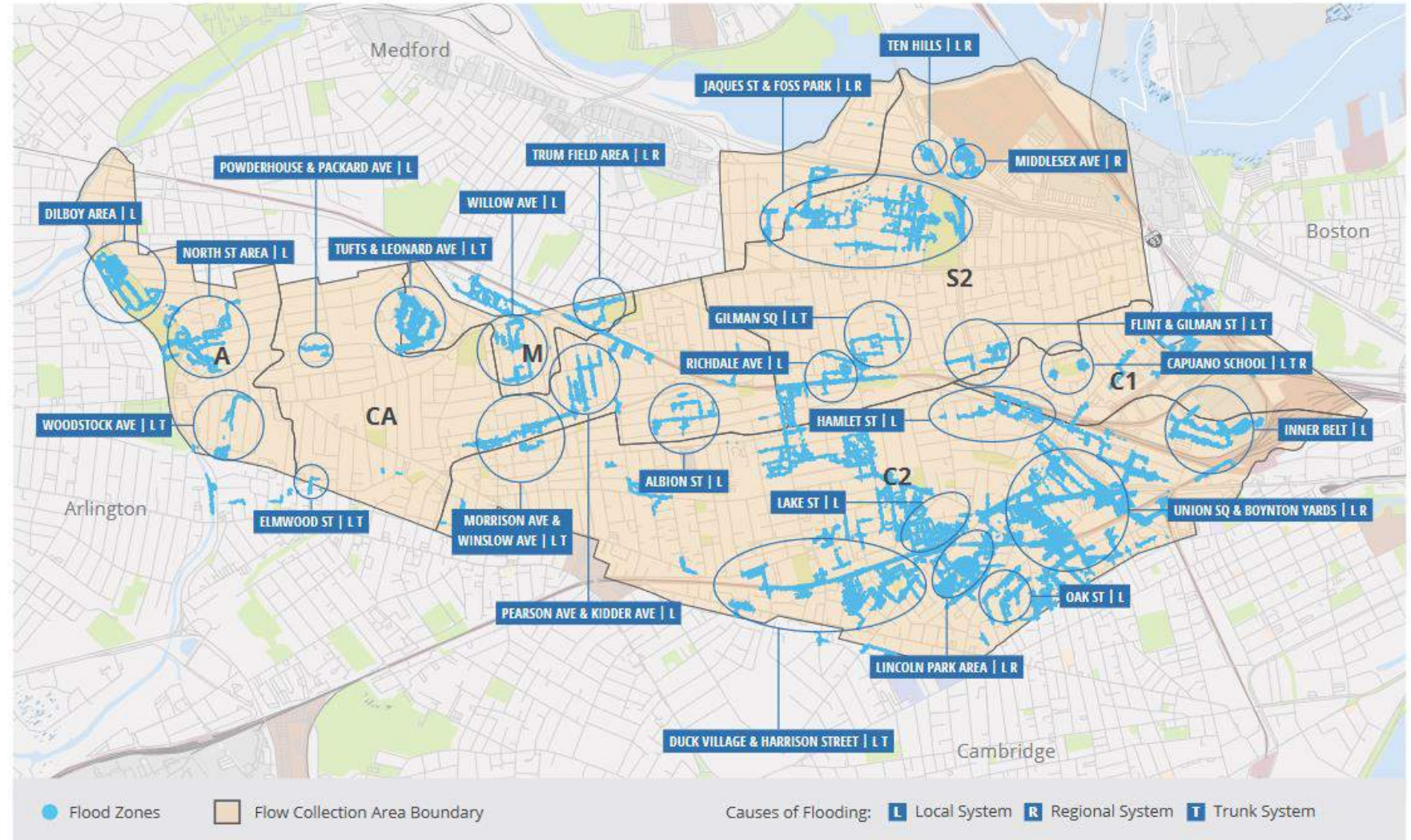
- Committee formed with local artists, GSNA, City staff to manage artist selection
 - Part 1 (RFQ) received 30 applications
 - Part 2 (RFP) issued to three finalists
 - Artist was selected - Anna Jacobs and team
- In Sept 2022 the full proposal and application submitted to MBTA
 - MBTA denied application citing new policy about public art on buildings
 - City is coordinating with the new Administration and incoming MBTA general manager to push for renewed commitment to art on the building



