

City of Medford

2026 Zoning Update

City Council + Community Development Board Joint Public Hearing
January 21, 2026





Agenda

- Project Scope
- Medford Square: Background
- Next Steps



Project Scope

Today

**Kick-off:
Joint public hearing**

January-March 2026

Phase 1

Topics:

- Medford Square
- Clean-up items requested by City staff

Meetings:

- 2 community meetings
- 4 meetings with City officials (City Council, Planning and Permitting Committee, or Community Development Board meetings)

March-June 2026

Phase 2

Topics:

- Tufts Institutional Zoning
- Boston Avenue

Meetings:

- 2 community meetings
- 4 meetings with City officials (City Council, Planning and Permitting Committee, or Community Development Board meetings)



Next Steps for Medford Square Rezoning

- Listen to comments and questions at today's meeting.
- Work with the City's Working Group to schedule community meetings and discuss format, content, and materials.
- Confirm meeting schedule with the Community Development Board and City Council.

Background: Planning Documents

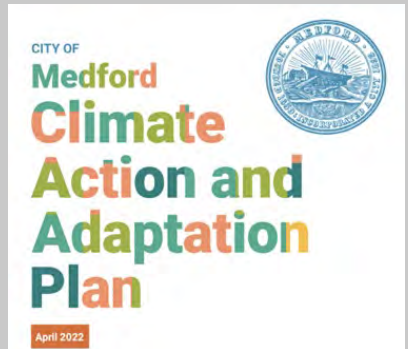




Background



2023



2022



2005

The Comprehensive Plan defines **MEDFORD SQUARE** as a **Civic and Institutional Anchor** and a **Square** (commercial center). It is one of the **Transformational Focus Areas** identified during the community planning process.

Medford Future Land Use Map

- Green Corridors
- Corridors
- Centers & Squares
- Gateway Nodes
- Civic & Institutional Anchors
- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Neighborhood Centers
- Transformational Focus Areas

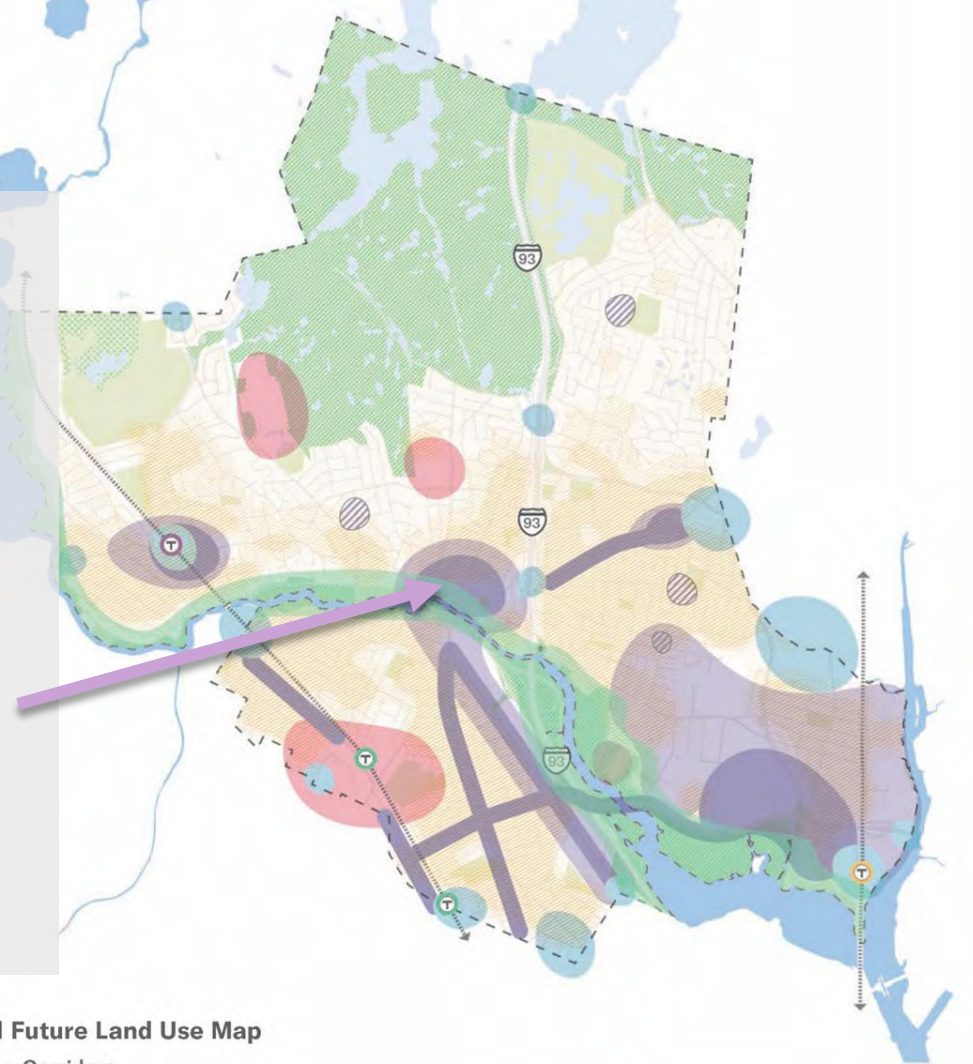


Figure XI. Medford Future Land Use Map



Medford Comprehensive Plan (2023)

Zoning Strategies for Medford Square



WS: WELCOMING AND SUPPORTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS

WS.1.1 Create, expand, and protect mixed-income housing options throughout the city to create a minimum of 600 units by FY2025 as called for in the 2021 Housing Production Plan.

WS.1.1.1 Update zoning to allow for **multifamily dwellings of different typologies in different zoning districts, such as APT-1, APT-2, C-1, and C-2.**

WS.1.1.2 Actively pursue mixed-income and mixed-use residential development opportunities for vacant and underutilized lots in Medford's business districts, such as existing surface parking lots and property owned by state agencies.



Medford Comprehensive Plan (2023)



Zoning Strategies for Medford Square

VP: VIBRANT PLACES

VP.1.1 Create opportunities for new amenities in Medford's Business Districts.

VP.1.2 Make development & regulations consistent with this Plan's vision for land use.

VP.1.7 Create commercial centers that meet residents' shopping needs.

VP.1.1.1 Undertake corridor or commercial center studies to allow an appropriate mix of uses and land use controls for cohesive development along corridors and within village centers.

VP2.1.2 Address inconsistencies between current and past land use and the current zoning ordinance.

VP1.1.3 Continue to work with developers to attract mixed-use development in underutilized sites in Medford's business districts.

Relevant Ongoing City Projects:

- **Oversee implementation of Medford Square Revitalization Study**
- Explore new business recruitments and redevelopment of City-owned property



Medford Comprehensive Plan (2023)

Non-zoning strategies for Medford Square



WS.3.1 Preserve historical structures, landscapes, and documents and foster an appreciation for Medford's many histories.

WS.3.2 Incorporate the history of the City and its neighborhoods, the cultures of its residents, and the arts into day-to-day life.

WS.3.1.4 Evaluate properties for eligibility to be listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places and CPA funding for restoration.

WS.3.2.9 Consider creating one or more cultural districts in Medford (Medford Square, West Medford).



Medford Comprehensive Plan (2023)



Non-zoning Strategies for Medford Square

VP: VIBRANT PLACES

VP.1.5 Leverage historic and cultural institutions, open space, and recreation assets as assets to employers looking to attract employees with a desire for a higher quality of life.

VP.5.1 Expand the public use and programming of Medford's rivers.

VP.1.5.1 Better integrate the Chevalier Theater with the economic and cultural life of the rest of the city. (ex. work with restaurant owners to provide pre- and post-show dinner reservations).

VP.5.1.1 Collaborate with private developers on riverfront or adjacent sites to expand pedestrian access where appropriate and ensure compatible development patterns with the riverfront location.

VP.1.5.2 Identify other opportunities to leverage Medford's historic and cultural institutions, open spaces, and recreational assets.

This might include encouraging businesses with waterfacing porches in Medford Square, where appropriate.



Medford Comprehensive Plan (2023)



Non-zoning Strategies for Medford Square

AA: ACCESS FOR ALL

AA2.2 Right-size parking across all commercial centers.

AA2.2.5 Integrate a public garage into future redevelopment in Medford Square. (Require the garage be open for parking at the same rate or cheaper than on-street meters, with a specific pass program for business owners/staff, and to accommodate evening events.)

