

APPENDIX B: Environmental Studies

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Figure B.1a | Existing + New Shadows - March 21, Vernal Equinox

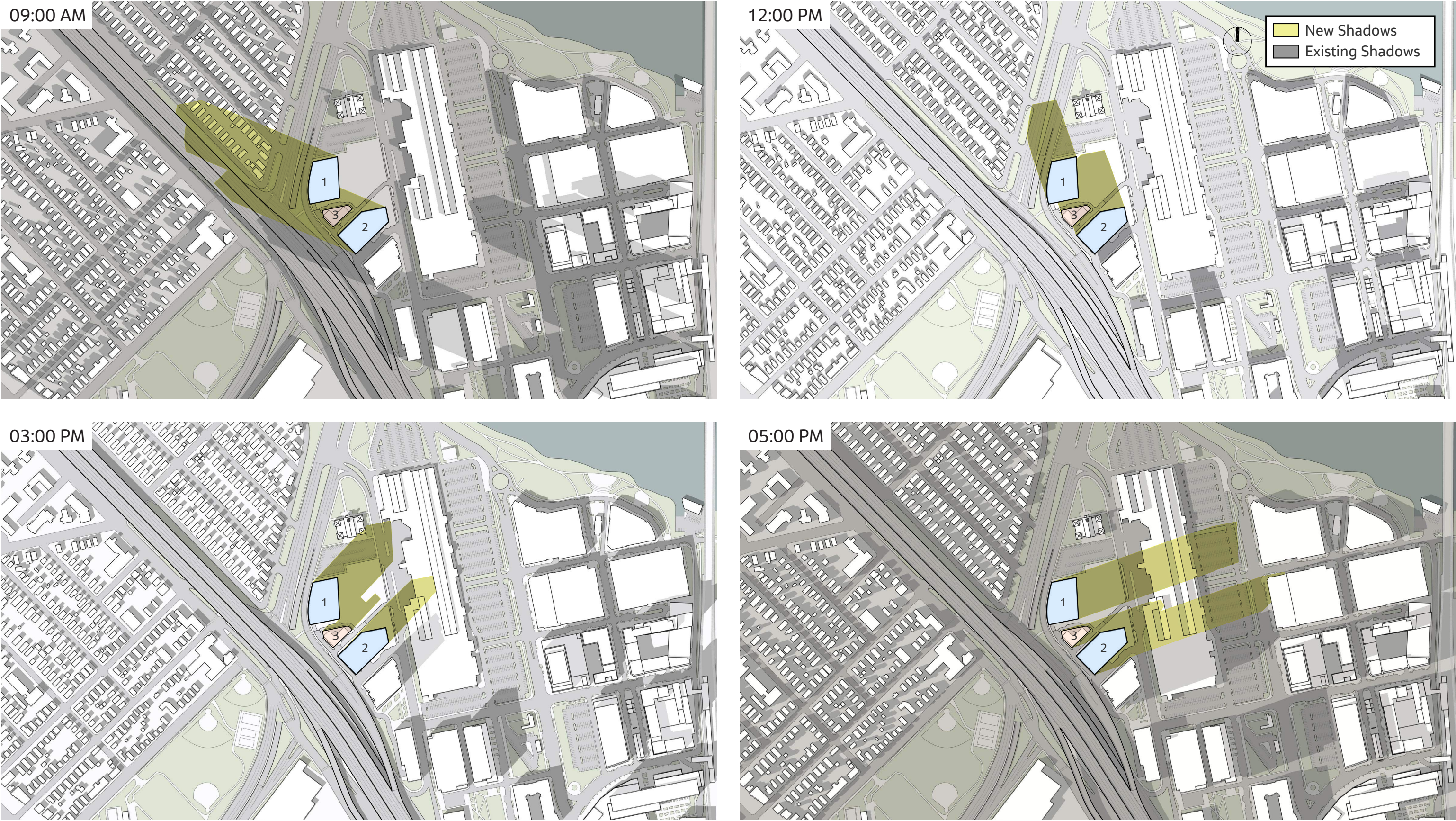


Figure B.1b | Cumulative Shadows - March 21, Vernal Equinox

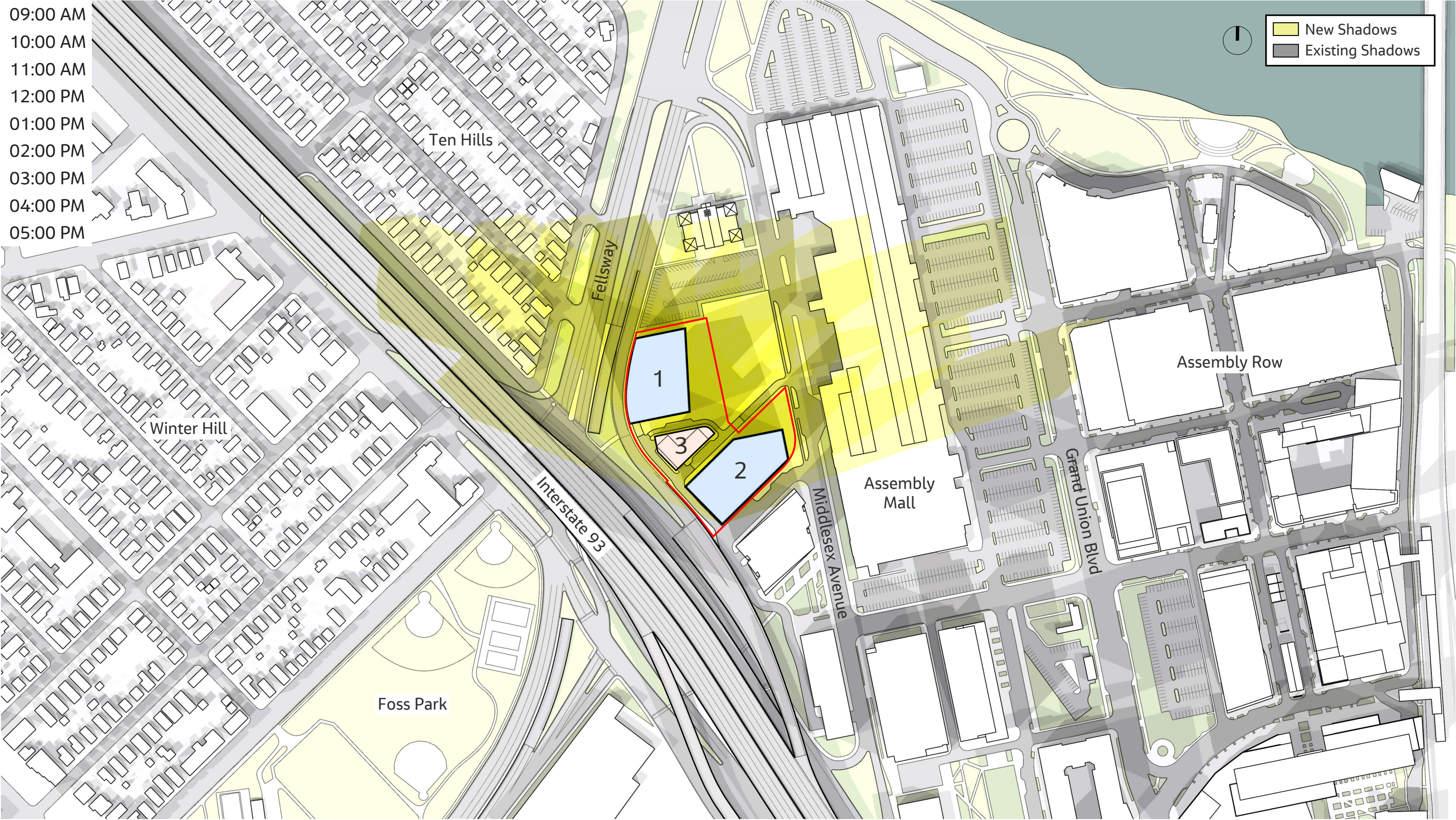


Figure B.2a | Existing + New Shadows - June 21, Summer Solstice

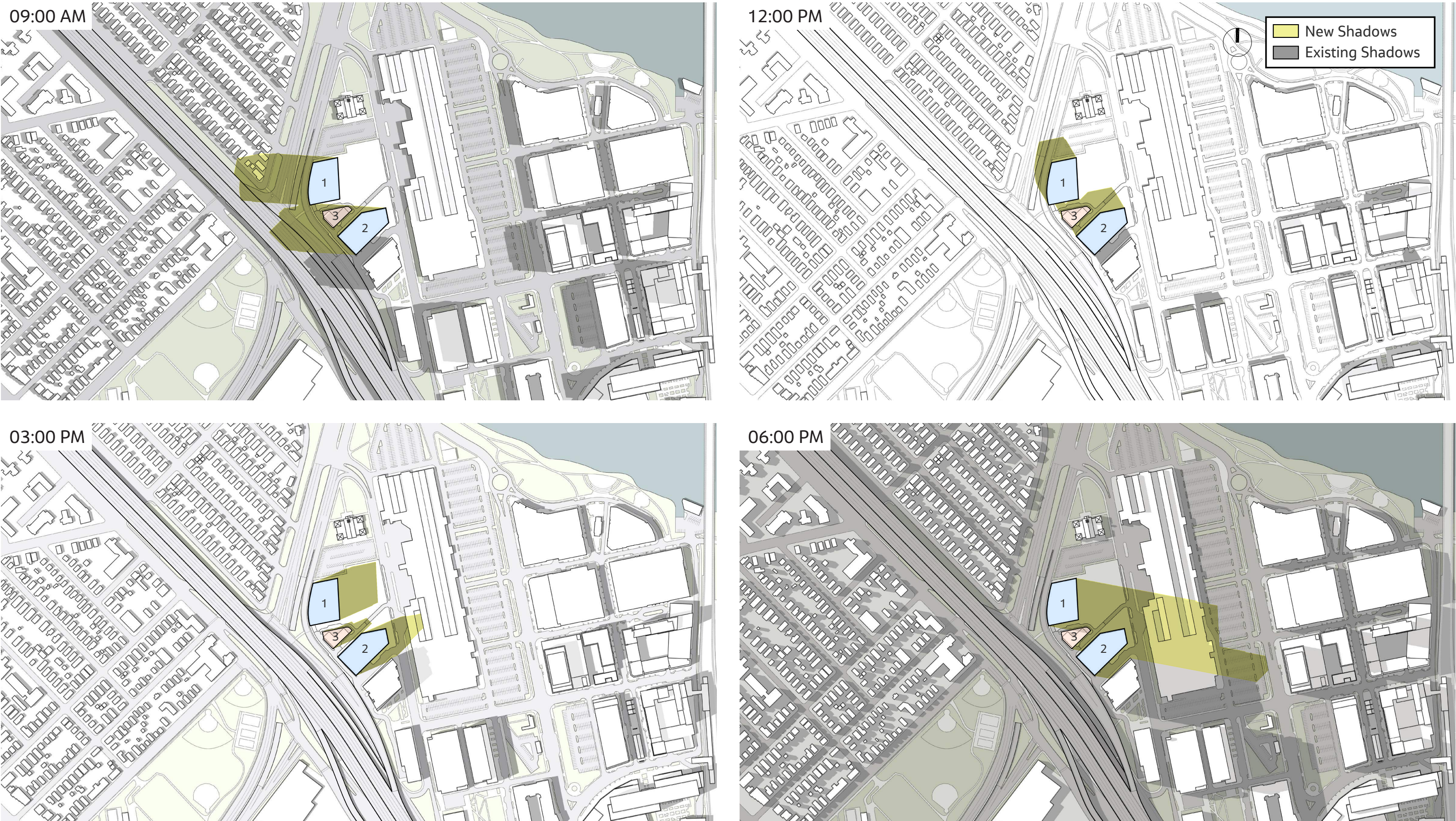


Figure B.2b | Cumulative Shadows - June 21, Summer Solstice



Figure B.3a | Existing + New Shadows - September 21, Autumnal Equinox

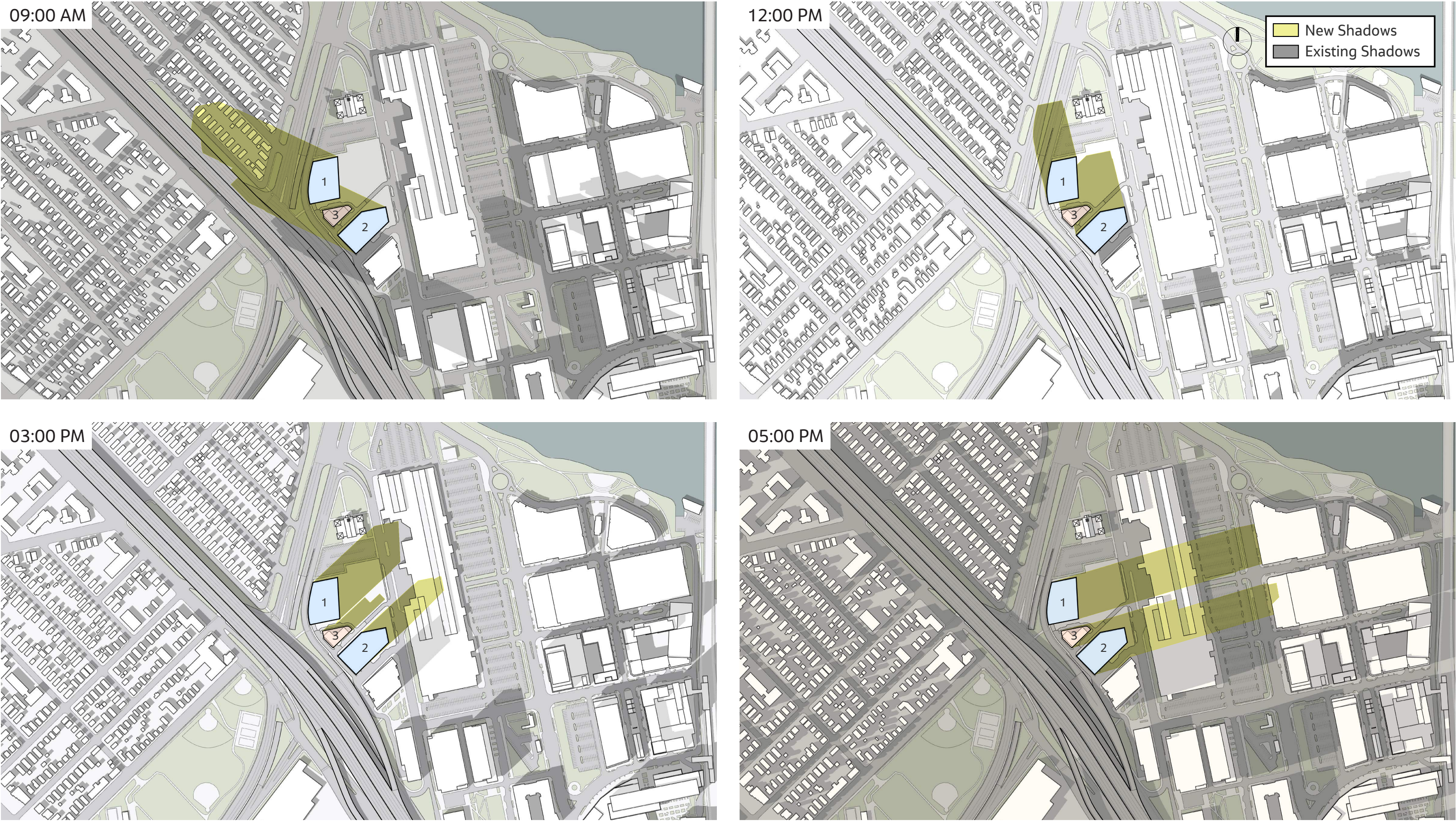


Figure B.3b | Cumulative Shadows - September 21, Autumnal Equinox

