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Utile, Inc  
October 2005

In collaboration with the  
City of Boston/  
Boston Redevelopment Authority's  
Greenway District Crossroads Initiative

# SOUTH BOSTON WATERFRONT GATEWAYS STUDY



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# South Boston Waterfront Gateways Study

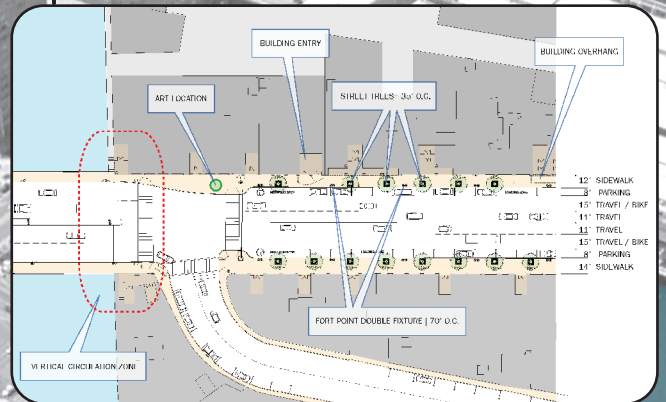
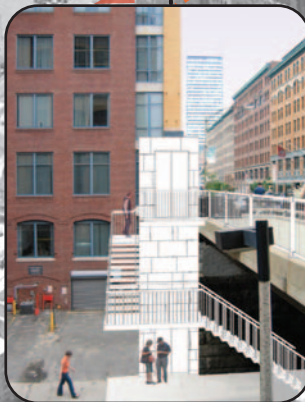
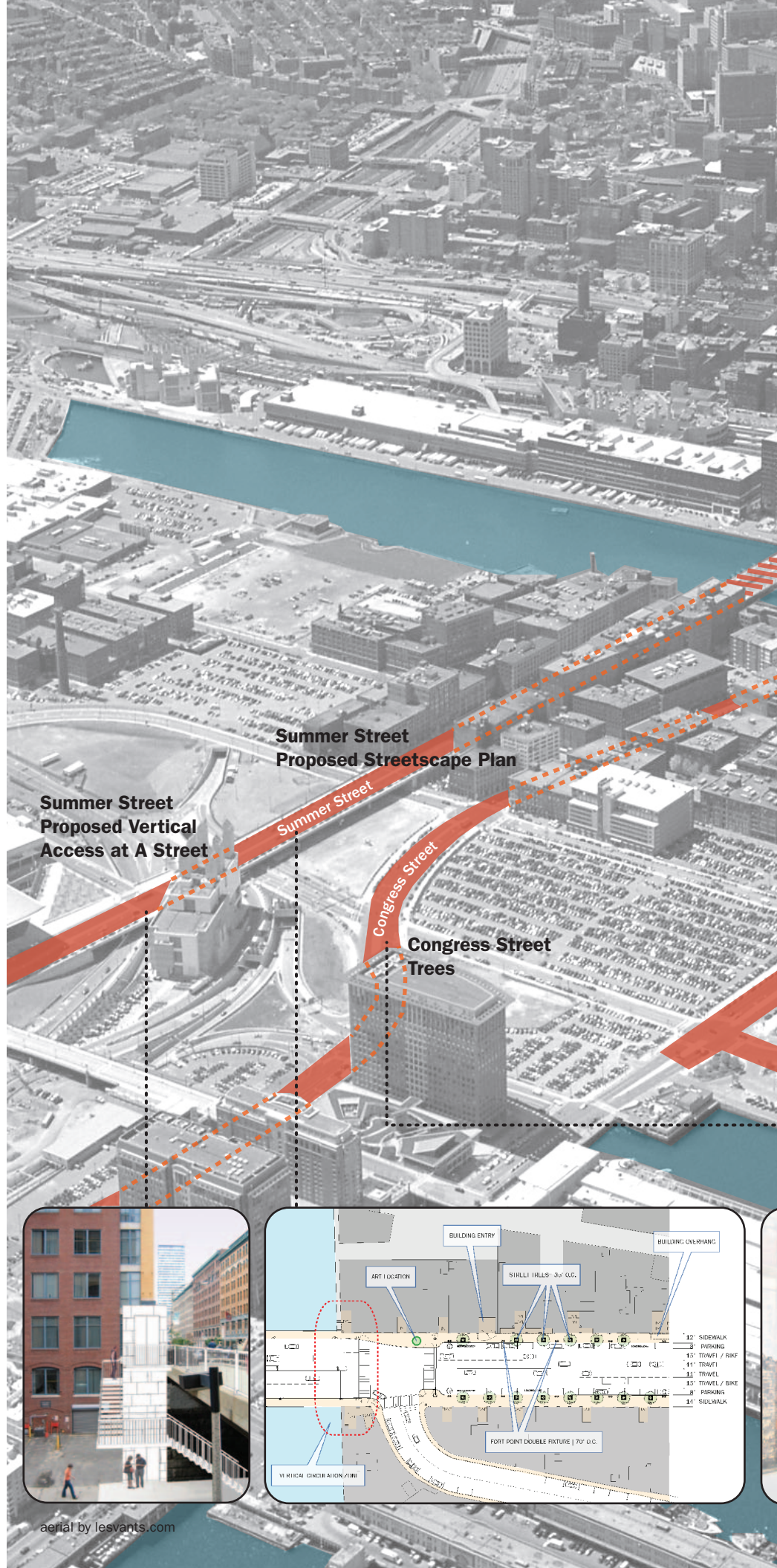
In collaboration with the City of Boston/ Boston Redevelopment Authority's Greenway District Crossroads Initiative