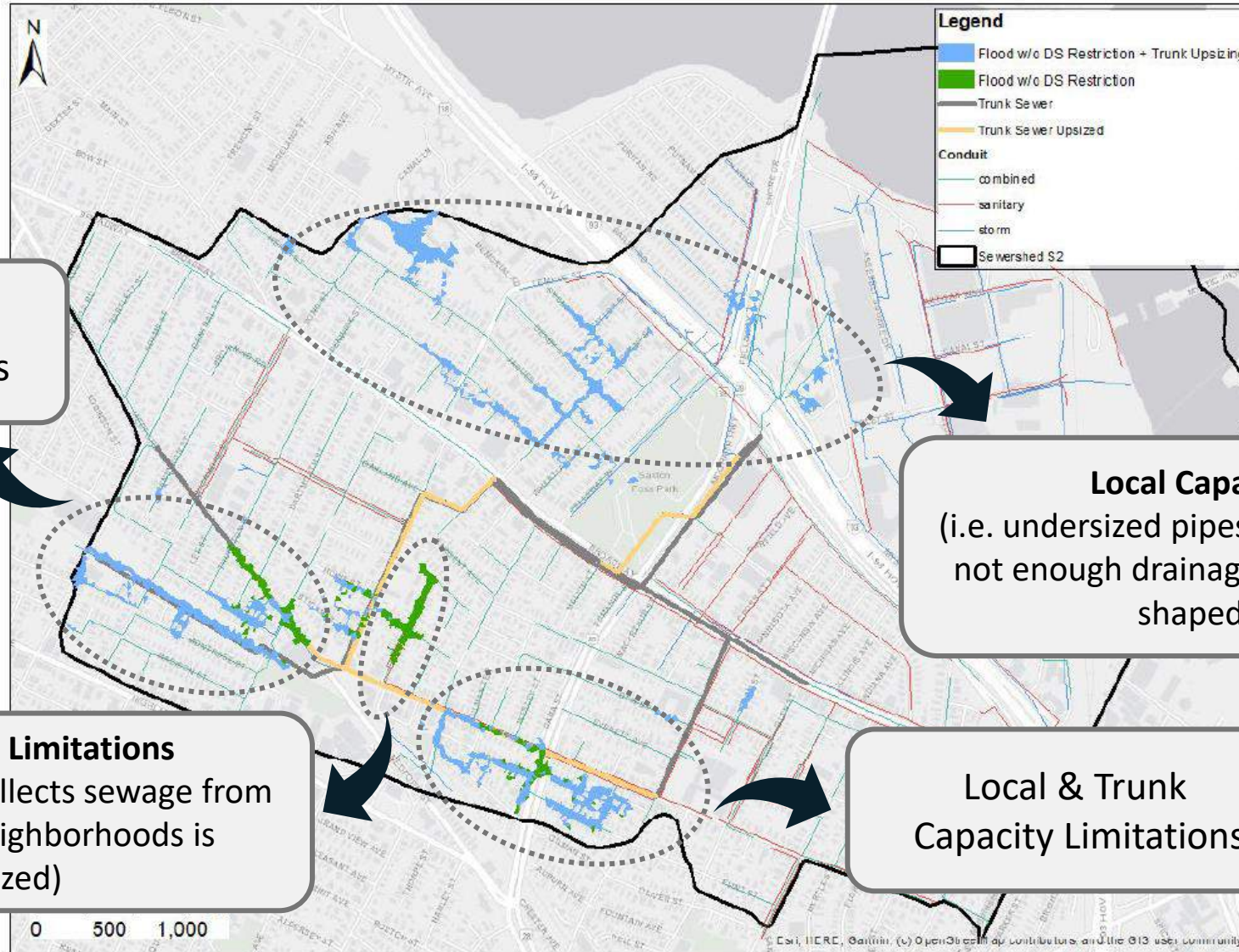
What about the Stormwater Plan?

Flood mitigation infrastructure

10-yr storm
City Wide



Why Does Gilman Square Flood?