AA2.2.6 Add sustainability features to commercial center parking such as solar arrays, stormwater management, and/or electric vehicle charging.



Medford Comprehensive Plan (2023)

Zoning Strategies for Medford Square



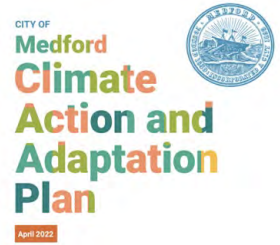
Additional Zoning Priorities

Implementation: Future Land Use and Zoning

Focus on areas that have been studied already. Public input indicated a certain amount of frustration that previous plans have not been implemented; **Medford Square was a specific example** given by participants in the public meetings.



Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (2022)



Zoning Strategies: Uses and Development Standards

BE 1.1 Expand diverse housing options in Medford to meet the needs of all ages, all family sizes, all abilities, and all income levels.

BE 1.2 Update Medford's zoning codes and the development review process to encourage highly energy efficient, resilient, and low-carbon new construction.

BE 1.3 Require flood resilient design for new development that could see high flood risk.

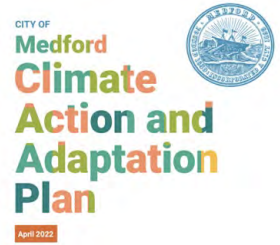
EN 1.2 Adopt ecological performance standards for new development.

PH 1.3 Increase local food system resilience. (note: specific to encouraging small grocery stores)

T 1.4 Update city codes and zoning ordinances so that new development contributes to neighborhoods accessible to all.



Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (2022)



Zoning Strategies for Medford Square

BE 1 Champion new buildings and redevelopment that make Medford a more affordable, resilient, and low-carbon city.

BE 1.1 Expand diverse housing options in Medford to meet the needs of all ages, all family sizes, all abilities, and all income levels.

BE 1.1.A Reduce zoning barriers to multifamily and mixed-use housing development.

PH 1 Create neighborhoods and infrastructure systems that support health.

PH 1.2 Improve Medford's capacity to stay cool in periods of high heat.



Medford Square Master Plan (2005)

Recommended by the Medford Square Vision Plan (2004)

Selected Zoning Recommendations



Building Height and Massing

- The maximum building height is 75 feet except in the area between Clippership Drive and Interstate I-93, where the height of 120 feet may be granted with appropriate step-backs.
- Structures within 100 feet of the boundary of an SF-1, SF-2, GR or APT-1 district should not exceed 50 feet in height.
- New construction should be sensitive to the scale and character-defining features of the surrounding district, especially along High Street.
- New building structures must be placed to establish consistent street walls and to reinforce open space and view corridors; the open space should be positive and usable, not left over or remnant space
- Step-backs are recommended to maintain a consistent street wall at the edge of the property, while allowing more height on the interior of the block or against the highway.
- New building structures generally should not be set back more than 15 feet from the property line, and on retail streets should be set at the property line.

Background: Existing Zoning



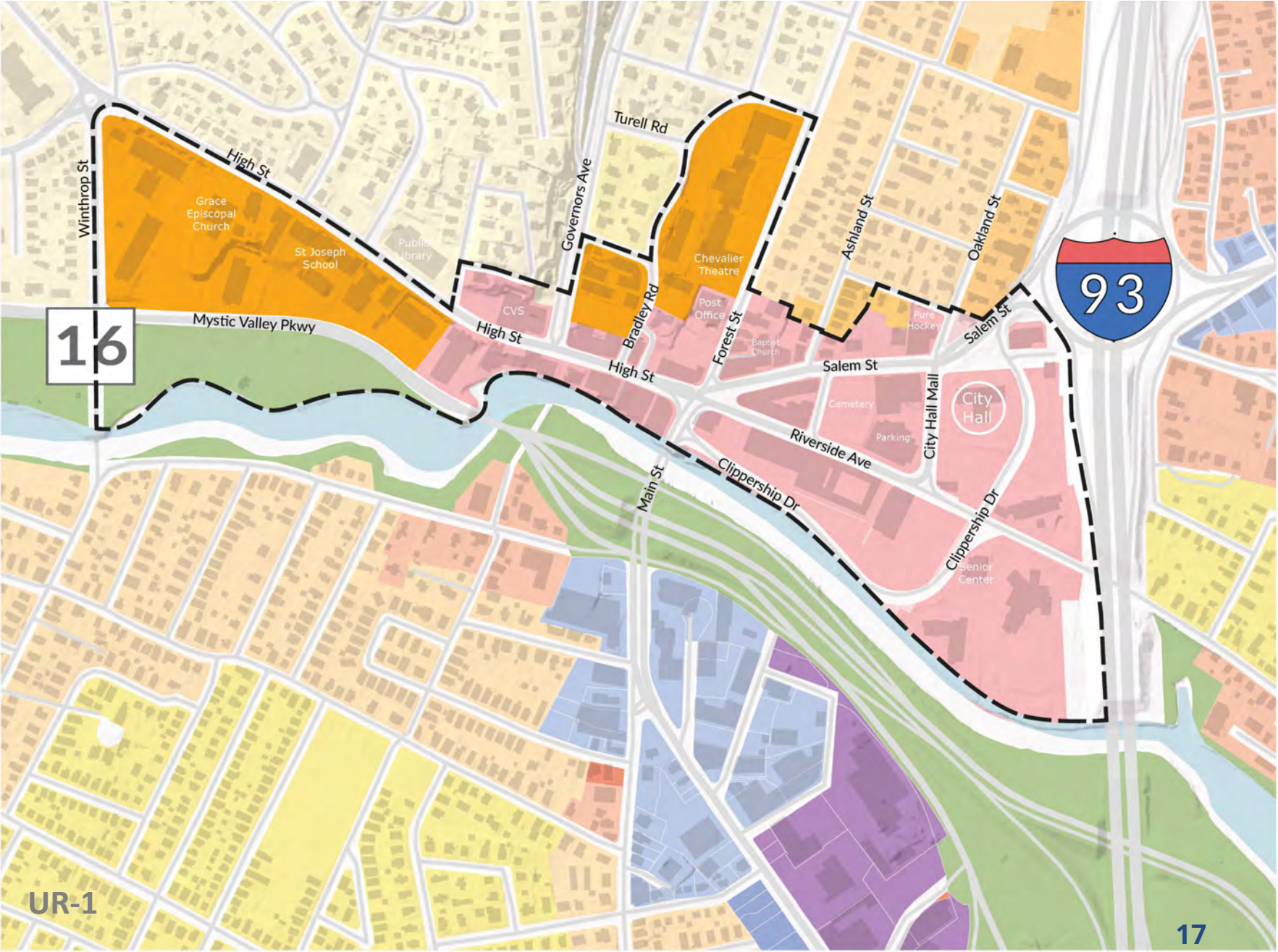


Medford Square Current Zoning



LEGEND

- Commercial 1**
 - Residential Building:
 - 6 stories by right
 - Commercial Building:
 - 4 stories by right
 - Hotel:
 - 15 stories by right
 - Other Permitted Structures:
 - 4 stories by right
- Apartment 2**
 - Residential Building:
 - 6 stories by right
 - Commercial Use:
 - NOT allowed
 - Other Permitted Structures:
 - 15 stories by right
- General Residential**
 - Single-unit Dwelling
 - 2-Units Dwelling
 - ADU



This map was produced in March 2025 by Innes Associates for the City of Medford using data from MassGIS: "Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Technology and Security Services".





Medford Square: Current Zoning

Commercial 1

Height

4 stories (other permitted uses)

6 stories (multifamily or assisted living)

15 stories (hotel)

Apartment 2

Height

2.5 stories (detached single- or two-family)

3 stories (attached single- or two-family)

6 stories (multifamily)

15 stories (other permitted uses)

Background: Dimensional Analysis

(Nonconforming analysis was in the interactive map)

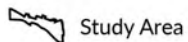




Medford Square

Study Area

LEGEND



Study Area



0 300 600
Feet

This map was produced in September 2024 by Innes Associates for the City of Medford using data from MassGIS, "Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Technology and Security Services".