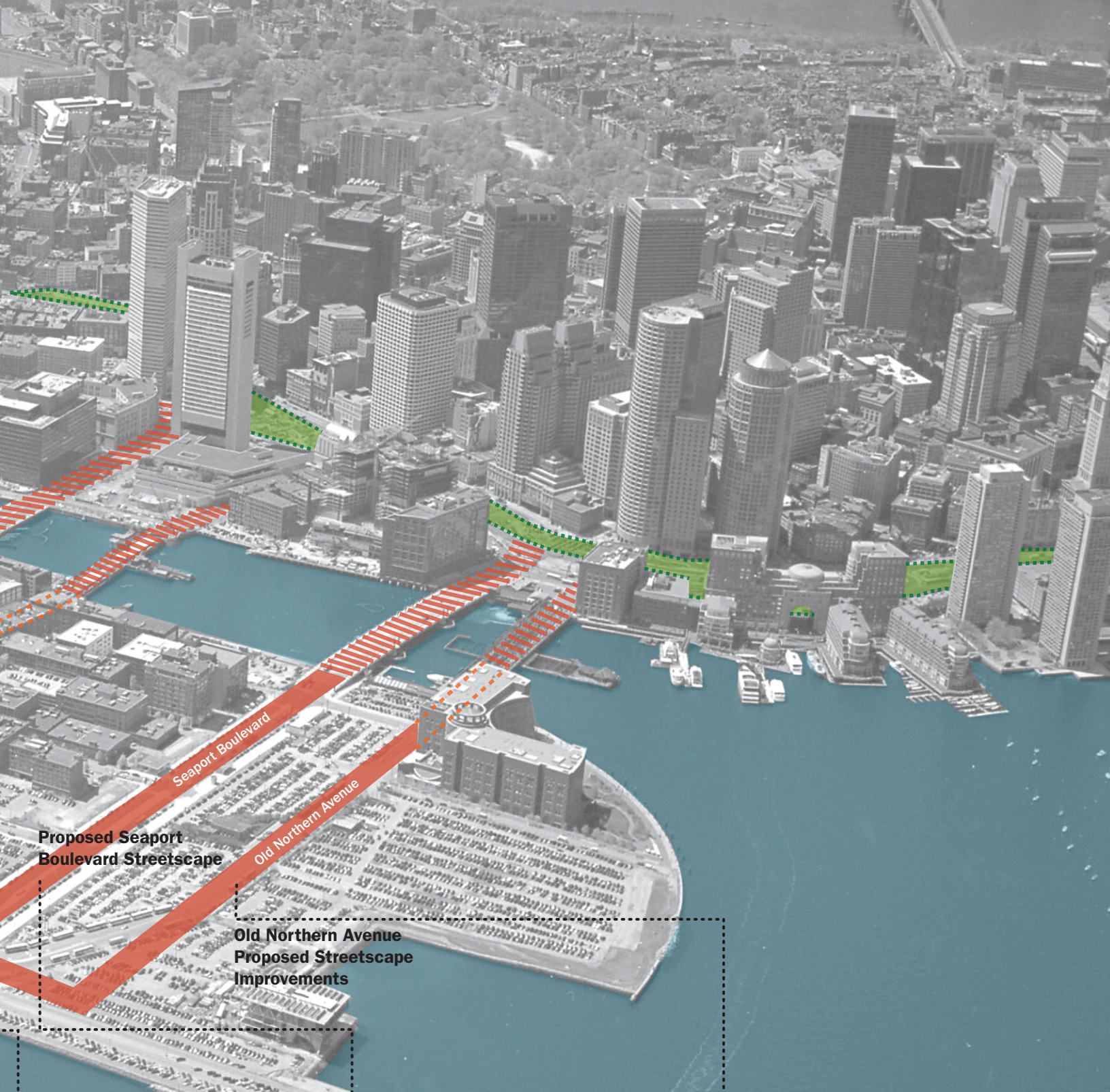
With the completion of the Rose Kennedy Greenway, the major east-west streets that connect historic Downtown Boston to the emerging South Boston Waterfront present perhaps the largest single urban design opportunity in the city. Currently, these streets – Old Northern Avenue, Seaport Boulevard, Congress and Summer Streets – represent a divide in the continuous and vital urban fabric of Boston. If intelligent collective decisions are made for their future improvement and development, then old Boston and new Boston can be merged into a single seamless urban environment. If the full potential of these streets is to be realized, public agencies and the abutting property owners must come together to craft a shared vision.

The South Boston Waterfront Gateways Study group collaborated with the Boston Redevelopment Authority's Crossroads Initiative to identify the relevant issues and then craft a series of appropriate streetscape improvements. These included typical "streetscape" elements, such as lighting, paving, landscaping and trees, curb alignments, as well as recommendations for vertical transportation for handicapped accessibility, locations for public art and interim public uses for underutilized lots. Anticipating the sequence and scale of future development along the streets' edges, the study attempts to maximize the benefit of streetscape improvements by analyzing the relationship between those improvements and the existing and future adjacent uses. The implementation of these recommendations, by both public and private entities, will result in a clearer identity for the individual streets as well as create a distinct sense of place for the district as a whole.