Local & Trunk
Capacity Limitations

Local Capacity Limitations
(i.e. undersized pipes on neighborhood streets, not enough drainage inlets, ground surface is shaped like a valley)

Trunk Capacity Limitations
(i.e. large pipe that collects sewage from many different neighborhoods is undersized)

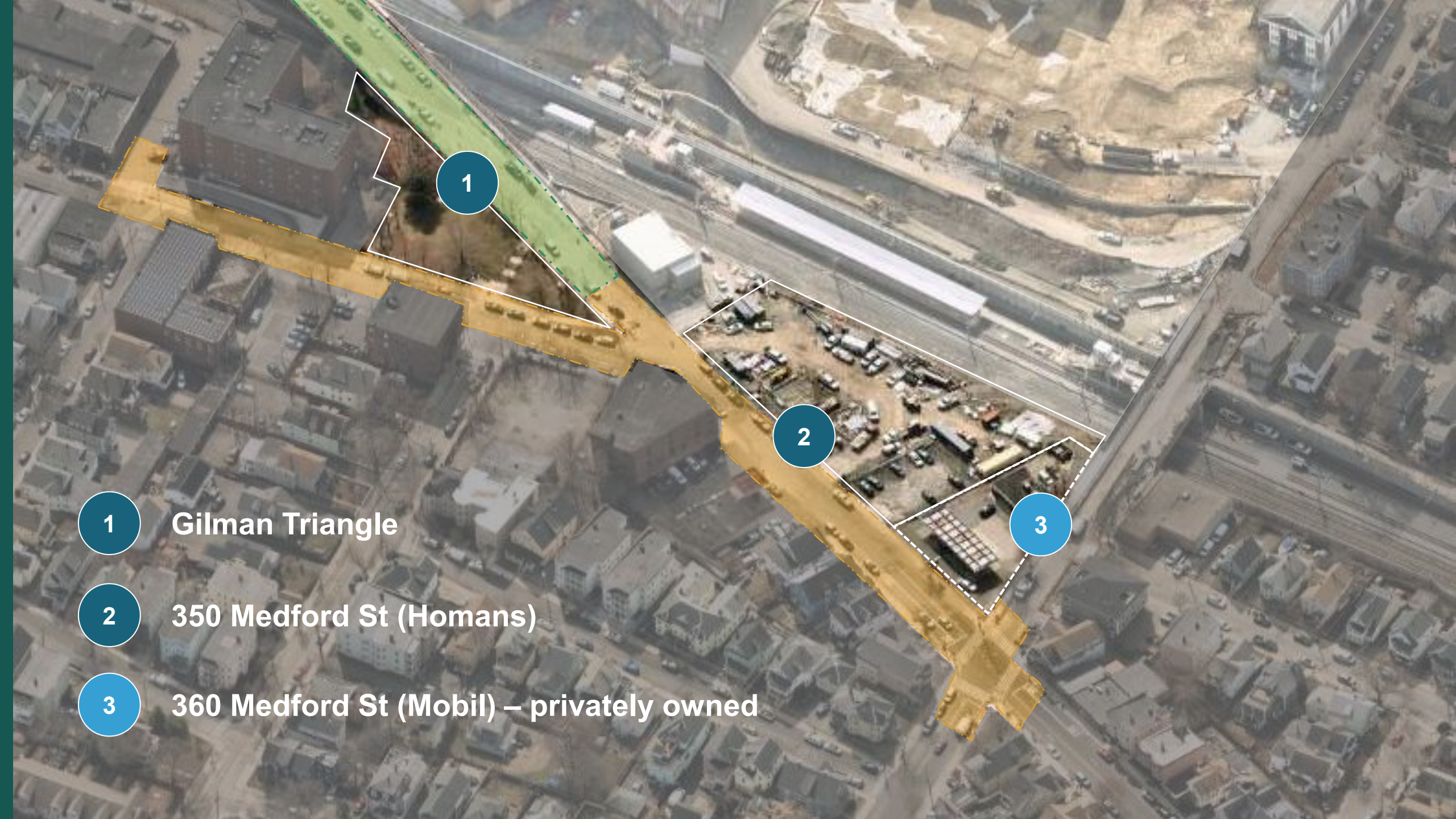
Local & Trunk
Capacity Limitations

City-Wide Flood Implementation Priorities

TABLE 4. CONCEPTUAL PROJECT RANKING WITH ANTICIPATED DURATION OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION PHASES