2026 Zoning Update



Medford Square

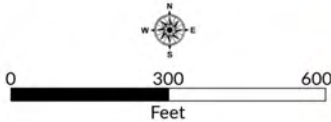
Existing Uses

LEGEND

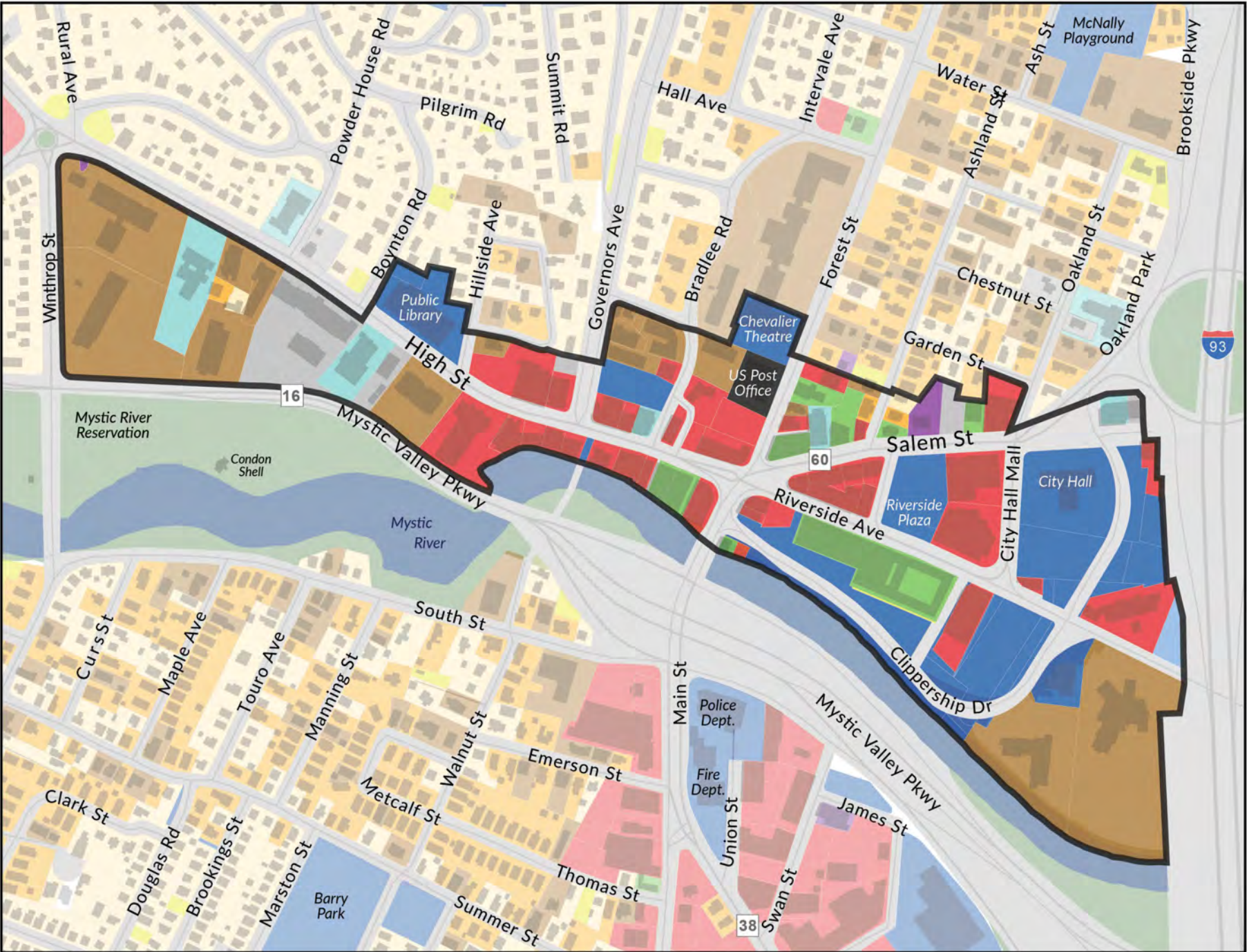
Existing Uses

- Single Family Residential
- Two Family Residential
- 3+ Units Residential
- Other Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Mixed Use
- Federal
- Municipal
- State Owned
- Places of Worship
- Other Exempt Properties

Existing uses are found in the assessors' data table.



This map was produced in September 2024 by Innes Associates for the City of Medford using data from MassGIS, "Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Technology and Security Services".





Medford Square

Dimensions - Lot Size

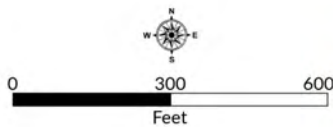
LEGEND

- Buildings
- Hydrography
- Open Space
- Study Area

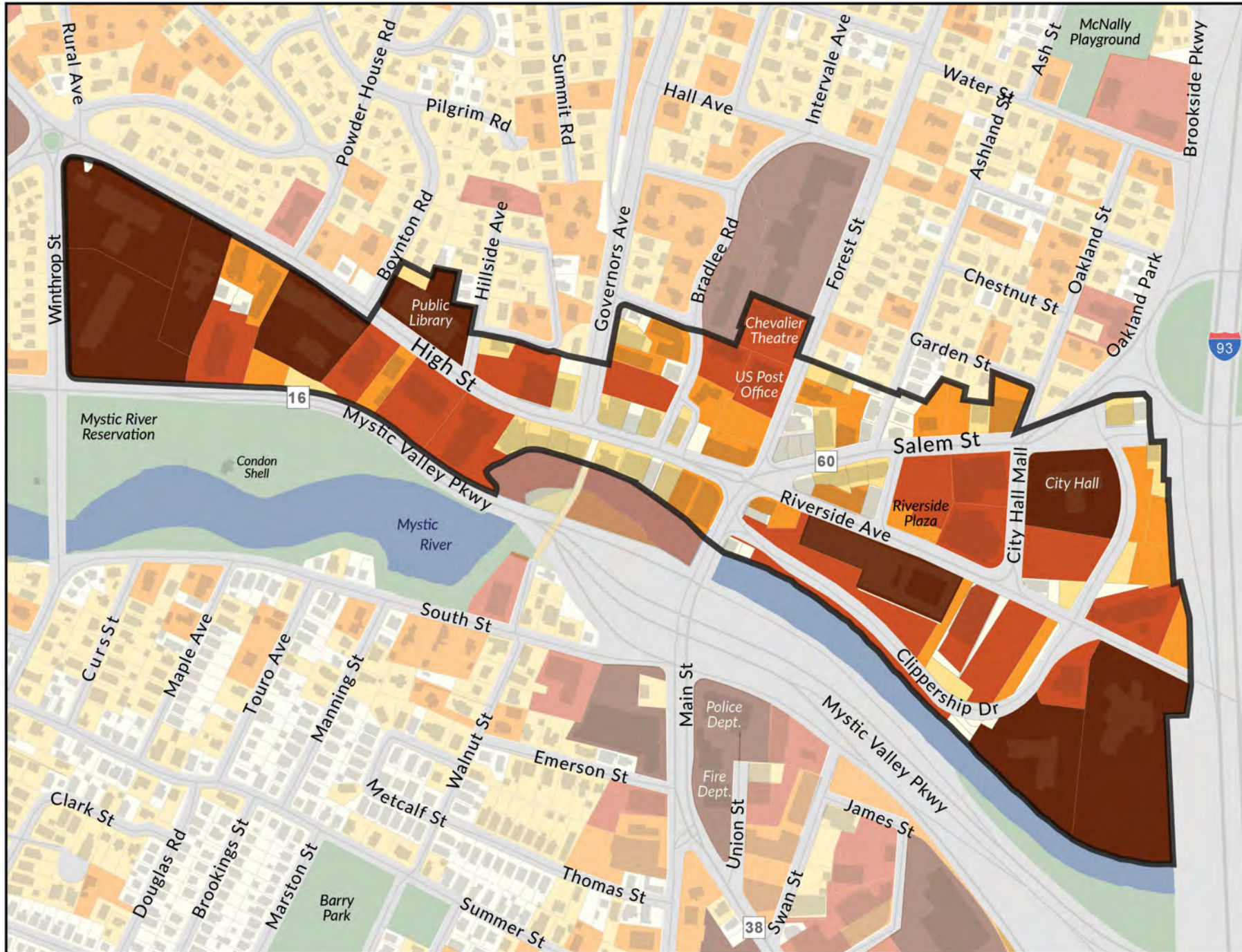
Lot Size in Square Feet

- ≤ 5,000
- ≤ 10,000
- ≤ 20,000
- ≤ 50,000
- > 50,000

Lot size is measured as the total area of the parcel in square feet.