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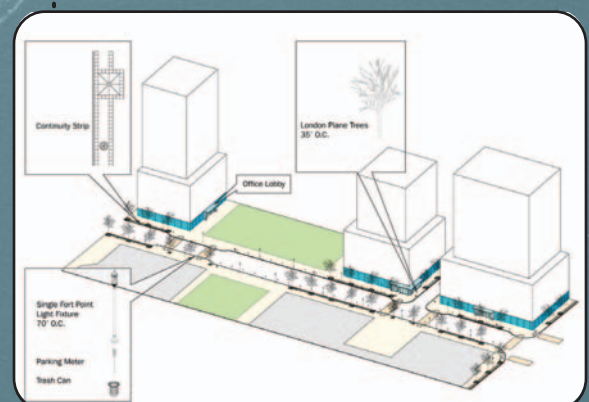


Seaport Boulevard

Old Northern Avenue

**Proposed Seaport Boulevard Streetscape**

**Old Northern Avenue Proposed Streetscape Improvements**





South Boston Waterfront Gateways Study scope overlaps with the Crossroads Initiative. The simultaneous efforts have allowed for valuable sharing of information. The South Boston Waterfront Gateways Study made use of the survey information collected by the Crossroads Initiative. Likewise, the implementation of the Crossroads Streetscape Improvements will benefit from the analysis and design of this study.

# Acknowledgements

This study was funded by private contributions from South Boston Waterfront stakeholders and the Artery Business Committee

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Thank you all for your devoted time and participation in this important urban design & planning initiative.





# INTRODUCTION



# Introduction

## Background and Process

**With the completion of the Rose Kennedy Greenway, the major east-west streets that connect historic Downtown Boston to the emerging South Boston Waterfront present perhaps the largest single urban design opportunity in the city.**

With the completion of the Rose Kennedy Greenway, the major east-west streets that connect historic Downtown Boston to the emerging South Boston Waterfront present perhaps the largest single urban design opportunity in the city. Currently, these streets – Old Northern Avenue, Seaport Boulevard, Congress and Summer Streets – represent a divide in the continuous and vital urban fabric of Boston. If intelligent collective decisions are made for their future improvement and development, then old Boston and new Boston can be merged into a single seamless urban environment. If the full potential of these streets is to be realized, public agencies and the abutting property owners must come together to craft a shared vision.

To this end, abutters within the study area collaborated in a series of visioning sessions in an effort to ascertain the scale and

character of the various streets and their role within a redefined district. Members of the BRA's Greenway Crossroads Initiative team also participated in ongoing discussions as the streetscape design preferences unfolded. In addition, the Boston Convention Center Authority, which had already undertaken to research improvements to Summer Street, agreed to fold their own efforts into that of the SBW Gateways Study, completing the project mission of addressing all of the South Boston access corridors spanning the Fort Point Channel.

Improvements to the public realm in Boston rarely occur without some collaboration between public and private entities. The South Boston Waterfront Gateways Study final report represents, on the one hand, a consensus between City and State agencies and participating private property owners

and institutions about the qualities of the future public realm in the district. More importantly, the study serves not just as a plan for those future improvements, but as a catalyst for the multi-tiered partnerships that are needed to make them happen.



