

# HOUSING INNOVATION LAB

MMA Conference: Aging in Place Tools  
from Municipalities

January 18, 2019



City of Boston  
Mayor Martin J. Walsh

# BACKGROUND

*"Maintaining a strong middle class is critical to ensuring that Boston continues to be a thriving, diverse city where people want to live and employers want to locate."*

*- Mayor Martin J. Walsh*



# BACKGROUND

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**Department of  
Neighborhood  
Development**

## MISSION

*The Mayor's Housing Innovation Lab aims to test innovative housing initiatives in order to increase housing affordability for all Boston residents.*





# METHOD

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- **People centered solutions** *put people at the center of our work*
- **Engage collaborators** *engage both internal and external partners to move the work forward*
- **Experiment early and often** *take a prototype driven approach to policy making*



# PEOPLE CENTERED



# COLLABORATIVE

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Age-Friendly **Boston**



LIVELIGHT



Inspectional  
Services  
Department



**THE REAL ESTATE INNOVATION LAB**  
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

**uep** Urban + Environmental Policy + Planning



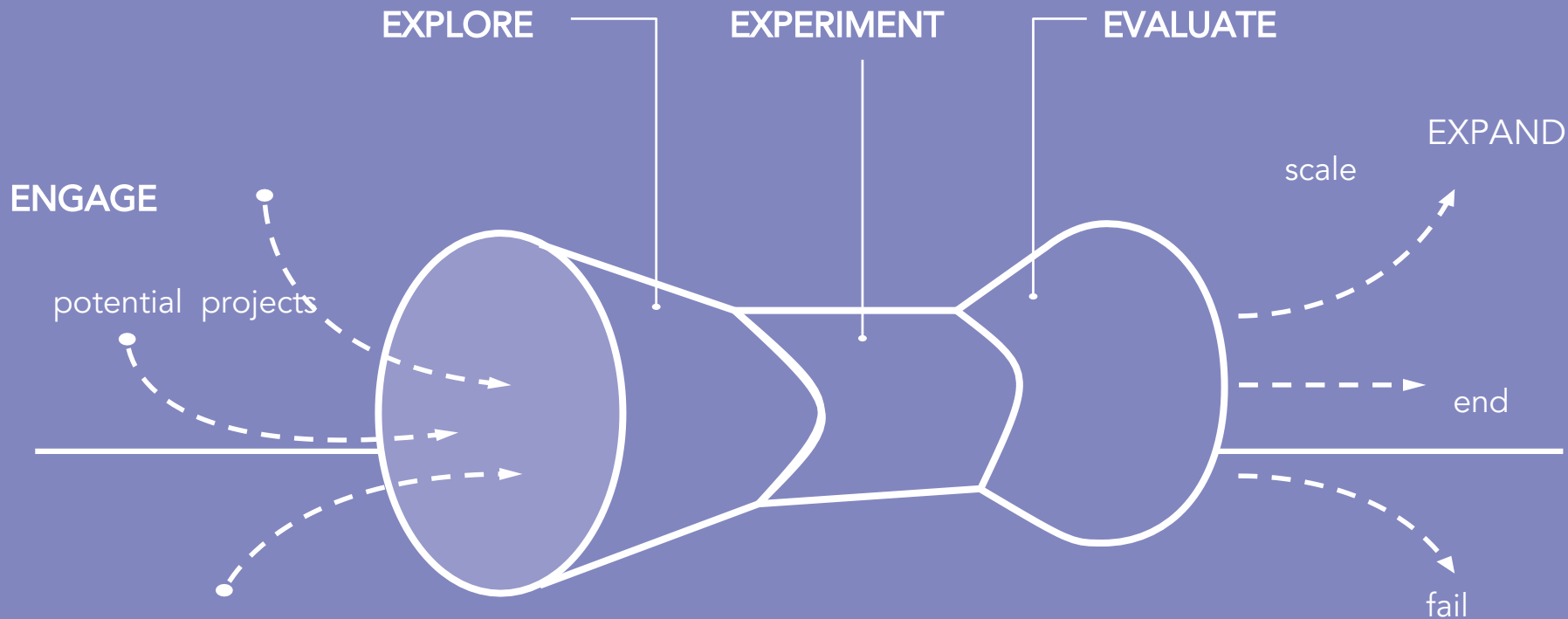
**HARVARD Kennedy School**

JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT



# EXPERIMENTAL

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# EXAMPLE INITIATIVES

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Additional Dwelling Units



Compact Living



Intergenerational Homeshare



Housing with Public Assets

## **ADDITIONAL DWELLING UNITS**

If we make it easier for homeowners to build ADUs will it increase naturally affordable rental units in the city?