PROJECT ID	PROJECT NAME	PRIORITY LEVEL	DESIGN PHASE DURATION	CONSTRUCTION PHASE DURATION	NOTES
S2-2	Jaques St Area	High	1-1.5 years	2-3 years	Concurrent with Ten Hills Rd Area
CA-1.1	Morrison Ave Area	High	1.5 years	3 years	Concurrent with Winslow Ave project
CA-1.2	Winslow Ave Area	High	1.5 years	3 years	Concurrent with Morrison Ave project
CA-1.3	Vernon St Area	High	9 months	15 months	
S2-1	Ten Hills Rd Area	High	4 months	8 months	Concurrent with Jaques St Area
CA-1.4	Tufts University Area	High	6 months	9 months	
S2-3	Richdale Ave and Bradley St Area	High	1.5 years	3 years	
C2-2	Concord Ave, Lincoln Park and South of Somerville Ave Area	High	1.5-2 years	3-4 years	Concurrent or close in time with Dane St, Lake St, and Harrison & Ivaloo St projects
C2-4	Lake St Area	Mid	9 months	1.5 years	Concurrent or close in time with Concord Avenue, Lincoln Park and South of Somerville Avenue area, Dane St, and Harrison & Ivaloo St projects
C2-8	Harrison & Ivaloo St Area	Mid	9 months	1.5 years	Concurrent or close in time with Concord Avenue, Lincoln Park and South of Somerville Avenue area, Dane St, and Lake St projects
C2-3	Dane St Area	Mid	1-1.5 years	2-3 years	Concurrent or close in time with Concord Avenue, Lincoln Park and South of Somerville Avenue area, Harrison and Ivaloo St, and Lake St projects
C2-6	Albion St Area	Mid	1 year	2 years	
S1-1	Sewershed S1 Surface Drainage Improvements	Mid	6 months	1 year	
C1-1	Franklin St and Inner Belt Rd	Mid	1-1.5 years	2-3 years	
M-2	Franey Road Area	Low	1 year	2 years	
S2-4	Flint and Gilman St Area	Low	1-1.5 years	2-3 years	
S2-6	Middlesex Ave Area	Low	6 months	1 year	
A-1	Woodstock St and Hooker Ave Area	Low	6 months	1 year	
M-1	Pearson Rd & Broadway Area	Low	1 year	2 years	
C2-7	Walnut, Thorpe & Hamlet St area	Low	6 months	1 year	
A-3	Dilboy Area	Low	4 months	8 months	
A-2	North St Area	Low	4 months	8 months	

What does all of this mean for
redeveloping City-owned property like
the Homans site?



