



# **SOUTH END BRANCH LIBRARY**

**Community Meeting #2**

**February 12, 2023**



Mayor Michelle Wu



utile



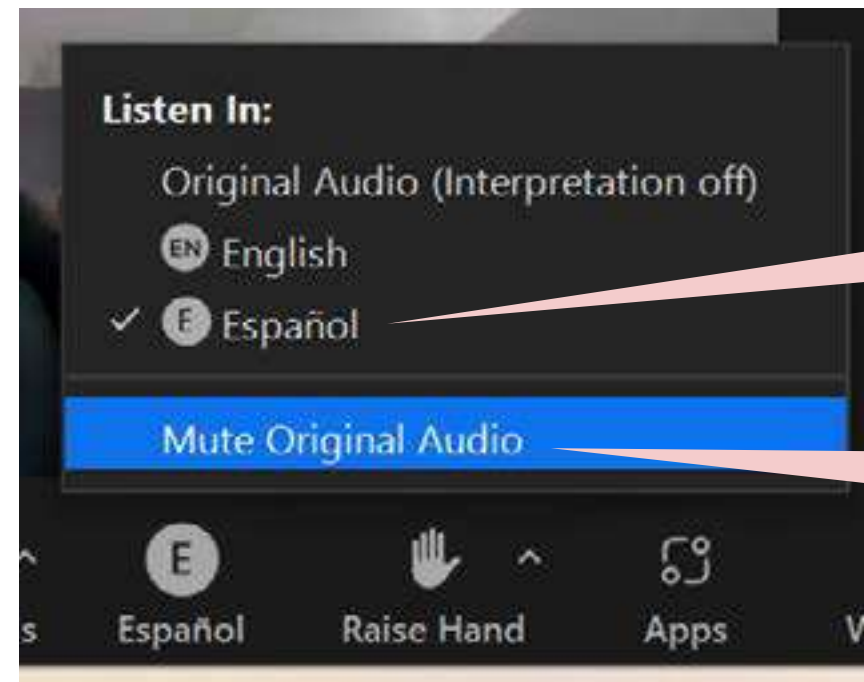
City of Boston  
Public Facilities

# TRANSLATIONS

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Translations for this meeting are available live in the following languages:

Chinese (Cantonese)  
Spanish (Español)



Select the language you would like to hear the presentation in

Select mute original audio to only hear your selected language channel

# AGENDA

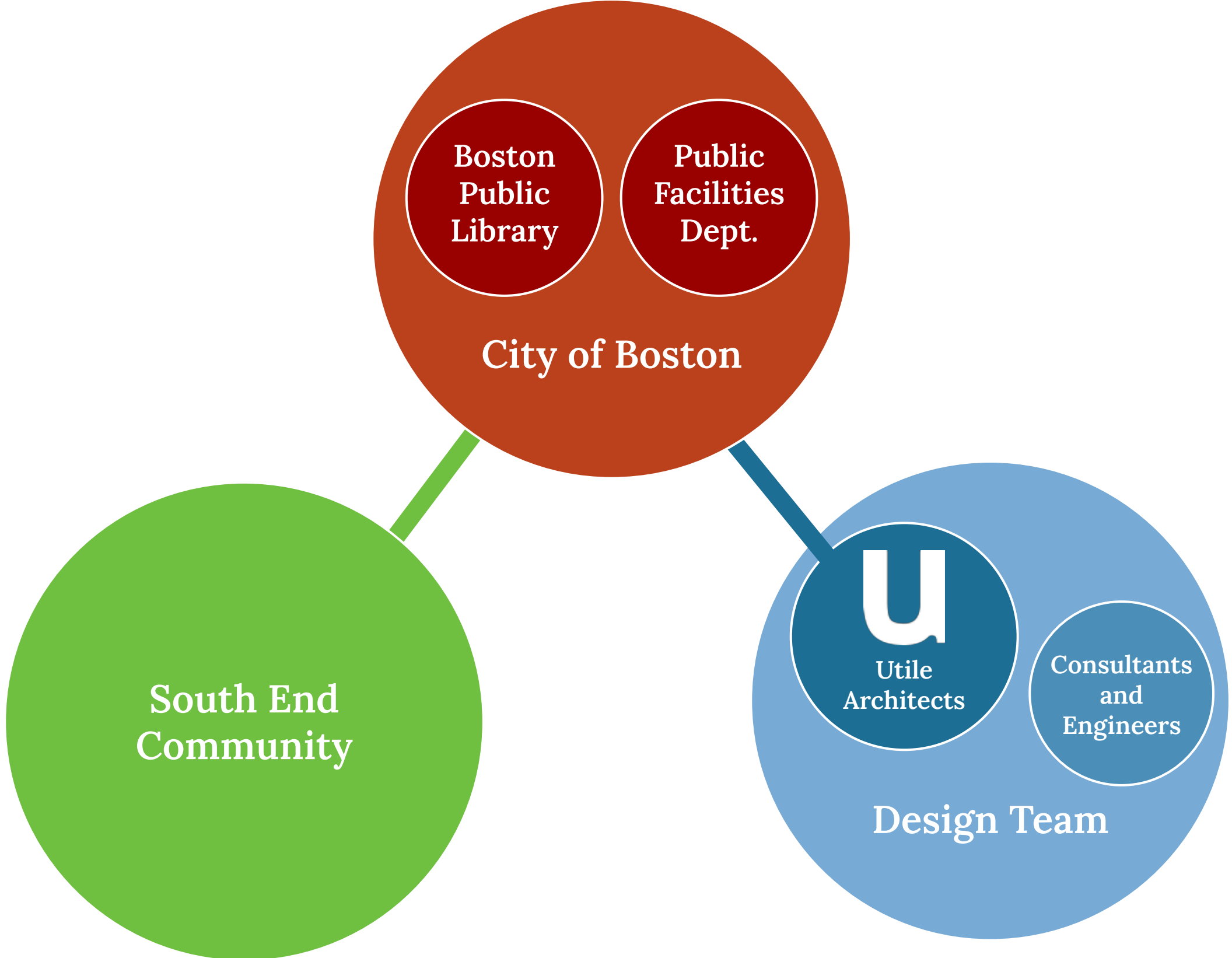
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Community Meeting #2  
February 12, 2024

1. Introductions
2. Schedule and Process
3. Branch Service Area & Demographics
4. Building Program
5. Site Observations
6. Test Fits
7. Next Steps
8. Q&A Discussion

# PROJECT TEAM

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# ACCELERATED PROJECT SCHEDULE



## Community Input

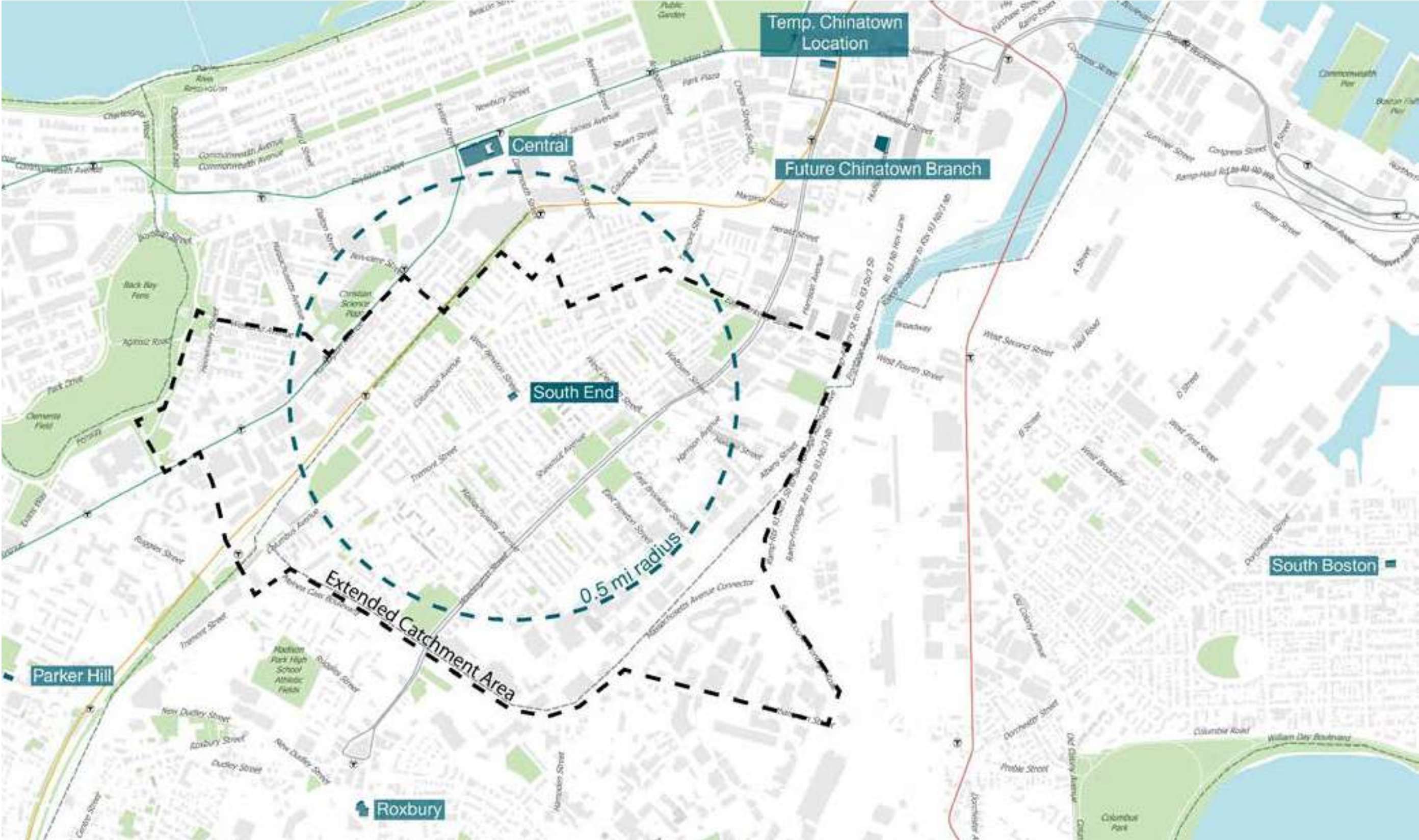
- Community Meeting #1  
Jan 8, 2024
- Community Meeting #2  
Feb 12, 2024
- Community Meeting #3  
Mar / Apr 2024
- Future Community Meeting  
TBD in 2024
- Future Community Meeting  
TBD in 2024

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# BRANCH SERVICE AREA & DEMOGRAPHICS



# EXTENDED CATCHMENT AREA



# CATCHMENT AREA DEMOGRAPHICS

## Languages Spoken

English (only): 23.9%

Spanish (only, and in addition to another language): 7.8%

29% increase in Spanish speakers since 2010

## Age Groups

Largest: 35-64 years-old (30.6% of total)

Fastest growing: 65+ years-old (57% increase)

## Racial Demographics

White: 49.3%

Black/African American: 13.7% (21% decrease)

Asian/Pacific Islander: 16.5% (30% increase)

Hispanic or Latino: 15.5% (8% decrease)

45.7% of total pop.

Greatest decrease since 2010: White (-6.3%)

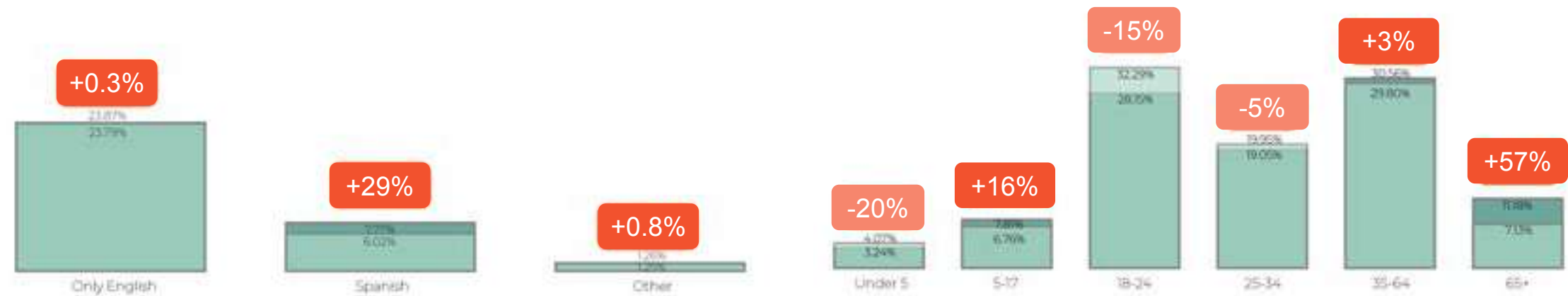
Greatest increase since 2010: Asian/Pacific Islander (+3.8%)

## Median Household Income (2022)

\$78,970

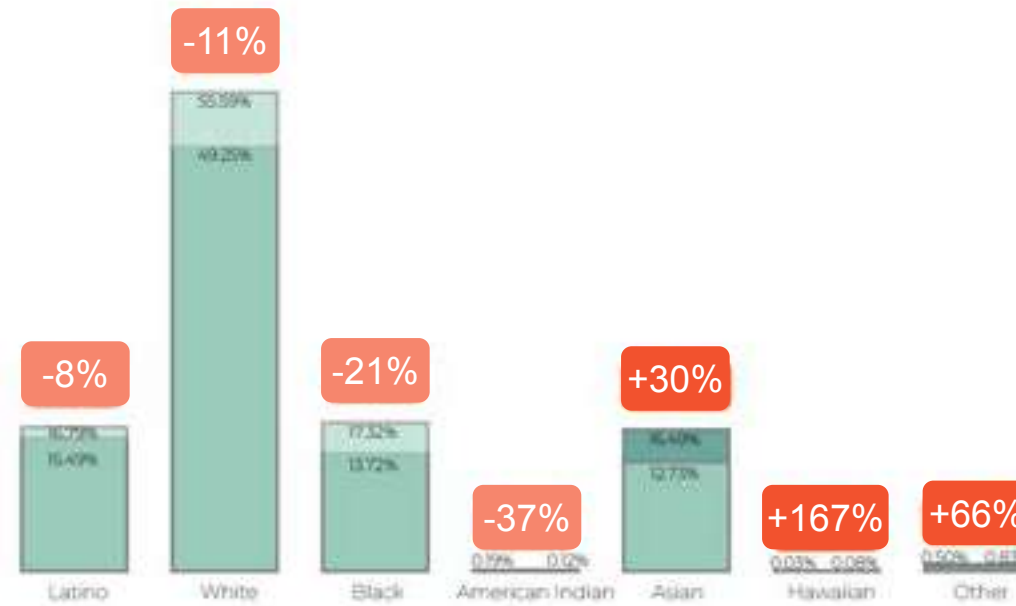
\*All demographic information is based on the South End Library Extended Catchment Area and comparing either an increase or decrease from 2010 to 2022 census data.

## Demographic Changes since 2010

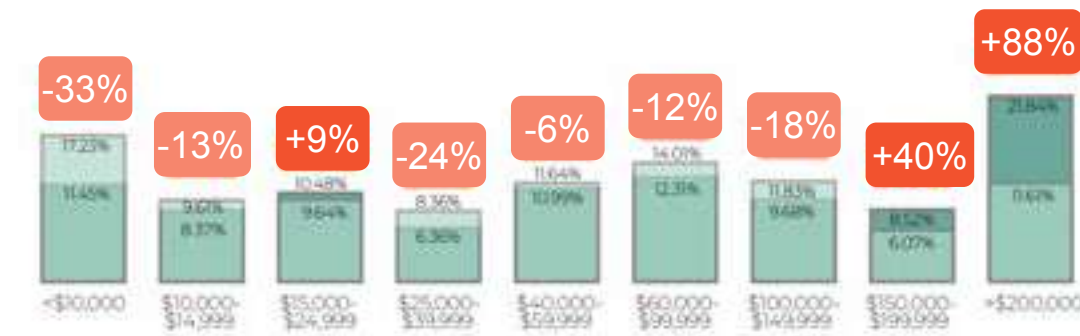


## Languages Spoken

## Age Groups



## Racial Demographics



## Income Brackets



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# BUILDING PROGRAM



# COMMUNITY MEETING #1 FEEDBACK

## General

- a. Building footprint and parcel is limited; therefore we need to prioritize multi-use
- b. Services for a broad range of needs for the community
- c. Relocate the main entrance closer or more visible from Tremont St.
- d. The South End Branch should prioritize sustainability which could be a teaching tool for patrons

## Collections and seating

- a. Consider role of the Local History Collection
- b. Provide a dedicated display for SE authors
- c. Increased area for computer users (increased qty or additional seating at library tables)
- d. Variety of seating for parents with young children
- e. Additional high top tables for remote working and collaboration



# COMMUNITY MEETING #1 FEEDBACK

## Community Room

- a. The existing community room is undersized for larger events
- b. The community room should be designed to host a variety of activities and special events

## Study Rooms / Classroom

- a. Smaller, acoustically private spaces are desired to enable services such as tax and homework support, language and reading assistance, etc.
- b. Consider providing a classroom that can accommodate a 10-12 person meeting for programs such as computer learning



# COMMUNITY MEETING #1 FEEDBACK

## Outdoor Spaces

- a. The SE community would like to maintain as much of the Library Park as possible
- b. Would be open to reducing the park in order to increase the building footprint and library programs
- c. The SE has limited tree canopy and would like to preserve the park trees if possible
- d. Reinstating Wi-fi in the Park is desired
- e. Socializing, chess-playing, summer concerts, Easter egg hunts and children's outdoor programming are well attended
- f. Enhancing the summer concert program would be welcomed
- g. Interest in blurring the boundaries between the library and the park.
- h. Could the park remain open after hours?



