

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT, COMMUNITY
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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July 30, 2003

Beth Rubenstein
Assistant City Manager for Community Development
238 Broadway
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

Dear Beth,

In response to your request, and City Council Order O-18, I am transmitting thirty-five copies of the June 21, 2003 BRA document "North Allston: The Vision for the Neighborhood Strategic Plan" for inclusion in the City Council packets for the August 4 meeting.

Let me provide you with background information regarding the North Allston Neighborhood Strategic Planning process and the 'Vision' document that is enclosed. Boston launched the North Allston Neighborhood Strategic Plan (NANSP) in November 2000 as an extension of the community planning work undertaken by North Allston residents in the early 1990's and an outgrowth of Harvard's campus planning. The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) is coordinating the North Allston Neighborhood Strategic Planning process. The BRA has hired the Boston-based urban design and planning firm Goody Clancy with funding from Harvard to shape the plan and has established a steering committee comprised of Allston residents, local businesses, and Harvard representatives.

On June 21, 2003 Mayor Thomas Menino and the BRA presented "North Allston: The Vision for the Neighborhood Strategic Plan." The Vision is based on the continuing work of the steering committee, the community, City and State agencies, and the Mayor's Office. The document illustrates the goals and principles of the overall planning process. Key objectives stated in the Vision are to create a mixed-use, mixed-income community; preserve traditional neighborhoods; use new development to enhance quality of life and economic opportunity; integrate campus and community; create a new "heart for the community"; expand access to transit; minimize truck traffic on residential streets; embrace change where appropriate and conserve existing assets where desirable; leverage the new resources being brought to the neighborhood; and enrich North Allston's qualities as a human-scaled urban village.

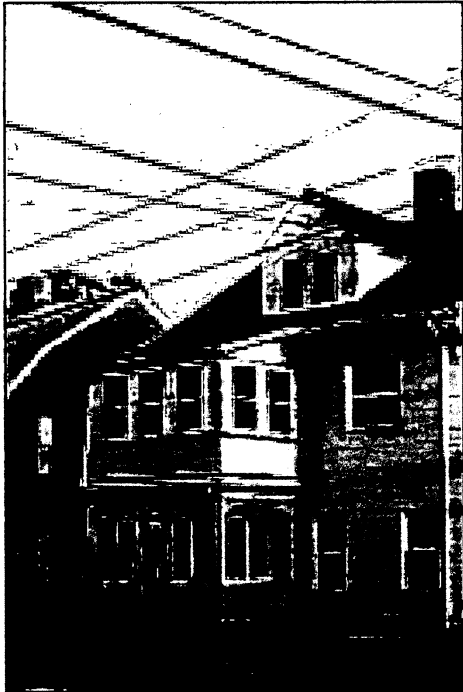
The process is continuing and it is expected that the Plan will be complete by the end of the year. Next steps include finalization of the Plan based on the Vision and creation of an implementation strategy. Please let me know if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



Mary Power
Senior Director of Community Relations

NORTH ALLSTON: THE VISION FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC PLAN



June 21, 2003

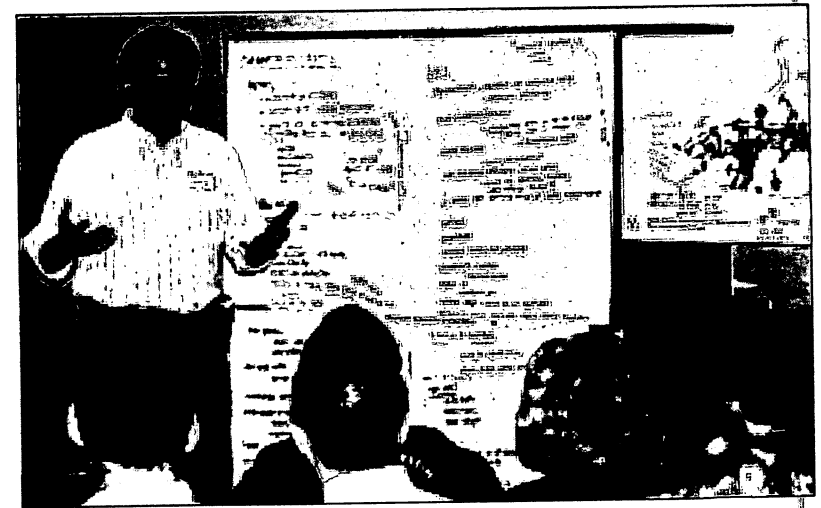


Thomas M. Menino, Mayor
Boston Redevelopment Authority

THE PROCESS THROUGH FEBRUARY 2003

Approximately 40 community events:

- ***Public kick-off: June 27, 2001***
 - *What are the things you value the most about North Allston?*
 - *What things should remain the same?*
 - *What changes would you like to see made?*
- ***Neighborhood Bus Tour***
- ***Interviews***
- ***Charrettes***
- ***20 Planning Group Working Sessions***
- ***15 Community Meetings***



Community charrette

PROCESS OBJECTIVES

- *Establish the groundwork and key planning and development issues to be addressed.*
- *Develop the goals, principles, and interests that will drive the planning effort.*
- *Prioritize the issues and work through them to develop initial strategies.*
- *Develop a series of possible alternatives and work through each of the scenarios to come to a preferred vision.*
- *Draft the Neighborhood Plan and guidelines for implementation.*



Planning Group bus tour and working session

PARTICIPANTS

- ***City and State Agencies***
 - ***Office of the Mayor***
 - ***City agencies***
 - ***BRA; BTD; Economic Development, including Back Streets; Jobs and Community Services; Parks and Recreation***

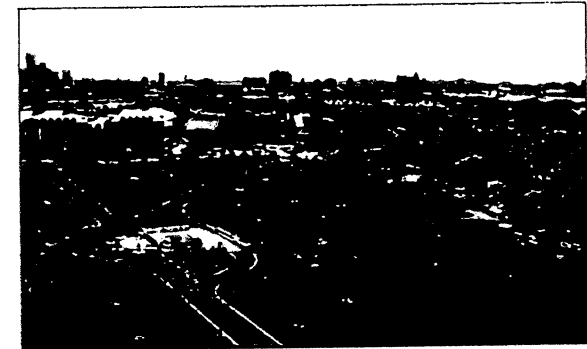


Community meeting

- ***North Allston Community Planning Group***
- ***North Allston Community***
- ***Harvard University***

WHAT WE HEARD: THE COMMUNITY'S GOALS

- *Relieve pressure on local housing market.*
- *Create new open space.*
- *Create a new neighborhood square.*
- *Expand access to Harvard's educational and other resources.*
- *Reduce the impact of truck and cut-through traffic through residential neighborhoods.*



WHAT WE HEARD: THE CITY'S GOALS

- *Create housing opportunities affordable to a wide range of people.*
- *Preserve and create jobs that serve Boston's workforce.*
- *Promote economic growth.*
- *Create new transportation services.*



WHAT WE HEARD:

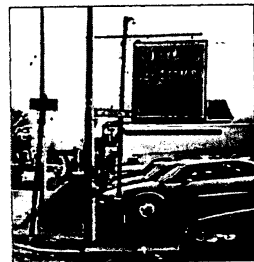
HARVARD UNIVERSITY'S GOALS

- *Provide opportunities to accommodate Harvard's growth.*
- *Enhance quality of life to attract Harvard community to study and live in North Allston.*
- *Meet a substantial portion of Harvard's housing needs.*
- *Enhance access to North Allston from the traditional Harvard campus and elsewhere.*



THE ISSUES

- *Housing*
- *Transportation*
- *Economic Development*
- *Public Realm*
- *Commercial Development*
- *Campus Development*



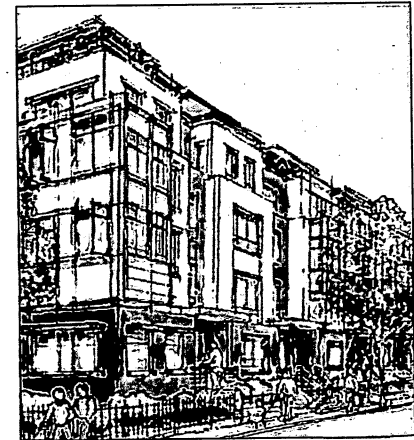
HOUSING

■ **Challenge**

- *Housing affordability crisis*
- *Harvard demand 2,000+ units*
- *Traditional neighborhoods fully built*