1

Gilman Triangle

2

350 Medford St (Homans)

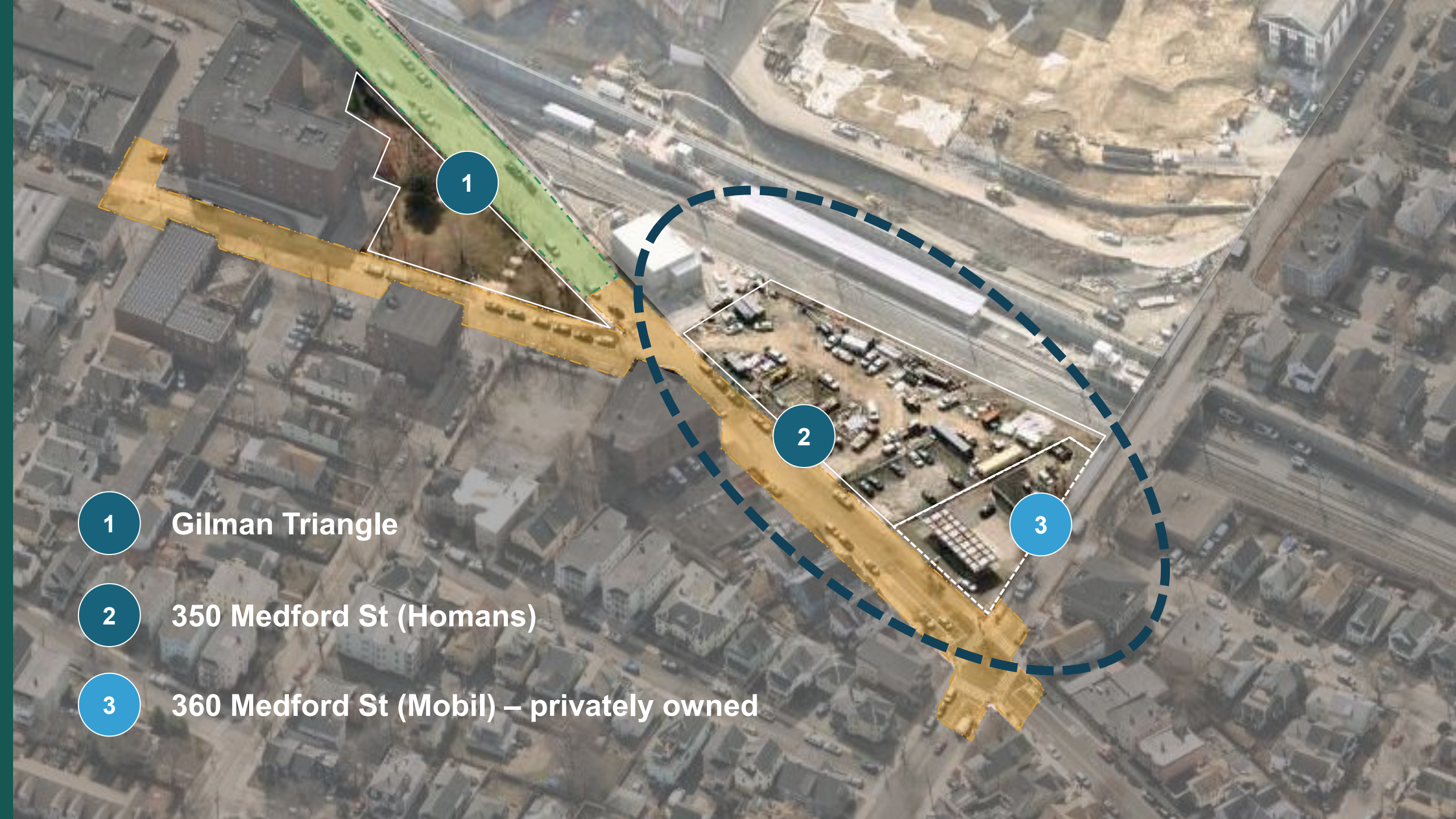
3

360 Medford St (Mobil) – privately owned

2022 Check In on Development Priorities

- Provide a “no hill” route from Medford St/Pearl St up to the station
- Support and complement existing local businesses
- Include a variety of comfortable public spaces for all ages, abilities, and seasons
- Emphasize community uses and activities
- Address neighborhood flooding
- Add more activity in the square
- Prioritize housing – affordable and diverse options
- Provide connections through the square
- Represent Somerville’s diverse culture





1

Gilman Triangle

2

350 Medford St (Homans)

3

360 Medford St (Mobil) – privately owned

Disposition Study

Internal Process for the Capital Improvement Program is wrapping up (includes buildings for City/school use)

City has a number of properties that may soon be ready for disposition for other (non-City/school) uses:

- Determination of surplus assets
- Decision of which assets to prioritize first
- Homans/350 Medford St would score highly

May involve a few months of internal work to confirm start of disposition process



1895 Building



19 Walnut



Homans Site (350 Medford)

Two Approaches

Urban Renewal Plan

- Urban Renewal is a tool that allows the City to take blighted private property
- Requires an Urban Renewal Plan to be approved by the City Council and Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development
- Can include multiple sites in the neighborhood
- Would involve a community process to determine which sites to include and review the urban renewal plan

If needed
Step 2

Request for Information/Qualifications

- See if there are developers who would be interested in development without the Mobil station
- Get an official perspective from the current Mobil station property owner to see if there is a route to collaboration without City taking the property
- Explore partnership options for key infrastructure challenges (e.g. station access)
- Can itself be a first step to the development partner selection process

Step 1

Two Approaches

Urban Renewal Plan

Request for Information/Qualifications

**Either approach will involve at least 2 years of
pre-construction process**

- Partner selection
- Project design & permitting
- Construction document preparation

Wild card: grants & engineering for elevator/escalator/funicular

Can we deliver on some of the priorities now?

Temporary activities in Gilman Square

Current uses



Temporary activities in Gilman Square

Precedents from CAC meeting

CAC members were excited about the prospect of **using all or a portion of the space for temporary recreational / community uses**. Given the proximity to SHS, they **especially wanted to involve teens**.