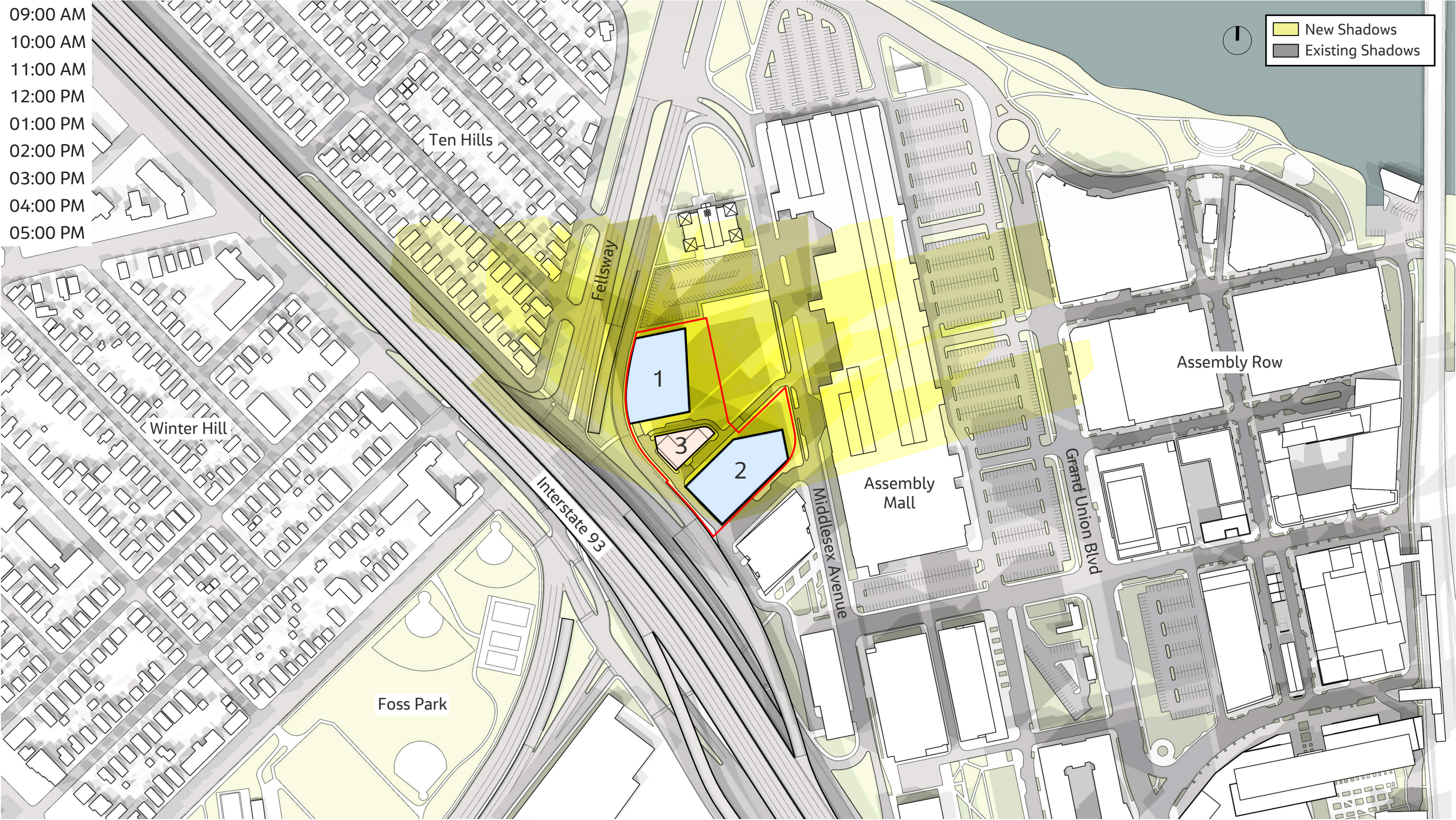


Figure B.4a | Existing + New Shadows - December 21, Winter Solstice

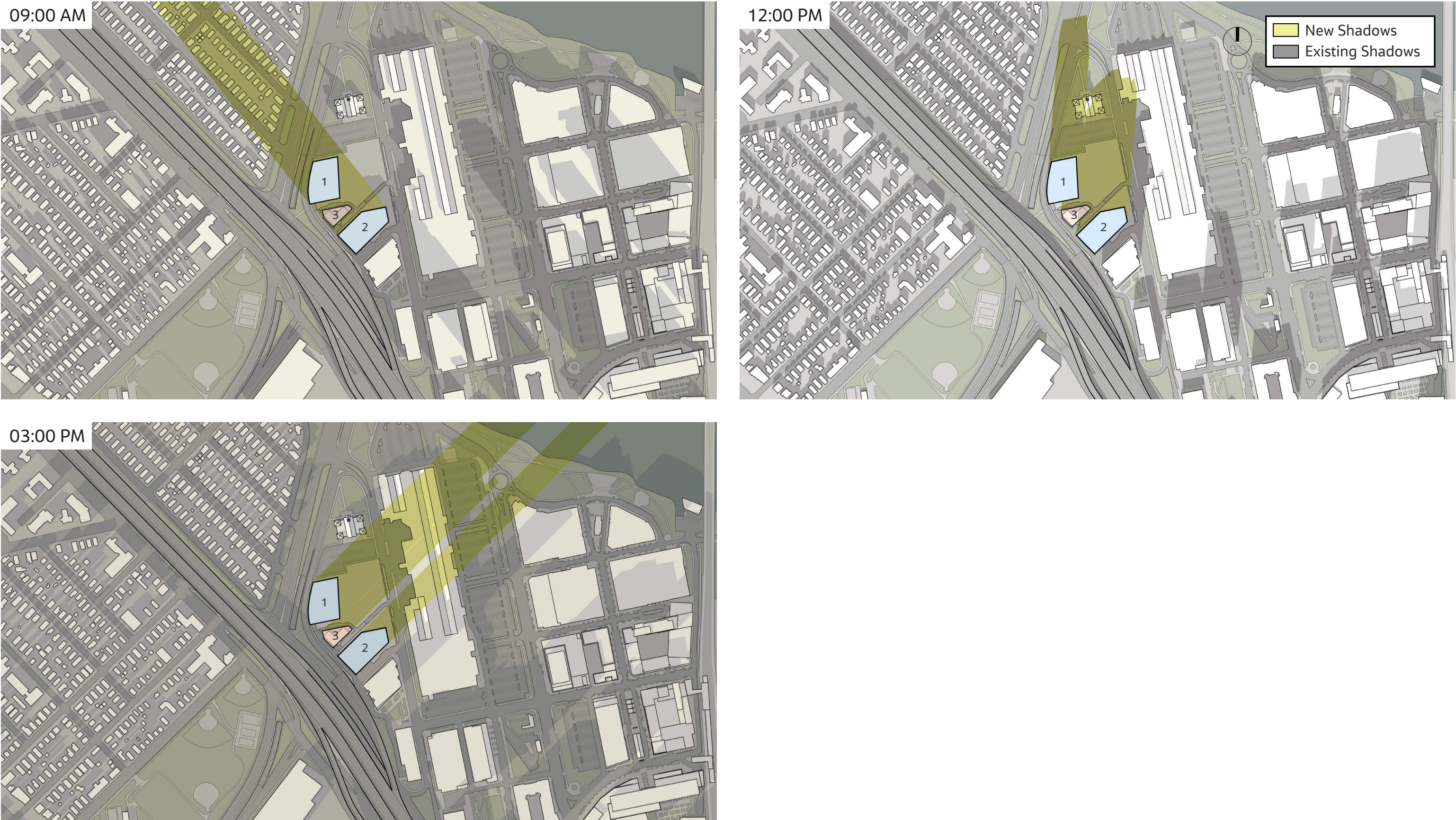
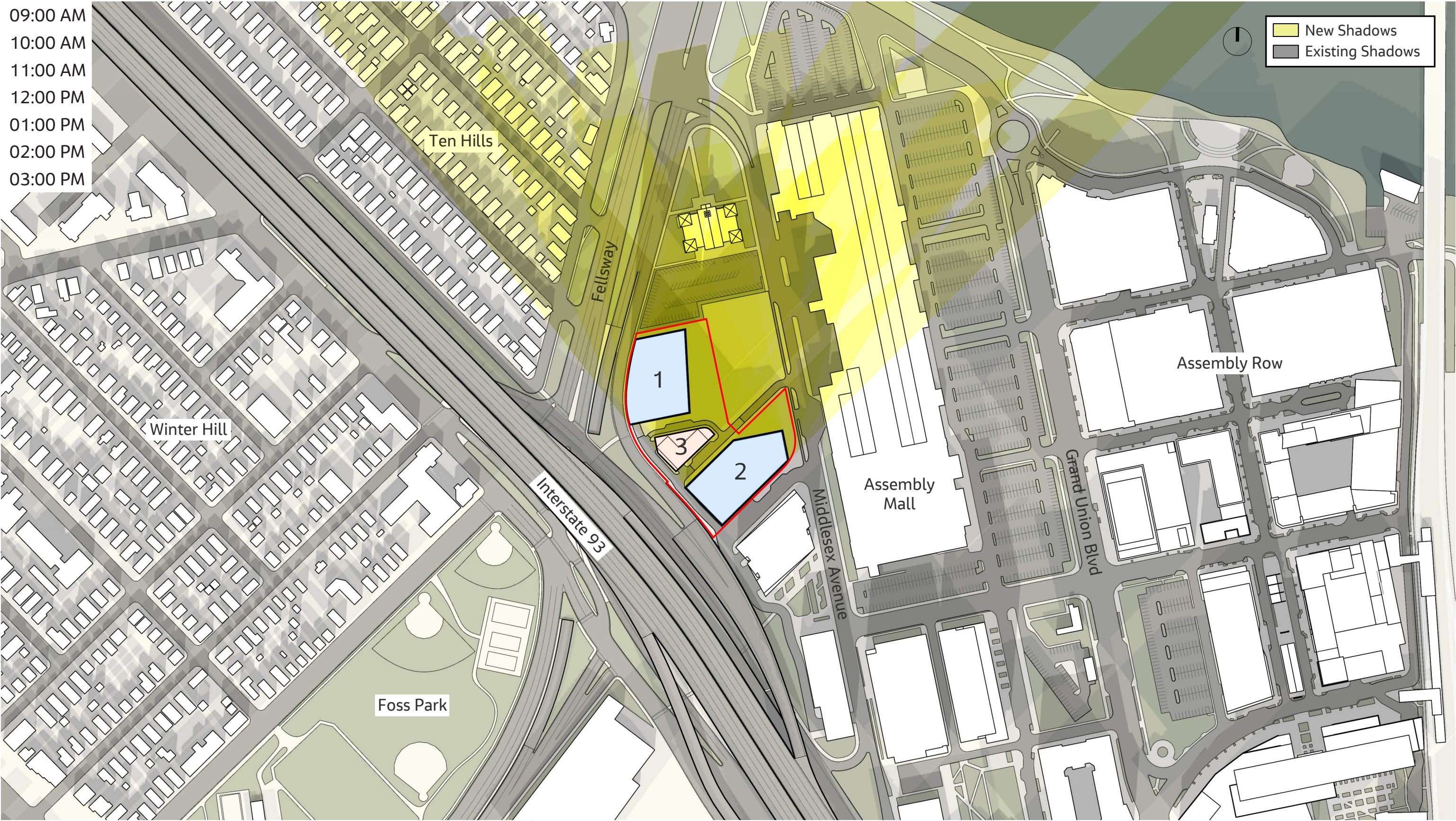


Figure B.4b | Cumulative Shadows - December 21, Winter Solstice



APPENDIX B: Environmental Studies

› Civic Space Study

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Master Plan Special Permit

Civic Space Study

20-23 Cummings Street

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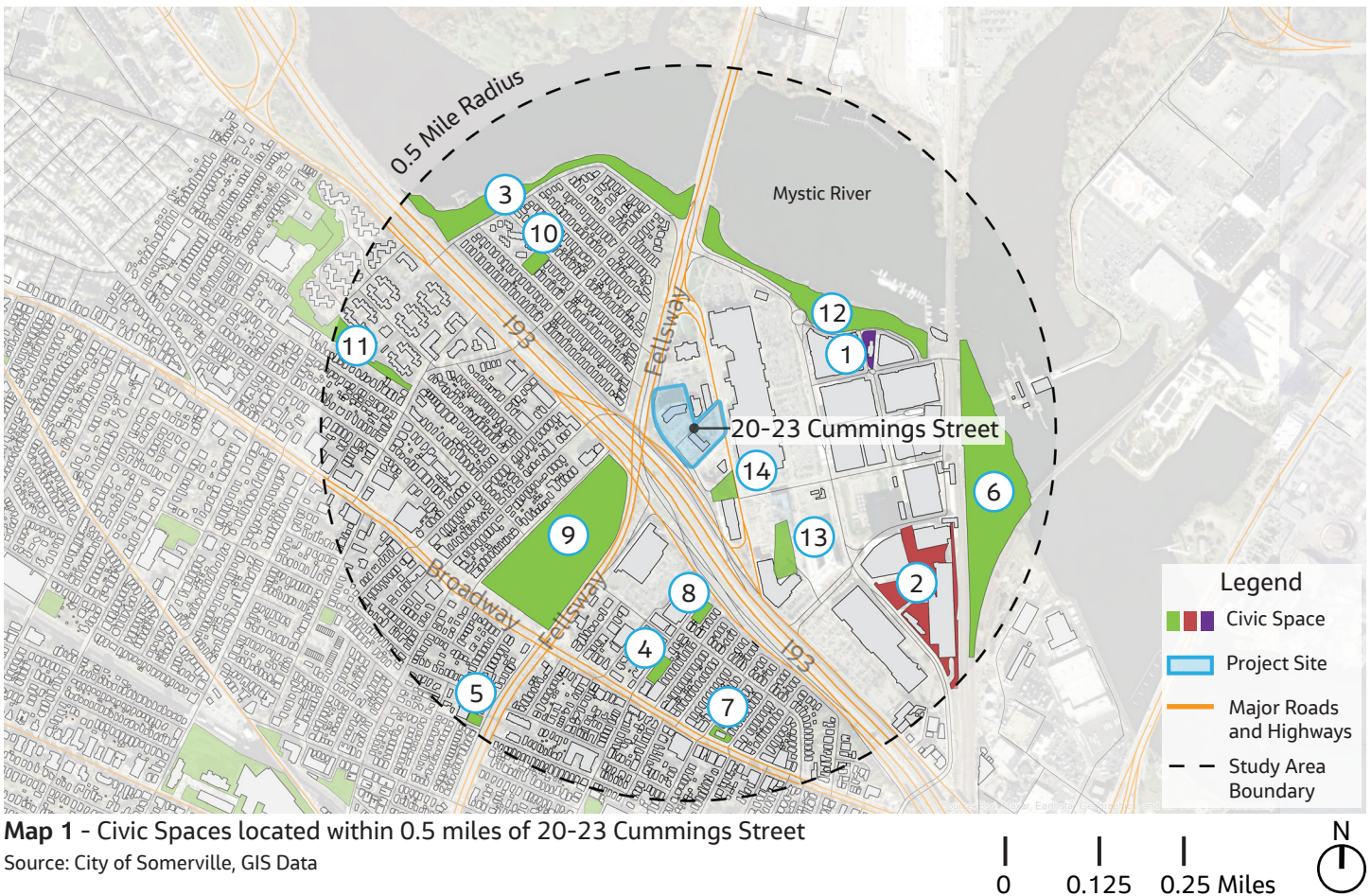
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1.1 Study Area



The City of Somerville's Zoning Ordinance defines Civic Spaces as part of the overall Public Realm. Article 13 of the ordinance sets requirements for all Civic Spaces to help ensure that development in the city is contributing to the overall quality of living for all residents and visitors. Civic Spaces are categorized into three main types---Parks, Commons, and Plazas---each with subtypes that have standards for size, circulation, access, amenities, furnishings, plantings, uses and other characteristics. The development will, working with the City of Somerville and Neighborhood input, be designed in accordance with the Public Realm requirements.