This map was produced in September 2024 by Innes Associates for the City of Medford using data from MassGIS, "Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Technology and Security Services".





Dimensions - Frontage

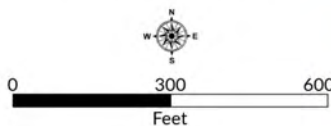
LEGEND

- Buildings
Hydrography
Open Space
Study Area

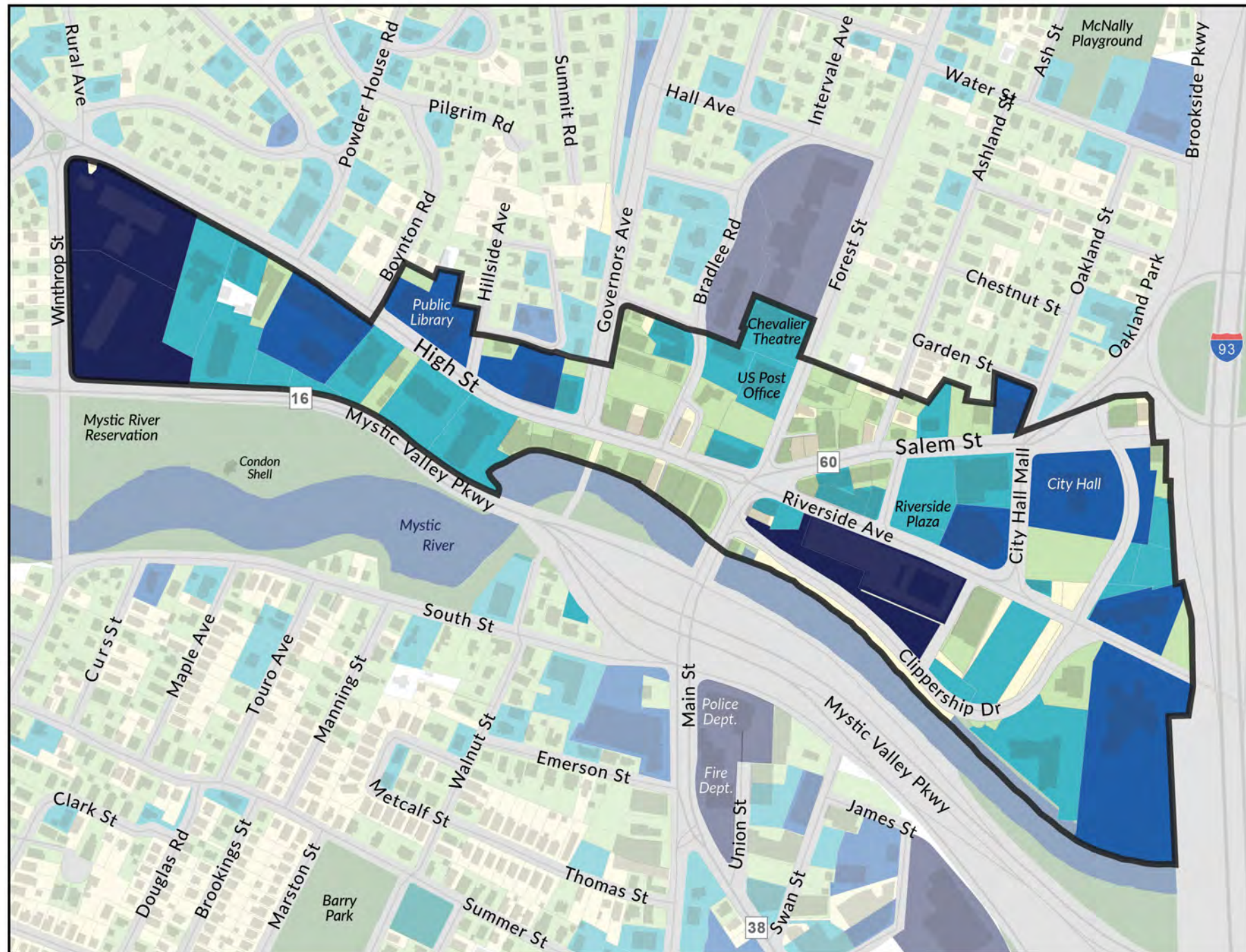
Length in Feet of the Lot's Principal Frontage

- No Frontage
 ≤ 50
 ≤ 100
 ≤ 200
 ≤ 400
 ≤ 600

Frontage is measured as the length of the frontage line on the lot's principal street. The lot's principal street is determined as the assessed site address in the assessors' data table.



This map was produced in September 2024 by Innes Associates for the City of Medford using data from MassGIS: "Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Technology and Security Services."





2026 Zoning Update



Medford Square

Dimensions - Front Setback

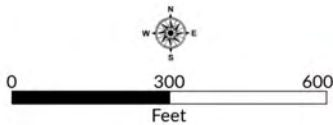
LEGEND

- Buildings
- Hydrography
- Open Space
- Study Area

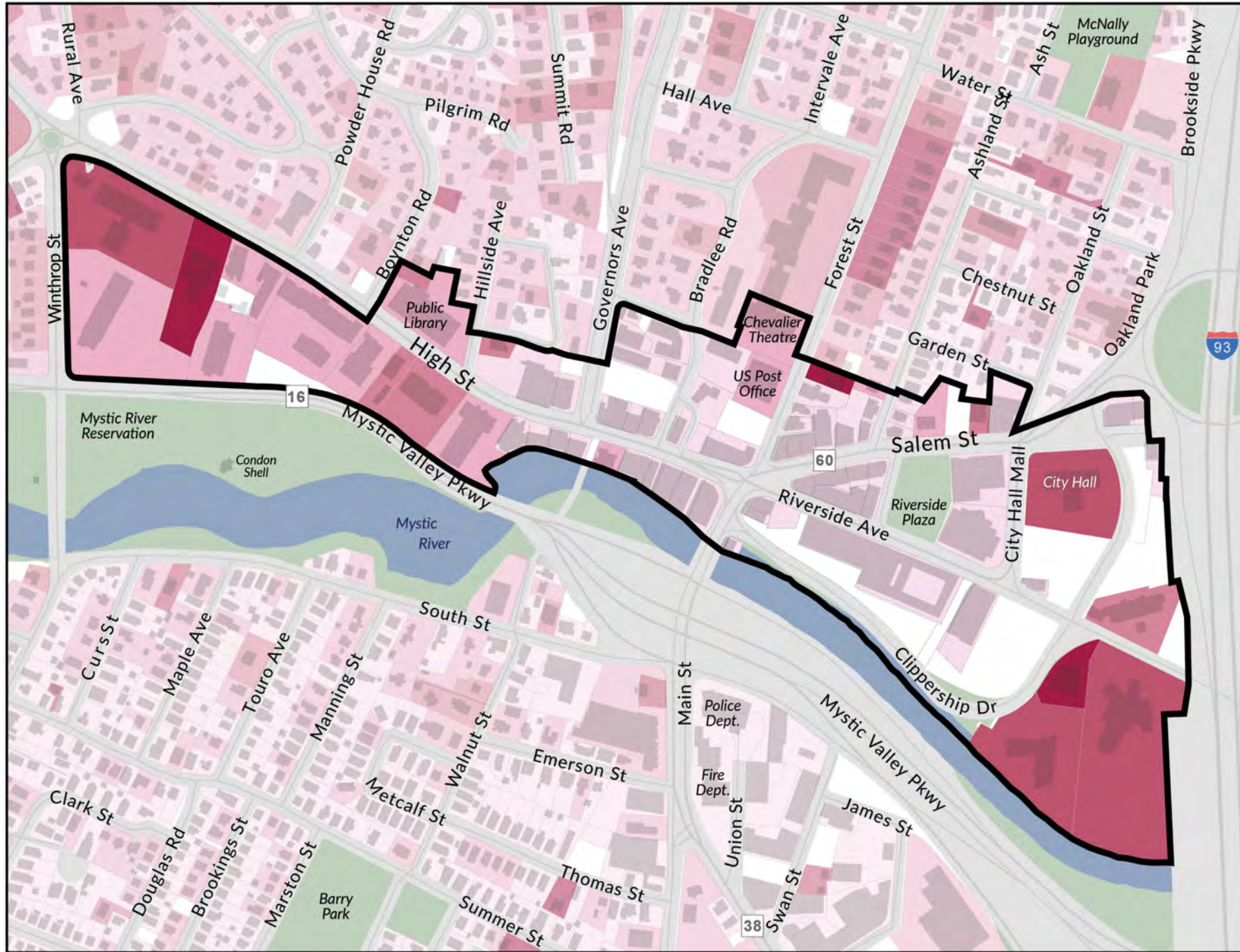
Distance in Feet of the Building's Front Setback

- No Building
- ≤ 15
- ≤ 30
- ≤ 45
- ≤ 60
- ≤ 100

The front building setback is measured as the closest distance that the building is set back from the lot's assessed principal frontage line.