# PROPOSED SOUTH END BUILDING PROGRAM

SUPPORT  
Custodian Nook  
Custodian Closet  
Friend's Storage  
Facilities Storage  
Stairs/Elevators  
Mechanical  
Server  
Electrical

COMMUNITY  
Community Room  
Storage Closet(s)  
Multi-Purpose Room  
Special Program  
Study Rooms  
Phone Booths

ADULT AREA  
Adult Collections  
Adult Seating  
Librarian's Desk  
Local History

TEEN AREA  
Teen Collections  
Teen Seating

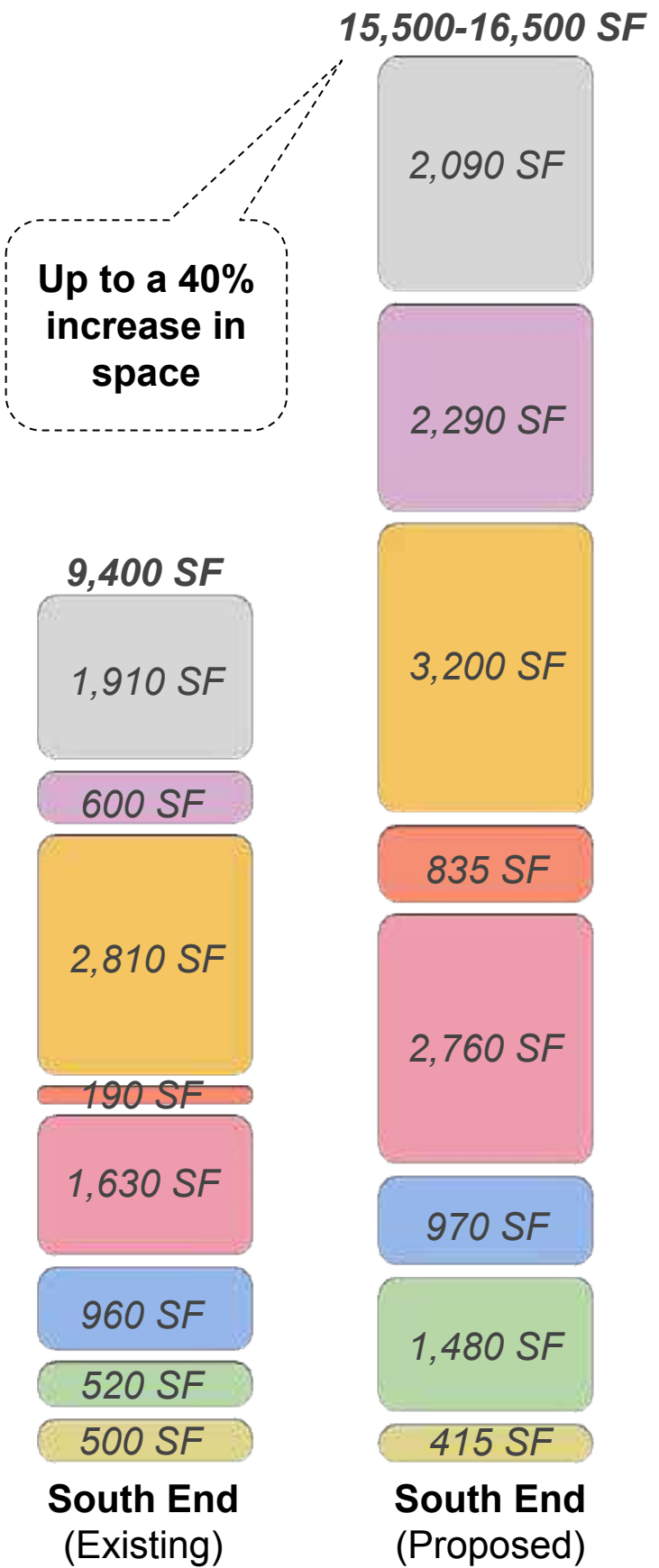
CHILDREN AREA  
Children's Collections  
Children's Seating  
Early Literacy Area  
Librarian's Desk  
Tween Area  
Stroller Parking  
Family Restroom

STAFF  
Workroom  
Librarian's Office  
Staff Break Room  
Staff Restroom  
Storage

CENTRAL SERVICES  
Borrower's Desk  
Satellite Desk  
Centrally Located Services  
Men's/Women's RR  
All Gender Restroom

ENTRY  
Vestibule  
Lobby  
Exterior Book Drop

# PROPOSED SOUTH END BUILDING PROGRAM



### Community - 2,290 SF

- Community Meeting Room, seating capacity of +/- 125
- Multi-purpose meeting room, 8-10 seats
- (2) Study rooms, 4-6 seats
- (2) "Phone room" nooks, 1-2 person capacity

### Adult Area - 3,200 SF

- 12,500 - 13,000 volumes
- 36 seats
- 12 computer stations
- Includes Local History

### Teen Area - 835 SF

- 3,000 volumes
- 12 seats
- 4 computer stations

### Children Area - 2,760 SF

- 13,250 - 13,750 volumes
- 30 seats
- 3 AWE computer stations
- Includes tweens area, story time area and crafts

### Staff - 970 SF

- Work room, break room, staff restroom and storage
- Branch librarian's office

### Central Services - 1,480 SF

- Borrower's desk
- Holds shelving, Friend's book sale, community bulletin board and display areas
- Restrooms

### Entry - 415 SF

- Vestibule, lobby and book drop

### Support - 2,090 SF

- Friend's and facilities storage
- Mechanical and electrical rooms

### Grossing Factor (+/- 15%)

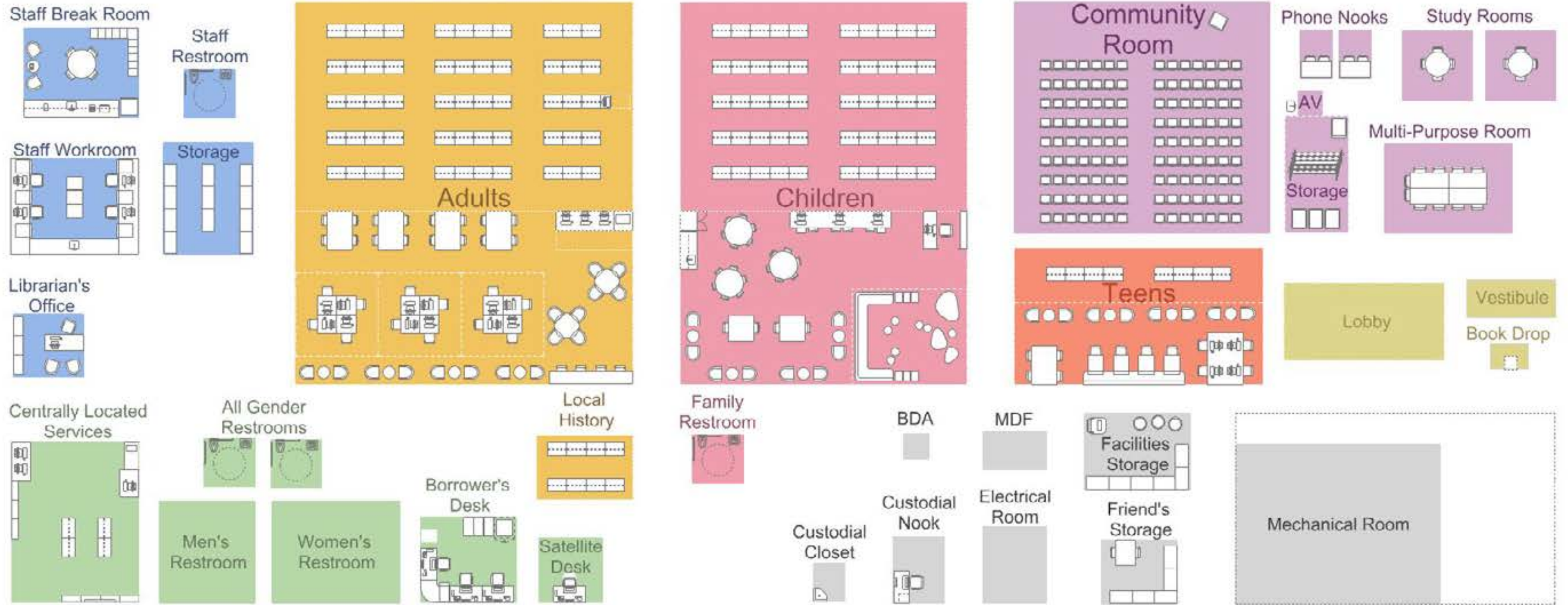
- Circulation between program areas and shaft spaces

**TOTAL - 15,500-16,500 SF**



City of Boston  
Public Facilities

# PROPOSED SOUTH END BUILDING PROGRAM



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# SITE OBSERVATIONS





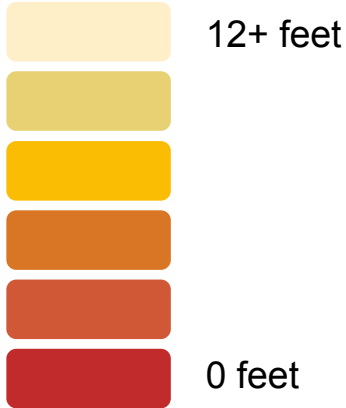
# NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT



# NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT - STREET WALL



Distance from building frontage to property line

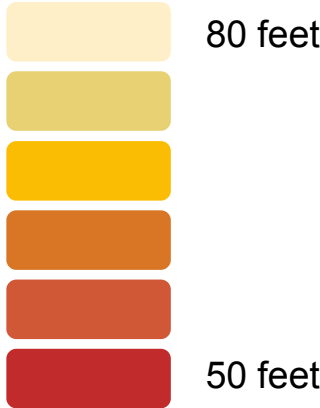


Most buildings along Tremont street are set back 4-8 feet from the property line, with a few exceptions being set back further, and a few with no setback at all.

# NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT - END CAPS

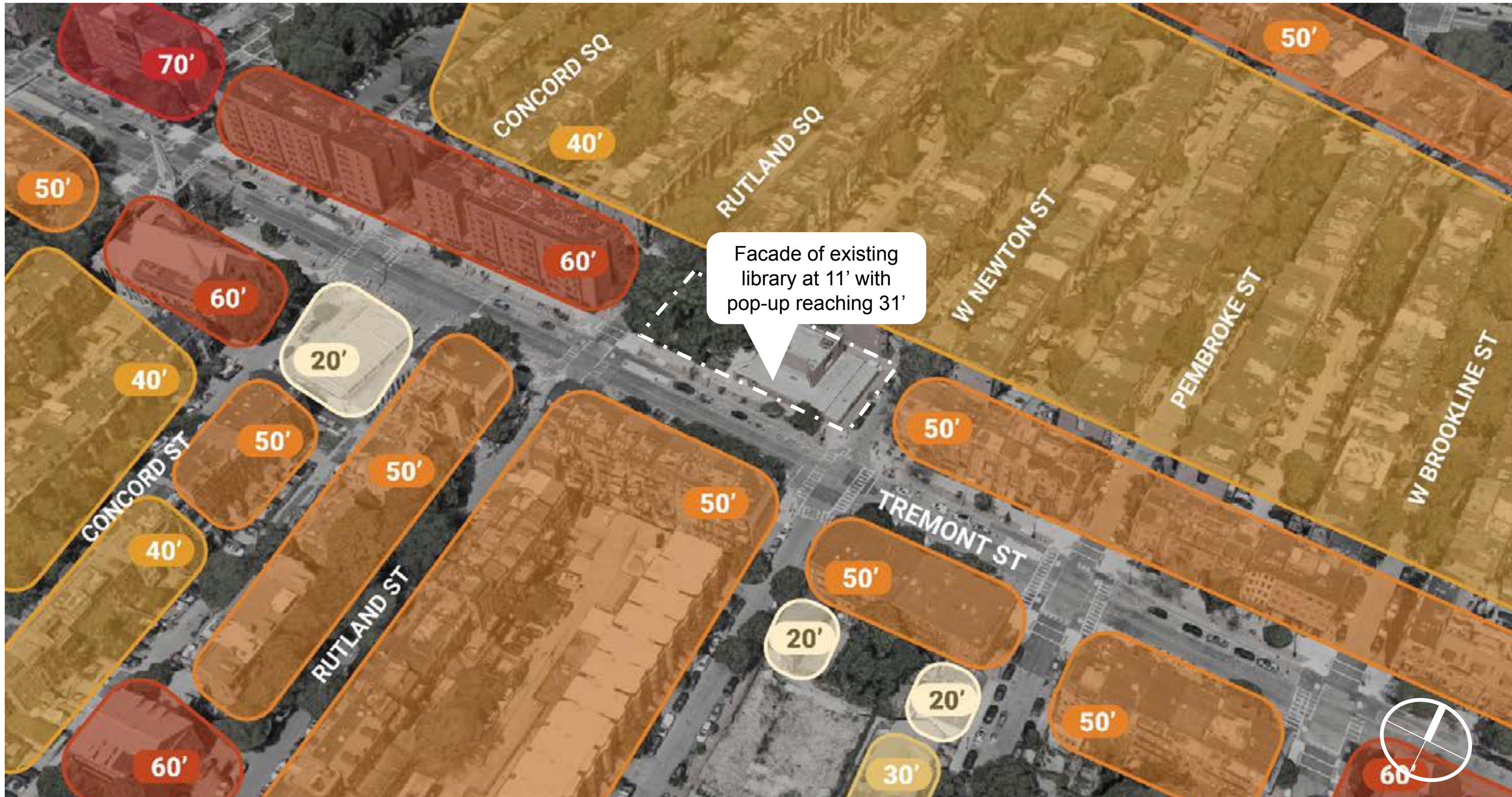


Distance between faces of buildings

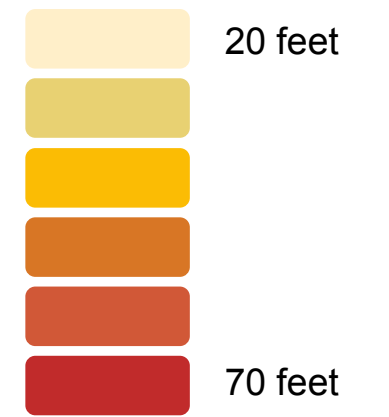


Typically, the space between end caps along Tremont street compress to a distance of 50 feet, while the faces of buildings along north-south streets expand to 60 or sometimes 80 feet.

# NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT - HEIGHT



## Heights of surrounding buildings

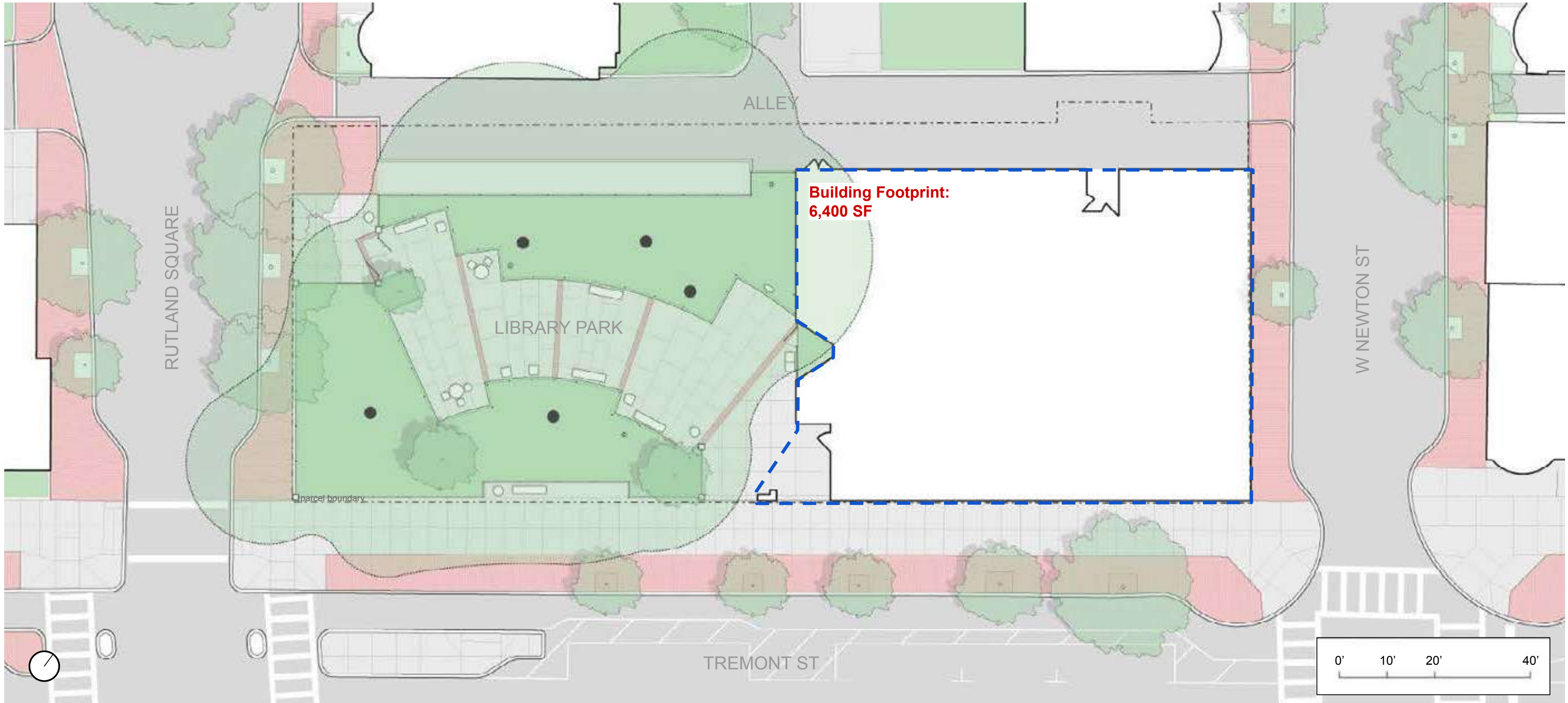


Heights along Tremont Street typically range from 50 to 60 feet, with some exceptions. Heights along the north-south streets are typically lower at 40 feet. Particularly north of Tremont street.

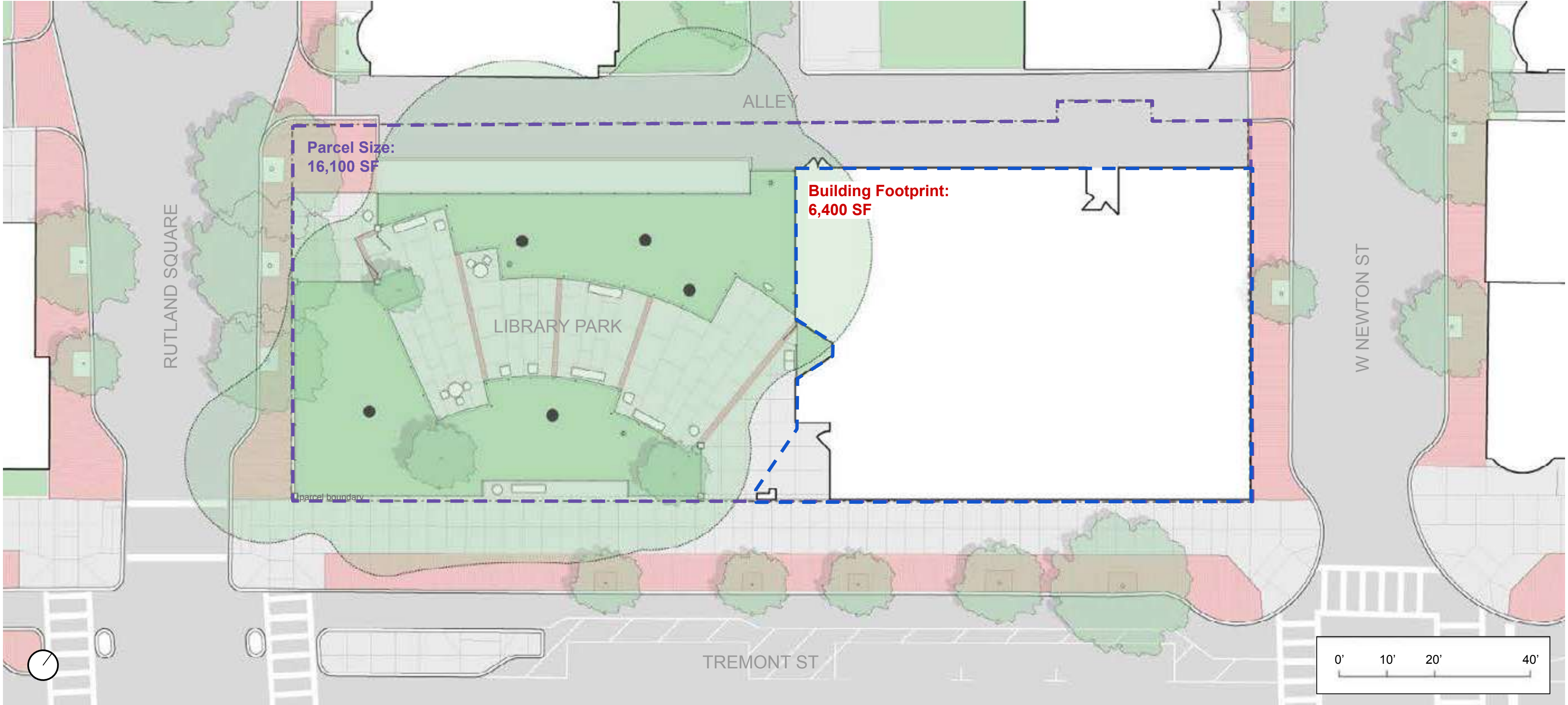
# NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT - ARCHITECTURAL VARIETY



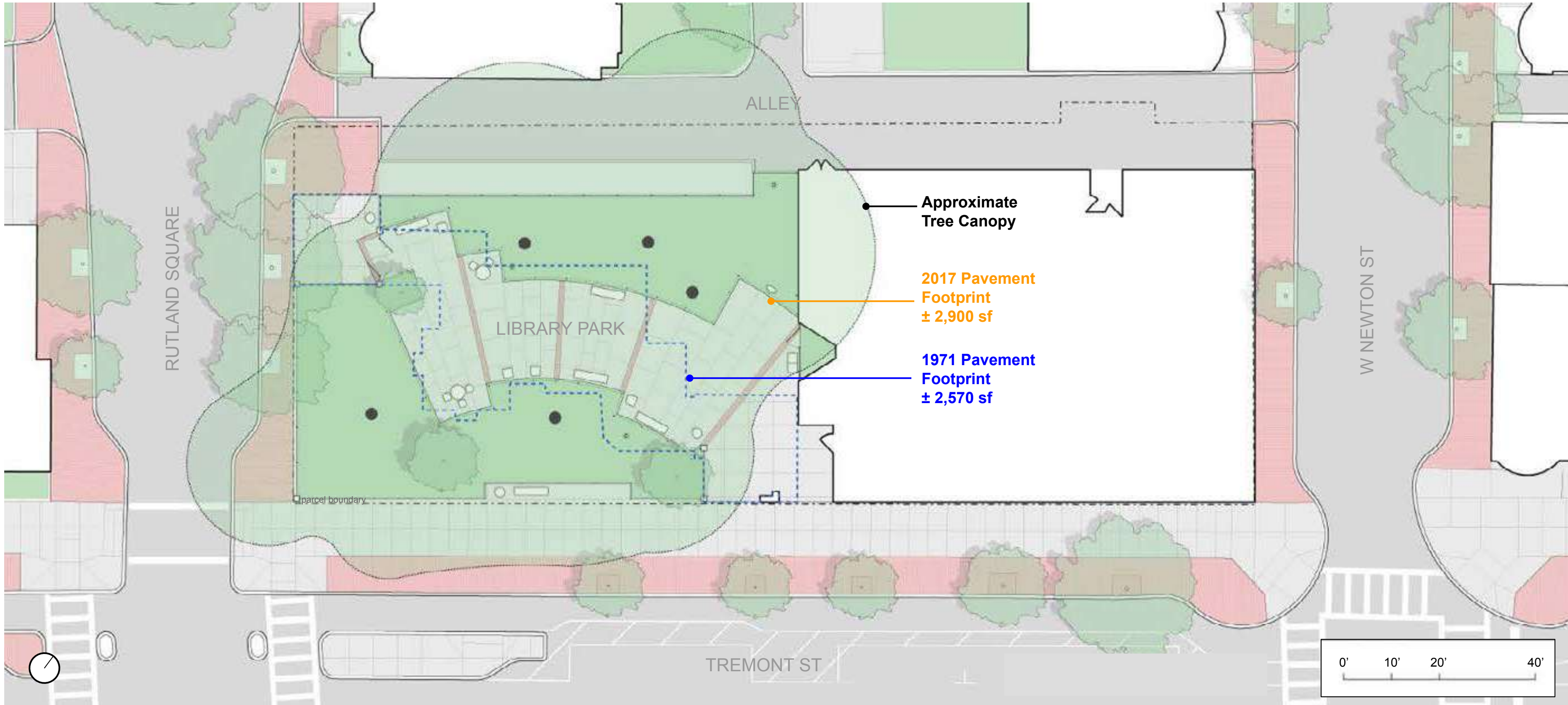
# EXISTING SITE PLAN



# OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANSION

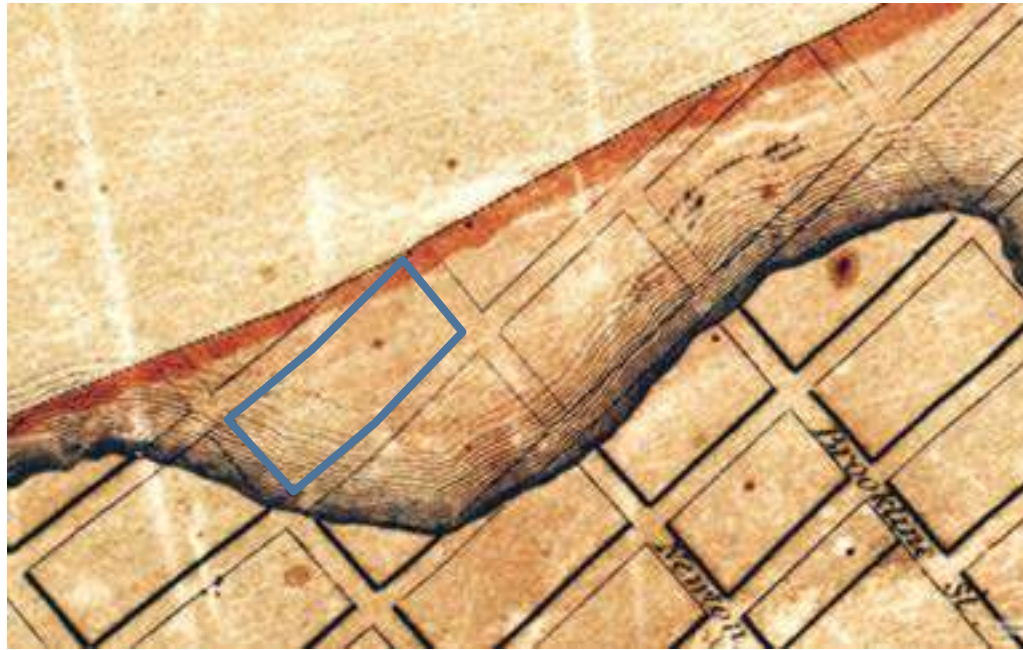


# IMPACTS TO THE ADJACENT PARK AND TREES



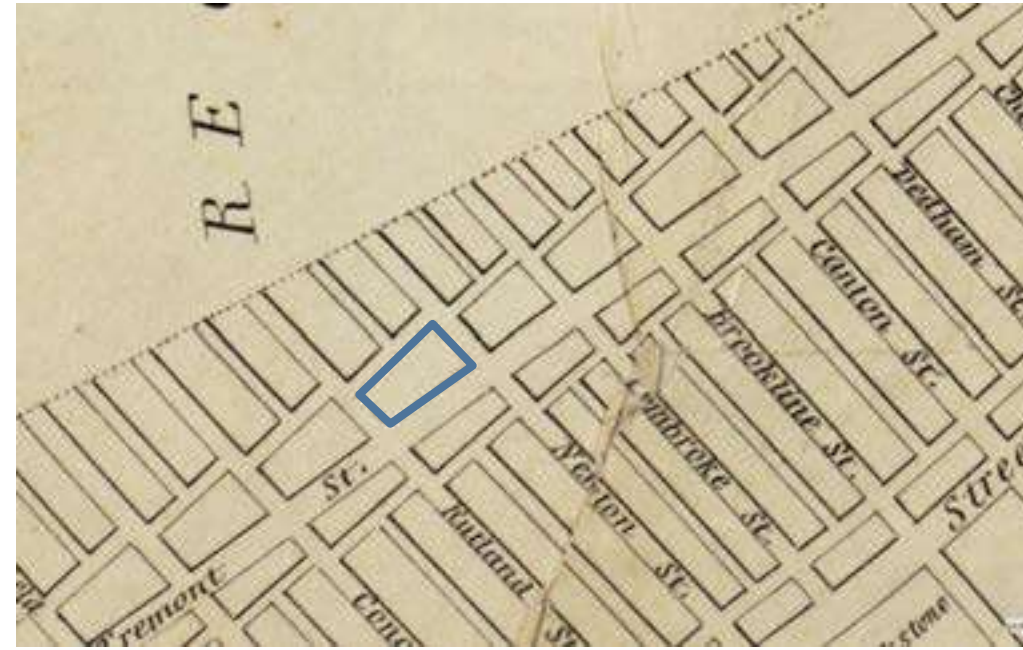


# SITE DEVELOPMENT HISTORY



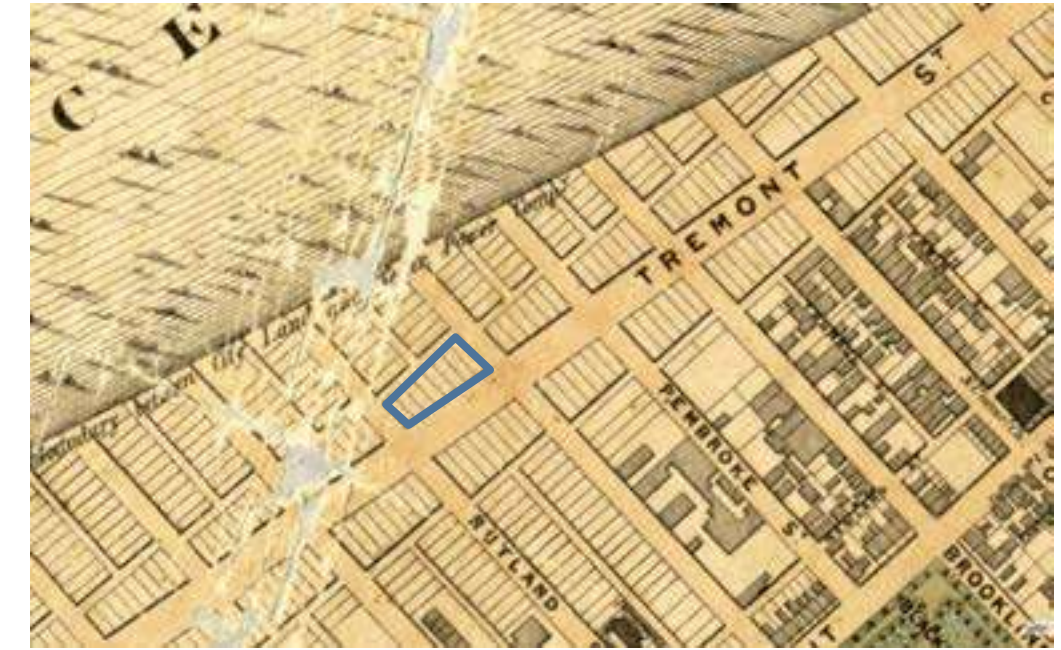
**1826:** Planning for the filling of the Back Bay begins