■ **Opportunities**

- *Harvard houses all of its housing demand*
- *Create 2400-2800 new community units*
- *Integrate community/Harvard housing*
- *Build a new mixed-income, mixed Harvard and community neighborhood*
- *Form partnerships to create housing*



Provide a wide range of housing types

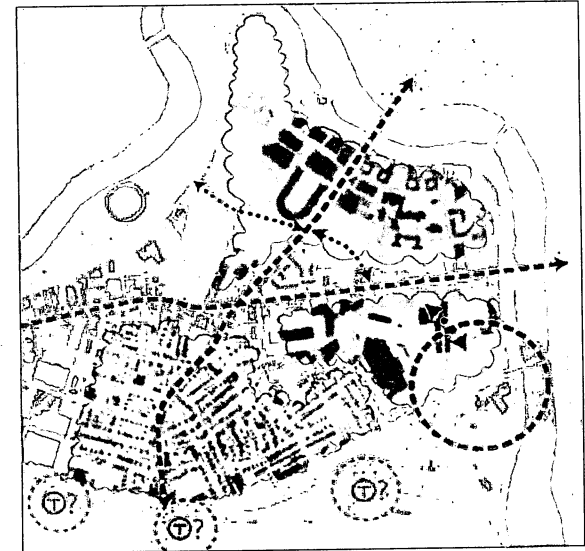
TRANSPORTATION

■ **Challenge**

- *Campus and related development could congest local streets*
- *Longstanding community opposition to heavy truck traffic*

■ **Opportunities**

- *City and Harvard study new transit options*
- *Locate new development to minimize neighborhood impacts*
- *Expand university shuttle services*



Enhance public and other non-auto transportation options, protect neighborhoods from cut-through traffic, create more walkable environments for Western Avenue and North Harvard Street, and connections to Charles River

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

■ **Challenge**

- *Protection of existing jobs and businesses*
- *Preservation of essential rail/truck transfer facilities*

■ **Opportunities**

- *Expand Boston's research economy*
- *Identify rail/truck transfer options*
- *Create 2-3,000+ jobs for wide span of skills...with education and training*
- *Support existing and new businesses*
- *Create new economic development facilities and partnerships*



Increase range of economic development opportunities

PUBLIC REALM

■ **Challenge**

- *Concerns about crowding limited neighborhood parks*
- *Inadequate access to the river*
- *Neighborhood concern about being walled off from campus*

■ **Opportunities**

- *Make new campus permeable*
- *Create new and expanded parks, access to the river, and pedestrian-friendly Main Streets*



Improve pedestrian realm



Enhance major parks

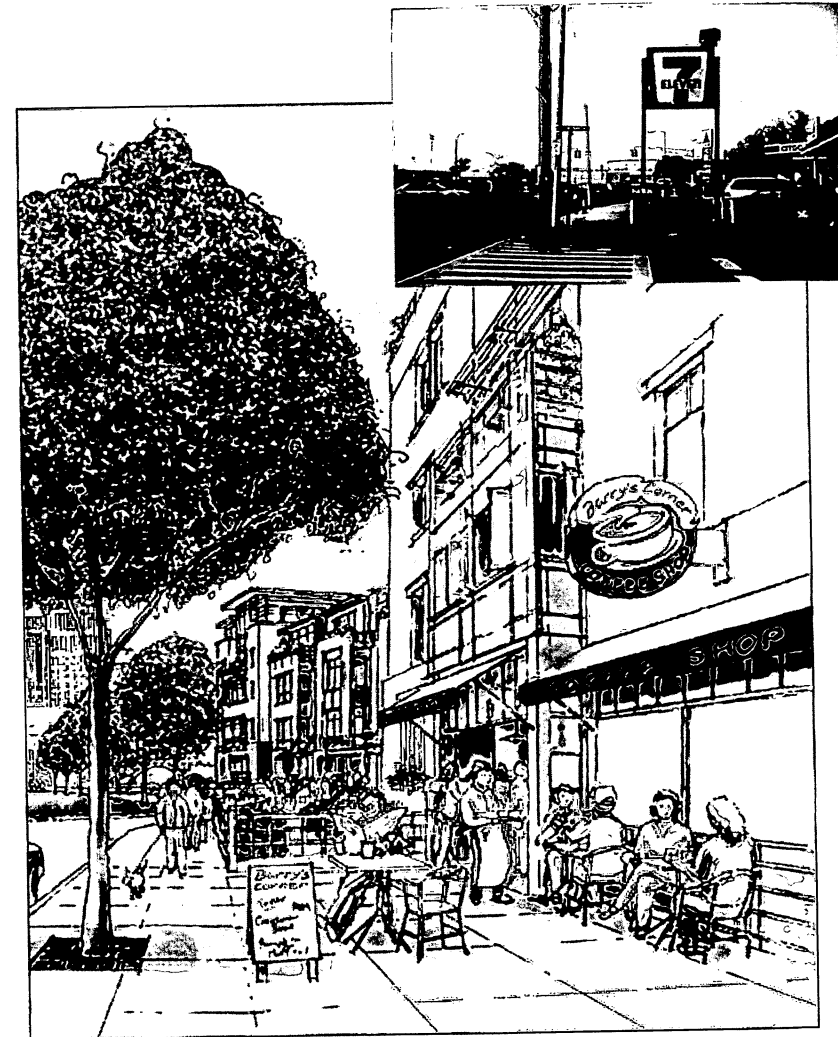
COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

■ **Challenges**

- *Lack of pedestrian-friendly commercial district*
- *Auto-dominated main streets*

■ **Opportunities**

- *Use demand created by development to create a human-scaled main street*
- *Promote 200-400,000sf of mixed-use development*
- *Redevelop strip shopping center*



Create new main street-like "heart" of the community

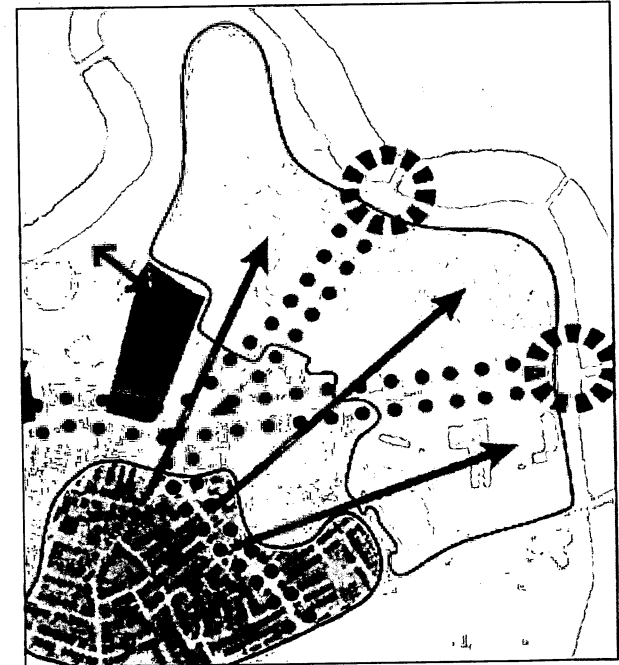
CAMPUS

■ **Challenges**

- *Avoid displacing residents and businesses*
- *Breakdown barriers between campus and community*

■ **Opportunities**

- *Visual, pedestrian connections to community*
- *Mix of housing, academic, research, and other uses*
- *Locate height and density away from neighborhoods*