This map was produced in September 2024 by Innes Associates for the City of Medford using data from MassGIS. "Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Technology and Security Services".





2026 Zoning Update



Medford Square

Dimensions - Building Height

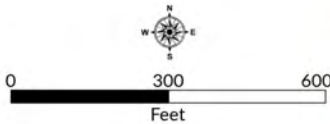
LEGEND

- Buildings
- Hydrography
- Open Space
- Study Area

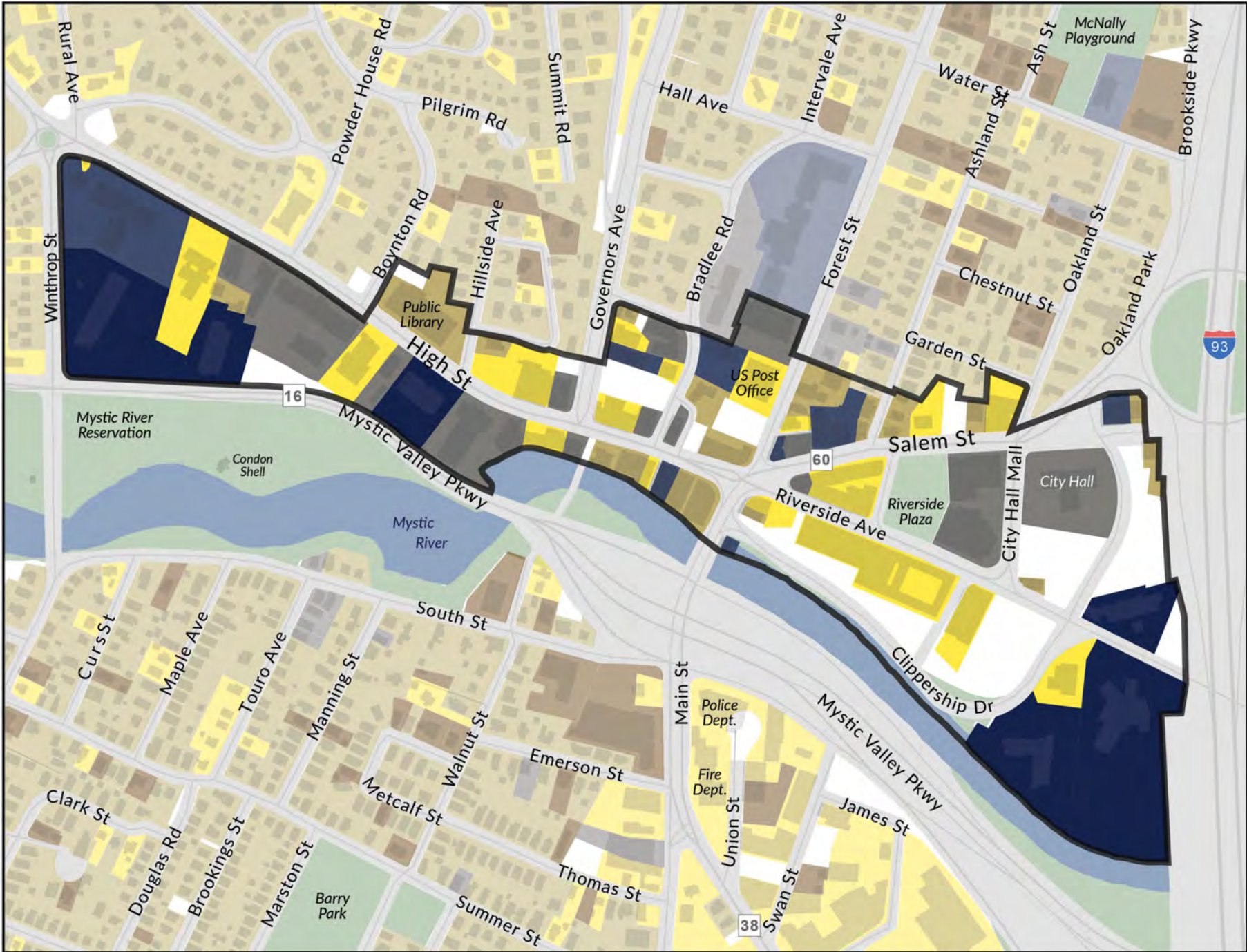
Building Height in Stories

- 1 - 1.75
- 2 - 2.75
- 3 - 3.5
- 4 - 6
- 7 - 11
- No Building
- No Building Height Data

Building height in stories is found in the assessors' data table.



This map was produced in September 2024 by Innes Associates for the City of Medford using data from MassGIS. "Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Technology and Security Services".





2026 Zoning Update



Medford Square

Dimensions - Building Coverage

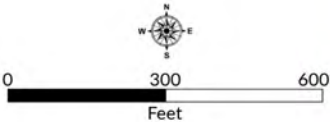
LEGEND

- Buildings
- Hydrography
- Open Space
- Study Area

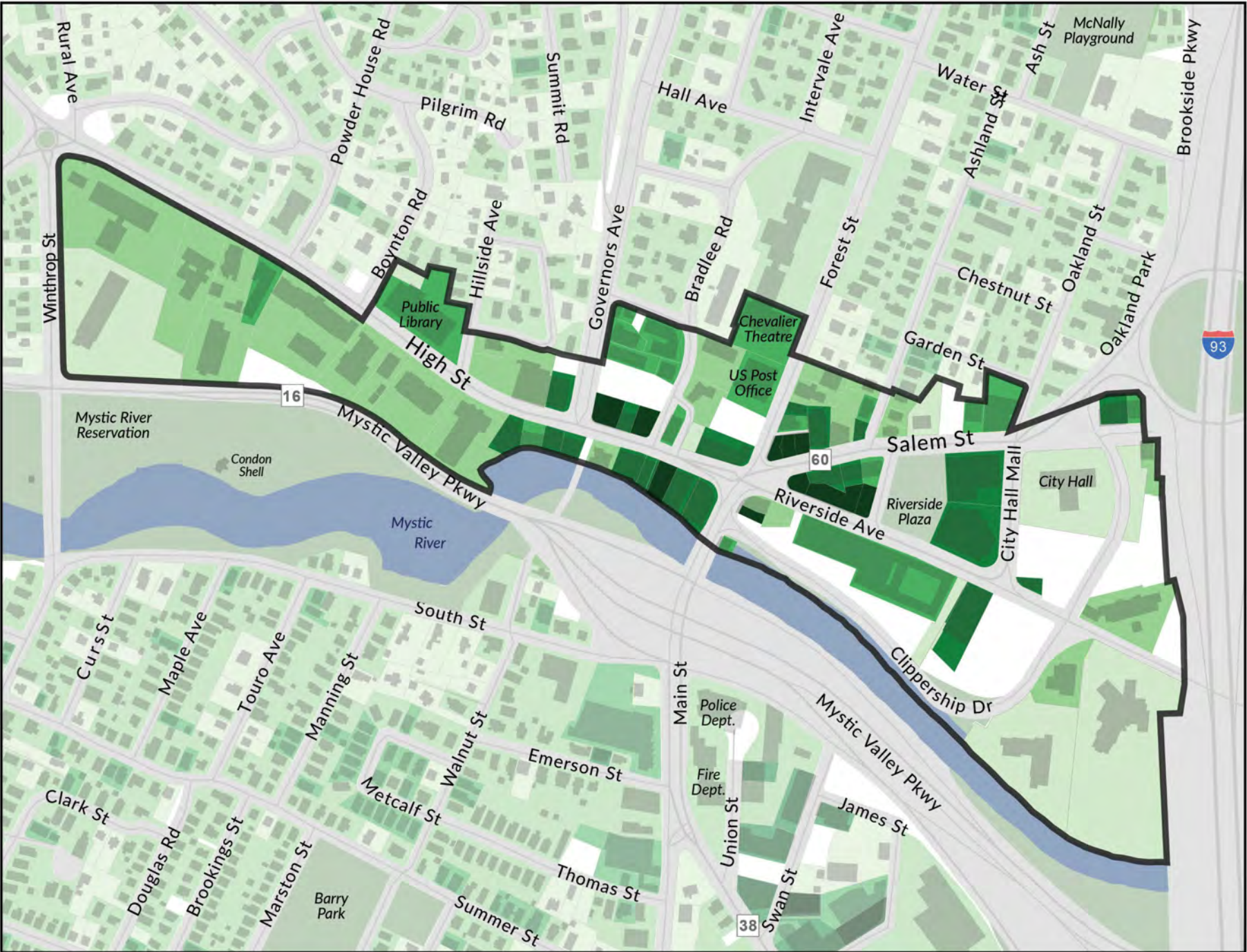
Percentage of Parcel Covered by Building Footprint

- 0%
- ≤ 20%
- ≤ 40%
- ≤ 60%
- ≤ 80%
- ≤ 100%

Building coverage is calculated by dividing the area of a building footprint within a lot by the total area of the lot.