*Image: 1826 Boston Annin & Smith Map*



**1835:** The cap-block condition is proposed as filling continues

*Image: 1835 Boston South Cove Pendelton Map*



**1852:** Parcelization begins as blocks are filled

*Image: 1852 Boston Slatter Map*



**1888:** Townhomes, streetcars, and residential “squares” define the South End’s boulevards and streets

*Image: 1888 Boston Bromley Atlas*



**1968:** The Branch site noted in a BRA Urban Renewal plan that demolishes cap blocks and neighborhood swaths.

*Image: 1968 BRA Boston South End Illustrative Site Plan*



**2023:** Today’s branch has returned to its original site, but challenges to meeting community needs remain.

*Image: Google Earth 2023*

# FLOOD RISK - STORMWATER

Near-Term Stormwater Flood Risk



Source: Climate Ready Boston Map Explorer

# FLOOD RISK - STORMWATER

Long-Term Stormwater Flood Risk



Source: Climate Ready Boston Map Explorer

# FLOOD RISK - COASTAL FLOODING

High Tide 2070 (takes into account a 36-in sea level rise)

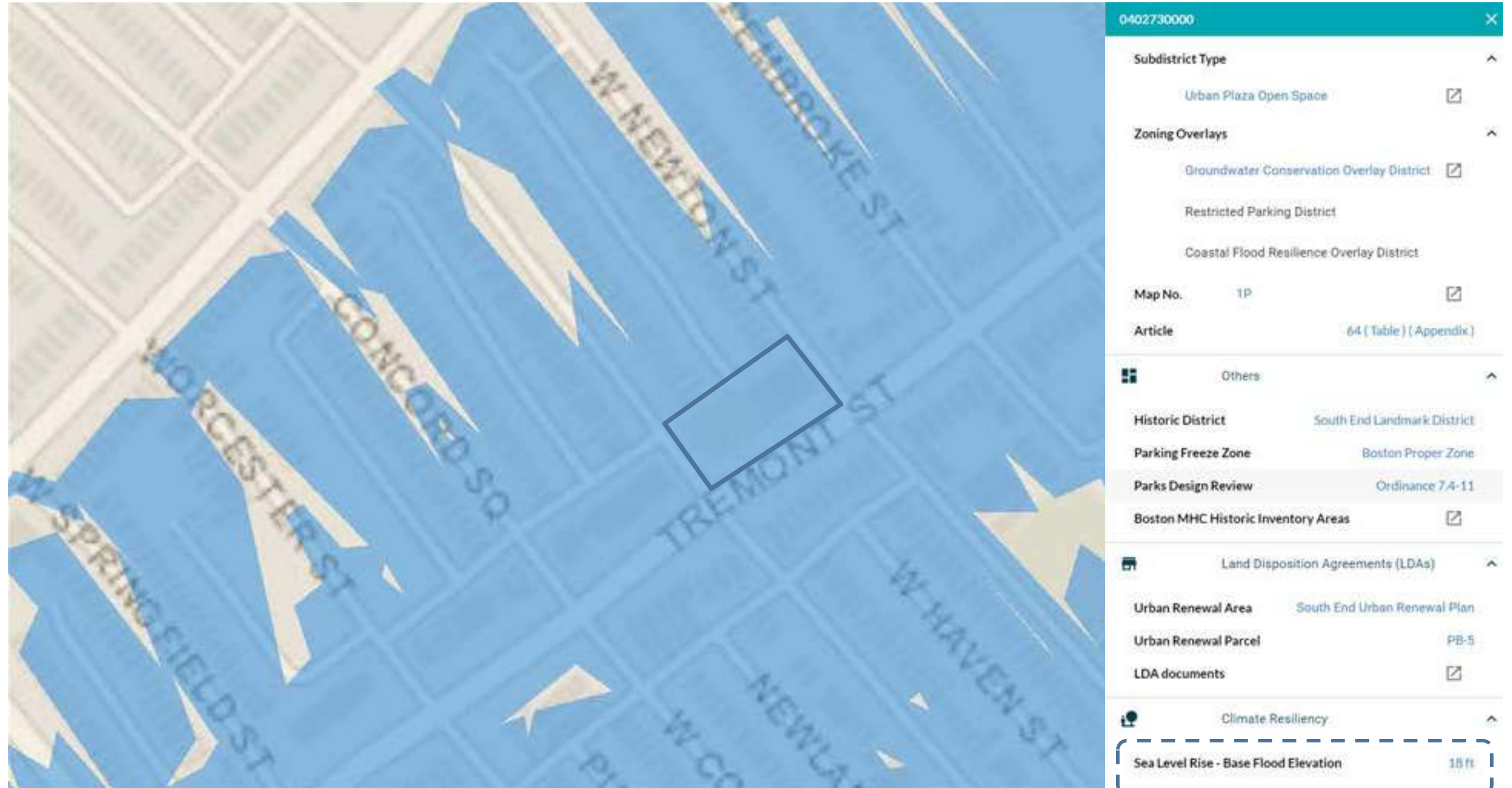
The existing South End Library parcel has a 10% annual coastal flood risk, meaning that in 2070 there will be a 1 in 10 chance of a flood event occurring in any given year.

The Base Flood Elevation for the SE Branch parcel is 18 ft

The existing library first floor elevation is 15.99 ft

The City of Boston Zoning Code requires the first floor elevation 1 ft above sea level.

**If our project were to comply w/ the zoning code, then the first floor elevation will need to be at 19 ft ( approx. 3'-3" above Tremont Street)**



Source: Boston Zoning Code

# FLOOD RISK - EXISTING BUILDING

DESIGN FLOOD ELEV.  
EL. 19.00'

APPROX. 3'-3" ABOVE  
TREMONT ST.



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# TEST FITS



# WHAT IS A TEST FIT

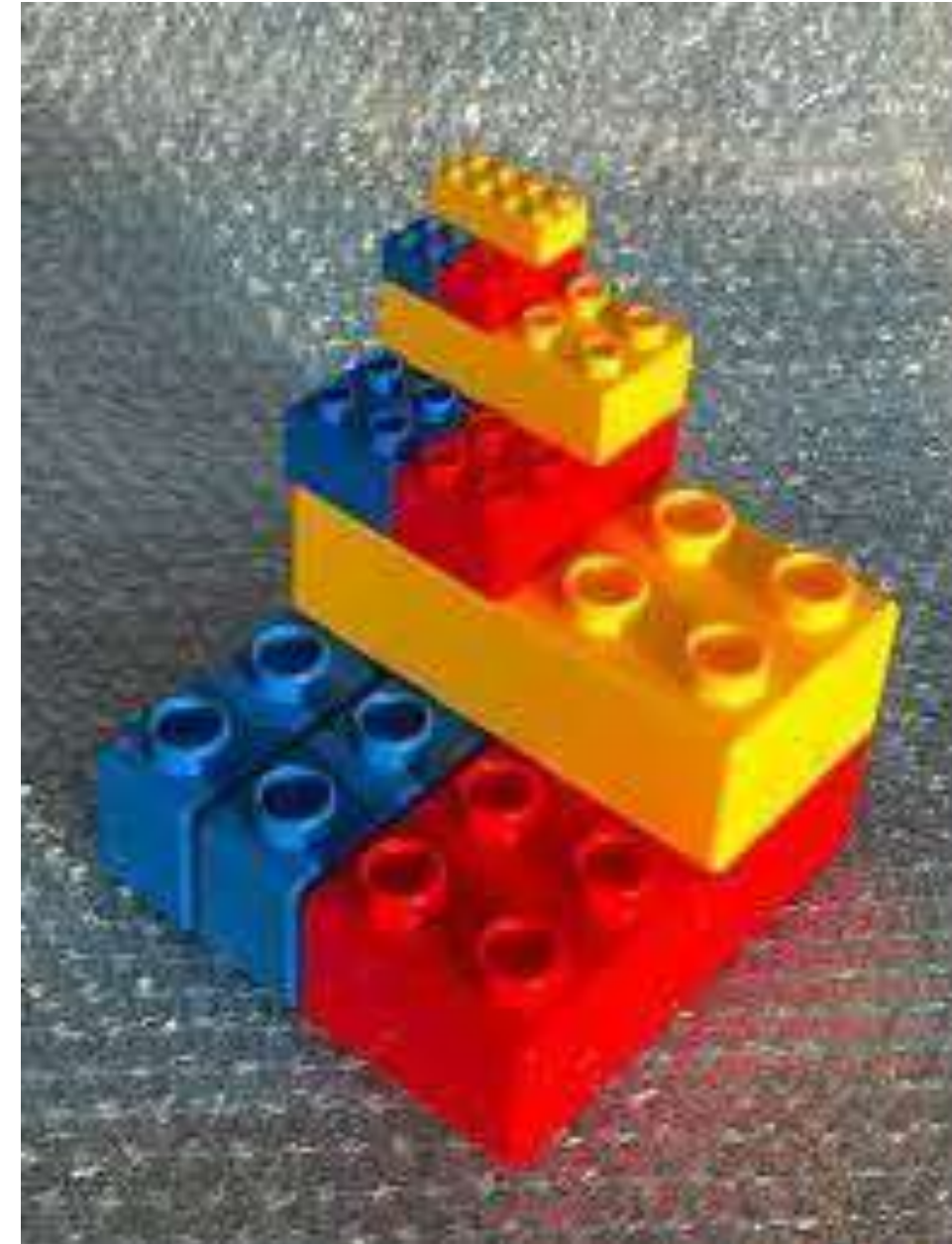
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## What is a test fit?

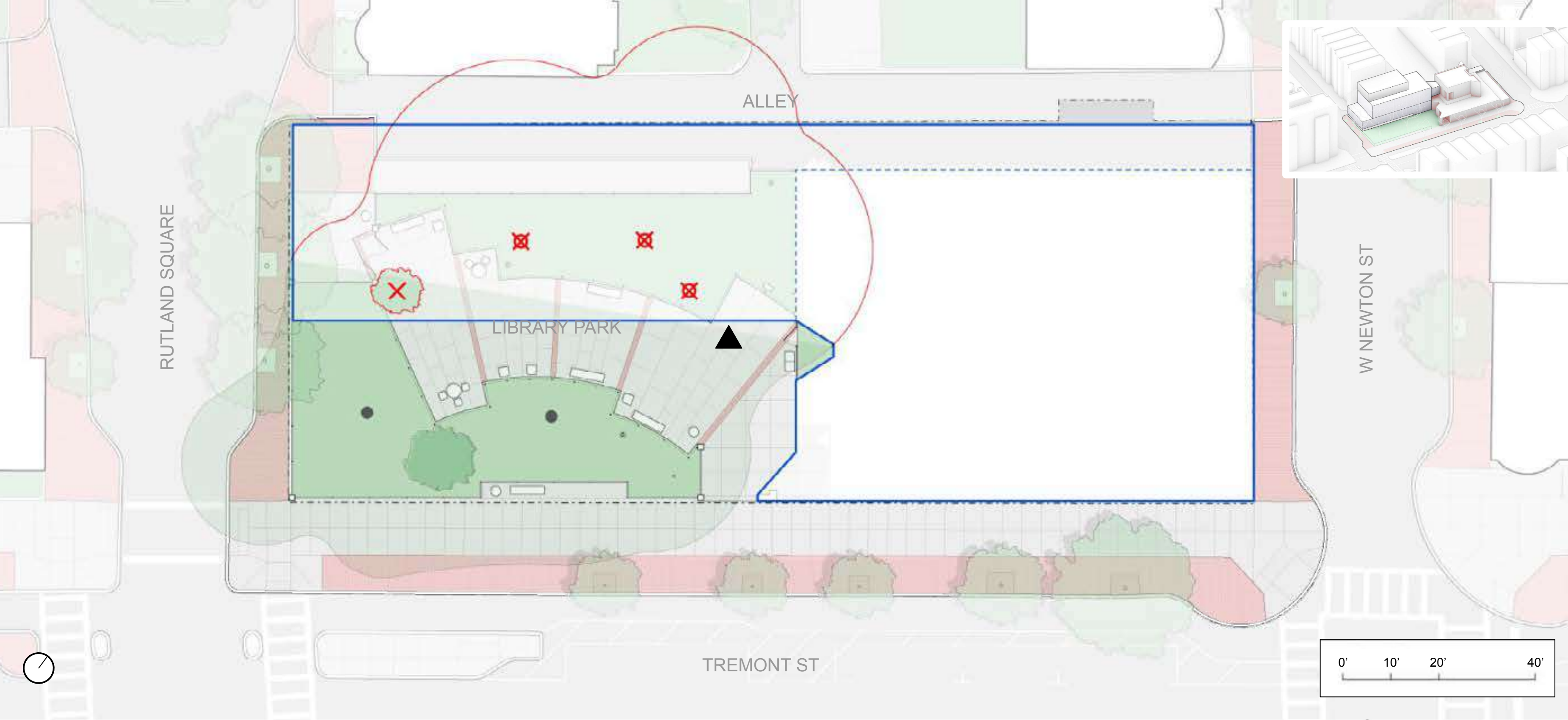
A three-dimensional test of the library program on the site.

## Disclaimer!

- These are only tests used as proof of concept.
- These are not design proposals.
- Goal of this exercise is to illustrate how a specific arrangement of the program fits on the site.
- No conclusions have been drawn from these test fits.
- **It is important to test many different options during the feasibility study phase as a form of due diligence.**

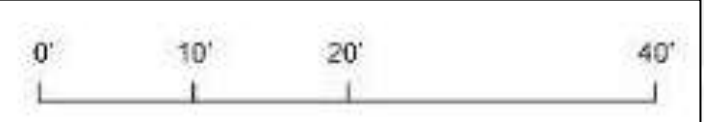
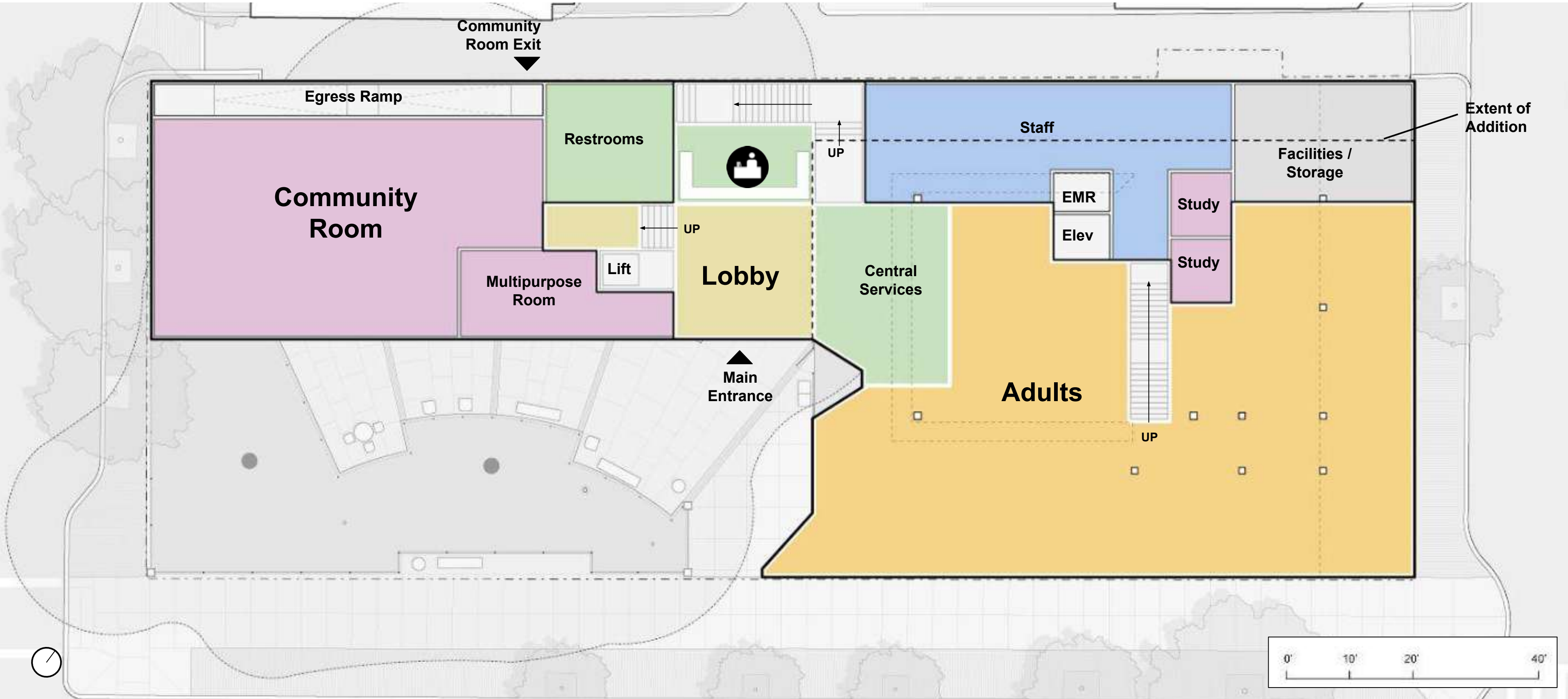