## *Additional Dwelling Unit (ADU)*

An ADU is a new typology to Boston that would allow owner occupants to carve out space within the envelope of their home for a smaller, independent rental unit.





## OBJECTIVES

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*In accordance with the Mayor's 2030 Housing Plan, additional dwelling units intend to address the following:*

1. Increase **affordable housing options** in the neighborhoods
2. Support **multigenerational family arrangements** and provide opportunities for aging in place
3. Create safer living arrangements by incentivizing homeowners to **legalize illegal rental units**
4. Support **homeowners to remain in their homes** by generating steady rental income
5. Use existing infrastructure to **achieve City's housing goals**

# PILOT FEATURES

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## PILOT DETAILS

### Pilot Neighborhoods

- East Boston
- Jamaica Plain
- Mattapan

### Pilot Length

- 18 months

## QUALIFICATIONS

### To qualify for an ADU the building must be:

- Owner occupied
- In one of the pilot neighborhoods
- Three units or less

## ADDITIONAL

### Additional pilot components:

- Adhere to full building code and full safety code
- Approved by Inspectional Services Department

# INTERGENERATIONAL HOMESHARE

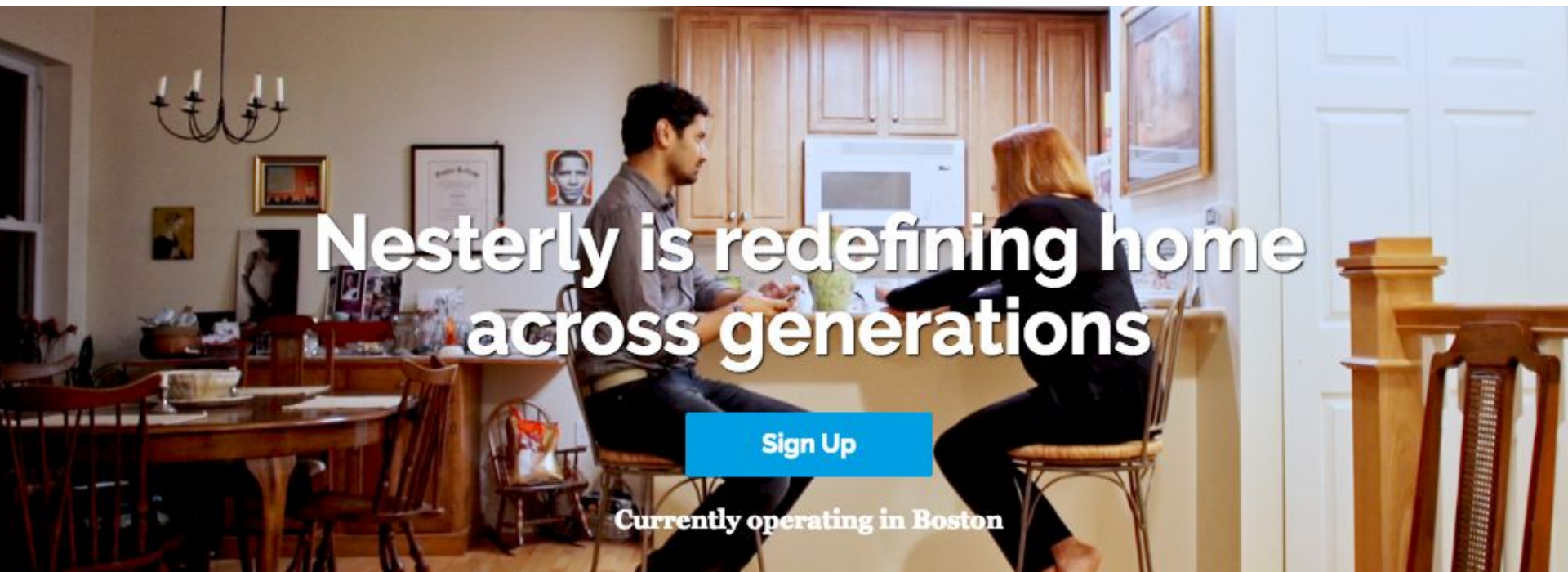
Will intergenerational living open up new affordable rental units and support older residents as they age in their homes?



# PILOT

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- Our objective was to pair 5-10 older adults in the Boston area with graduate students for September 2017 matches.
- Nesterly did outreach, matching and monitored pairs.