This map was produced in September 2024 by Innes Associates for the City of Medford using data from MassGIS "Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Technology and Security Services".





2026 Zoning Update



Medford Square Dimensions - Impervious Coverage

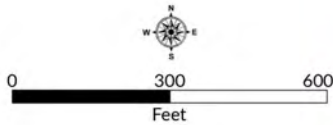
LEGEND

- Buildings
- Hydrography
- Open Space
- Study Area

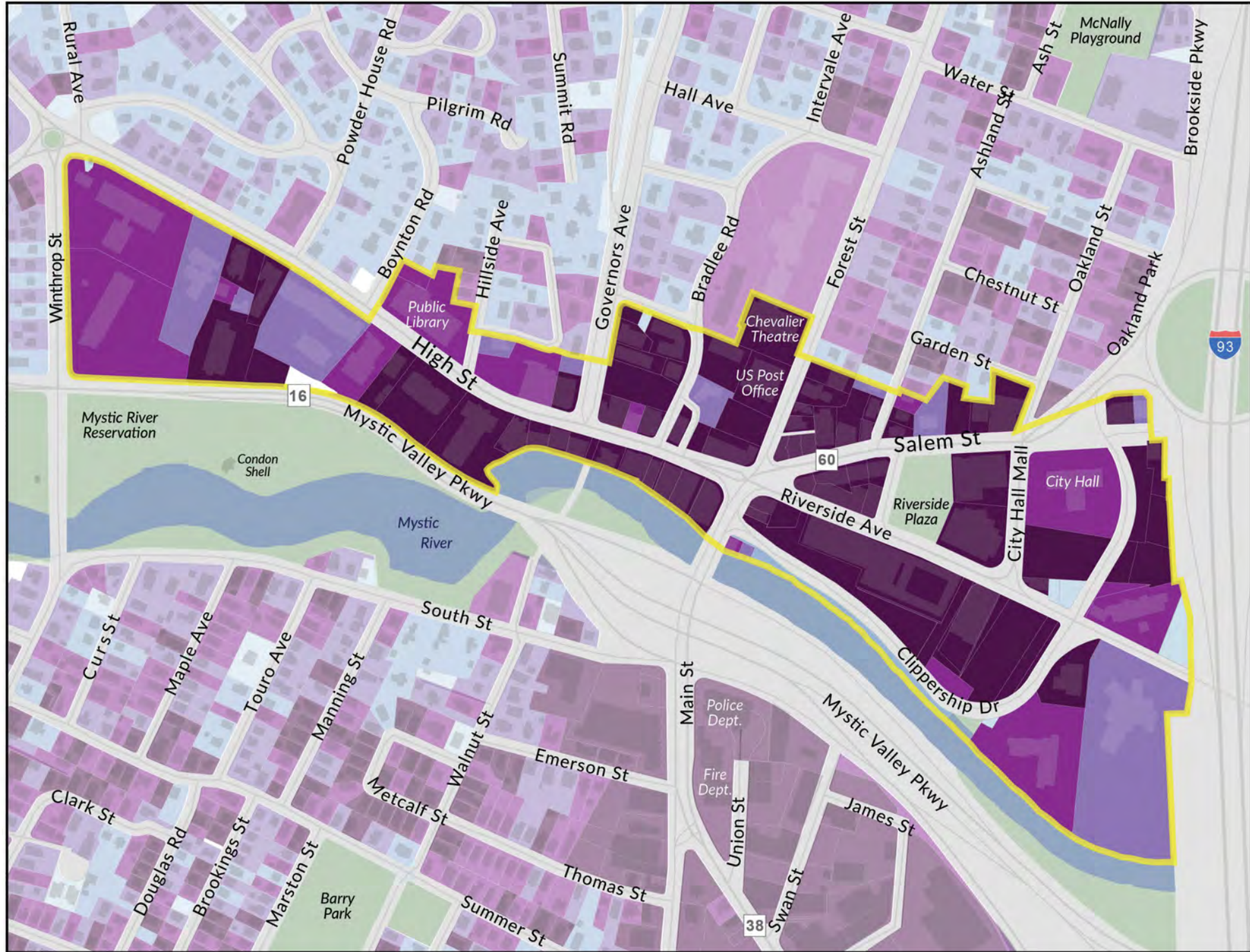
Percentage of Parcel Covered by
Impervious Surfaces

- 0%
- ≤ 20%
- ≤ 40%
- ≤ 60%
- ≤ 80%
- ≤ 100%

Impervious coverage is
calculated by dividing the area of
impervious surfaces within a lot
by the total area of the lot.



This map was produced in September 2024 by Innes Associates for the City
of Medford using data from MassGIS. "Bureau of Geographic Information
(MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Technology
and Security Services".



Background: Historic Assets





MACRIS Inventory



Medford Square

Medford, MA

MassHistoric Commission
MACRIS Inventory

LEGEND

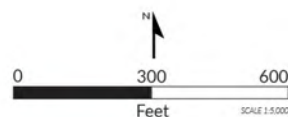
- Buildings
- Hydrography
- Open Space
- Study Area

Historic Structures

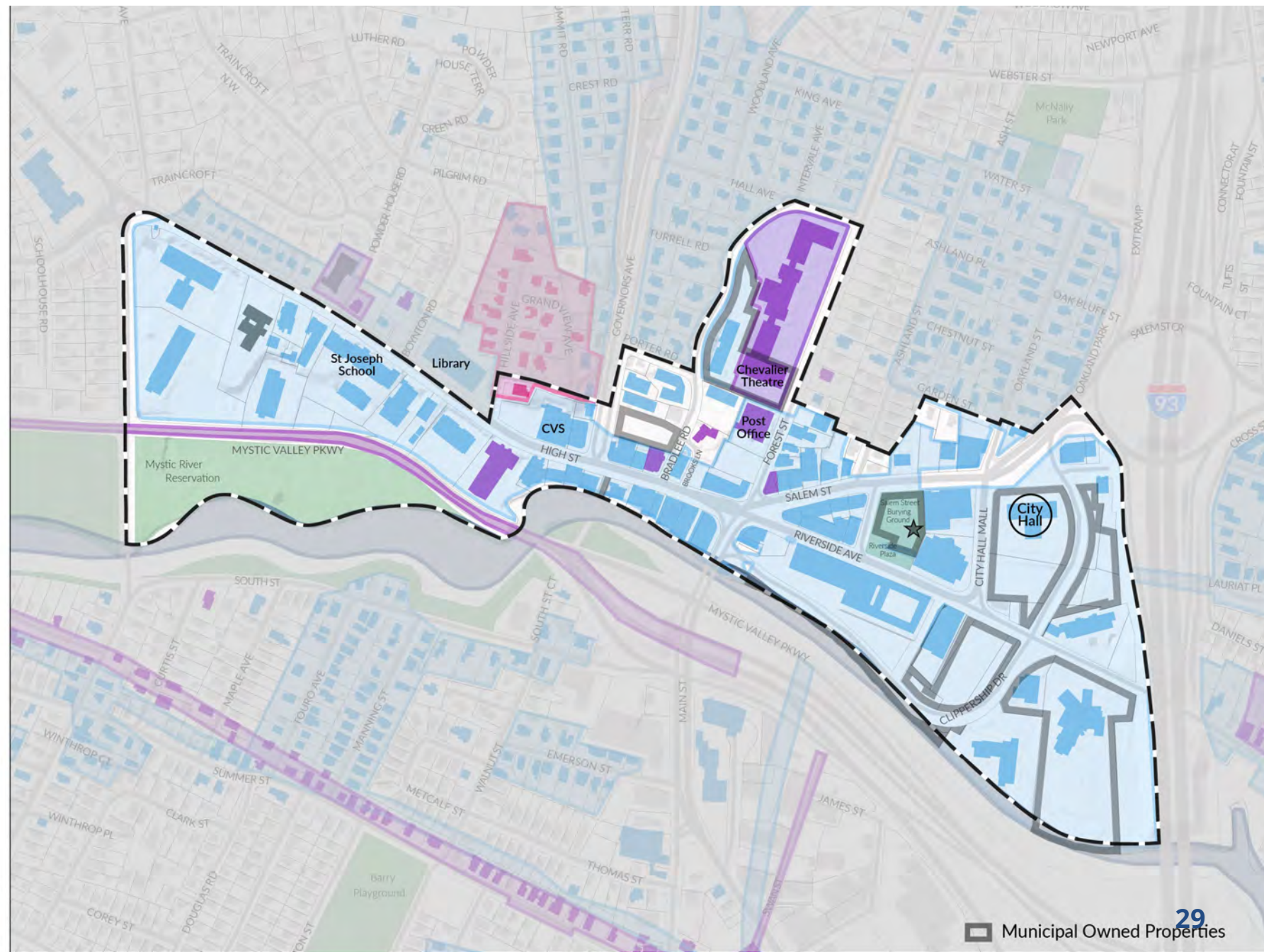
- Inventoried Area
- National Register of Historic Places
- National Register of Historic Places & Local Historic District
- Preservation Restriction
- Preservation Restriction Property