Lawn on D | Boston, MA



Austin Foods Trucks and Trailers | Austin, TX

CAC members also expressed wanting to **tie the site into the surrounding neighborhood**, and on the impressive views down Medford Street and up to SHS and City Hall.



Spark Social SF | San Francisco, CA



Off the Grid | Oakland, CA

Temporary activities in Gilman Square

Need for snow and operational storage in Somerville

The City needs additional space to store snow during the winter months (and early spring, depending on volume).

Snow storage in Somerville is extremely difficult—the **City owns very little vacant land where snow can be stored**. But, without proper snow storage, moving throughout the City becomes much more difficult, especially for people with mobility issues, and it can become difficult to open schools. **The Homans site is one of these few places.**

The area of the site dedicated to snow storage could potentially also be used for operational storage (such as of construction equipment) when there is no snow.



Temporary activities in Gilman Square

ARPA Funding Request

OSPCD's Economic Development Division will seek ARPA funding for an operator to develop and run temporary activities in Gilman Square.

One of their tasks would be to determine the feasibility for short-to-medium term activities on:

- Homans site
- Gilman triangle
- Medford St bridge

They would also then manage a series of events in the Square in any/all available places for activities.



Thank you for your attention and patience!
What questions/comments do you have?

Guidelines for engagement

Use the raise hand function or type a question in the chat.

Please ...

- Speak for yourself
- Be respectful of others
- Be as brief as you can (staff will mute after 2 min if needed)

Interpreters will be interpreting your question/comment into each language. You can also ask a question or make a comment in any language and interpreters will interpret it in the other languages offered for the audience (depending on their channel).

Q&A Period

If you have questions but cannot stay, please reach out to the appropriate City staff with your questions:

Development on the Homans site?

Rachel Nadkarni, Acting Director, Economic Development, rnadkarni@somervillema.gov

Mobility in Gilman Square?

Viola Augustin, Senior Planner, Mobility, vaugustin@somervillema.gov

Temporary activities in Gilman Square?

Ben Demers, Planner, Economic Development, bdemers@somervillema.gov

Stormwater management?

Brian Postlewaite, Director of Engineering, bpostlewaite@somervillema.gov

Art on the TPSS?

Greg Jenkins, Executive Director, Somerville Arts Council, gjenkins@somervillema.gov

Snow storage on the Homans site?

Eric Weisman, Director of Operations, DPW, eweisman@somervillema.gov

Staying engaged

Joint meeting of the City Council Land Use and Transportation Committee and Somerville Planning Board on ground floor commercial spaces fronting pedestrian streets

Thursday, February 2, 2023, at 6:30pm (Link to join: <https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/hVIYC1wPpJhMNRPGsGpjBF>)

Next Gilman Square Neighborhood Association meeting:

Monday, February 6th, from 6:30-8pm.

(Link to join: <https://mitll.zoomgov.com/j/1616948063?pwd=bk1yMkpHUEFXWUErcG5aa1RTY3htQT09>)

Meeting ID: 161 694 8063

Passcode: 468205

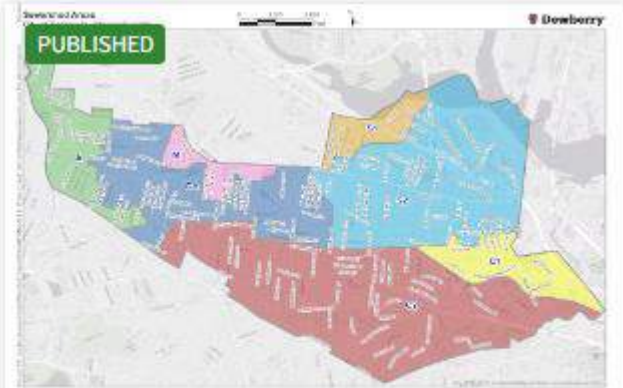
Next Gilman Square CAC meeting:

Thursday, February 23, 2023, from 5:30-7pm. (These meetings occur on the fourth Thursday of every month, with information posted on the City website at least 48 hours ahead.)

References – Somervoice Projects



Gilman Square Plan Implementation



Citywide Drainage and Water Quality M...

Voice.somervillema.gov/projects



Spring Hill Sewer Separation Project



Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Control...



Winter Hill Plan Implementation