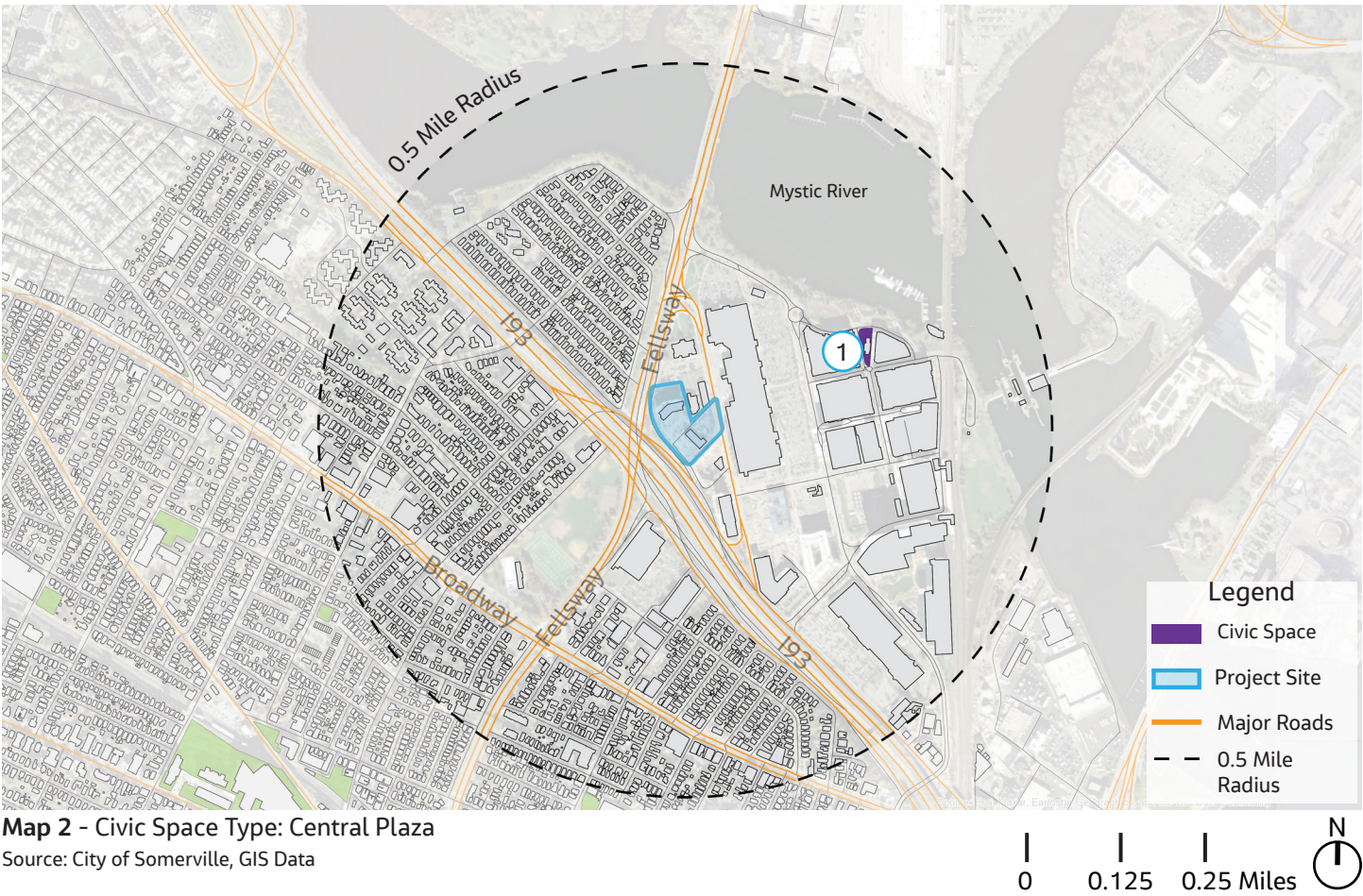
Map 1 shows the study area of the 20-23 Cummings Street project site, as determined by the extent of a 0.5 mile walking radius beyond the site. According to the City of Somerville GIS data and discussion with City officials, 12 existing Civic Spaces fall within the 0.5 mile radius. These 12 Civic Spaces and their size, zoning type, civic use, and attributes are summarized in Section 1.2 and are further described in the following pages of this document. **Map 1** also includes the proposed Civic Spaces for the 74 Middlesex and 5 Middlesex projects located southwest of the project site, which are currently under development.

The study area is primarily composed of the Assembly Square district; the neighborhoods of Winter Hill, East Somerville, and Ten Hills; and a significant area of the riverbank and watershed of the Mystic River to the north.

1.2 Study Area Civic Spaces

Civic Space Name		Type: Plaza	Size (SF)	Size (Ac)	% of Total Civic Space	Civic Uses (Top 3)
1	Assembly Square Block 2A Plaza	Central Plaza	14,359	0.33	0.7%	Passive Space
Civic Space Name		Type: Common				
2	Mass General Brigham Public Space	Public Common	199,739	4.59	9.1%	Passive Space
Civic Space Name		Type: Park				
3	Blessing of the Bay Park	Community Park	308,280	7.08	14.1%	Passive Space, Boat House, Performance Space
4	Chuckie Harris Park	Neighborhood Park	16,730	0.38	0.8%	Passive Space, Playground, Performance Space
5	Cremin Playground	Pocket Park	7,583	0.17	0.3%	Passive Space, Playground, Water Feature
6	Draw 7 Park	Regional Park	530,403	12.18	24.2%	Passive Space, Athletic Field, Water Feature
7	East Branch Library Lawn	Pocket Park	8,022	0.18	0.4%	Passive Space
8	ESCA Park	Neighborhood Park	12,655	0.29	0.6%	Passive Space
9	Foss Park	Regional Park	599,819	13.77	27.4%	Playground, Athletic Field, Pool
10	Grimmons Park	Neighborhood Park	19,325	0.44	0.9%	Playground, Handball, Climbing Wall
11	Healey School Community Plgd	Community Park	179,707	4.13	8.2%	Schoolyard, Playground, Water Feature
12	Sylvester Baxter Riverfront Park	Community Park	237,368	5.45	10.8%	Passive Space, Scenic, Water Feature
13	5 Middlesex Ave (future development)	Neighborhood Park	43,560	1.00	2.0%	Passive Space, Performance Space
14	74 Middlesex Ave (future development)	Neighborhood Park	14,500	0.33	0.7%	Passive Space, Café Seating, Water Feature
Subtotal Plazas			28,859	0.33	0.7%	
Subtotal Commons			199,739	4.59	9.1%	
Subtotal Parks			1,963,452	45.41	90.2%	
Study Area Totals			1,992,311	50.32	100.0%	

1.3 Walkshed Analysis | Central Plaza



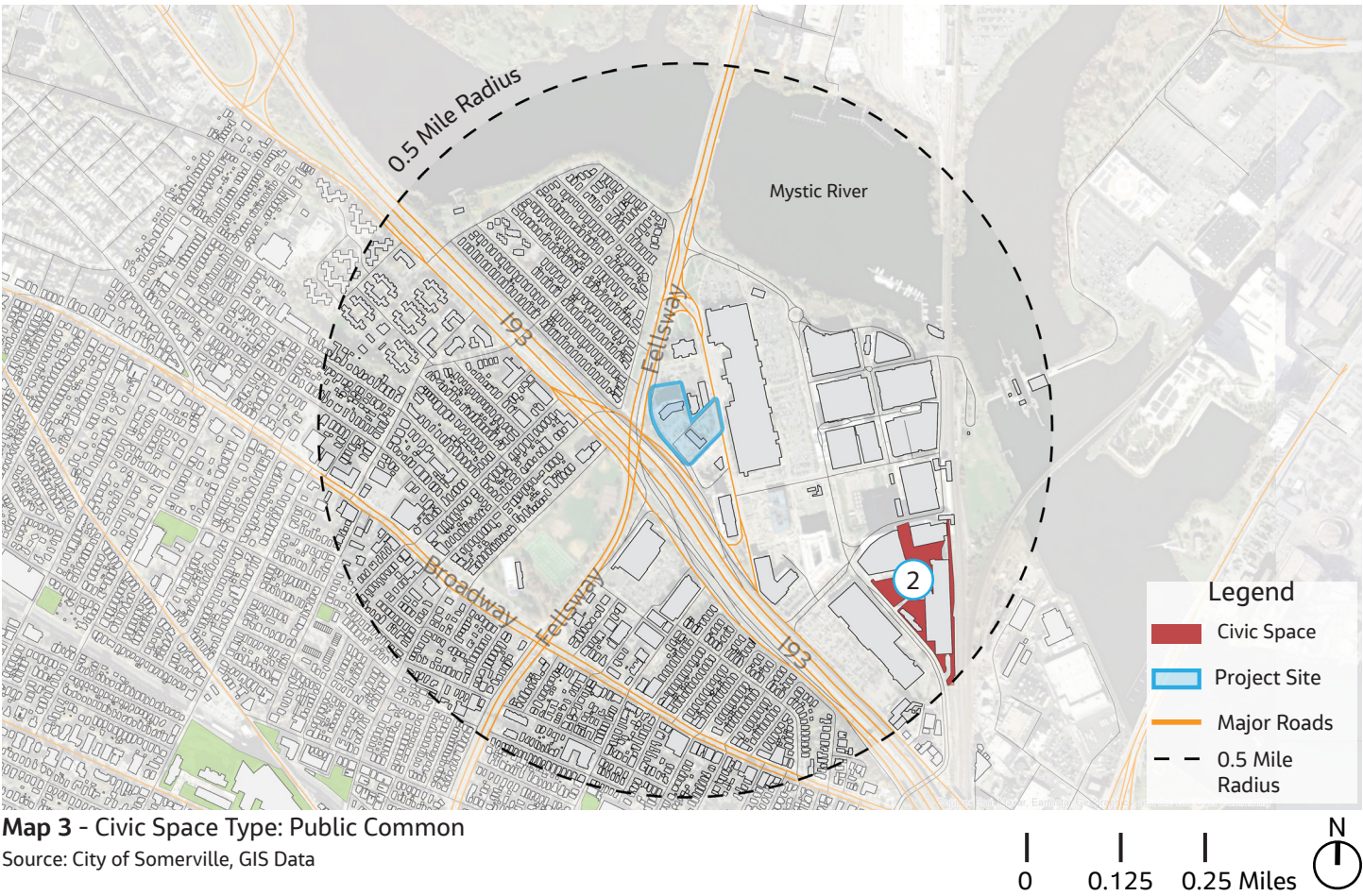
Civic Space Name		Type	Size (SF)	Size (Ac)	% of Total Plazas
1	Assembly Square Block 2A Plaza	Central Plaza	14,359	0.33	100.0%
Central Plaza			14,359	0.33	100.0%