Integrate campus and neighborhood

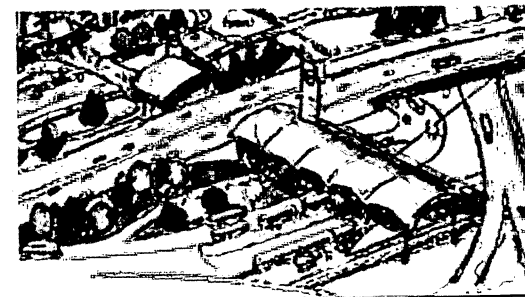
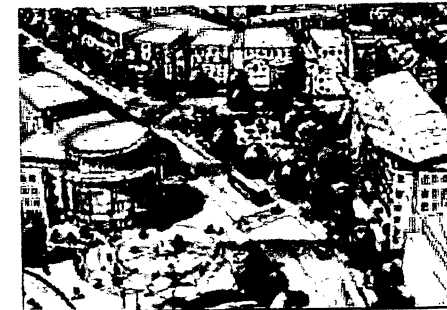
THE VISION STATEMENT

- *Create mixed-use, mixed-income community*
- *Preserve traditional neighborhoods*
- *Use new development to enhance quality of life and economic opportunity*
- *Integrate campus and community*
- *Create a new “heart for the community”*



THE VISION STATEMENT

- ***Expand access to transit***
- ***Minimize truck traffic on residential streets***
- ***Embrace change where appropriate and conserve existing assets where desirable***
- ***Leverage the new resources being brought to the neighborhood***
- ***Enrich North Allston's qualities as a human-scaled urban village***



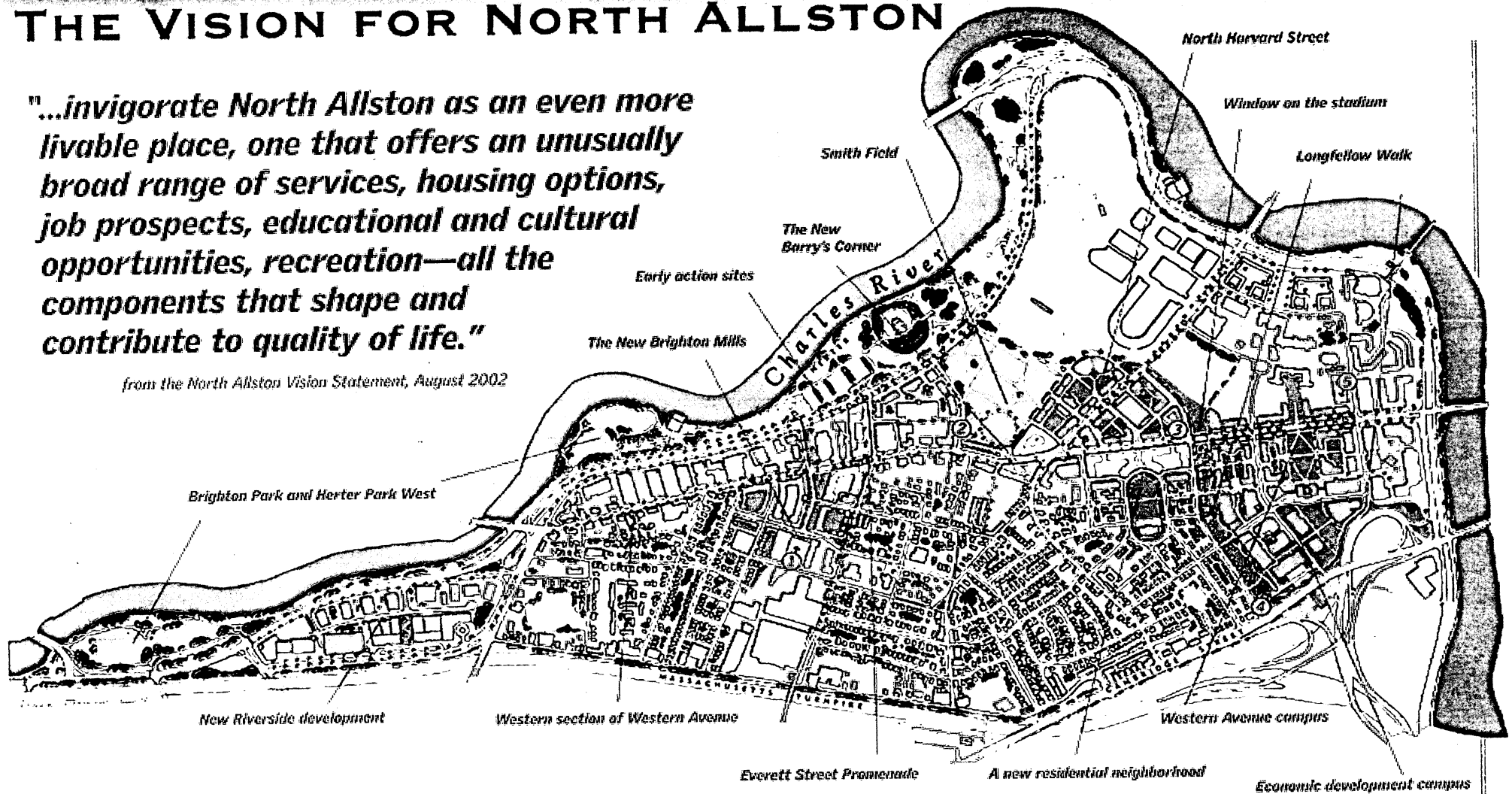
TRANSLATING THE GOALS INTO A VISION

- *Supports the priorities established in the Draft Vision Statement.*
- *Lays the foundation for continuing dialogue, collaboration, and partnership.*

THE VISION FOR NORTH ALLSTON

"...invigorate North Allston as an even more livable place, one that offers an unusually broad range of services, housing options, job prospects, educational and cultural opportunities, recreation—all the components that shape and contribute to quality of life."

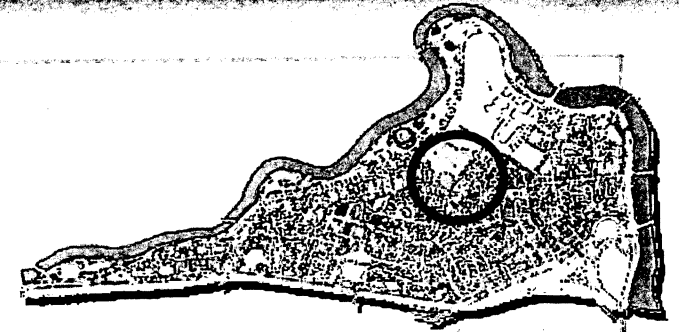
from the North Allston Vision Statement, August 2002



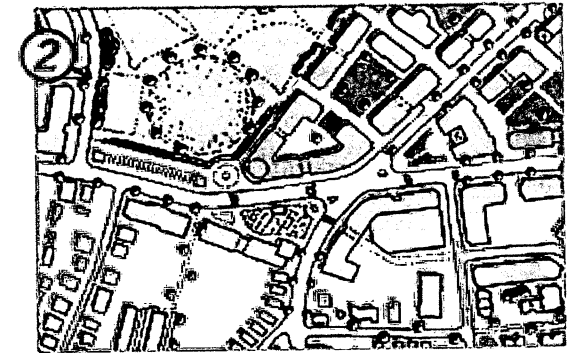
North Allston Neighborhood Strategic Plan

THE NEW BARRY'S CORNER

- *Create a vibrant mixed-use area with a major new public space at the intersection of North Harvard Street and Western Avenue.*
- *Build a neighborhood center that is pedestrian friendly.*
- *Create a "Main Streets" environment with 200,000 sf of new community-based retail, commercial, and other services.*
- *Reprogram Smith Field with year-round activity that is accessible to local residents.*
- *Introduce seamless connections from the residential neighborhood to the Charles River and Herter Park.*
- *Develop a significant new cultural facility as a neighborhood and regional attraction.*



Smith Field (left) and Teete Mall (right) flanking Western Avenue.



Western Avenue at North Harvard Street.