# RENOVATION + ADDITION OPTION - SITE DIAGRAM

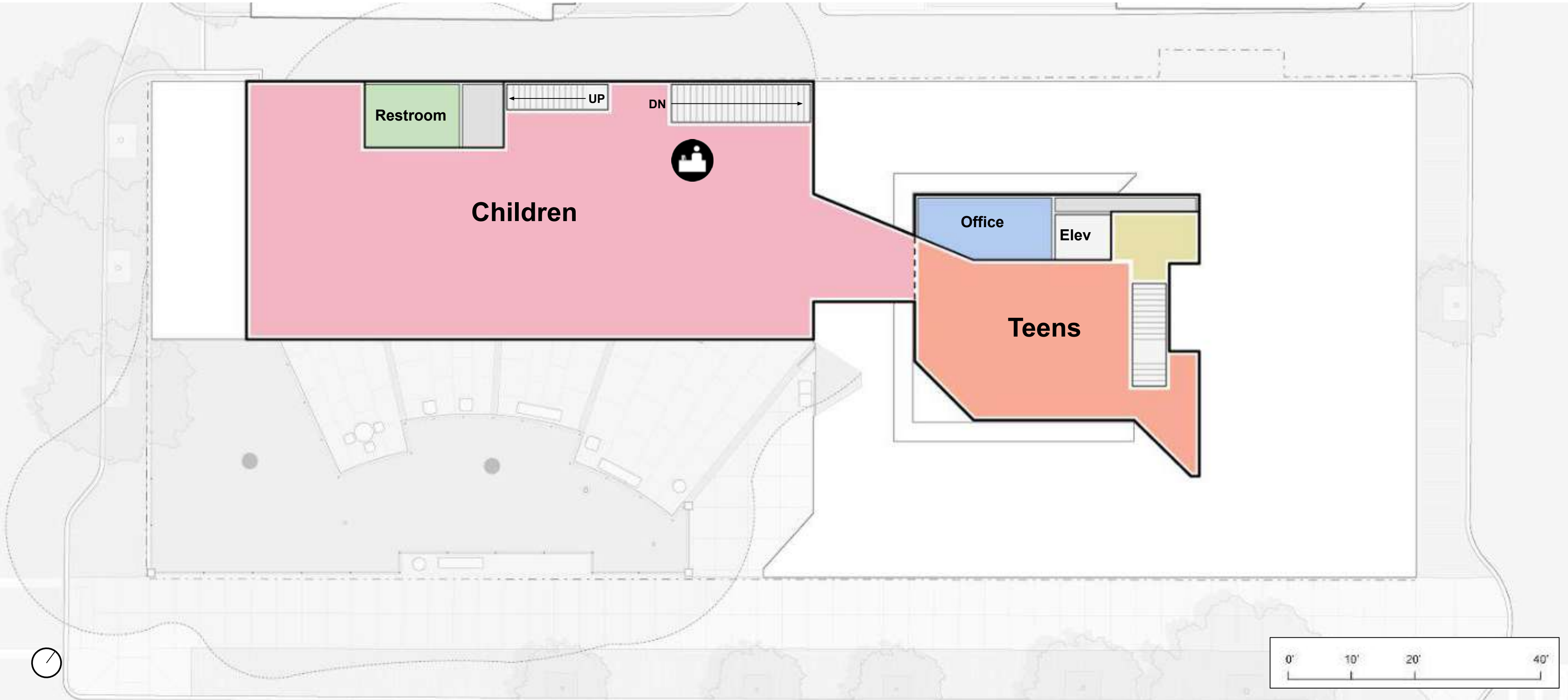




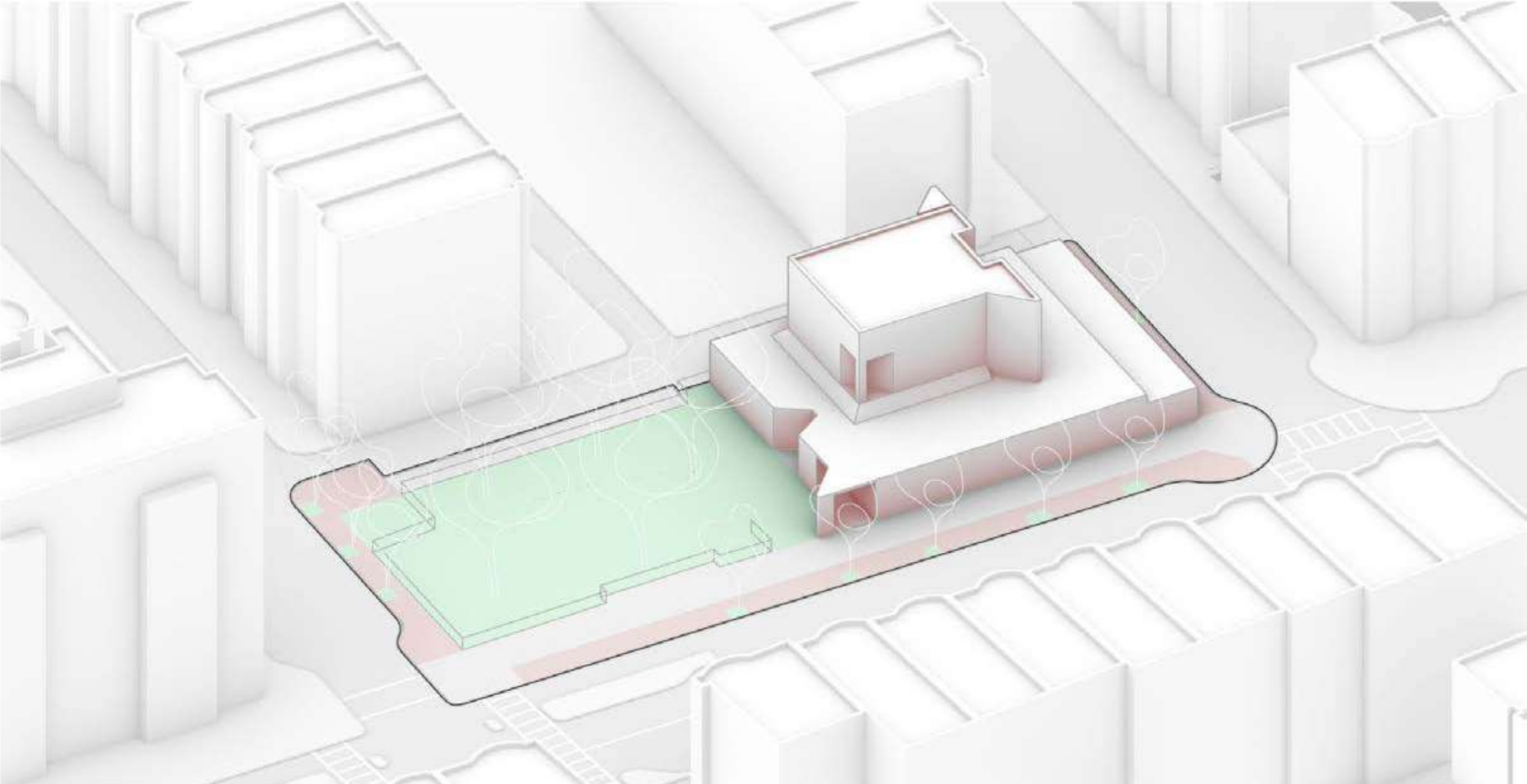
# RENOVATION + ADDITION OPTION - FIRST FLOOR



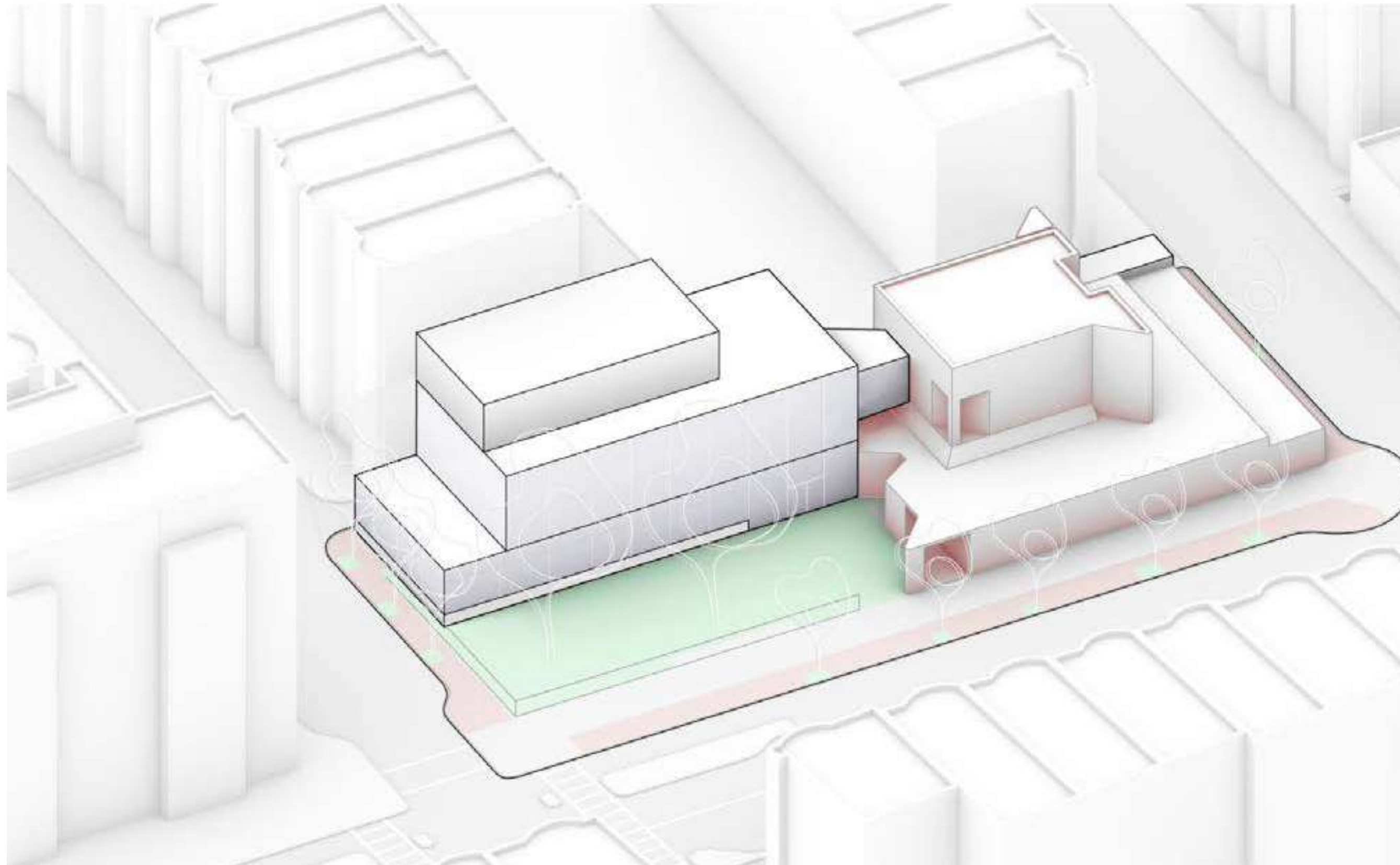
# RENOVATION + ADDITION OPTION - SECOND FLOOR



# MASSING - EXISTING BUILDING



# MASSING - RENOVATION + ADDITION



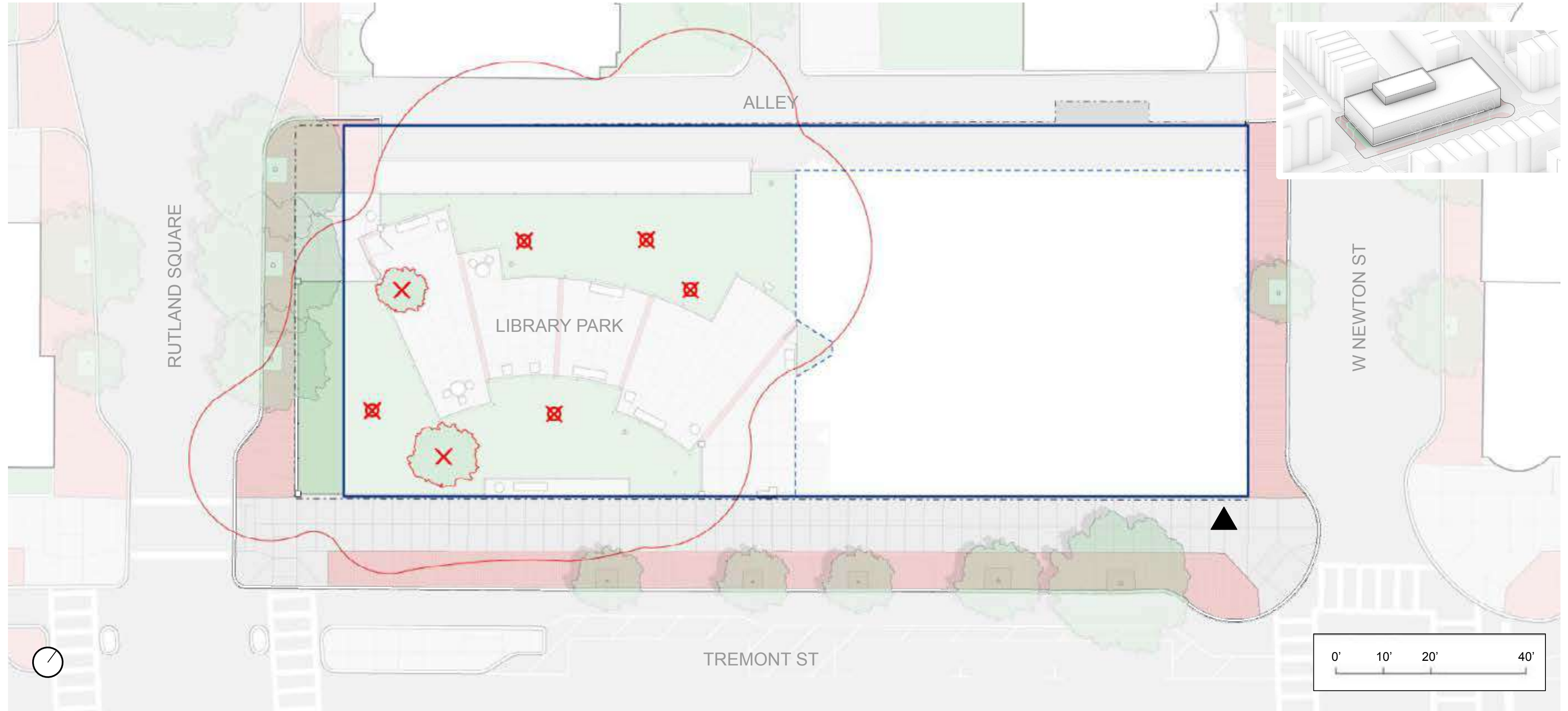
## Opportunities:

- Preserves the existing building shape and facades along Tremont and West Newton Street
- Locates most (but not all) new construction above the floodplain