Historic Areas

- Inventoried Area
- National Register of Historic Places
- National Register of Historic Places & Local Historic District



This map was created in January 2024 by Innes Land Strategies Group for the City of Medford, MA using data from MedDOT and MassGIS. "Bureau of Geographic Information (MedGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Technology and Security Services".

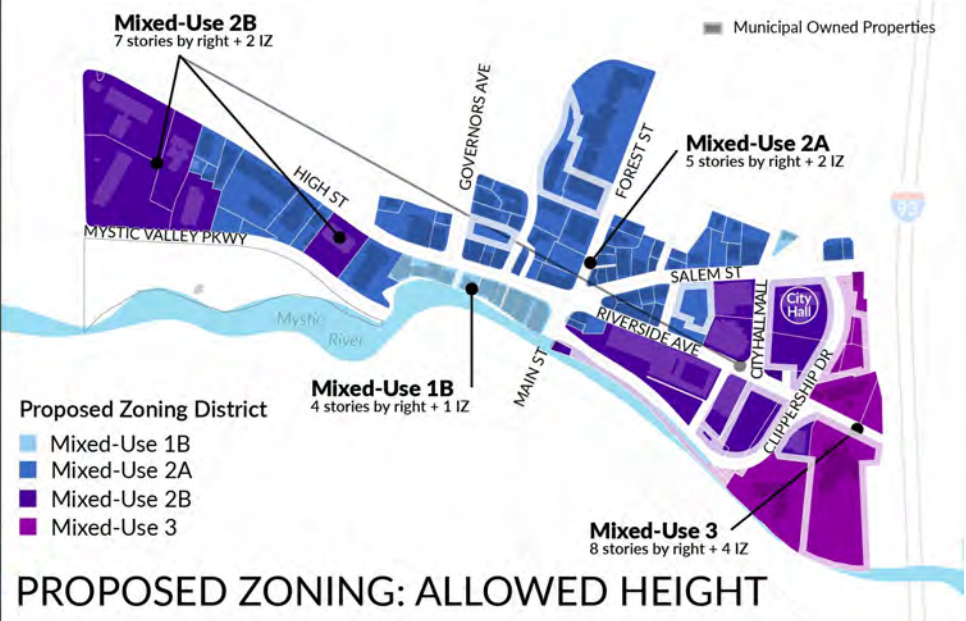
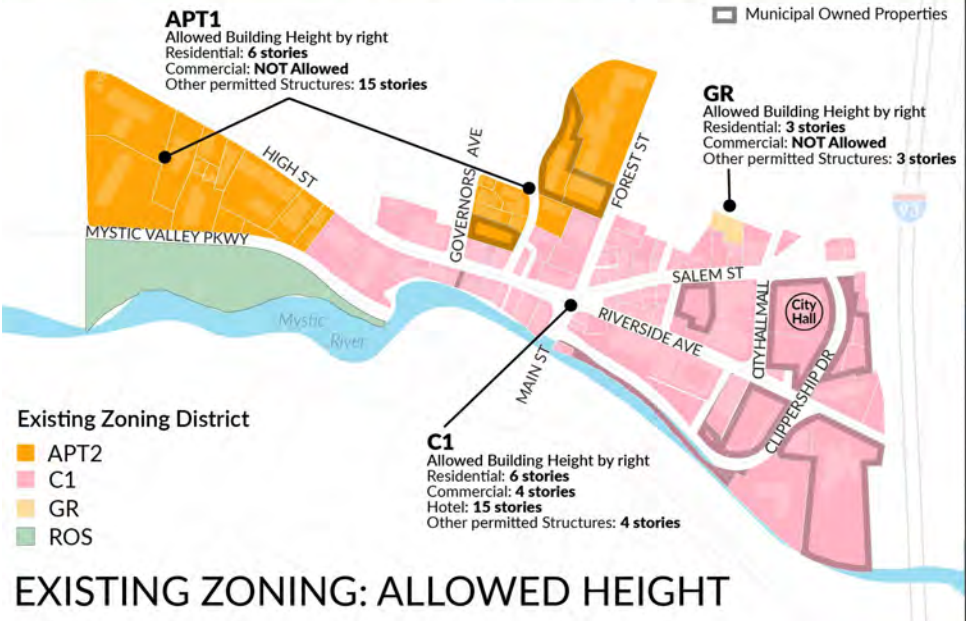
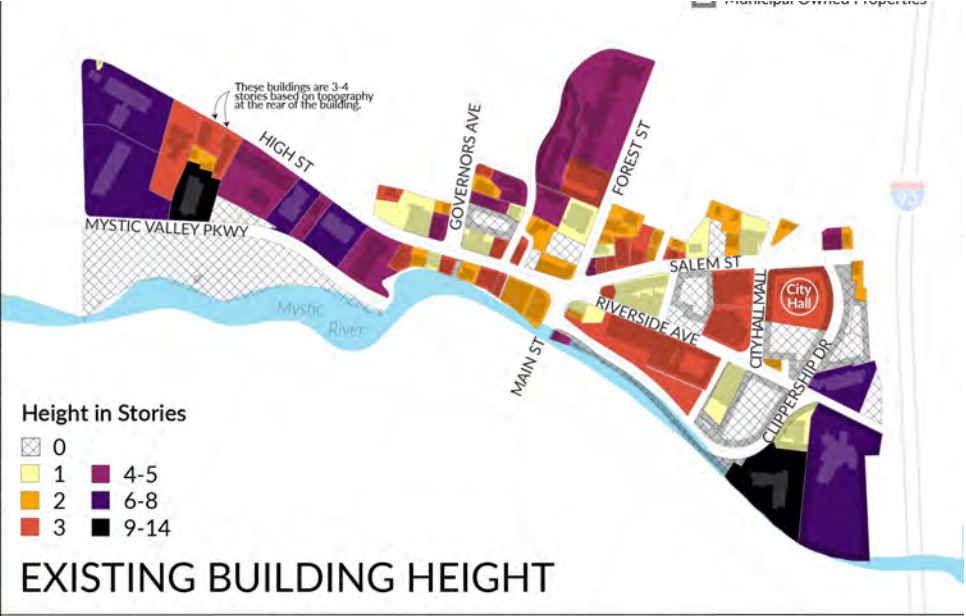