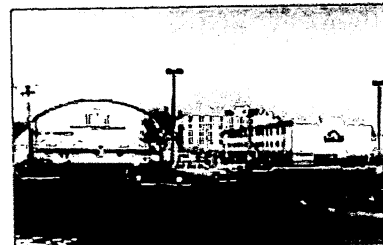
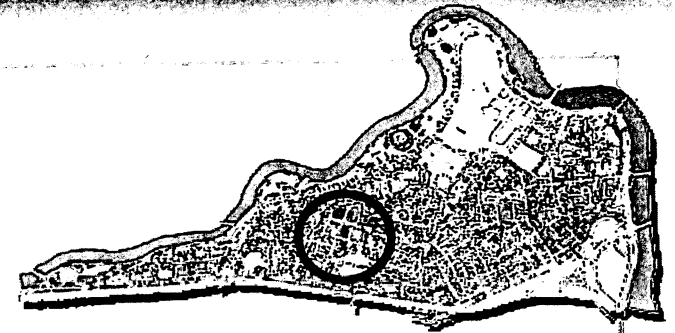
THE NEW BARRY'S CORNER



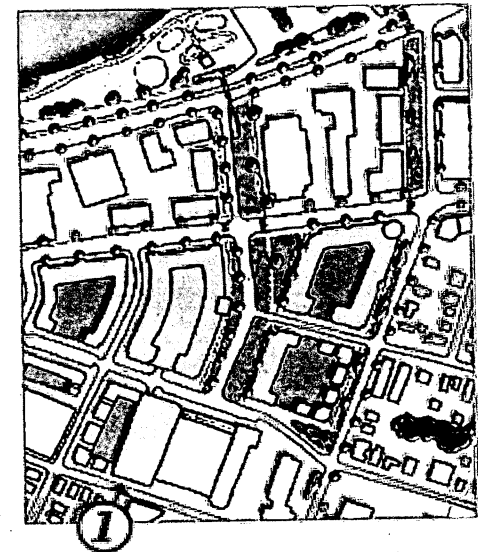
Looking east along Western Avenue

THE NEW BRIGHTON MILLS

- *Transform the shopping center into a major focal point of mixed use, with 220,000 sf of new and existing retail space, 550 units of new mixed-income housing, structured parking, and attractive public space.*
- *Use urban design guidelines to ensure that new development reflects the unique character of the neighborhood.*
- *Reconnect neighborhoods by extending existing streets through the site.*
- *Emphasize Everett Street as a major corridor through the neighborhood to the Charles River.*
- *Jazz up Western Avenue both physically with new streetscape design and economically by dispersing new local retail along the avenue.*

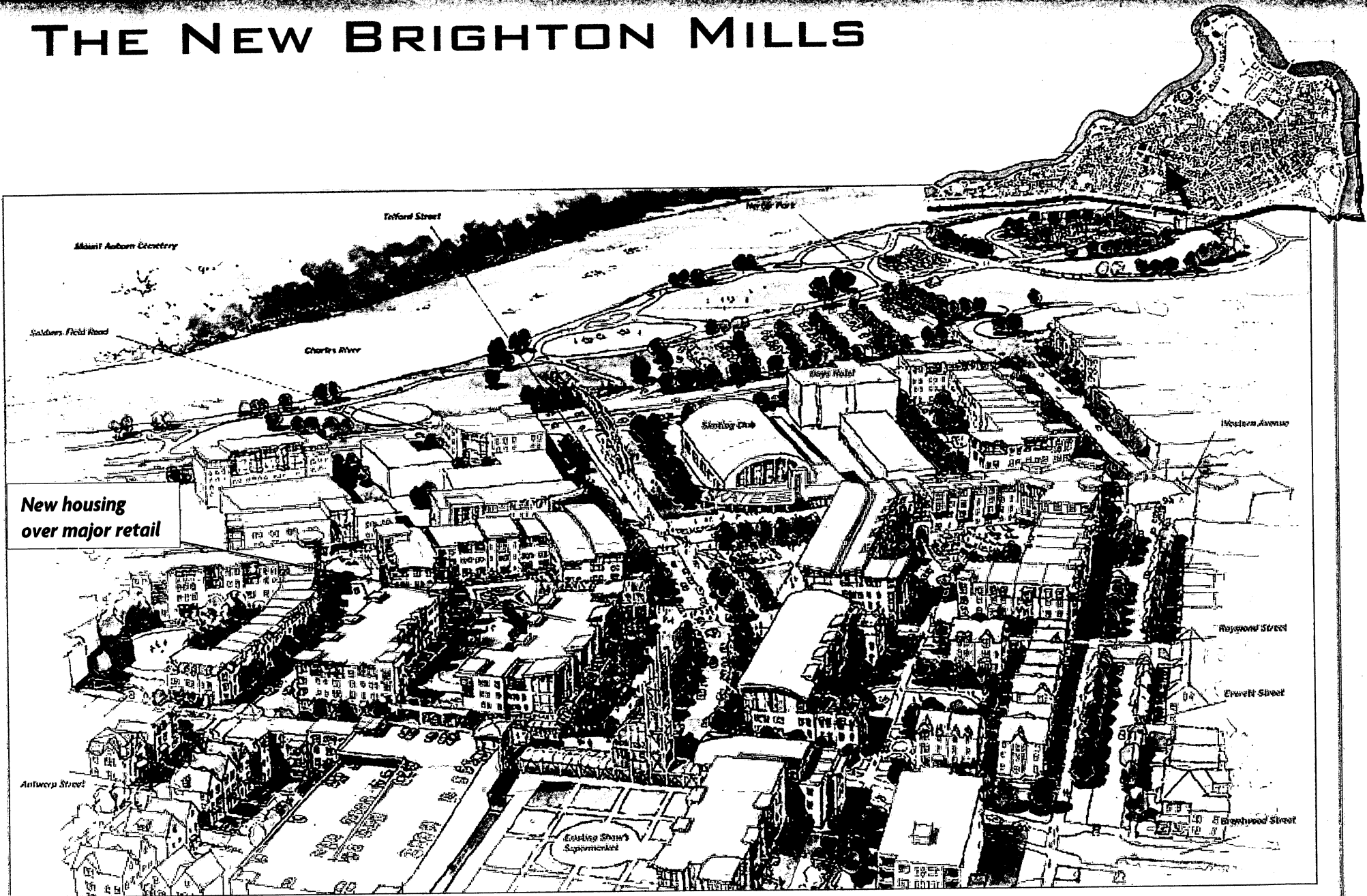


The Skating Club and Days Hotel from Brighton Mills today.



Brighton Mills from Western Avenue today.