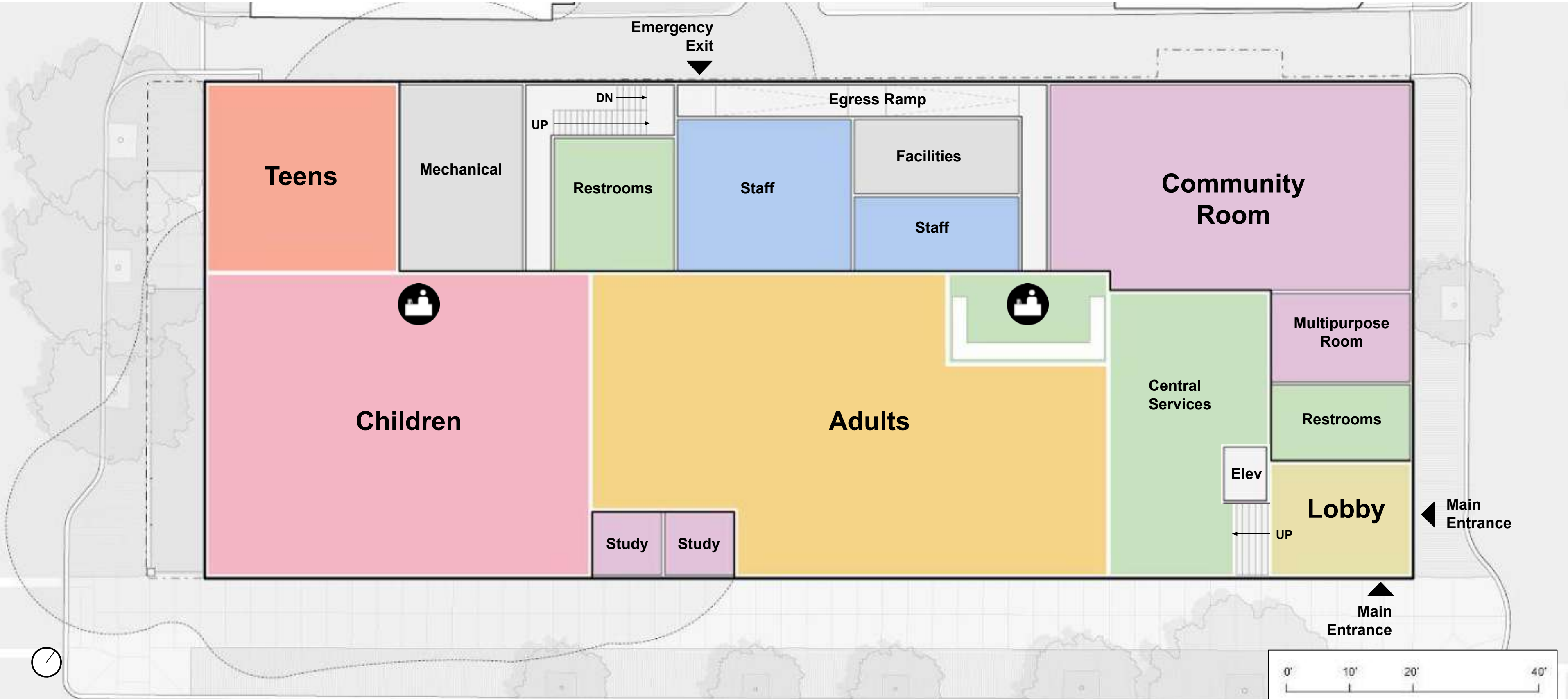
## Constraints:

- The existing building and some new construction remains in the floodplain
- Headroom in the first floor of the addition is severely limited (approximately 8 feet ceilings); maintains low ceilings in the existing building
- Costly interventions when adding onto to an existing building
- Approximately half of Library Park is lost to the addition, including several mature trees
- Entrance is set back from Tremont Street
- Preserves the blank facades along Tremont and West Newton Street
- May require a second elevator in addition or variance for a motorized lift
- Ground floor is oversized for Adult collection but too small to accommodate other programs

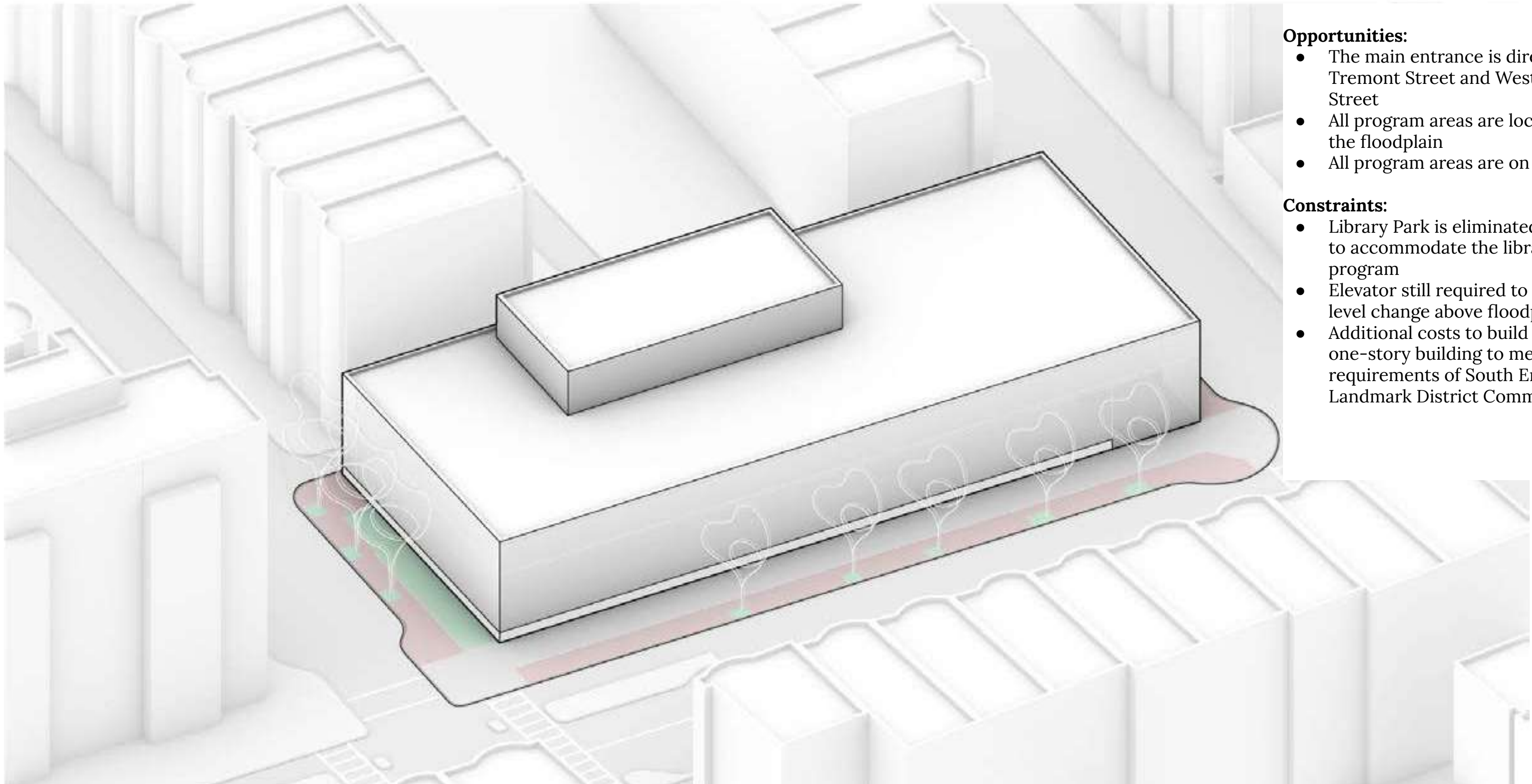
# NEW CONSTRUCTION ONE STORY OPTION - SITE DIAGRAM



# NEW CONSTRUCTION ONE STORY OPTION - FIRST FLOOR



# MASSING - NEW CONSTRUCTION ONE STORY OPTION



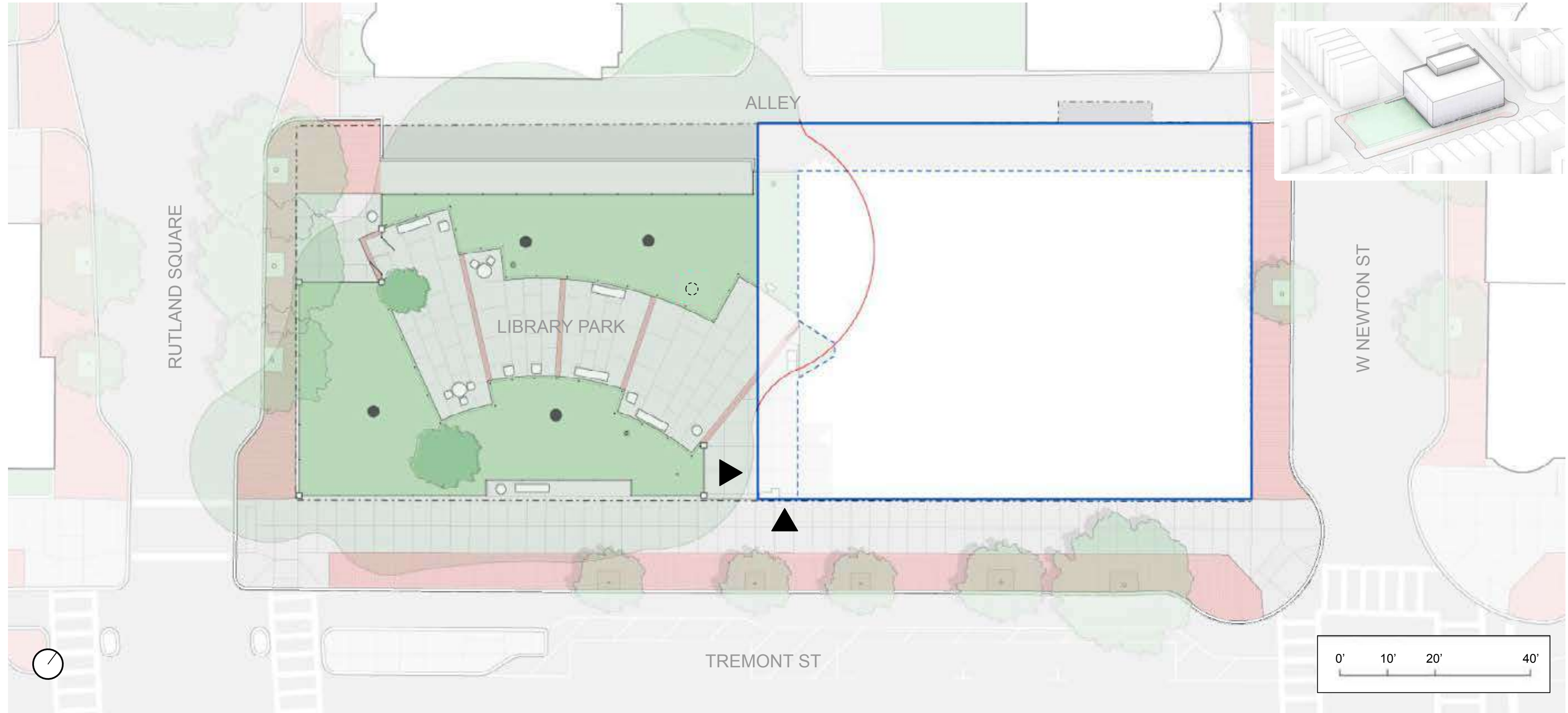
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- All program areas are located above the floodplain
- All program areas are on one floor

## Constraints:

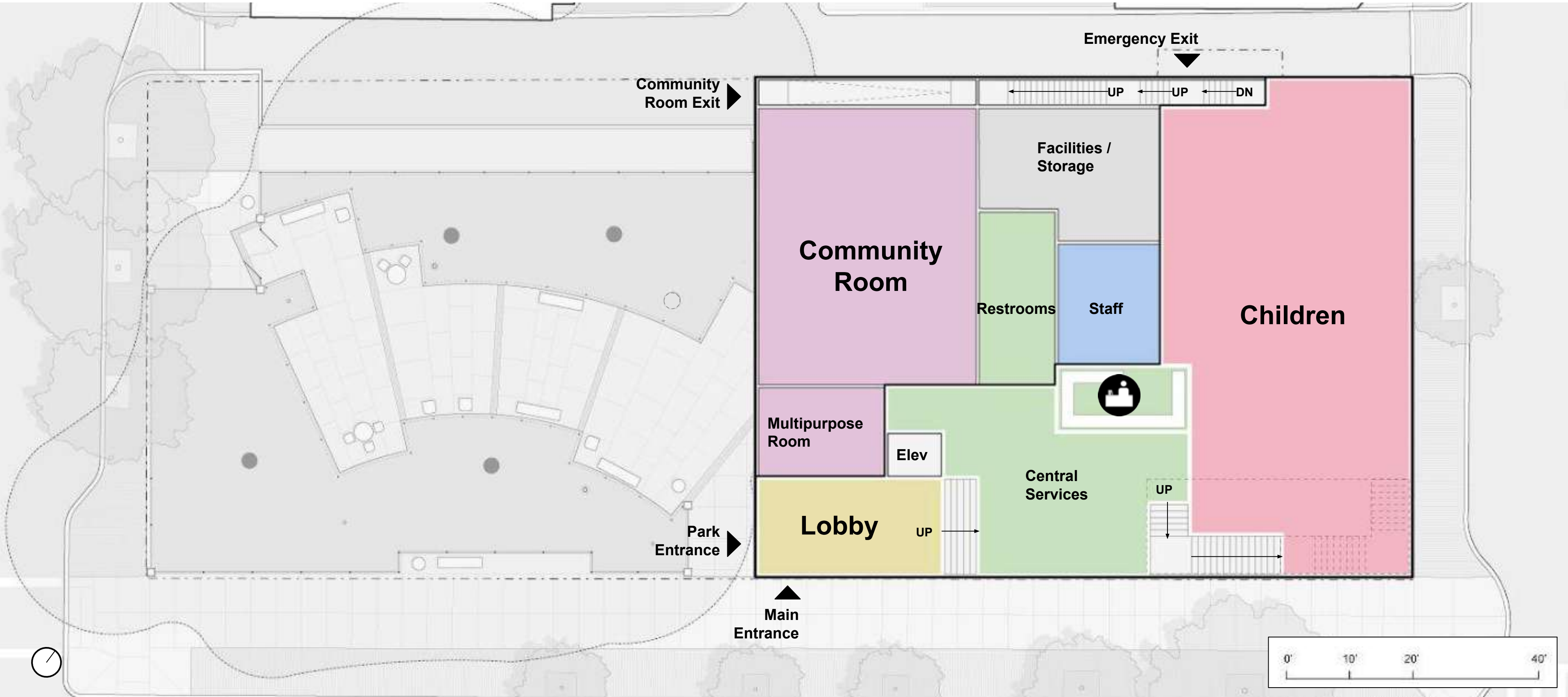
- Library Park is eliminated in order to accommodate the library program
- Elevator still required to negotiate level change above floodplain
- Additional costs to build a tall one-story building to meet requirements of South End Landmark District Commission