Background: Height Comparison Existing, Currently Allowed, Proposed





Height Comparison



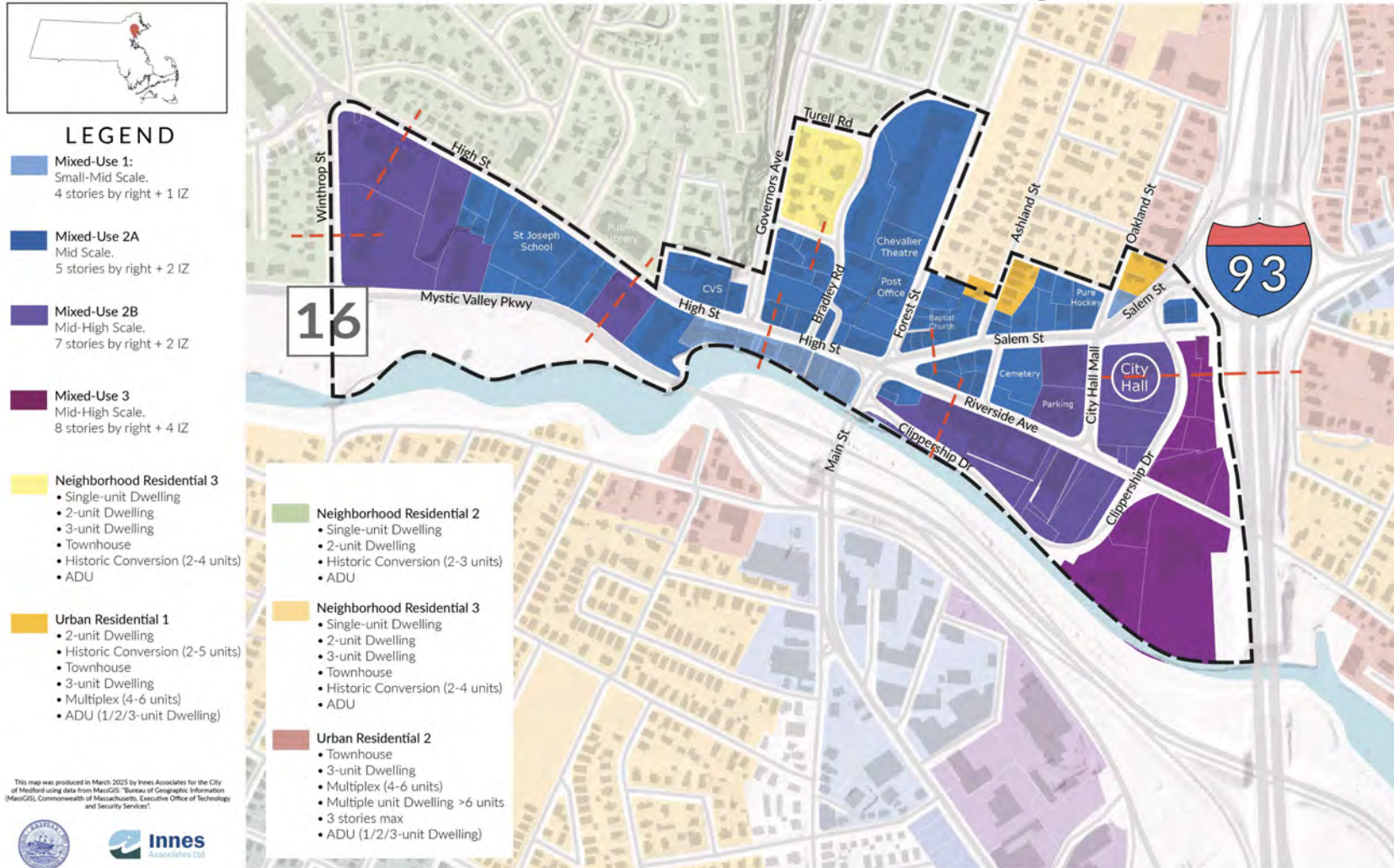
Proposed Medford Square Zoning





Hearing Agenda: Proposed Zoning Under Discussion

Medford Square Zoning





LEGEND

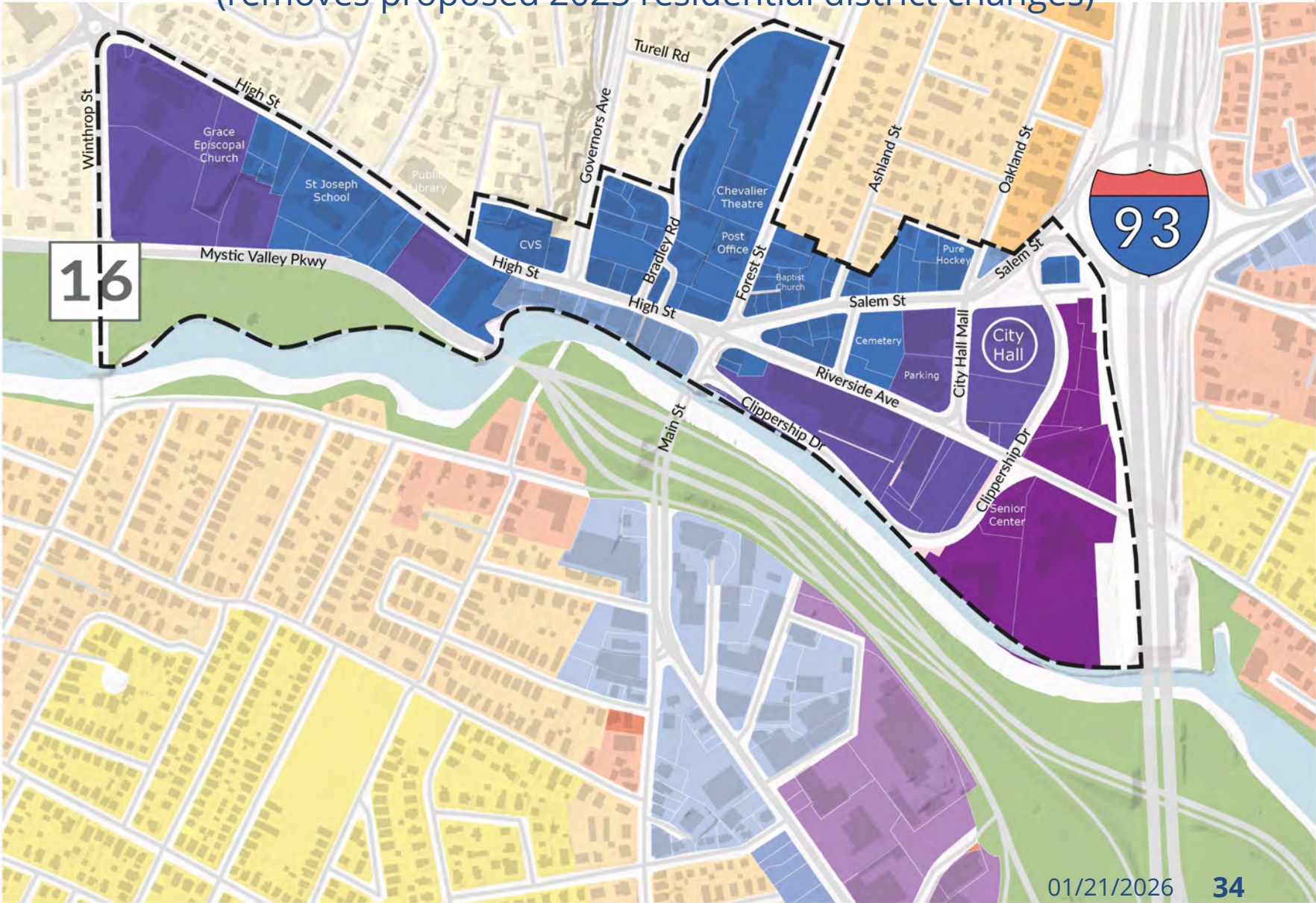
- Mixed-Use 1B:
4 stories by right + 1 IZ
- Mixed-Use 2A
5 stories by right + 2 IZ
- Mixed-Use 2B
7 stories by right + 2 IZ
- Mixed-Use 3
8 stories by right + 4 IZ

This map was produced in June 2025 by Innes Associates for the City of Medford using data from MassGIS: "Bureau of Geographic Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Technology and Security Services".



Recommended Map for Discussion

(removes proposed 2025 residential district changes)





Next Steps for Medford Square Rezoning

- Listen to comments and questions at today's meeting.
- Work with the City's Working Group to schedule community meetings and discuss format, content, and materials.
- Confirm meeting schedule with the Community Development Board and City Council.