THE NEW BRIGHTON MILLS

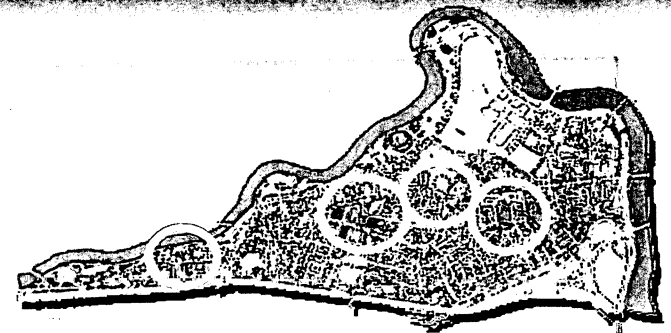


**New housing
over major retail**

Brighton Mills looking north

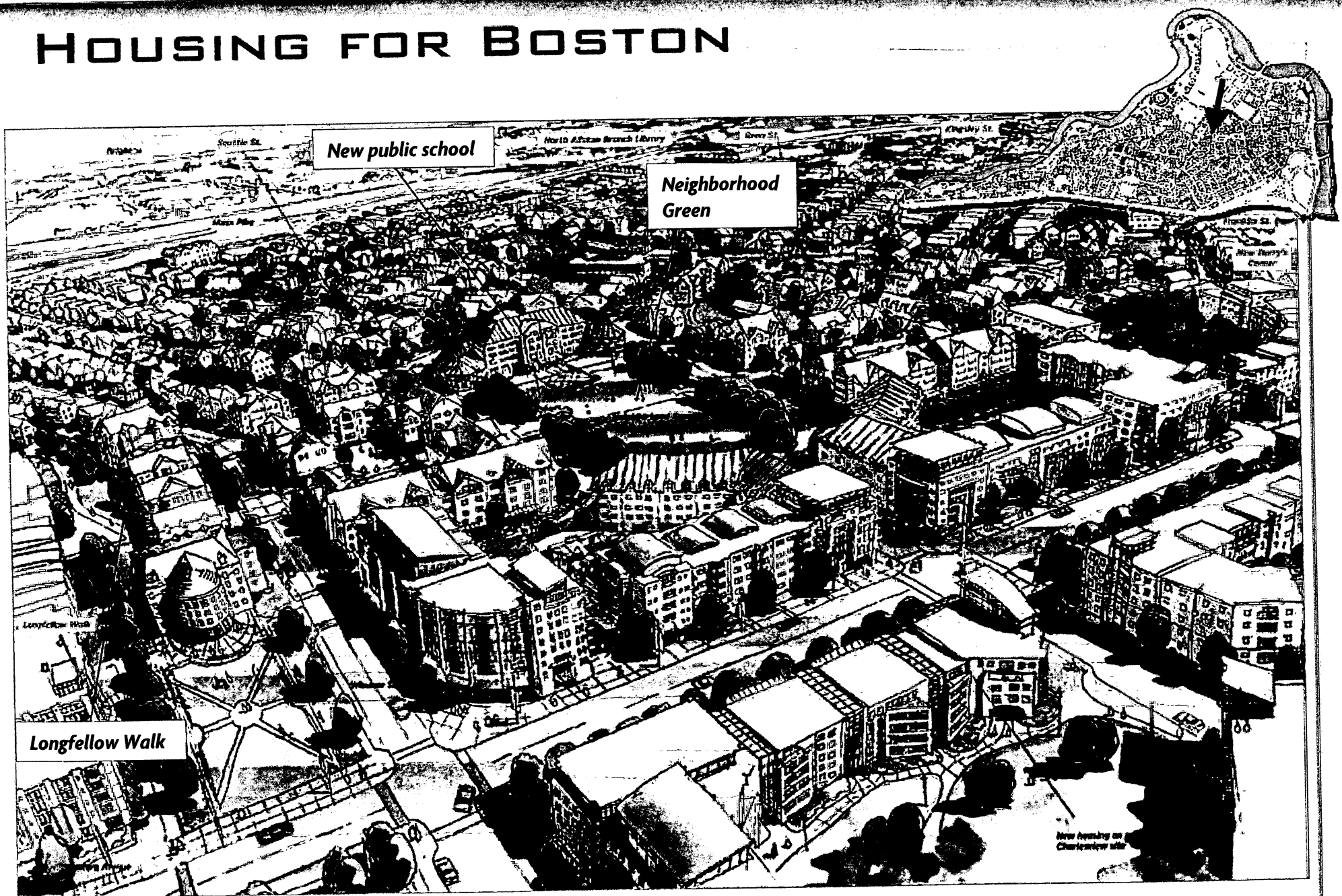
HOUSING FOR BOSTON

- *Preserve existing housing and traditional neighborhoods.*
- *Create an area-wide total of 2,400-2,800 new units in Barry's Corner, Brighton Mills, Riverside, and a new residential neighborhood, providing a wide range of housing opportunities and serving long-time and new neighbors.*
- *Develop a new school- and park-centered neighborhood containing approximately 900 new units of housing, with easy access to the Honan Library, Allston Square, and fully expanded transit.*
- *Fully maximize all housing opportunities to support commercial and retail businesses, creating a safe, vibrant and livable neighborhood.*

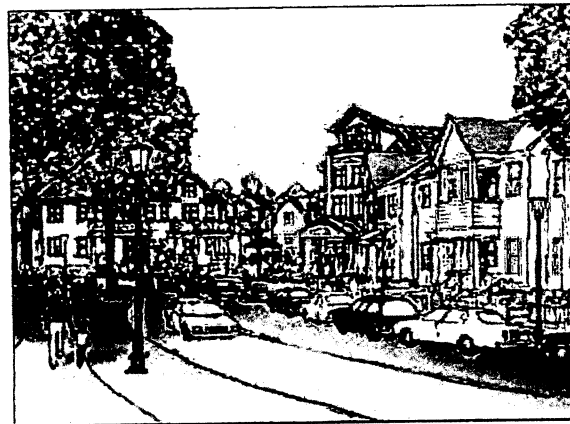
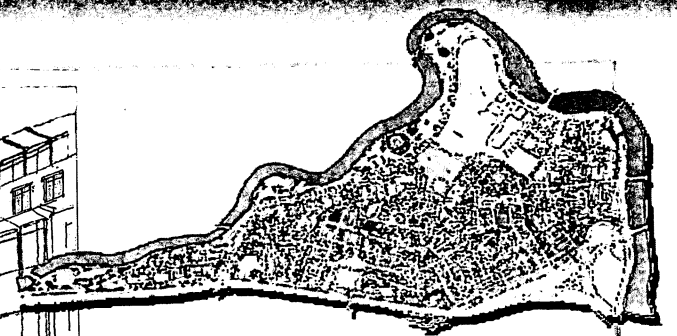
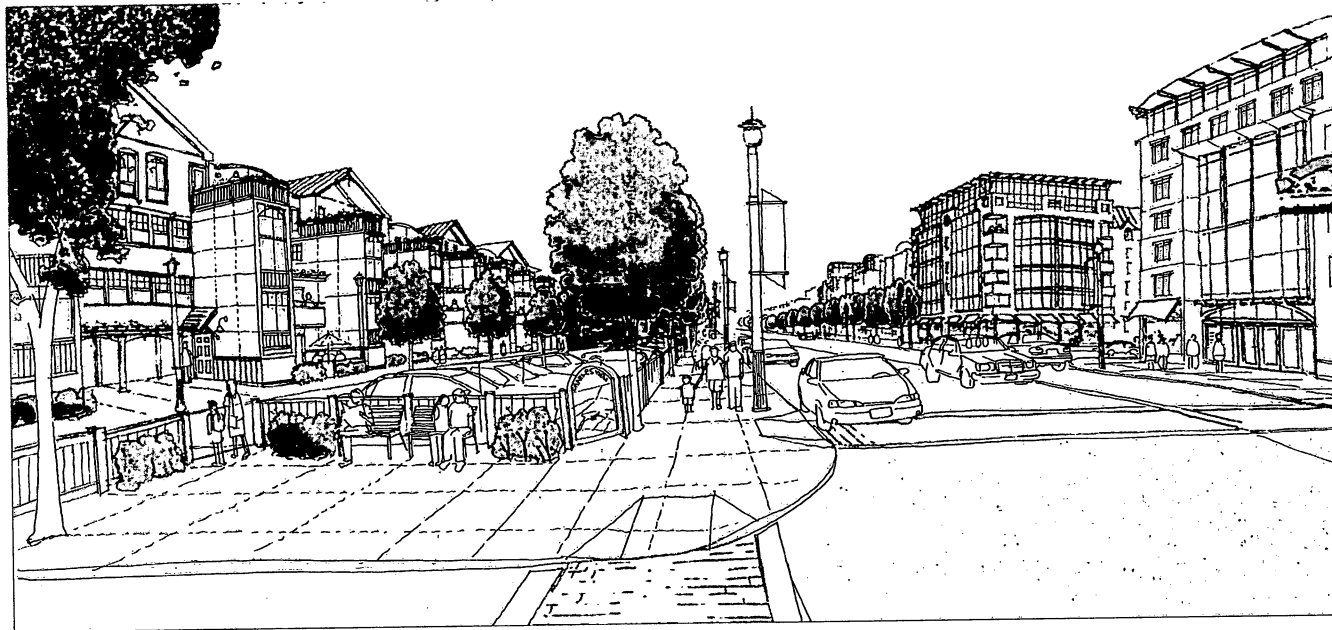


Westview Avenue looking towards Barry's Corner today.