Existing view west along Seaport Boulevard

# Introduction

## Purpose of the Study

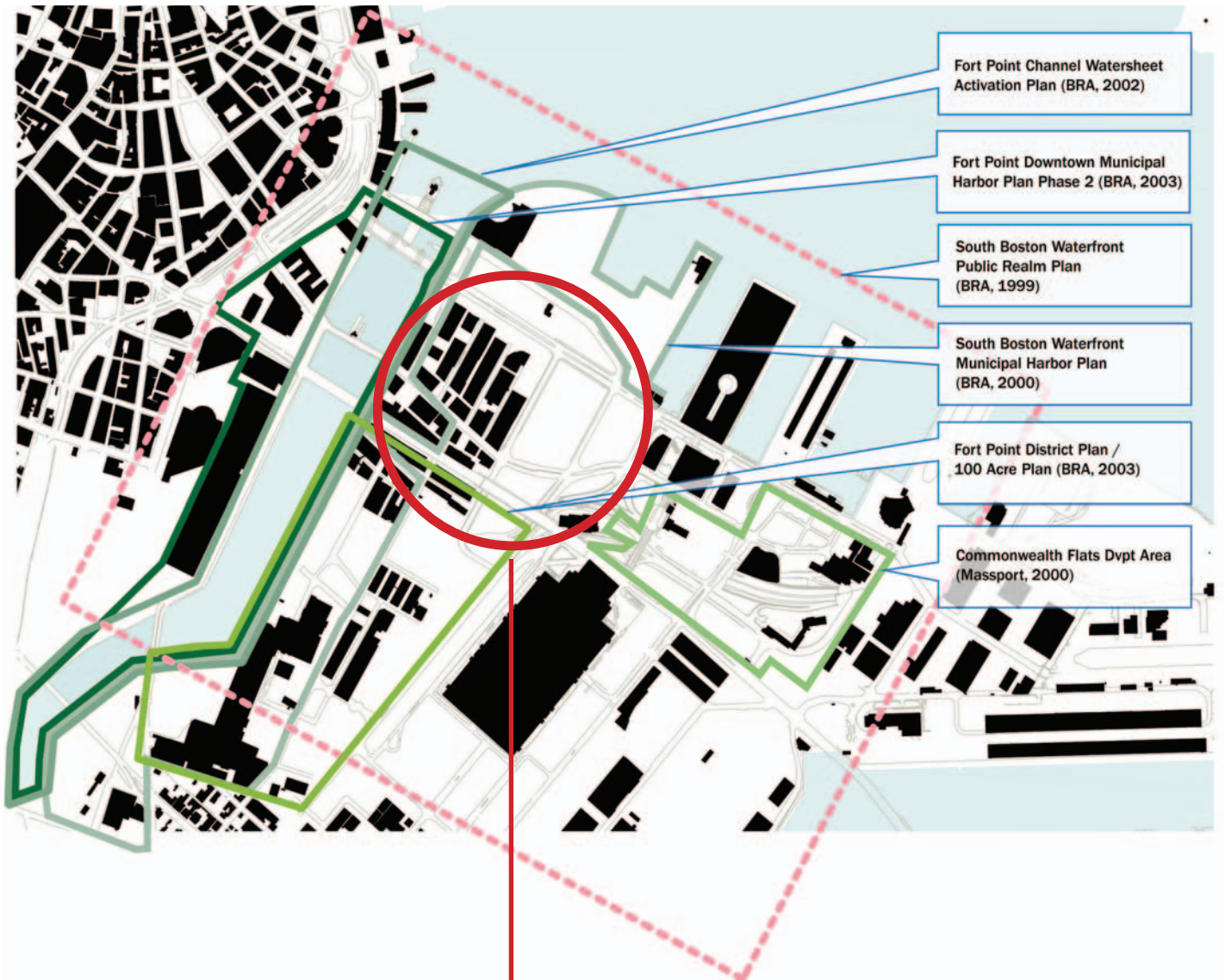
**Beyond the obvious need to simply plan for improvements to the area, the study represents a unique opportunity to envision the urban realm in advance of individual development projects.**

Visions for the new South Boston abound: The Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan, the Fort Point Downtown Municipal Harbor Plan Phase 2, the South Boston Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan, the 100 Acre Plan, and the Commonwealth Flats Development Area, to list a few. Among the many plans, only the South Boston Waterfront Public Realm Plan, completed in 1999, overlaps the entire focus area of this study. While the Public Realm Plan provides a valuable template for the design of the variety of streetscape conditions in the Waterfront and Fort Point Areas, none of the planning studies has explicitly addressed the gateways streets as such, nor the emerging district they circumscribe. The South Boston Waterfront Gateways study benefits from a more limited scope, which allows for the consideration of both the typical and atypical conditions within a smaller sub-district.

Despite its proximity to the Financial District to the west, Fort Point to the South and the newly established Commonwealth Flats developments to the east, the area remains relatively untouched by the development activity surrounding it. On the one hand, the district contains many important institutions, including the Federal Courthouse, the new Institute of Contemporary Art, the Boston Children's Museum, the Boston Fire Museum, and the Good Voyage Chapel, as well

as several successful smaller destinations such as restaurants, retail establishments and galleries. In addition, the district is rich with landscaped waterfront access, to both the Fort Point Channel and Boston Harbor. On the other hand, these "existing assets" are in many instances disconnected by unimproved streetscapes, inactive uses, abrupt changes in grade and a lack of north-south through streets. It is against this backdrop of unfulfilled potential that this planning initiative was conceived.

Beyond the obvious need to simply plan for improvements to the area, the study represents a unique opportunity to envision the urban realm in advance of individual development projects. The potential for those developments is great: Fan Pier is permitted, Pier 4 is seeking permitting, The McCourt Company, the largest land-owner in the district, is refining a master plan for the redevelopment of its own properties, to name a few examples. By crafting a clear set of criteria for the vision of the public realm, these large and imminent developments will be considered in the context of a continuous streetscape rather than as stand-alone projects.