Central Plaza

A Central Plaza is a subtype of Plaza Civic Space. A Plaza is generally designed for passive recreation, civic purposes, and commercial activities, with its character defined by both hardscape and landscape. Plazas are often associated with commercial and activity centers at the nexus of major circulation routes. Central Plazas are rectangular, sized between 8,000 SF to 2 acres, and open to the sky with at least 50% of the area unobstructed. They have ample seating, furnishings, and have planted beds and/or lawns. The study area contains one Central Plaza that is 14,359 SF (0.33 acres) and is 0.7% of the available Civic Space. Assembly Square Block 2A Plaza, with eateries and outdoor tables, connects Sylvester Baxter Riverfront Park and Assembly Row. Characterized by its unique paving pattern and plentiful seating opportunities, the plaza provides a threshold for pedestrians moving between the park and the streetscape.

Source: <http://www.somervillezoning.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/09/Sep-2018-Sub-13.pdf>

1.3 Walkshed Analysis | Public Common



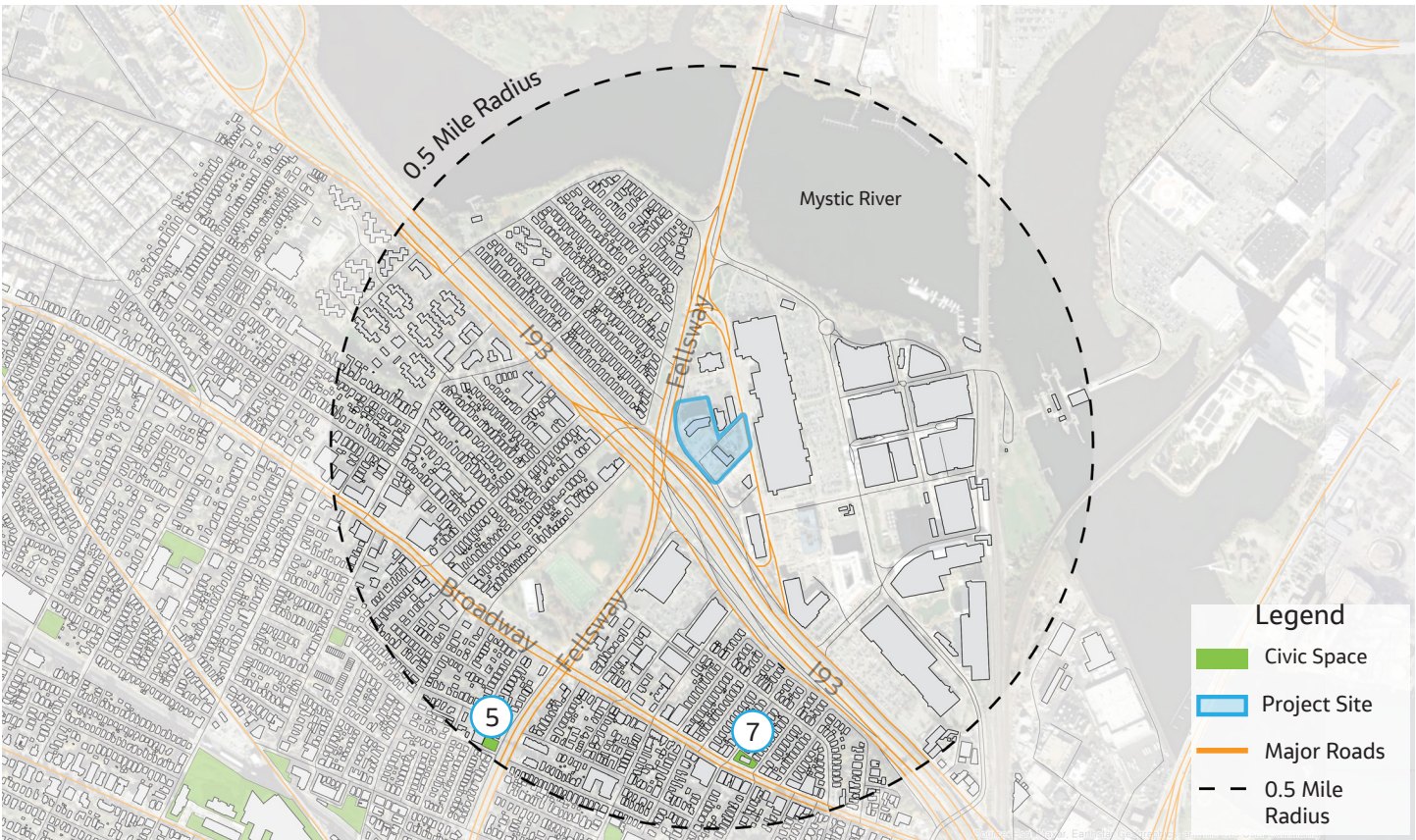
Civic Space Name		Type	Size (SF)	Size (Ac)	% of Total Commons
2	Mass General Brigham Public Space	Public Common	199,739	4.59	100.0%
Public Common			199,739	4.59	100.0%

Public Common

A Public Common is a subtype of a Common Civic Space. Generally, a Common is designed for passive recreation and civic purposes, with its character defined primarily by vegetation. A Public common has uninterrupted open space that can be paved and unpaved, with large canopy trees. Some uses include different forms of play, public events, sports, picnics, general relaxation, and the opportunity for public markets. The size of a Public Common is between 20,000 SF to 8 acres. The study area contains one Public Common that is 199,739 SF (4.59 acres) and is 9.4% of the existing Civic Space. Mass General’s Brigham 4.59 acre corporate campus is unique because it is always open to the public. The campus’ hardscape and green space amenities include seating areas, lawns, an amphitheater, and walking paths. It is surrounded by mixed-use development and serves as an outdoor anchor for residents and pedestrians within the 45 acre Assembly Row.

Source: <https://www.landscapeforms.com/en-US/lighting/projects/Pages/Partners-HealthCare-Project.aspx>
<http://www.somervillezoning.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/09/Sep-2018-Sub-13.pdf>

1.3 Walkshed Analysis | Pocket Park



Map 4 - Civic Space Type: Pocket Park

Source: City of Somerville, GIS Data



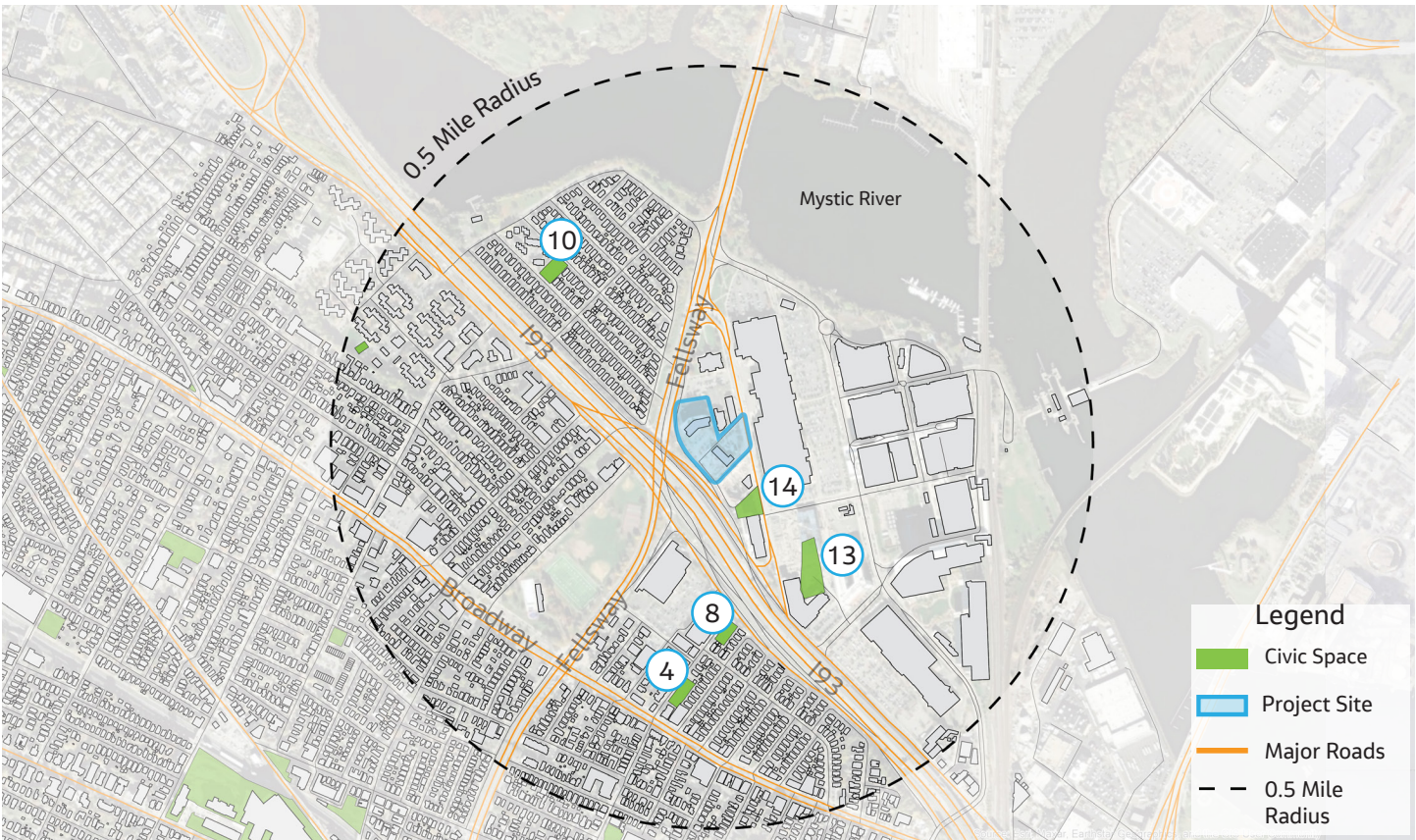
Civic Space Name		Type	Size (SF)	Size (Ac)	% of Total Parks
5	Cremin Playground	Pocket Park	7,583	0.17	0.4%
7	East Branch Library Lawn	Pocket Park	8,022	0.18	0.4%
Pocket Park			15,604	0.36	0.8%