HOUSING FOR BOSTON



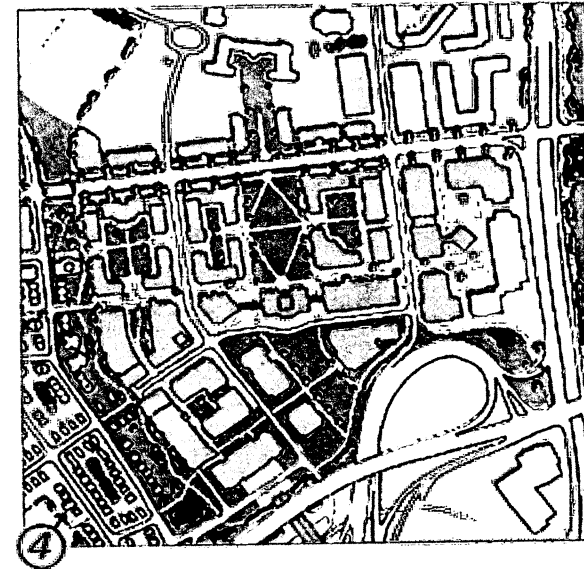
Looking south over Western Avenue



New housing opportunities: enhanced Charlesview (top, looking east along Western Avenue) and a variety of housing types in a new traditional neighborhood (below)

JOBS FOR BOSTON

- *Through the Mayor's Back Streets program, assess impact of Harvard's expansion on existing businesses.*
- *Implement North Allston Business Protection Program with Harvard now to assist businesses and employees impacted by development.*
- *Create an economic development zone to support existing businesses and ensure growth opportunities.*
- *Partner with Harvard to create new jobs and implement a workforce development strategy for area residents.*
- *Initiate transportation and economic studies on Beacon Park, Holton Street Corridor, and Allston Landing North.*

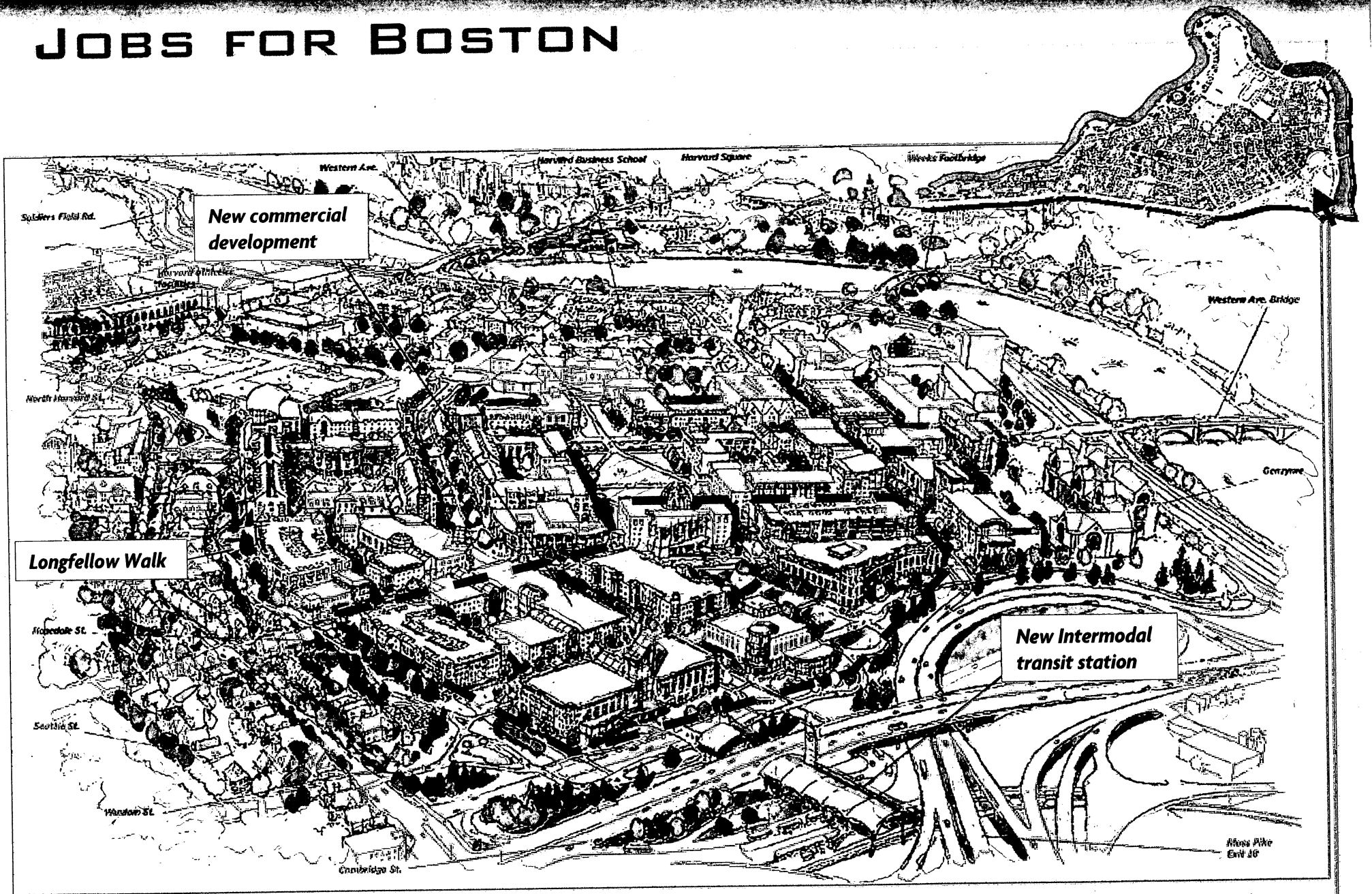


Cenzyme Building and industrial land from Cambridge Street.



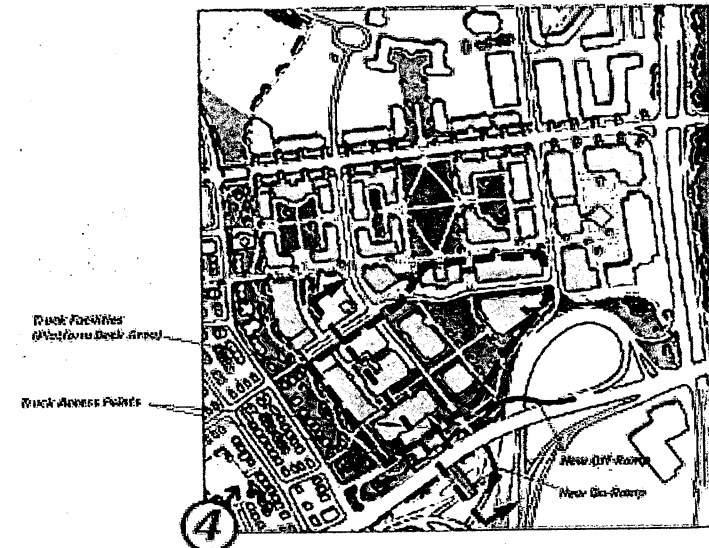
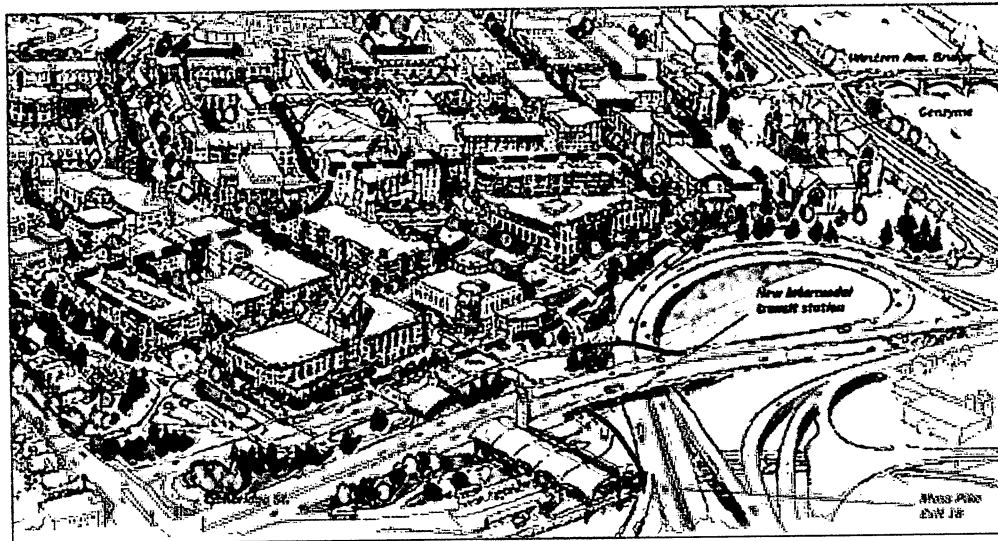
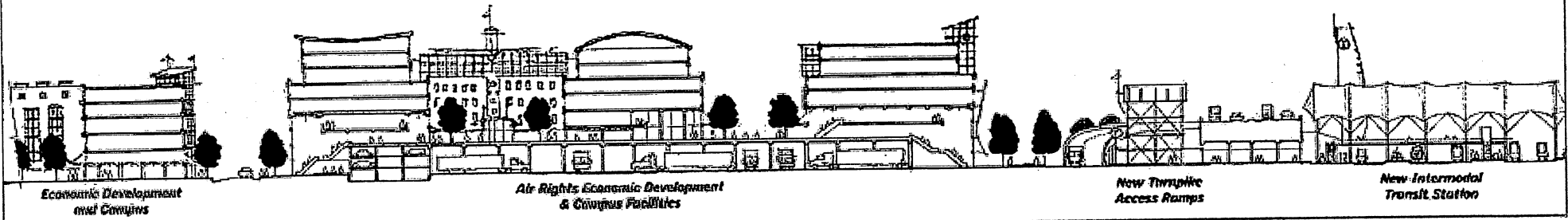
Industrial uses adjacent to residential.