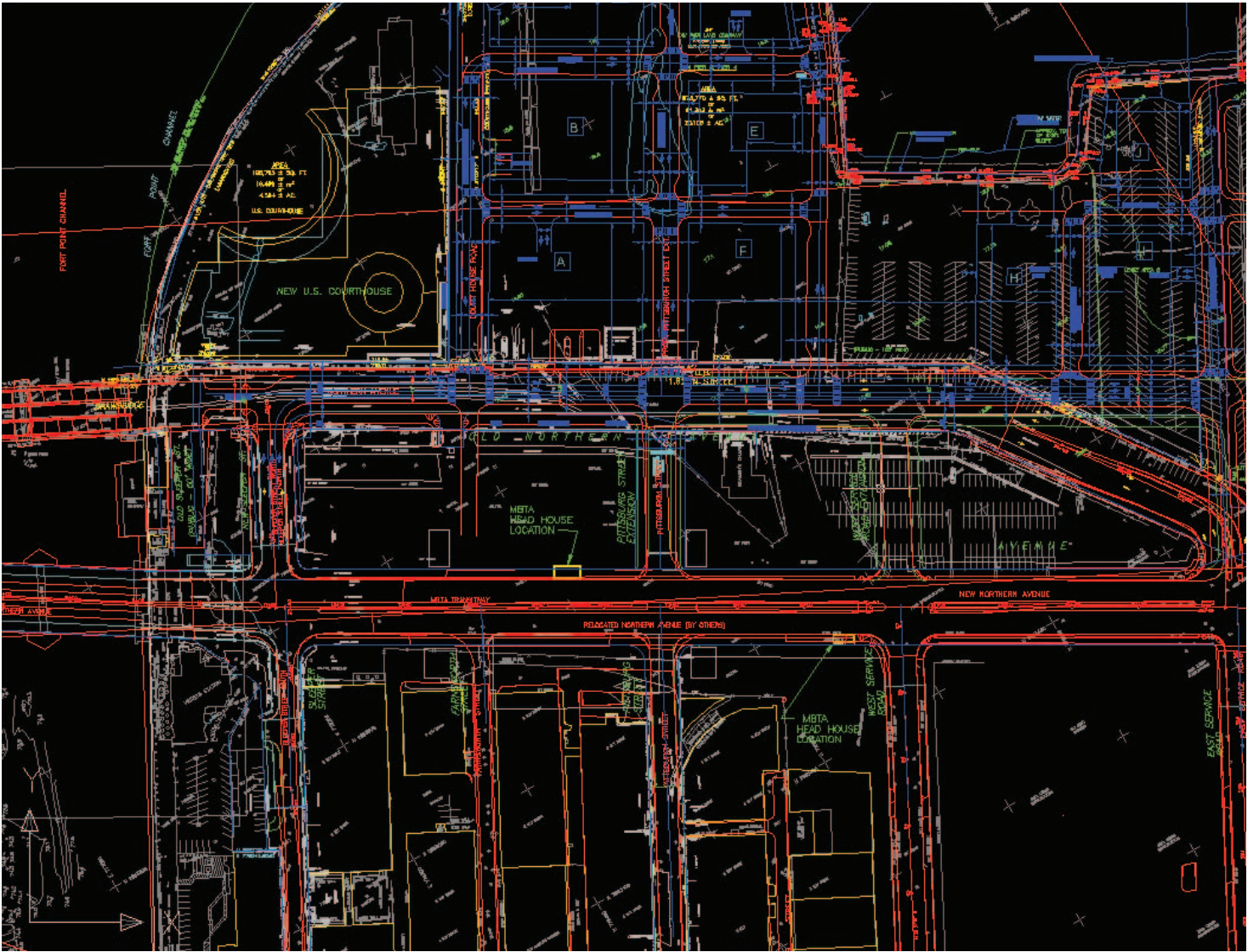
The South Boston Waterfront Gateways Study is the first planning initiative to focus exclusively on the specific streetscape design of Old Northern Avenue, Seaport Boulevard, Congress and Summer Streets. Our study builds on the broad guidelines established by the South Boston Waterfront Public Plan.

# Introduction

## Context and Methodology

Our study area has two “contexts”: The immediate surrounds of the Fort Point Waterfront District, and Boston as a whole. As a first step, the immediate context was analyzed in terms of its existing potential – its residential uses, institutions, open space, and other active uses that could serve as the foundation for a lively urban destination. An accurate composite CAD map of the entire area was assembled from a variety sources – existing conditions surveys provided by the Crossroads Initiative, street alignments and subsurface conditions provided by the MBTA, as-built surveys of the Berkeley Investments portfolio and street alignments in northern Fort Point, Commonwealth Flats street alignments provided by Massport and the proposed ground floor plans and street alignments for the permitted Fan Pier. The assembled data offered a precise view of the current and planned condition of the streets, enabling a series of spatial and programmatic analyses that later informed the final recommendations.

Finally, Boston as a whole was also considered as both a context and precedent for the study area. The multiple characters of the east-west streets that comprise the Back Bay, for instance, were analyzed as a possible precedent for the Gateways streets, whose character and scale might vary but nonetheless contribute to a unified neighborhood. The streets were analyzed with regard to the reciprocal relationship between their “lushness,” or density of greenery, and the unit size of the retail establishments along the streets. “Lushness” and retail became the key ingredients in the discussion about scale and character along street edges. The Back Bay analogy also provided a template for understanding the relative role of city through-streets, like Seaport Boulevard, and local streets, like Old Northern Avenue, and how the more specific identity of the neighborhood overlaps with the broader scale and identity of the city.



Composite CAD file assembled from recent surveys and planned developments. The CAD file will provide useful background information for the future developments and planned streetscape improvements in the area.





# METHODOLOGY **2**

# Context and Methodology

## Back Bay Analogy

### **The South Boston Waterfront has the potential to function as a single district without resorting to a uniform streetscape character.**