# BRENDA

“It’s time for this old house to start carrying its own weight”

# PHOEBUS

“I wanted to get outside the university bubble and experience the city through someone’s eyes”



# RESULTS

## **INTEREST:**

- Significant interest - 80 applied (30 hosts / 50 guests)
- 8 matches - 89% said they would recommend to others

## **AFFORDABILITY:**

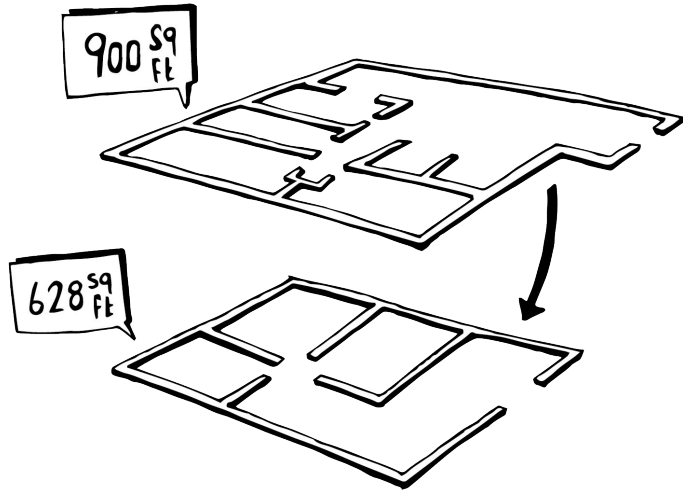
- Older adults gained additional income and students paid below market rents
- Average rent \$700, some saved extra by doing tasks

## **SOCIAL BENEFITS:**

- “I'm an empty-nester, and he brings a presence into my home that makes it feel so much more alive and full.” -Host

# COMPACT LIVING

Will having smaller, well designed units on the market create more affordable living options?



Compact Living Units are newly developed units that are less than the typical square footage as outlined in the chart below.

Unit Type	Square Feet
Studio	< 450 SF
1 Bedroom	< 600 SF
2 Bedroom	< 750 SF
3 Bedroom	< 900 SF

## *What is Compact Living?*

Compact living is a new type of residential development that uses well designed and efficient use of space paired with shared amenities to make housing more affordable.



# BACKGROUND



## Community Engagement

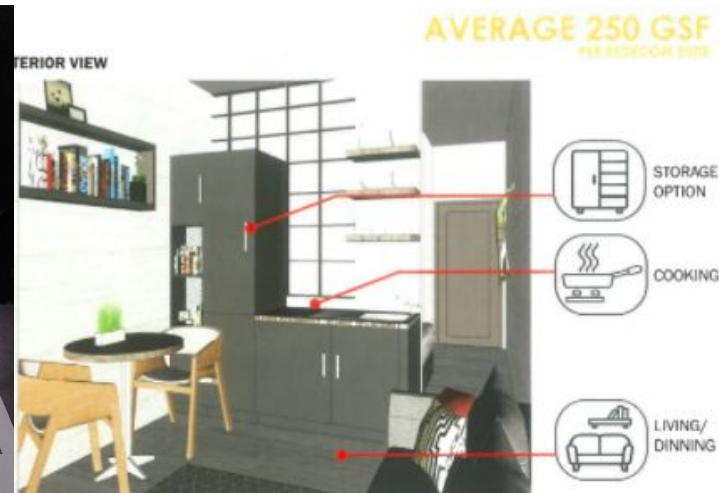
*Urban Housing Unit*

## Development Feasibility

*Housing Innovation Competition*

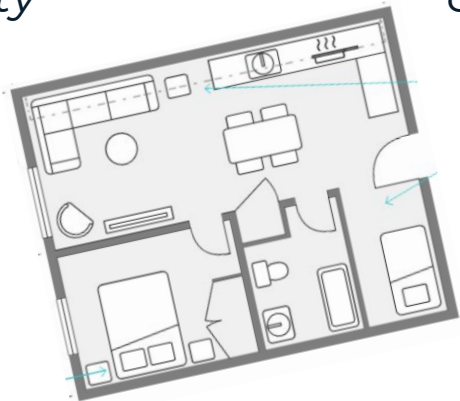
## Developer Interest

*Several projects in discussions with BPDA*



## UNIT INTERIOR

*Minimizing personal space without reducing livability*

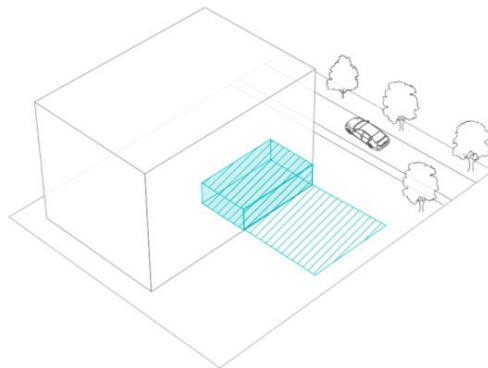


## SHARED SPACES

*Provide thoughtful spaces to facilitate social cohesion*

## TRANSPORTATION

*Reducing impacts on community and costs for residents*



# HOUSING WITH PUBLIC ASSETS

If we build housing on top of or alongside city assets, will we be able to create more affordable housing and improve city facilities at the same time?