# NEW CONSTRUCTION TWO STORY OPTION - SITE DIAGRAM

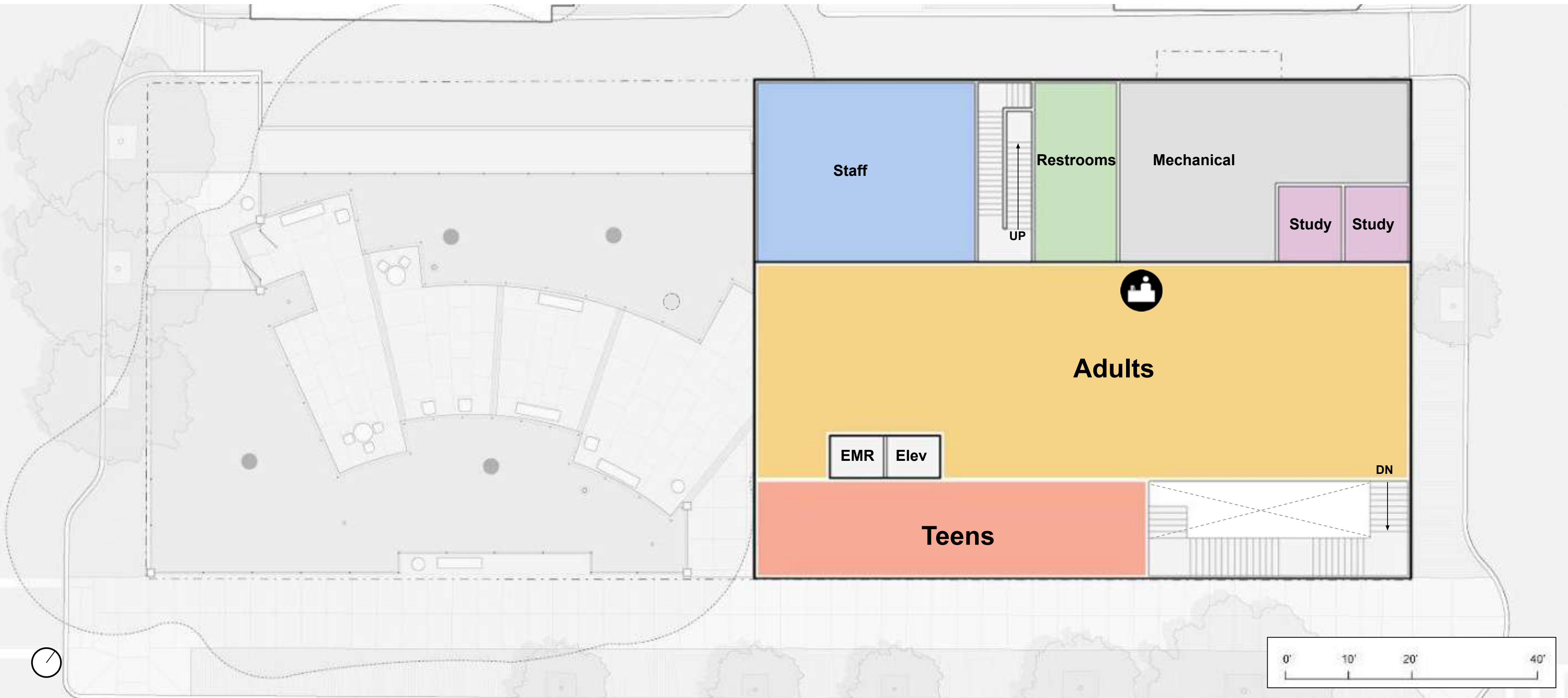




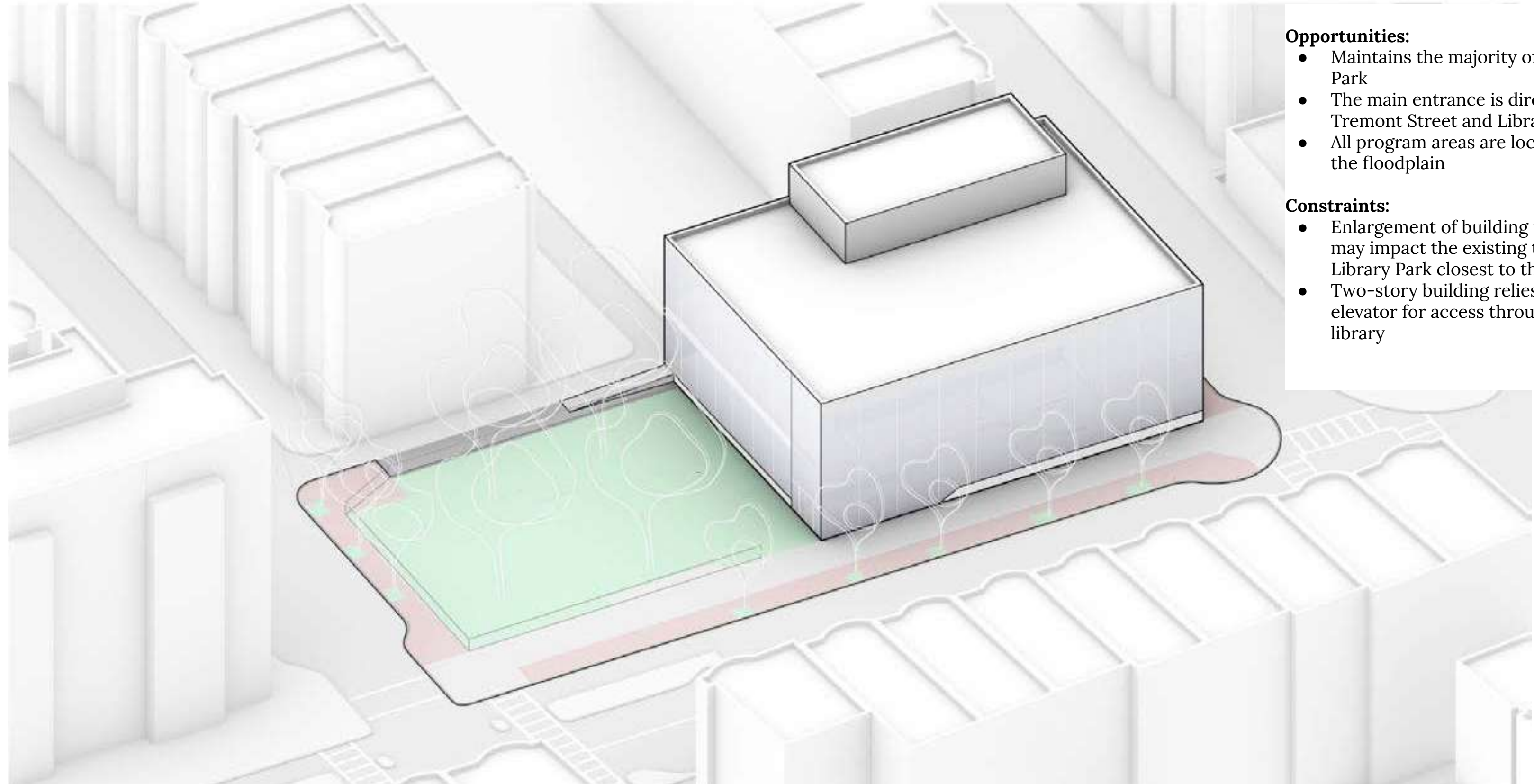
# NEW CONSTRUCTION TWO STORY OPTION - FIRST FLOOR



# NEW CONSTRUCTION TWO STORY OPTION - SECOND FLOOR



# MASSING - NEW CONSTRUCTION TWO STORY OPTION



## Opportunities:

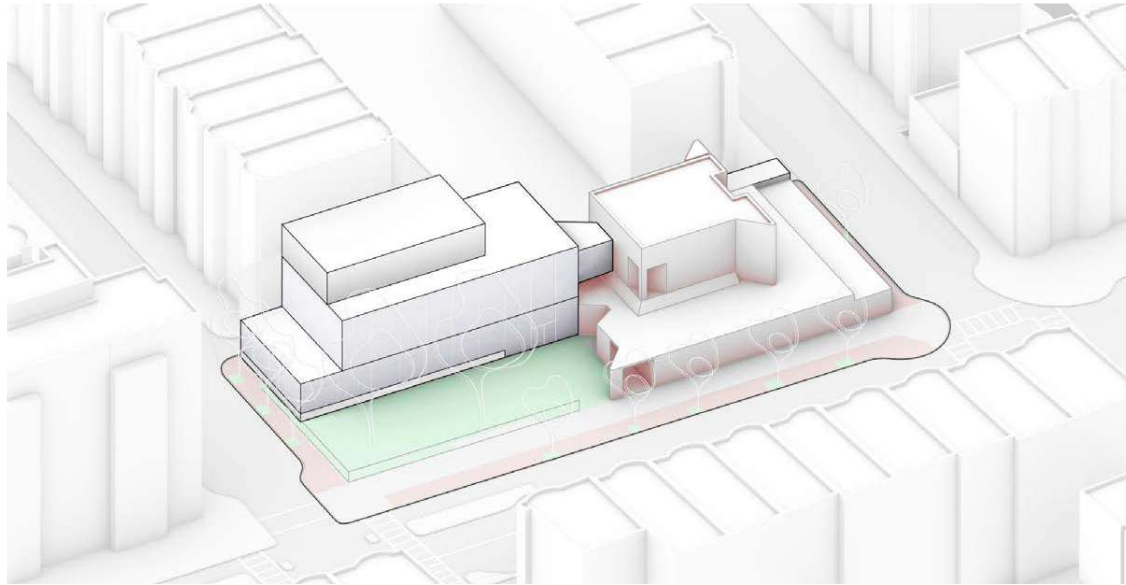
- Maintains the majority of Library Park
- The main entrance is directly off of Tremont Street and Library Park
- All program areas are located above the floodplain

## Constraints:

- Enlargement of building footprint may impact the existing tree in Library Park closest to the library
- Two-story building relies on an elevator for access throughout the library

# SUMMARY

## Renovation + Addition - 17,100 SF



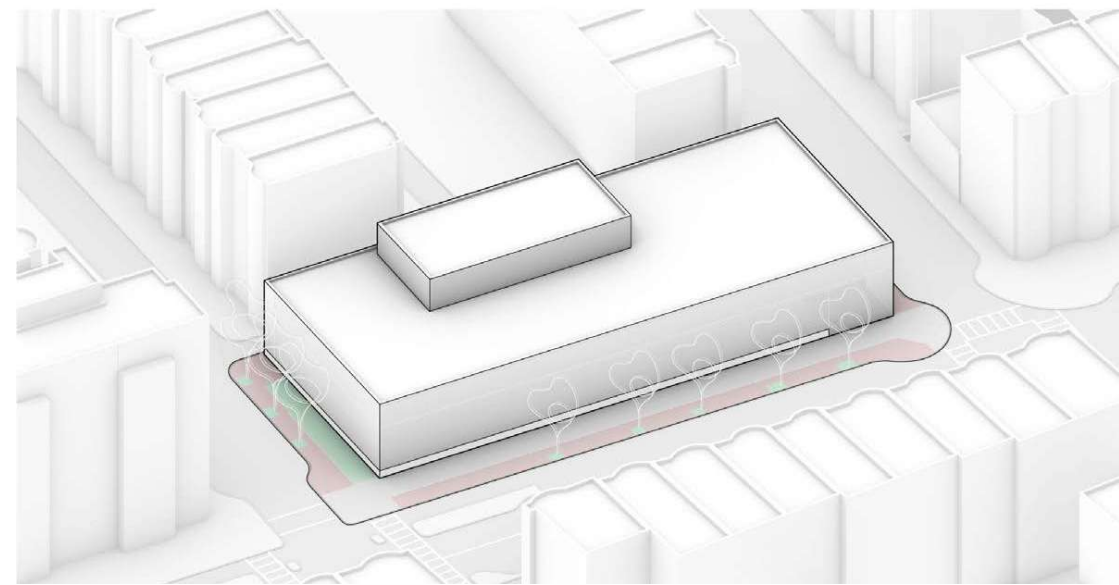
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### Constraints:

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- Headroom in the first floor of the addition is severely limited (approximately 8 feet ceilings); maintains low ceilings in the existing building
- Costly interventions when adding onto to an existing building
- Approximately half of Library Park is lost to the addition, including several mature trees
- Entrance is set back from Tremont Street
- Preserves the blank facades along Tremont and West Newton Street
- May require a second elevator in addition or variance for a motorized lift
- Ground floor is oversized for Adult collection but too small to accommodate other programs

## New Construction One Story - 15,050 SF



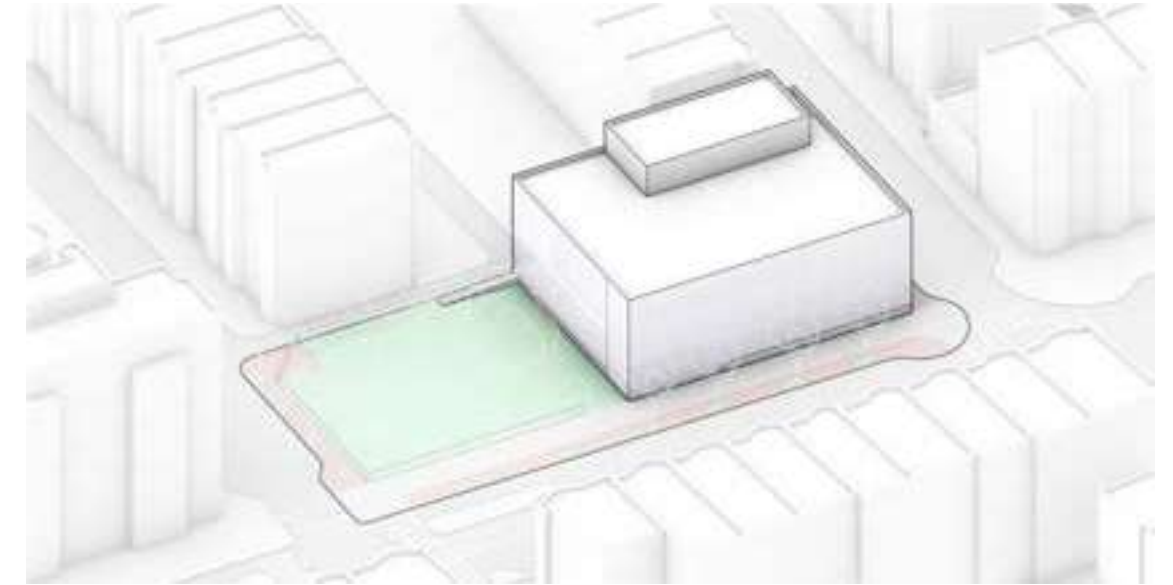
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### Constraints:

- Library Park is eliminated in order to accommodate the library program
- Elevator still required to negotiate level change above floodplain
- Additional costs to build a tall one-story building to meet requirements of South End Landmark District Commission

## New Construction Two Story - 15,845 SF



### Opportunities:

- Maintains the majority of Library Park
- The main entrance is directly off of Tremont Street and Library Park
- All program areas are located above the floodplain

### Constraints:

- Enlargement of building footprint may impact the existing tree in Library Park closest to the library
- Two-story building relies on an elevator for access throughout the library

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# NEXT STEPS



# COMMUNITY INPUT

We are here  
↓



Community Meeting #1  
Jan 8, 2024  
Preliminary existing conditions report  
Present typical BPL Branch Library building program  
Understand community needs for South End Branch

Community Meeting #2  
Feb 12, 2024  
Update on existing conditions findings  
Develop preliminary South End Branch building program  
Present preliminary test-fits of program in renovation and new construction options

Community Meeting #3  
Mar / Apr 2024  
Finalize Branch building program  
Update test-fits in renovation and new construction options  
Present recommendation of option for further design

Future Community Meetings  
TBD in 2024

Future Community Meetings  
TBD in 2024

# FUTURE SITE ACTIVITIES

## Geotech Borings

- Targeting early March (weather permitting) for drilling
- Geotech borings will help determine the subsoil conditions and makeup
- The drilling rig is the size of a garbage truck
- Expect the drilling will last 3 days to complete 4 borings



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# QUESTIONS & COMMENTS?