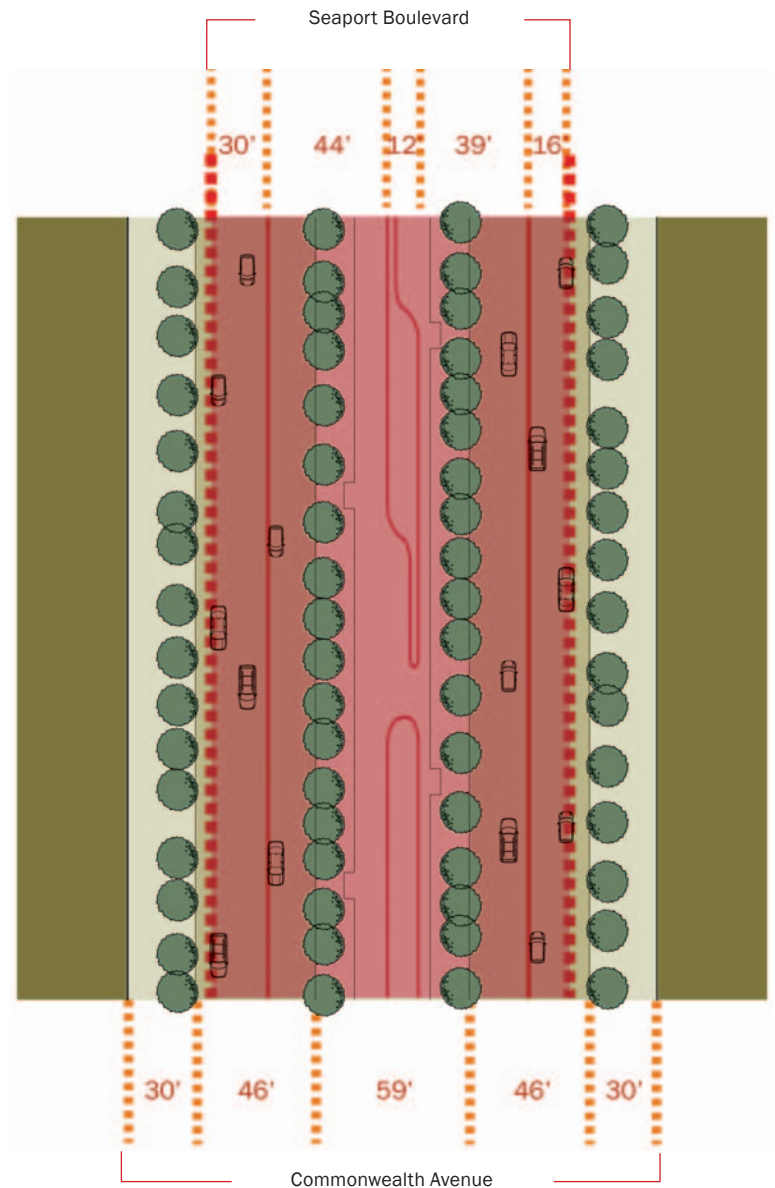
In the search for precedents for the Gateways district, the Back Bay provided the most immediate example of a network of parallel streets of different character that nonetheless contribute to an understanding of a coherent neighborhood. Earlier planning efforts by The McCourt Company also drew this comparison in its vision for a place with a single identity. The analogy is most helpful in two regards:

1. The Back Bay contains major avenues with distinct characters. Newbury Street, for example, is known for its smaller, pedestrian scaled boutique retail environment and consistency of building types and street wall. Boylston Street, on the other hand, presents a larger scale of retail, more vehicular movement and a less continuous architectural expression. Commonwealth Avenue and Marlboro Street, while both lined with residential uses, also present urban places of very different character. Despite these differences,

the neighborhood is still understood as an integrated whole. The South Boston Waterfront has a similar potential to function as a single district without resorting to a uniform streetscape character.

2. Commonwealth Avenue and Boylston Street both act as through streets for the larger city, while Newbury and Marlboro Streets remain largely “local.” This continuity and discontinuity with a larger network of streets and neighborhoods is essential to understanding the difference between, for example, Congress Street, which threads its way from the Bullfinch Triangle all the way through to the Commonwealth Flats area, and Old Northern Avenue, which is clearly locally bounded by the Fort Point Channel and Pier 4. Identifying these broader connections in light of the Back Bay “model” helped the study team to begin envisioning the various “character zones” within the district.




Although strictly residential, Commonwealth Avenue provides a fine example of an extremely lush, broad avenue with relatively few “active” uses. Although a dimensional overlay revealed that Seaport Boulevard is not wide enough for the occupiable landscaped median that is so successful on Commonwealth, its dimension nonetheless calls for a similar lushness that would anchor the street, mitigate the potential barrenness of any inactive uses along its edges, and endow the boulevard with a clear identity.