# GOALS

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## REVITALIZE AND RESTORE CITY ASSETS

*City assets can have maintenance and re-development needs that outpace funding.*

*Creative co-location of services with other uses might fill the gap.*

## BUILD HOUSING

*We want to add 53,000 new units of housing in Boston by 2030 - utilizing city assets may help us get there.*

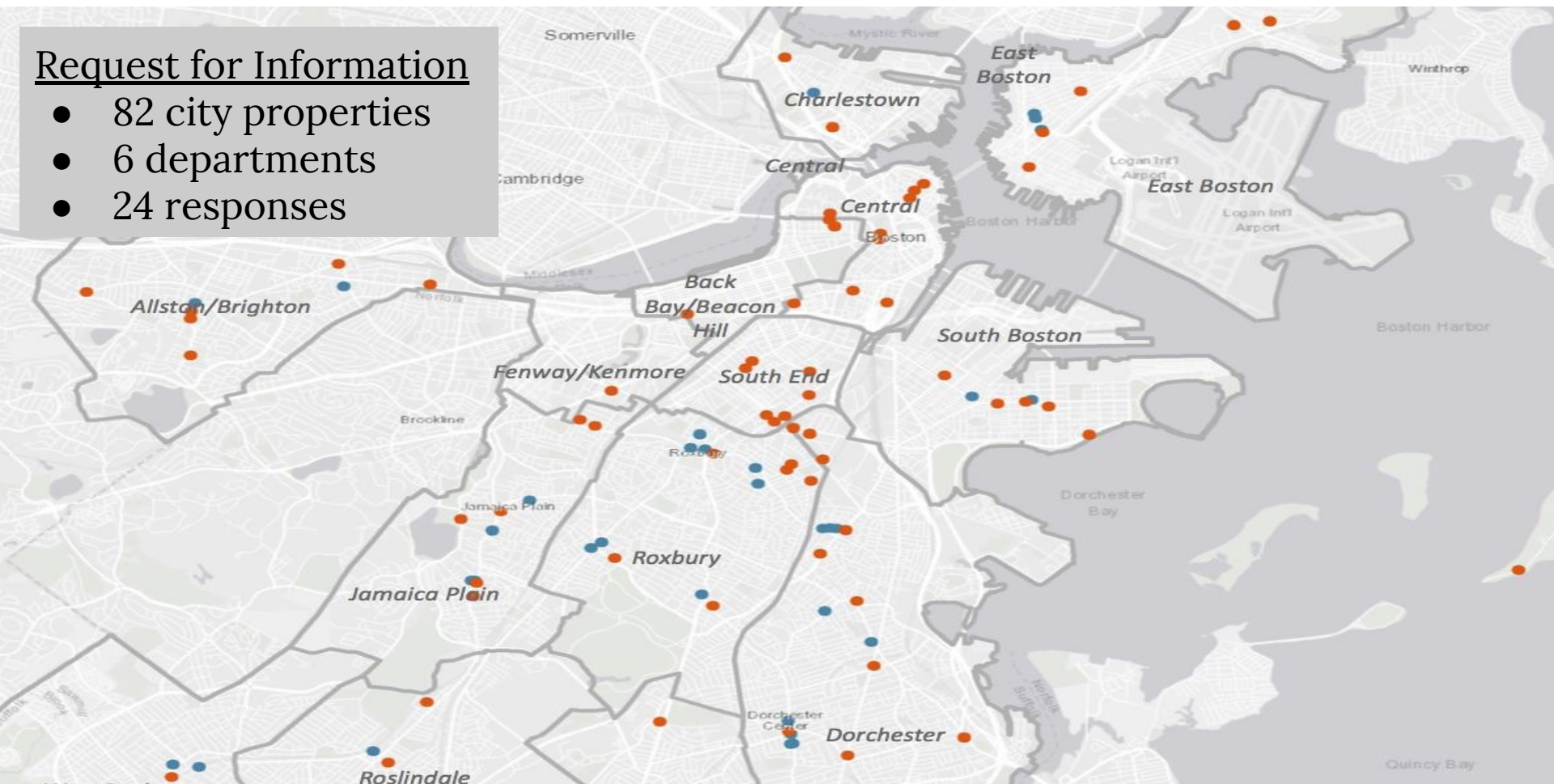