Pocket Park

A Pocket Park is a subtype of Park Civic Spaces. Generally, Parks support active and passive recreation for people of all ages and life circumstances. Pocket Parks range between 800 SF to 10,000 SF. They must have seating for comfort and casual watching of surrounding activity. They provide dual experiences of unobstructed views and a sense of enclosure. The study area contains two Pocket Parks that total 15,604 SF (0.36 acres) and 0.8% of the available park space. Cremin Playground contains play features, water elements, and café seating. The park uses unique lighting and grading features to provide a safer environment for park users. The other Pocket Park, East Branch Library Lawn, is a greenspace surrounding three sides of the library and can host small informal events.

Source: <http://archive.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/parks-and-open-space/otis-street-playground>
<http://www.somervillezoning.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/09/Sep-2018-Sub-13.pdf>

1.3 Walkshed Analysis | Neighborhood Park



Map 5 - Civic Space Type: Neighborhood Park

Source: City of Somerville, GIS Data

Civic Space Name		Type	Size (SF)	Size (Ac)	% of Total Parks
4	Chuckie Harris Park	Neighborhood Park	16,730	0.38	0.8%
8	ESCA Park	Neighborhood Park	12,655	0.29	0.6%
10	Grimmons Park	Neighborhood Park	19,325	0.44	1.0%
13	5 Middlesex Ave (future development)	Neighborhood Park	43,560	1.00	2.2%
14	74 Middlesex Ave (future development)	Neighborhood Park	14,500	0.33	0.7%
Neighborhood Park			48,710	1.12	2.5%

Neighborhood Park

A Neighborhood Park is a subtype of Park Civic Space. Generally, Parks are well connected to their surroundings and provide a variety of spaces that accommodate active recreation, play, and/or physical fitness. They are meant to be flexible for use, have loose plantings of trees and shrubs, and may have varied topography. Neighborhood Parks, which are 8,000 SF to 2 acres in size, reflect the desires of surrounding residents. Cognitive and social play is encouraged, with ample site furnishings and, where appropriate, water features. Three Neighborhood Parks are in the Study Area, totaling 48,710 SF (1.12 acres) and 2.5% of the available park space.

Chuckie Harris Park provides a variety of uses, including a giant slide down a “mountain”, a rain wall that can double as a movie screen, and other traditional play elements. The park also has passive areas, including community gardens and café seating. Grimmons Park is a lively park with a historical archway, handball courts, traditional play equipment, and shade trees. ESCA Park, which opened in June 2023, provides seating areas, lawn features, and densely planted perimeter beds. Additionally, two Neighborhood Parks are under development at 5 Middlesex Avenue and 74 Middlesex Avenue and will add 58,060 SF to the study area.

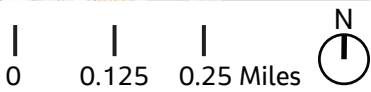
Source: <http://archive.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/parks-and-open-space/harris>
<http://archive.somervillema.gov/departments/ospcd/parks-and-open-space/grimmons>

1.3 Walkshed Analysis | Community Park



Map 6 - Civic Space Type: Community Park

Source: City of Somerville, GIS Data



Civic Space Name	Type	Size (SF)	Size (Ac)	% of Total Parks
3 Blessing of the Bay Park	Community Park	308,280	7.08	15.6%
11 Healey School Community Plgd	Community Park	179,707	4.13	9.1%
12 Sylvester Baxter Riverfront Park	Community Park	237,368	5.45	12.0%
Community Park		725,355	16.65	36.7%

Community Park

A Community Park is a subtype of Park Civic Space. Generally, Parks are well connected to their surroundings and provide a variety of spaces that accommodate active recreation, play, and/or physical fitness. They are meant to be flexible for use, have loose plantings of trees and shrubs, and may have varied topography. Community Parks are well-connected to neighborhoods and transportation routes, with 2/3 reserved for active recreation and play. There are three Community Parks in the Study Area, totaling 725,355 SF (16.65 acres) and 37.8% of the available park space. Sylvester Baxter Riverfront Park is a threshold, marked by a remnant industrial archway, between Assembly Square and the Mystic River. With scenic views of the river, the park also offers residents a playground, walking paths, and outdoor event spaces. The Healey School Community Playground is a new development project that features play areas, walking paths, and a U-12 soccer field. Blessing of the Bay Park is a waterfront park with paddle boating, kayaking, walking trails, and a meadow.

Source: <https://urbnparks.com/boston/sylvester-baxter-riverfront-park/>
<https://www.somervillema.gov/healeyschoolyard>

1.3 Walkshed Analysis | Regional Park



Map 7 - Civic Space Type: Regional Park

Source: City of Somerville, GIS Data



Civic Space Name	Type	Size (SF)	Size (Ac)	% of Total Parks
6 Draw 7 Park	Regional Park	530,403	12.18	26.8%
9 Foss Park	Regional Park	599,819	13.77	30.3%
Regional Park		1,130,222	25.95	57.1%

Regional Park

A Regional Park is a subtype of a Park Civic Space. Generally, Parks are well connected to their surroundings and provide a variety of spaces that accommodate active recreation, play, and/or physical fitness. They are meant to be flexible for use, have loose plantings of trees and shrubs, and may have varied topography. Regional Parks are easily entered from multiple locations and include a large network of well-connected paths that accommodate walking, running, strollers, bicycles, and maintenance vehicles. Sized at 10 acres or more, they accommodate passive and active recreation and are equally comfortable for large crowds, smaller groups, and individuals. Restrooms are required at Regional Parks and could possibly accommodate other open structures, with trees used as a major organizing element.

The study area contains two Regional Parks that total 1,130,222 SF (25.95 acres) and 58.9% of the available park space. Foss Park is Somerville’s second-largest park; it serves local and regional user groups. The park’s recreational amenities include walking paths, bike paths, baseball, basketball, soccer, tennis, swimming, playground, and waterplay. Draw 7 Park is adjacent to the Assembly Square T stop and the Mystic River and supports multiple recreational activities, including soccer, fishing, walking, and biking.

Sources: <https://voice.somervillema.gov/fosspark>
https://somervillehub.org/park_playground/foss-park
<https://www.mass.gov/locations/draw-seven-state-park>

1.3 Walkshed Analysis | Daycare Centers



Map 8 - Context Map: Daycare Services in Study Area

Source: Google Maps, City of Somerville, GIS Data



Daycare Center Name

- 1 Bennajah Child Care
- 2 Bright Future Educare Center
- 3 Childrens Center at Assembly Row
- 4 Ms. Miledys's NeighborSchool
- 5 Rock and Roll Daycare Winter Hill
- 6 Sweet Family Weecare

Daycare Centers

There are four daycare centers located inside the Study Area. In addition, two exist just beyond the northwest extent of the boundary and are included in the Study Area because of their proximity (shown at markers 1 and 4 on the map). Of the four centers inside the boundary, three are located on the opposite side of I-93 and Fellsway West.

1.3 Walkshed Analysis | Public Art



Public Art

Twelve art installations are inside the Study Area, with the majority being mural art curated by local artists with input from community members. Murals appear on exterior building walls, highway retaining walls, and city switch boxes. One instance of digital art, “The Conversation,” is in Assembly Square and was installed in 2021. The large amount of public art in the neighborhood underscores that Somerville has embraced and nurtured a creative and diverse community.