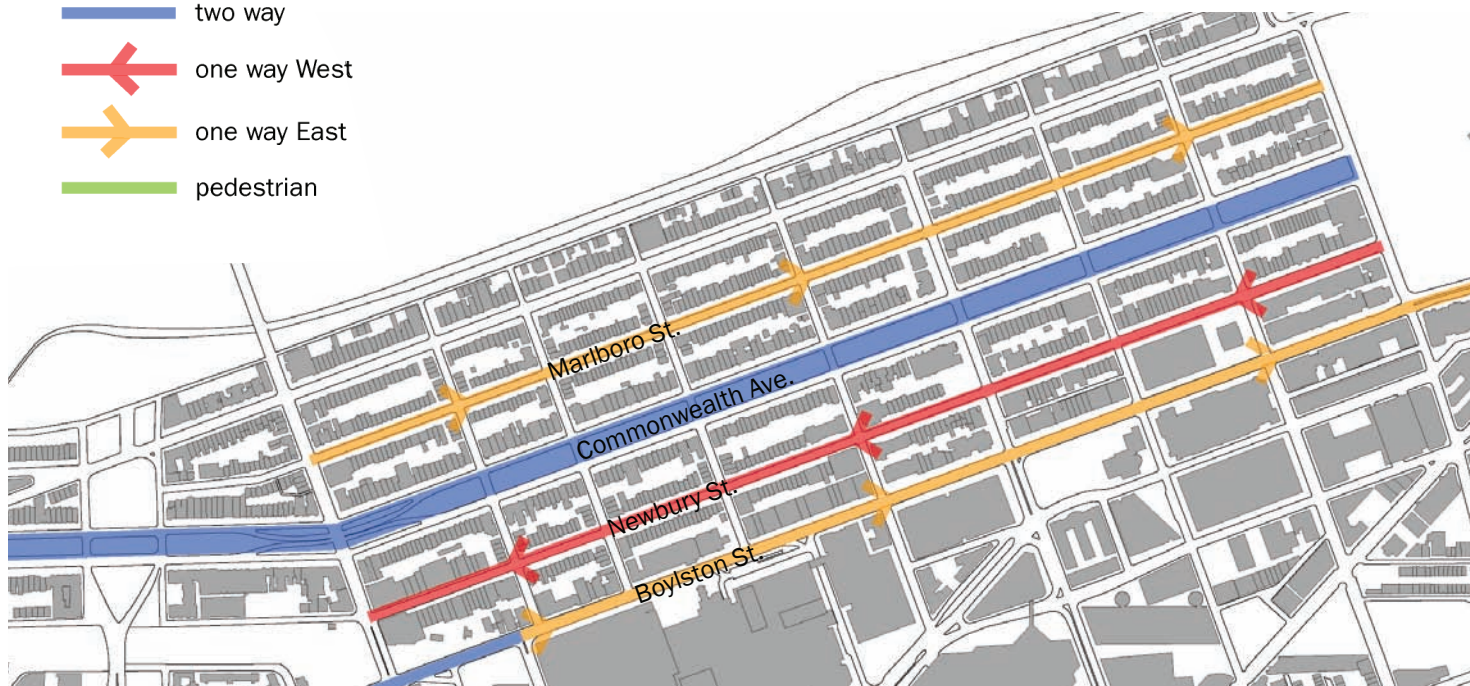


Dimensional comparison between Seaport Blvd. (red) and Commonwealth Avenue

# Context and Methodology

## Dimensional Comparison of Commonwealth Avenue and Seaport Boulevard

-  two way
-  one way West
-  one way East
-  pedestrian



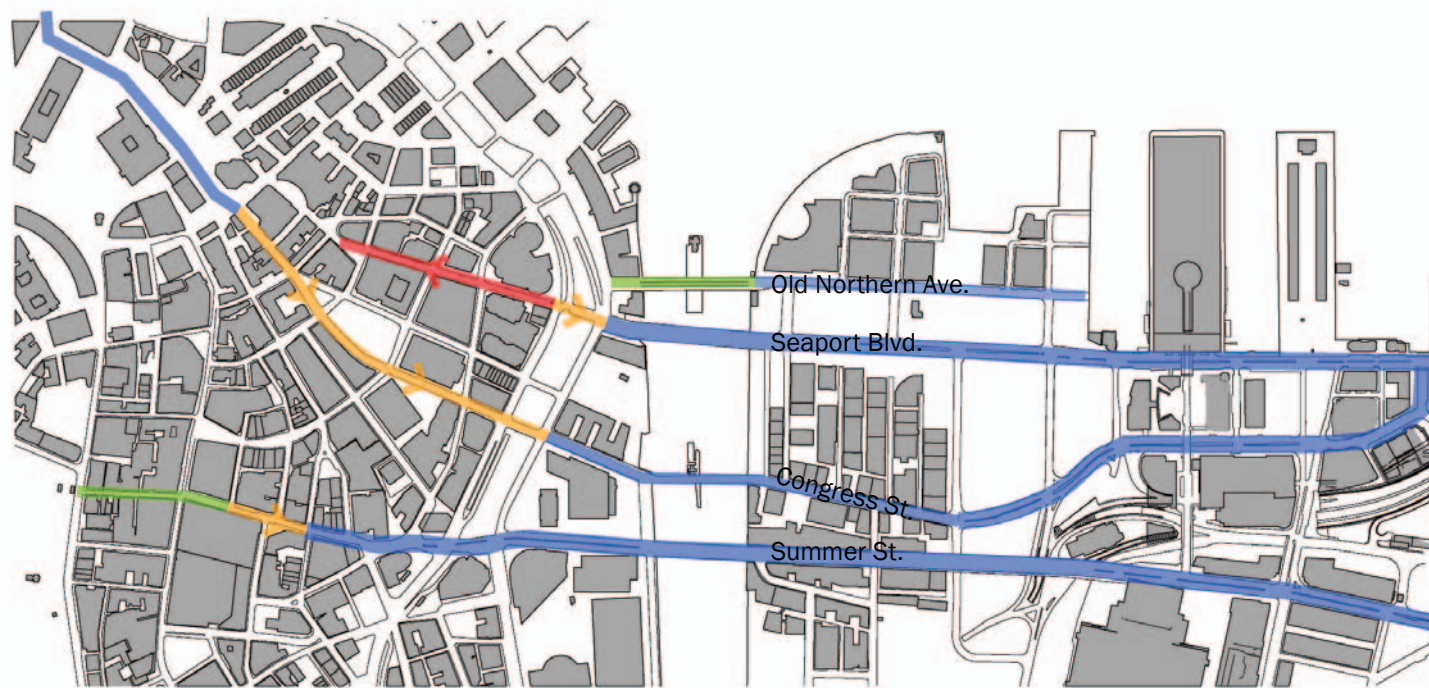
Connectivity of Back Bay streets

Marlborough Street

Newbury Street



Connectivity of South Boston Waterfront streets (below), depicted at the same scale as the Back Bay. Despite the variety of shapes and lengths of the streets west of the Fort Point Channel, they coalesce into an identifiable district within the South Boston Waterfront. Their proximity makes it all the more essential that the character of each street be studied as part of a larger district.