JOBS FOR BOSTON



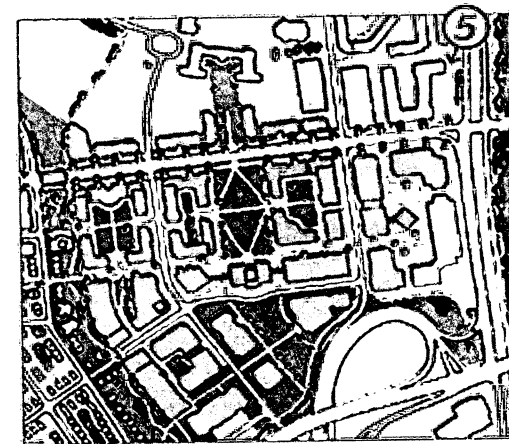
Looking north from Cambridge Street

JOBS FOR BOSTON - AIR RIGHTS OPPORTUNITIES



HARVARD IN NORTH ALLSTON 02134

- *Ensure that Harvard's Boston campus—whether graduate, life sciences, or cultural—will offer community-accessible features ranging from parks to daycare facilities.*
- *Strengthen and expand public-private partnerships with Harvard to increase educational, economic, and housing opportunities available to Boston residents.*
- *Integrate campus in a neighborhood-wide open space system connecting the community to the Charles River.*
- *Extend and ensure visual and physical pedestrian connections throughout the campus.*
- *Line Western Avenue with a mix of housing for both the community and Harvard affiliates.*
- *Create urban design guidelines that intergrate the campus into the neighborhood, with buildings facing public streets.*

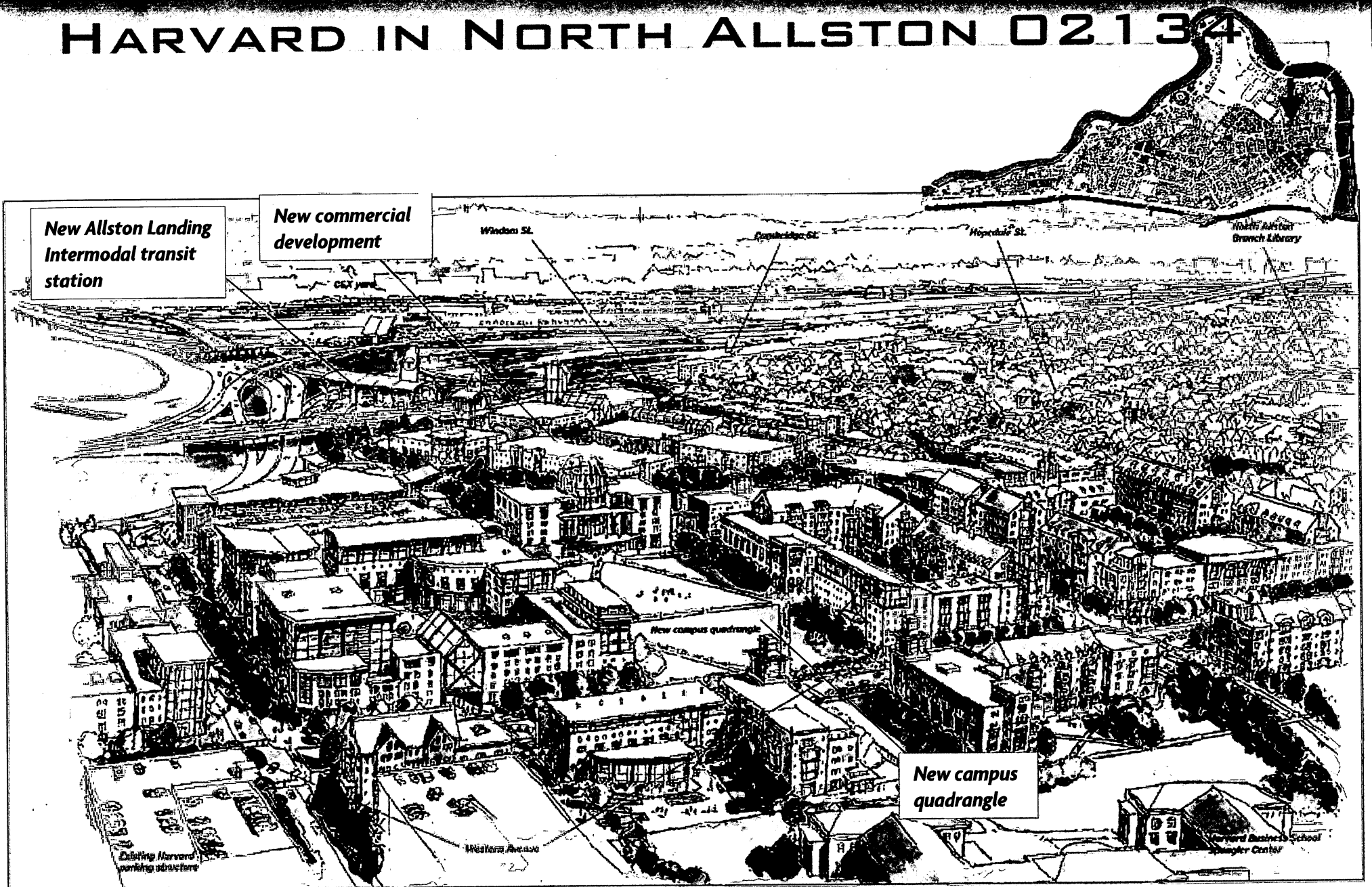


The site today with Genzyme at left and Western Avenue extending to Barry's Corner at right.



Looking east on Western Avenue, near WGBH.