Hand Switchbox



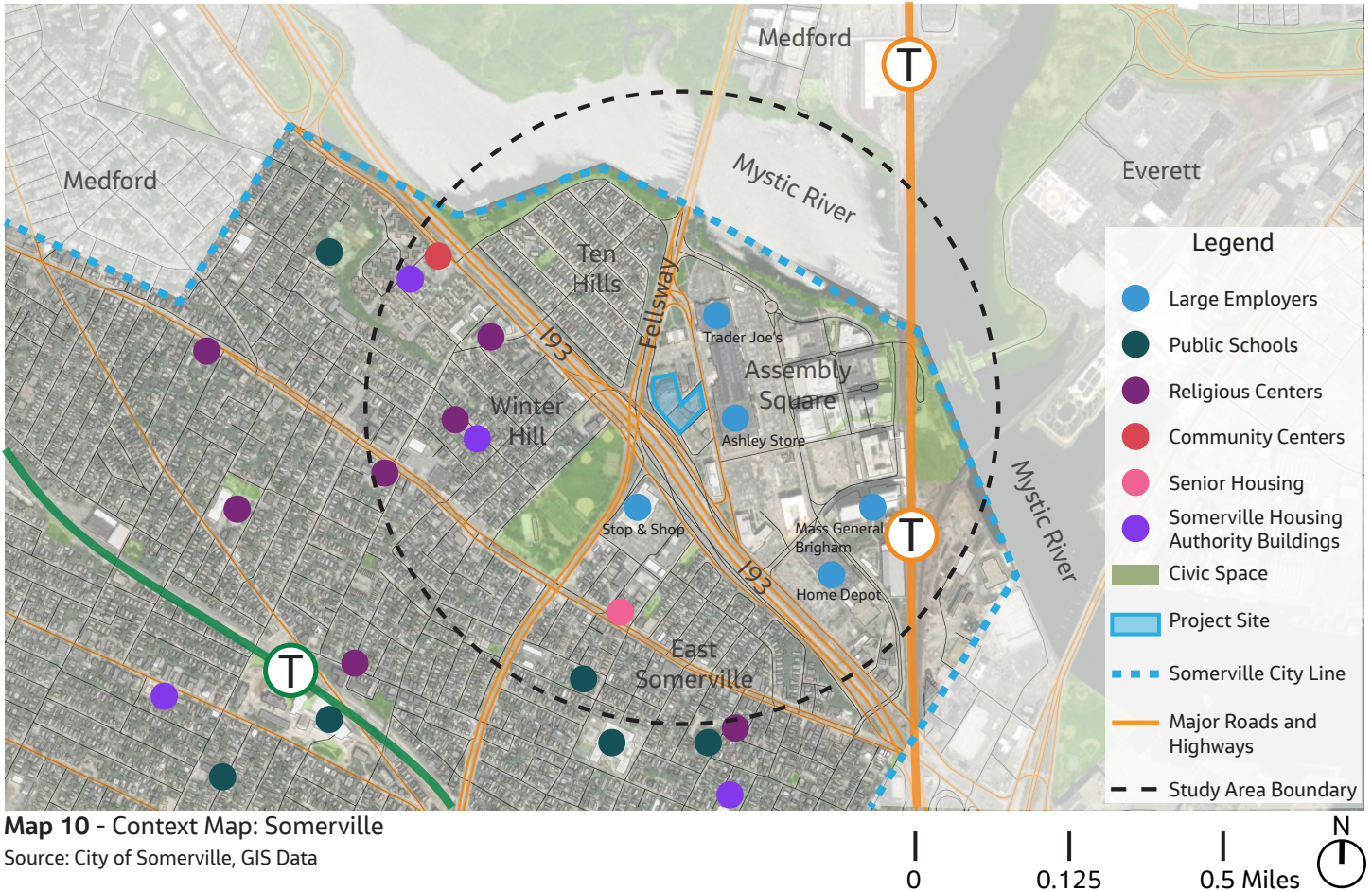
Mystic River Mural



Goddess of Winter Hill

Source: <https://somervilleartscouncil.org/artmap>

1.4 Project Site Context

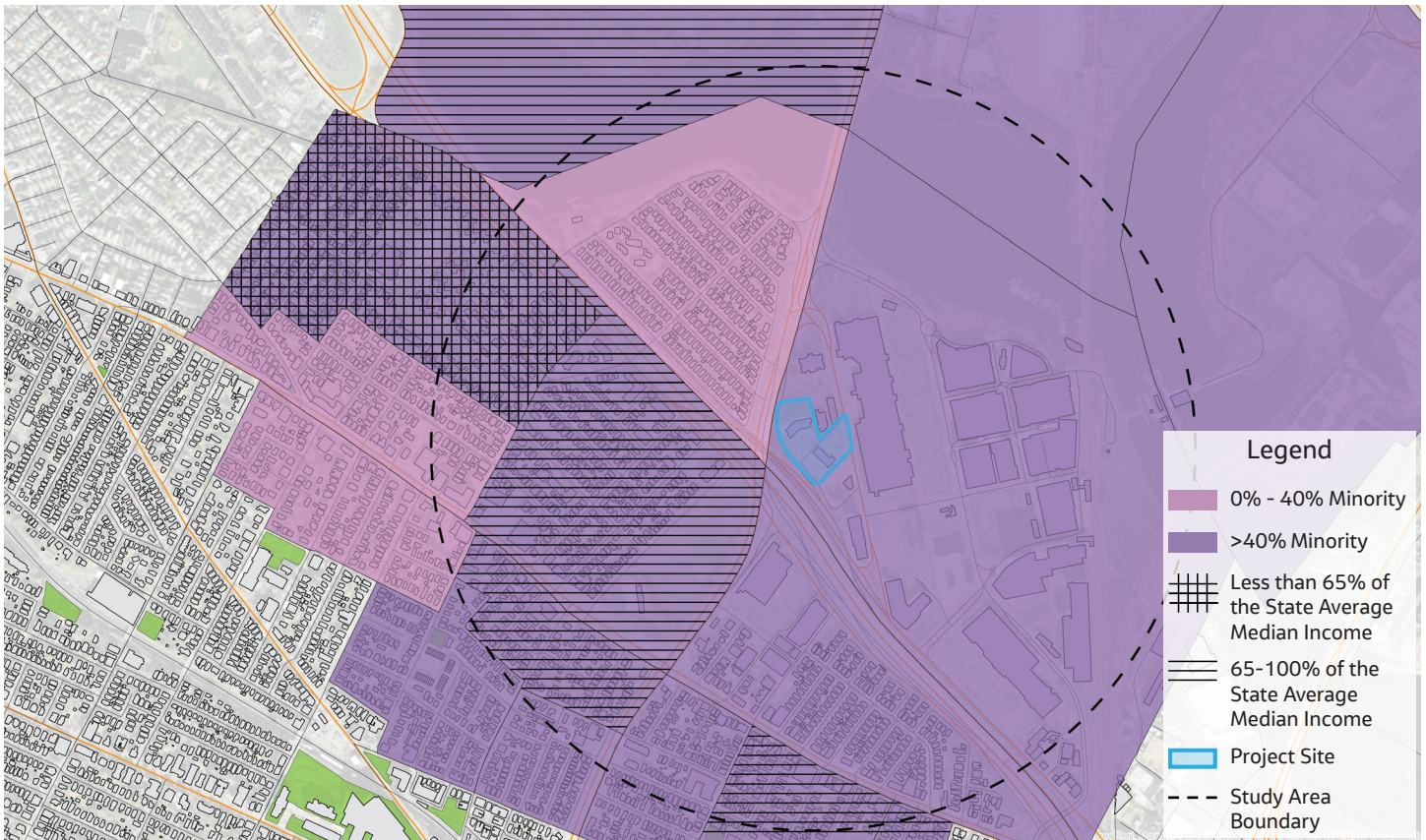


Context

Map 10 situates the project site within a larger Somerville context. Located at the junction of Assembly Square, Ten Hills, Winter Hill, and East Somerville, the project site is accessible from all neighborhoods and within walking distance to subway stops on the Green and Orange T lines. The project has the advantage of being located at an existing threshold between the city's established and newer uses. Access by vehicles is easy because of the site's proximity to I-93 and local major roads such as the Fellsway and Middlesex Avenue.

Assembly Square puts retail, eateries, entertainment, and multiple employers within easy range of all the area's neighborhoods, including the project site. The Mass General Brigham campus is a major work center and Assembly Square offers small, medium, and large stores that provide both employment and essential shopping needs. By contrast, Somerville's long settled and adjacent neighborhoods have fewer large employers and retailers but offer community-wide uses such as public schools, religious centers, parks, recreation, and community centers. The housing mix of these neighborhoods is also diverse with market rate, senior housing, and Somerville Housing Authority complexes. An abundance of existing Civic Spaces within the half-mile study area further reinforces the vibrant context of the 20-23 Cummings Street development.

1.5 Demographic Analysis



Map 11 - Populations Identified as Minority and Income Relative to State Average

Demographics

The study area encompasses 16 public population census blocks. Based on the 2020 Decennial Census and MassGIS's 2020 Environmental Justice Populations data, about 21,955 residents reside within these blocks, with 50.4% identifying as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC). The median age for residents is 32.9 years old, and the median household income is \$91,337 per year. Per capita income is \$58,437. Housing units total 10,259, of which about 92.7% are occupied.

Environmental Justice populations are identified to ensure that people receive equal protection from dangerous environmental conditions and health hazards, and who also have or should have equal access to outdoor amenities. Communities of note for Environmental Justice considerations in this area are those in which the annual household income is below 65% of the state median household income and those in which more than 40% of the population is composed of BIPOC citizens. Based on 2020 Census data collected and processed by MassGIS, 13 of the 16 blocks within the focus area contain more than 40% BIPOC population. One census block contains a median household income below 65%, and five others fall below the state's average median household income.

Source: <https://data.census.gov/>
<https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=ebeb65deb5c14f4d8849fd68944b7ee6>
<https://www.mass.gov/environmental-justice>
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-2020-environmental-justice-populations>

1.5 Demographic Analysis

Census Block	Population	Housing Units	Occupied	Vacant	Median Age	Median Income	Median Income Relative to State Avg.	Minority (%)	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Other Race	2+ Races
3398.02-4	2554	1420	1249	171	33.9	76656	90.84	58.9	1050	601	162	428	4	80	229
3398.03-1	1043	620	547	73	29.6	96250	114.06	59.3	424	31	63	450	0	21	54
3424.02-1	1387	674	614	60	31.5	135500	160.57	58.3	578	116	460	91	2	54	84
3501.05-1	1181	530	495	35	34.6	104750	124.13	30.9	816	43	135	83	3	32	69
350106-1	1660	1006	939	67	30.9	109234	129.45	43.7	934	77	156	367	0	17	109
3501.07-1	1355	553	513	40	32.3	107315	127.17	51.1	662	74	388	111	1	52	67
3501.08-1	2655	1049	998	51	31.7	53135	62.97	66.6	887	519	812	164	2	50	221
3501.08-2	1519	725	676	49	31.2	98583	116.83	37.7	946	84	175	198	1	33	82
3501.09-1	2176	882	832	50	31.2	72241	85.61	53.8	1006	190	432	173	6	128	239
3502.01-1	602	243	227	16	34.5	105769	125.34	47.3	317	45	150	36	1	17	36
3502.01-2	1328	532	511	21	32.9	112105	132.85	43.9	745	101	248	140	7	21	66
3502.01-3	769	319	290	29	33.6	79167	93.82	44.5	427	63	145	70	1	4	59
3502.02-3	1120	564	544	20	33.3	87014	103.12	29.6	789	36	112	95	2	23	63
3514.03-2	928	391	361	30	31.9	79167	93.82	48.4	479	54	255	71	1	24	44
3514.03-3	597	317	307	10	40.8	57875	68.58	48.4	308	53	104	62	1	16	53
3514.03-4	1121	434	402	32	32	86633	102.66	51.7	541	93	290	70	4	37	86

Total Population	Total Housing Units	Total Occupied	Total Vacant	Avg. Median Age	Avg. Median Income	Avg. Median Income Relative to State Avg.	Total % Minority	Total White	Total Black	Total Hispanic	Total Asian	Total Native American	Total Other Race	Total 2+ Races
21995	10259	9505	754	32.9	91337.125	1.082	50.4%	10909	2180	4087	2609	36	609	1561

Source: <https://data.census.gov/>
<https://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=ebeb65deb5c14f4d8849fd68944b7ee6>
<https://www.mass.gov/environmental-justice>
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massgis-data-2020-environmental-justice-populations>

2.1 Existing Plans | Assembly Square Proposed Plan



Map 12 - Assembly Square Neighborhood Plan

The plan above shows the project site and its relation to the Somerville Assembly Square Neighborhood Plan Update, 2022. The Neighborhood Plan proposes two elements that make 20-23 Cummings Street a key part of Assembly Square's development; the extension of Artisan Way and the proposal for new Civic Space. The extension of Artisan Way to Cummings Street connects the Winter Hill, East Somerville, and Ten Hills neighborhoods with Assembly Square and the Mystic River waterfront parks. The 20-23 Cummings Street project will sustain and reinforce pedestrian access from adjacent neighborhoods entering and exiting Assembly Square.