## PROMOTE AFFORDABILITY

*We want to promote affordability and make living in Boston accessible for all.*

# Are developers & communities interested in this idea?

## Request for Information

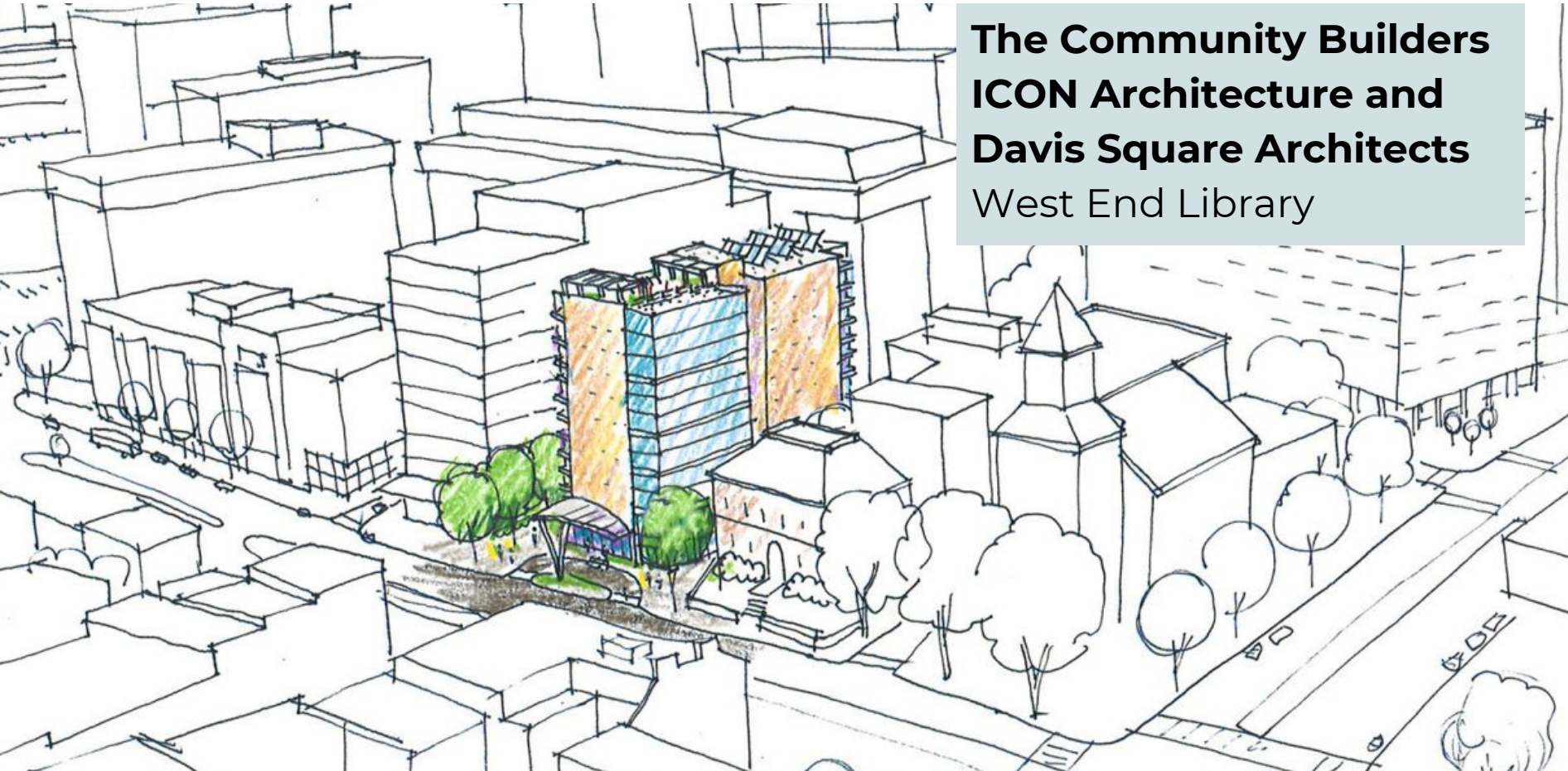
- 82 city properties
- 6 departments
- 24 responses





## EXAMPLE SUBMISSIONS

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**The Community Builders**  
**ICON Architecture and**  
**Davis Square Architects**  
West End Library

# THANK YOU