HARVARD IN NORTH ALLSTON 02134



Looking south over Western Avenue

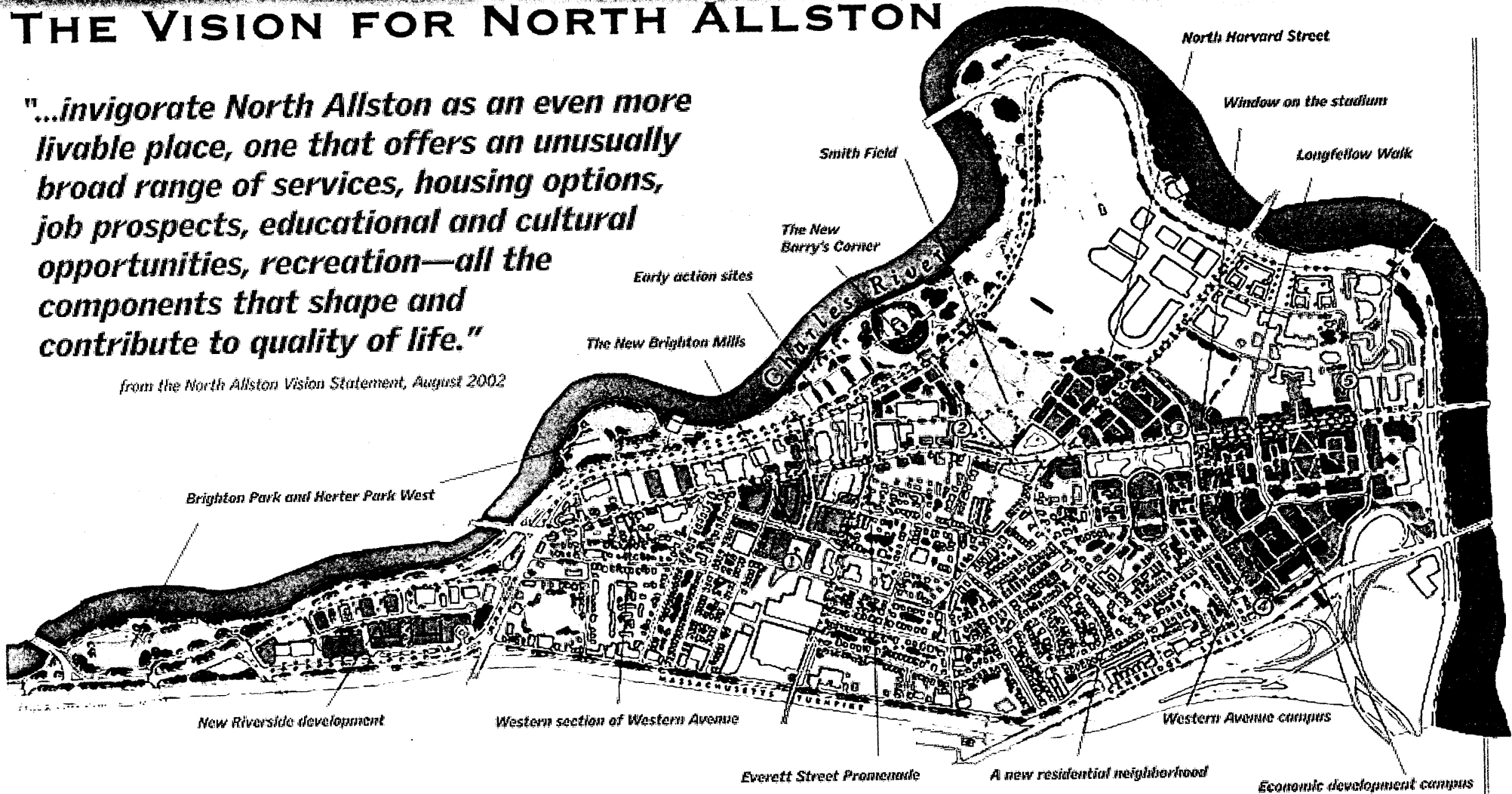
SCHEDULE MOVING FORWARD

- *July – August* *Comment period on the Vision*
- *September* *Planning Group*
Discussion on Implementation
- *September* *Community Meeting*
Presentation of the Vision for North Allston
- *October* *Planning Group*
Review of the Draft Plan
- *November* *Community Meeting*
Presentation of the Draft Plan

THE VISION FOR NORTH ALLSTON

"...invigorate North Allston as an even more livable place, one that offers an unusually broad range of services, housing options, job prospects, educational and cultural opportunities, recreation—all the components that shape and contribute to quality of life."

from the North Allston Vision Statement, August 2002



North Allston Neighborhood Strategic Plan

- What will the impacts be if Harvard moves one or more schools to Allston? How will any vacated buildings be reused? Will there be design, use and other issues of community concern? How will changes impact nearby neighborhoods?

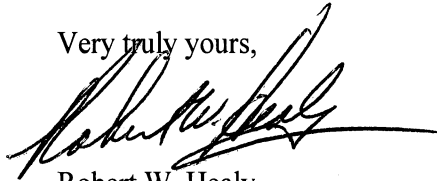
- How will Cambridge residents access facilities in Allston such as an intermodal transportation center, museums or other cultural facilities? Will any desirable Harvard-sponsored Cambridge amenities be moved to Allston?

There are near-term steps that we in the city can take to stay informed about the Allston planning process. Community Development staff will meet with BRA staff to get a better understanding of the North Allston planning process and Boston's steps going forward. CDD staff will also publicize upcoming Allston community meetings to discuss the North Allston Plan.

Additionally, Harvard's plans to vacate buildings (if any) and make other changes to the Cambridge campus should be included in the annual Cambridge Town-Gown report and we will ask Harvard to do so. We will also monitor any emerging mitigation agreements and measures that are undertaken by Harvard in Allston.

The City Council University Relations subcommittee may want to ask Harvard to give a presentation of its ongoing work in Allston. Other committees working on a regular basis with the university, such as the Administrative Working Group and the Agassiz Working Group, will discuss relevant development issues as the Harvard planning process for Allston goes forward.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachment



30.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE • EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Robert W. Healy, City Manager *Richard C. Rossi, Deputy City Manager*

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Voice: 617.349.4300 Fax: 617.349.4307 TTY: 617.349.4242 Web: www.cambridgema.gov

August 4, 2003

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report Item Number 03-79, regarding obtaining a copy of the Boston Plan for Allston Landing and report on any implications for Cambridge/Harvard relations and Harvard development in Cambridge, Assistant City Manager for Community Development Beth Rubenstein reports the following:

Background

The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) began a city-sponsored visioning process for the North Allston area in June 2001. The City of Boston and Harvard agreed to a neighborhood strategic planning process to focus on anticipated Harvard's expansion in Allston and related community and city benefits. As a product of that process, on June 21, 2003 the BRA unveiled a document entitled "North Allston: The Vision for the Neighborhood Strategic Plan." The participants in the process included Boston city agencies, Office of the Mayor, North Allston Community Planning Group, the North Allston community and Harvard University.

Goals

The community's goals which emerged from the visioning process are as follows: relieve pressure on the local housing market, create new open space, create a new neighborhood square, expand access to Harvard's educational and other resources, and reduce the impact of truck and cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods. While Harvard wants to provide opportunities to accommodate its growth, meet a portion of its housing needs, and enhance access to the traditional Harvard campus, the City of Boston is looking for affordable housing opportunities for Boston residents, job preservation and creation, economic growth and new transportation services.

Implications for Cambridge

The plan represents the City of Boston's vision for North Allston and is part of its emerging conversation with Harvard regarding future development in Allston. Other than Harvard Business School and some athletic facilities, Harvard has a limited presence in the Allston community today; this presence will increase significantly over the next decade and beyond. In contrast, Harvard has been woven into the fabric of the Cambridge community over a very long period of time.

As Harvard increases its presence in Allston, a number of questions about Cambridge/Harvard relations, Harvard's presence in Cambridge, and the impacts of growth in Allston are raised. For example:

- As growth proceeds in Allston, how will the Cambridge campus change?
- How does Harvard plan to have the two campuses function as a whole? For example, will there be an increase in the number and frequency of intra-campus shuttle buses? Will any roadway patterns change? Will there be more pedestrian traffic? Will peak traffic hours change?

5234

Consent Agenda #30

Transmitting communication from Robert W. Healy, City Manager, relative to **Awaiting Report Item Number 03-79**, regarding obtaining a copy of the Boston Plan for Allston Landing and report on any implications for Cambridge/Harvard relations and Harvard development in Cambridge.

In City Council August 4, 2003

**REFERRED TO UNIVERSITY
RELATIONS COMMITTEE**