2.2 Departmental Feedback

The project team has met with city staff, including staff at Public Space and Urban Forestry Division (PSUF), multiple times during the development of the Civic Space Study and Masterplan Special Permit. The project team met with city staff on 13 June 2023 to review initial site concepts and again on 7 July 2023 to review site programming diagrams for both Civic Spaces. Below are comments the project team received during both of these meetings, summarized by City staff and by the project team.

- Green spaces can be a welcoming gateway, but they should read as being part of the public realm.
- Spaces that serve all ages will draw people in; family-friendly civic spaces and public amenities are essential.
- Take advantage of the shared pedestrian street and the existing crosswalk under the highway, which brings people into the Assembly Neighborhood. The treatment of the corner must be distinguishable, safe, and inviting. The architecture and landscape can highlight this connection as a gateway between the project site and adjacent neighborhoods.
- The middle space where the street, Central Plaza and Green meet is an important moment to have a focal amenity and/or experience that draws you into the space.
- Need to build a clear case for the two types of Civic Spaces being proposed – Central Plaza and Civic Green. Why are those types important and how did you determine there is a lack of those types in the neighborhood?
- Make these places read as public open space. Creating civic space between lab buildings will be hard to activate and get the public to use the space and feel comfortable. We caution using the word “campus” as it implies a private space in which only certain people are allowed.
- It’s helpful to look at precedence spaces, but be careful to choose public spaces that are relevant to the project location and ambitions of the city. For example, the Novartis HQ in Cambridge feels more like a private space. Consider that the Central Plaza will be shaded much of the day and that the Green will be sunny and will need shade for comfort. Plantings ecologies will be critical.
- Do not think that the Central Plaza requires the space to be entirely paved. The designation is not intended to lock designers into a particular use. This neighborhood has a lack of open space on the McGrath side. Encourage the most vulnerable residents to use the spaces and consider activation of spaces after 5pm.
- In the Central Plaza diagram presented, the Nature Play is set deeper in the site, near the daycare. Consider placing it closer to the main entrance so it feels open to everyone and not just the daycare.
- Design the playground to EEC and State Playground guidelines to ensure the daycare, citizens, and any other groups can all use it.
- Ground floor tenants should be carefully chosen. Recommend hyper-local or arts focused businesses. The daycare can be challenging because of the desire to close off the space to public (the existing daycare at Partners Health Office does not allow public access, which is a loss for neighborhood residents).
- Furniture and materials should be clearly identifiable as public and not too far off from City public space standards.

2.3 Neighborhood Feedback

The project participated in a Neighborhood Community Meeting on 26 July 2023. The project's building massing and site considerations were presented, as well as preliminary discussions about the location of two Civic Spaces. These issues were mentioned and will be explored as the project develops:

- Sustain and strengthen the connections to the neighborhoods of East Somerville, Ten Hills, and Winter Hills.
- Create Civic Space uses that would promote inclusivity.
- Provide all season activity.
- Account for differences in uses, character, and plantings between spaces that are in sun and shade.
- Consider for air quality because of the site's proximity to roadways and highways.
- Use native and pollinator plants.

2.4 Existing Conditions Analysis

The study area has twelve existing Civic Spaces and two Civic Spaces under development, amounting to 50 acres within the 1/2 mile boundary surrounding the project site. The majority of the Civic Space acreage is classified as Parks (89.6%), with most of the acreage located in larger Regional and Community Parks like Foss Park and riverfront parks, including Draw 7 Park, Blessings of the Bay Park, and Sylvester Baxter Riverfront Park. The Mass General Brigham Common Space is the sole Commons Civic Space in the study area. Assembly Square Block 2A is the only Central Plaza in the study area. Civic Uses found in the study area include playgrounds, athletic fields, dog parks, water features, public swimming, and passive spaces. This survey of existing and future Civic Spaces as well as input from the City and Neighborhood Community Meetings will help to determine which subtype of open spaces would best benefit this area of Somerville and what uses should occur within those subtypes.

Of the fourteen (14) Civic Spaces noted in the study area, eight are located across from I-93 and Fellsway West. Both are significant physical obstacles separating Assembly Square from East Somerville, Ten Hills, and Winter Hill. I-93 bridges over the pedestrian crossing and Fellsway West are major traffic routes that require timed crossing signals. Both roadways are also noisy, block sight lines, fume filled, and unattractive. This analysis reinforces the need to sustain community pedestrian connections between existing neighborhoods, while underlining the importance of making the threshold into the project site visible and inviting.

Environmental Justice may be of issue in Winter Hill and East Somerville where there are areas of populations with more than 40% BIPOC and/or that fall below the average annual state median income. Environmental Justice issues include equal access, inclusivity, and access to physically and psychologically safe areas.

There are twelve public art installations within the 1/2 mile study area, most of them are murals located on the opposite side of I-93 and Fellsway West. There are three instances of public art at Assembly Row: two murals and one digital screen. Public art already contributes to the liveliness of Somerville, reflects its variety of cultures, and gives an outlet for artistic expression.

Historically, the site has abutted smaller commercial buildings and the Somerville District Courthouse to the north. Development in the project area reflects the strength of the Boston area's biotech industries, supported by local institutions. The 120 Middlesex and 74 Middlesex developments are life science buildings, as will be the future 20 and 23 Cummings Street buildings. The success of the Civic Spaces lies in their every day appeal to neighborhood residents. Other populations can contribute to the liveliness of the Civic Spaces. The Hospitality building proposed by this project will regularly bring visitors through the Civic Spaces throughout the day with the potential to add to the liveliness during the morning and evening hours. Equally important is making solid connections with future development. Across Middlesex Avenue, the 2022 Assembly Square Neighborhood Plan also envisions a residential mixed-use development at the Assembly Marketplace, offering more users of the Civic Spaces during mornings, nights, and weekends. Collectively, the Civic Space within the project site and nearby parcels will provide varied open space for the existing and future diverse communities and expanding workforce.

2.5 Conclusions

The project site, which is on the western border of the Assembly Square neighborhood, is at a critical crossroads between existing and future development in one of the most actively growing parts of Somerville. Located at the terminus of a signaled pedestrian crossing at Fellsway West, the 20-23 Cummings Street project can sustain an already active pedestrian and cyclist connection between Assembly Square, East Somerville, Ten Hills, and Winter Hill neighborhoods. Thoughtful site planning, building layout, use of underground parking, and active, accessible, pedestrian-oriented streetscapes will welcome visitors into the Assembly Square neighborhood and to some of the best waterfront parks in the City. The project's two Civic Spaces will be activated by ground-level building lobbies and retail establishments that will serve as anchors and stopping points for visitors or workers within the project site and beyond. Generous pedestrian walkways and buffer zones will invite visitors to and through the site. Short-term and long-term bicycle storage will be visible and easily accessible for those traveling by bike along Middlesex Avenue's dedicated bike lanes or on the shared streets within the project site. In keeping with SomerVision 2040's values, the project site will prioritize pedestrians and cyclists first, and create safe spaces for all. Both of the Civic Spaces will be explored for opportunities to include public art. All Civic Space design will comply with the Development Standards outlined in the 2021 Somerville Zoning Ordinance, with the assistance of the City.

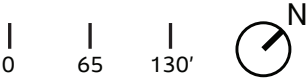
Civic Space 1, an approximately 19,000 square foot rectangular footprint next to 23 Cummings Street, is the project site's largest Civic Space and is roomy enough to provide multiple uses and experiences of varying character, is open to the sky, and has the potential for winding paths that can imbue a sense of (safe) discovery that can be lacking in the urban environment. The space is arranged to have minimal intrusion by cars since traffic is only active on one of its short edges and that road is being designed as a Shared Pedestrian Street, where people take precedence over vehicles. This Civic Space is most closely aligned with the public realm subtype category of a "Central Plaza". However, the ambition is to provide spaces that can add to the activity of the area by being "hardwired" into the lives of neighbors, workers, and visitors. Possibilities include places to meet, relax, be with friends and family, hold community events (the shared pedestrian path can be closed for events), and enjoy nature, all while contributing to the sustainability of all life. Civic Space 1 also has its challenges. Early sun/shade studies show it is the least sunny of the two Civic Spaces. One long side of the landscape abuts the back side of the 120 Middlesex Avenue building. These can be helped by the careful selection and arrangement of plants, properly scaled and convenient places, and an inviting character.

Civic Space 2 is approximately 10,750 square feet, set between Middlesex Avenue, the Shared Pedestrian Cummings Street, and wrapping around the east corner of the 20 Cummings Street building. The space will be activated by the pedestrian/bicycle circulation surrounding two sides of the site, the 20 Cummings Street building lobby, and a large ground-floor retail space, currently planned to be a restaurant or brewery, with outdoor cafe seating. This Civic Space is most closely aligned with the public realm subtype category of a "Green". Since this is the sunniest Civic Space, it could support a gently sloping lawn for daily/weekend use or perhaps programmed events like neighborhood movie night. Because two sides of this triangular space are roads---one with intermittent traffic, the other more busy---it might be desirable to frame Civic Space 2 with permeable landscaped beds that still allow free flow and views across the space. The Shared Pedestrian Street will provide a strong physical connection between Civic Space 2 and 1 for easy pedestrian access throughout the site.

2.5 Conclusions | 20-23 Cummings Street Plan Civic Space Types



Map 13 - Proposed Civic Space Types



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