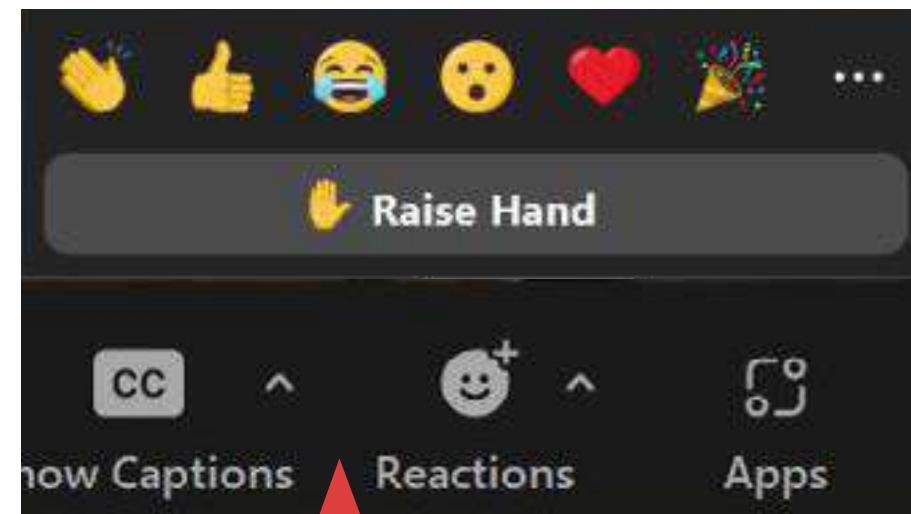
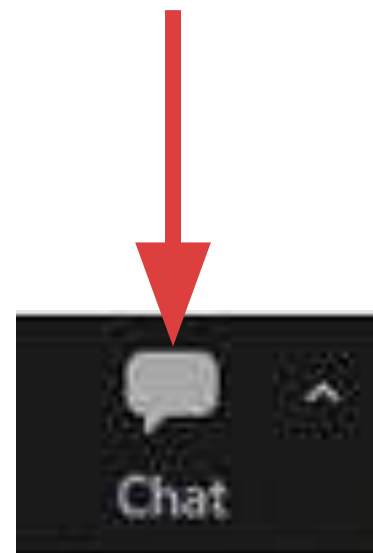




# QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

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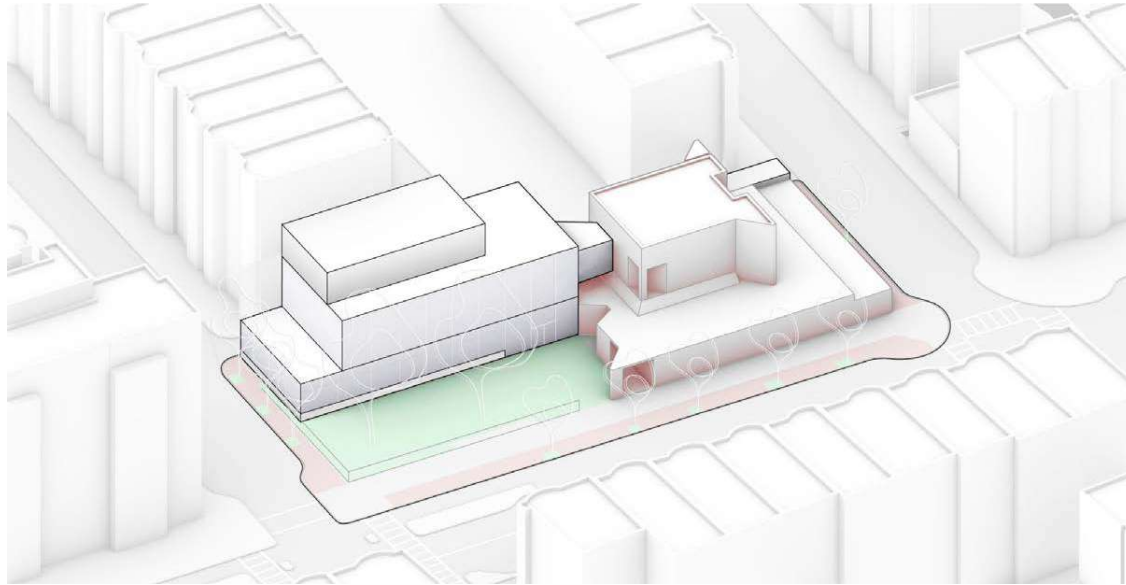
For written comments or questions:  
Use the chat dialog box



To ask a question:  
Raise hand and wait to be called on

# SUMMARY

## Renovation + Addition - 17,100 SF



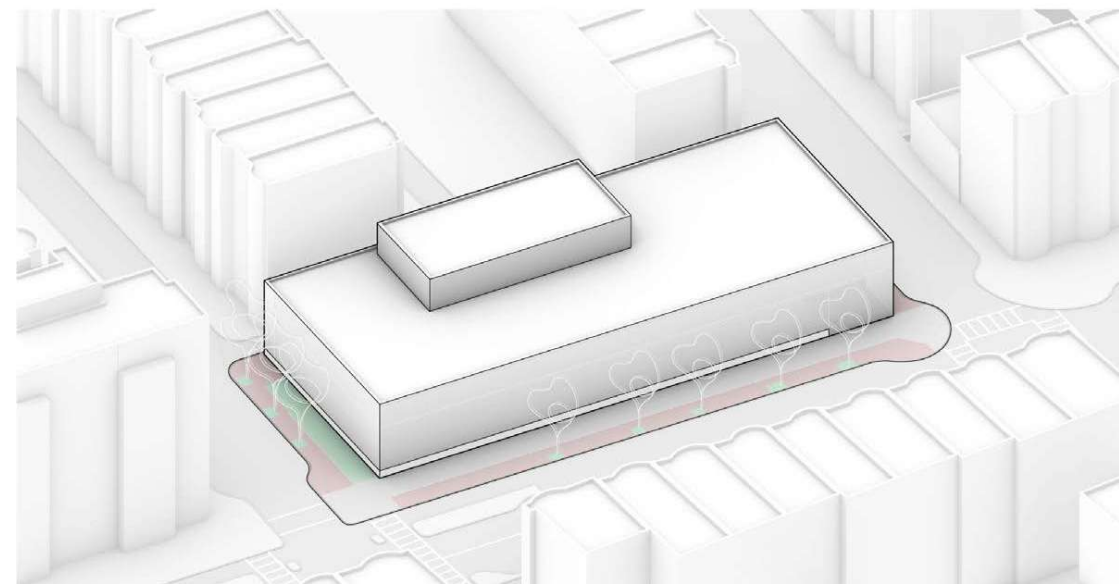
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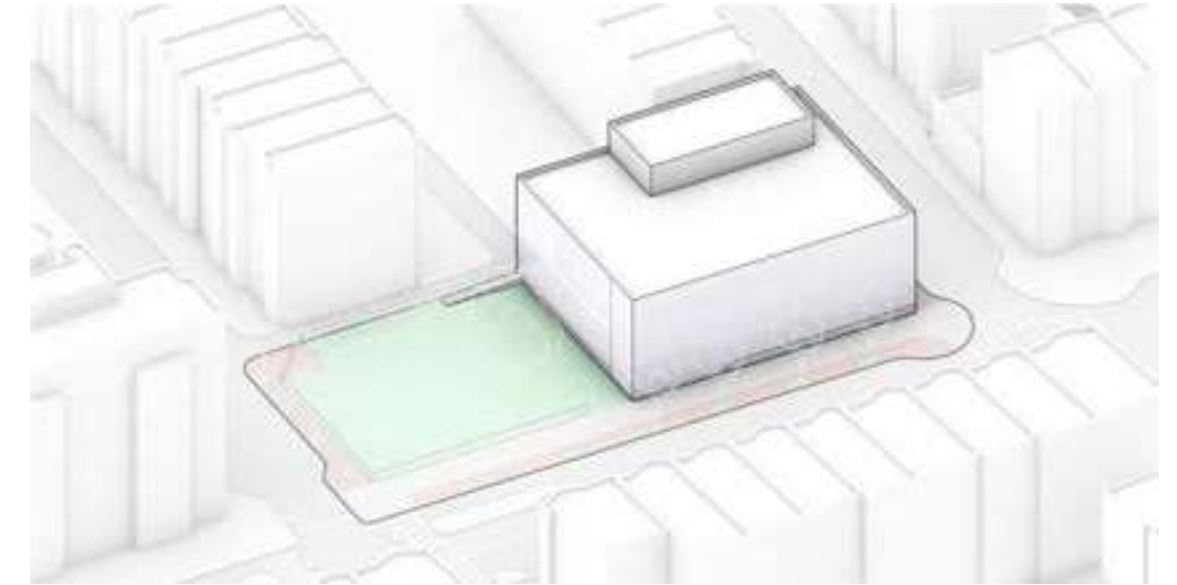
### Opportunities:

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- All program areas are on one floor

### Constraints:

- Library Park is eliminated in order to maximize the library program
- Program targets are not fully met due to the limitations of the property extents
- Elevator still required to negotiate level change above floodplain
- Additional costs to build a tall one-story building to meet requirements of South End Landmark District Commission

## New Construction Two Story - 15,845 SF



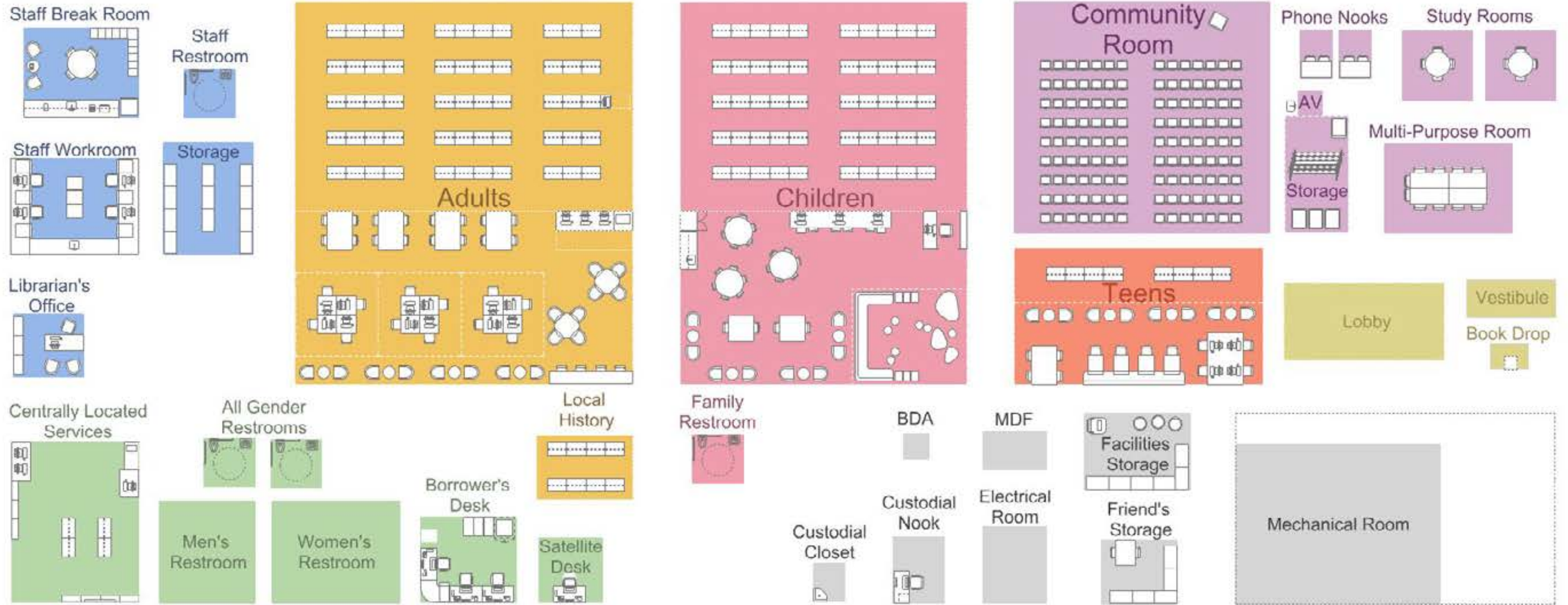
### Opportunities:

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- Accommodates the target program
- The main entrance is directly off of Tremont Street and Library Park
- All program areas are located above the floodplain

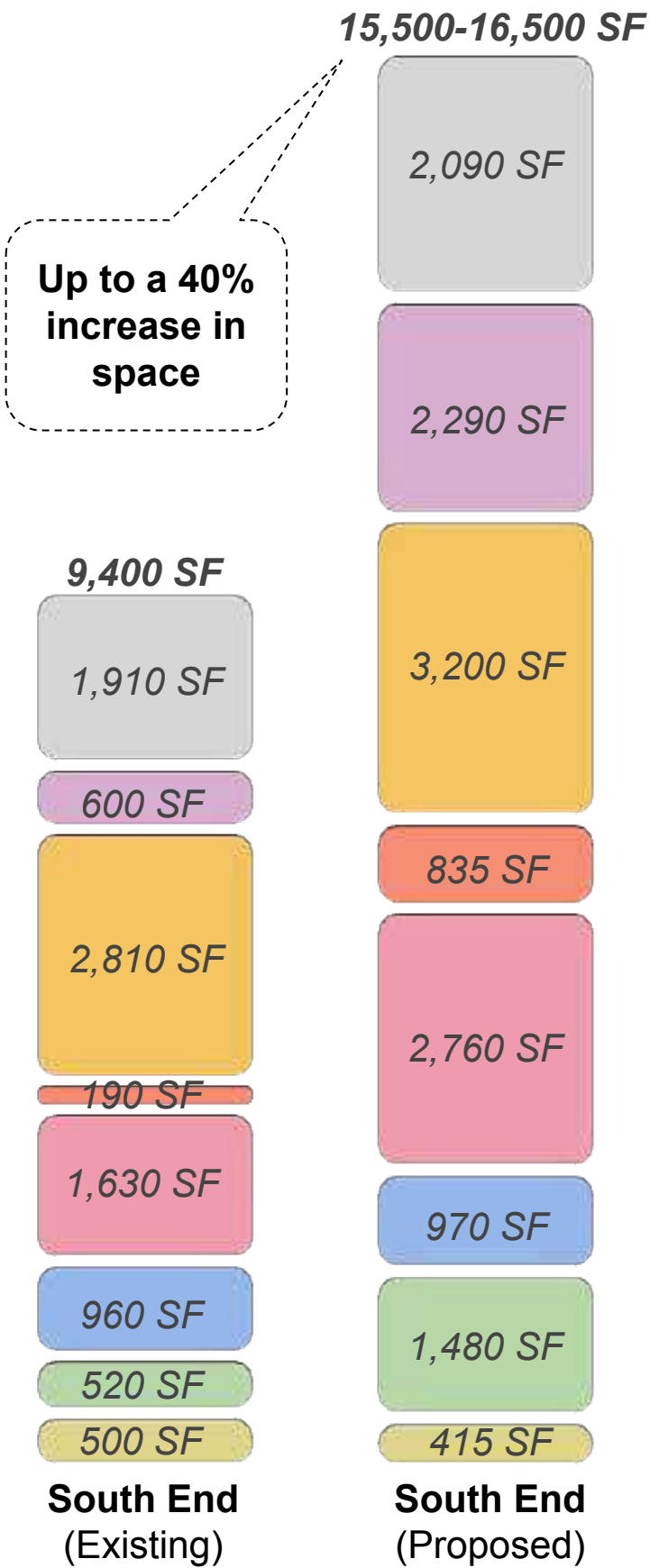
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- Enlargement of building footprint may impact the existing tree in Library Park closest to the library
- Two-story building relies on an elevator for access throughout the library

# PROPOSED SOUTH END BUILDING PROGRAM



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### Community - 2,290 SF

- Community Meeting Room, seating capacity of +/- 125
- Multi-purpose meeting room, 8-10 seats
- (2) Study rooms, 4-6 seats
- (2) "Phone room" nooks, 1-2 person capacity

### Adult Area - 3,200 SF

- 12,500 - 13,000 volumes
- 36 seats
- 12 computer stations
- Includes Local History

### Teen Area - 835 SF

- 3,000 volumes
- 12 seats
- 4 computer stations

### Children Area - 2,760 SF

- 13,250 - 13,750 volumes
- 30 seats
- 3 AWE computer stations
- Includes tweens area, story time area and crafts

### Staff - 970 SF

- Work room, break room, staff restroom and storage
- Branch librarian's office

### Central Services - 1,480 SF

- Borrower's desk
- Holds shelving, Friend's book sale, community bulletin board and display areas
- Restrooms

### Entry - 415 SF

- Vestibule, lobby and book drop

### Support - 2,090 SF

- Friend's and facilities storage
- Mechanical and electrical rooms

### Grossing Factor (+/- 15%)

- Circulation between program areas and shaft spaces

**TOTAL - 15,500-16,500 SF**



City of Boston  
Public Facilities

# QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

The screenshot shows the Boston Public Library website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Hours & Locations', 'Help', and 'Log In / My BPL'. Below this is the library logo and a search bar. A red navigation bar contains links for 'About', 'Visit', 'Books & More', 'Services', 'Learning & Research', 'Events', 'Support the BPL', and 'Work at the BPL'. The main content area is titled 'South End Branch Project' and has two tabs: 'Hours & Location' and 'About the South End Branch'. Below the tabs is a section titled 'Branch Improvement Feedback' with a sub-header 'We look forward to your feedback and will be glad to answer any questions you may have.' and a note '\* indicates required fields'. The form includes fields for 'Name' (split into 'First' and 'Last'), 'Email', and a 'Feedback' text area. A red arrow points to the 'Feedback' text area.

Written comments or questions can also be directed to:

**Priscilla Foley**

Director of Neighborhood Services

617-859-2233

[pfoley@bpl.org](mailto:pfoley@bpl.org)

Feedback can be issued through the project page:

<https://www.bpl.org/south-end-project/>

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# THANK YOU!