Connectivity of South Boston Waterfront streets

Commonwealth Avenue

Boylston Street

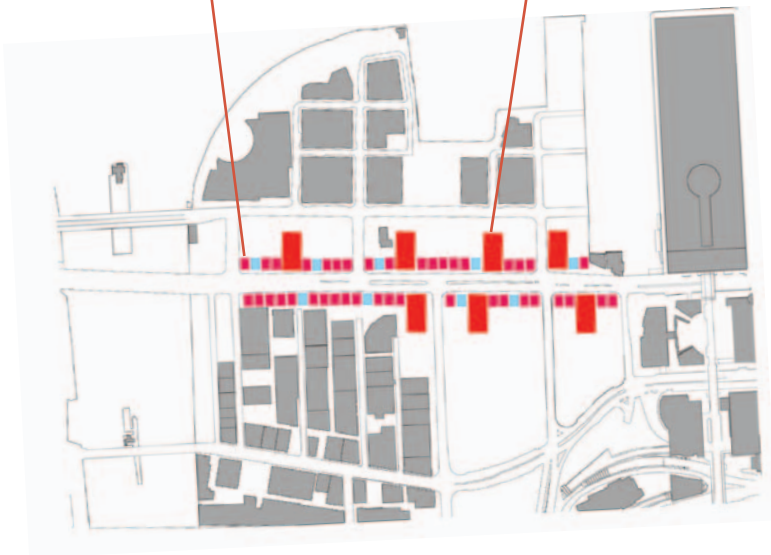


# Context and Methodology

## Lushness and Retail



Retail Scale: Fan Pier ground floor plan with 'boutique' size retail overlay

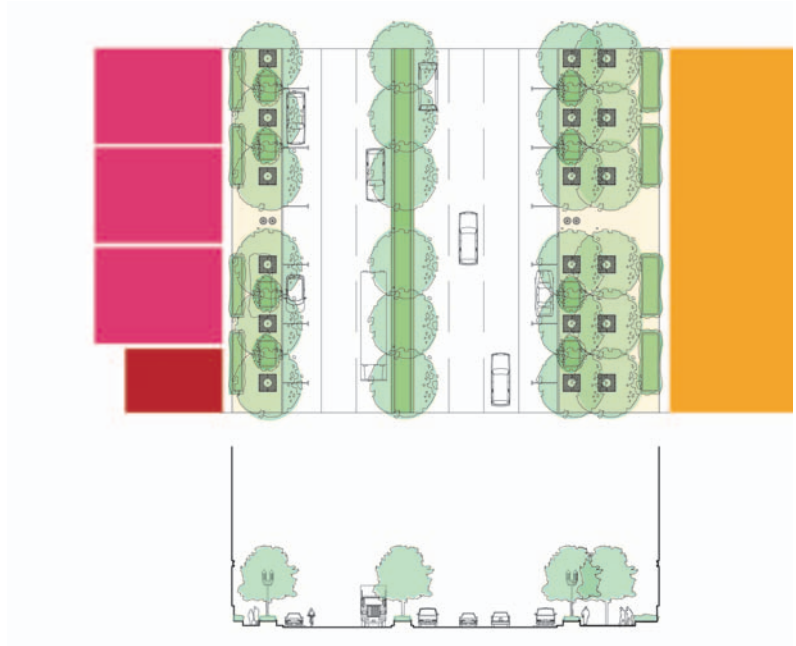


Seaport Boulevard with boutique and small big box retail overlay (above)

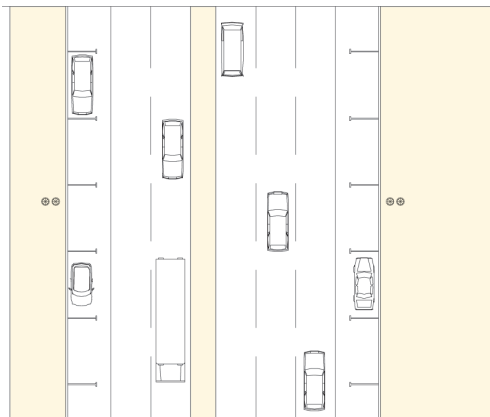
Two fundamental ingredients that define the character of a street - lushness, or density of plantings, and retail, more specifically the size of retail - were singled out as a way for the study's participants to quickly assign a character to the various streets of the study. Lushness was measured, from maximum to minimum, by the density of the street trees, and the presence of raised planters on the sidewalks and medians. Retail was measured by size, starting at the 600sf "micro" retail establishment (shoe repair, coffee vendors) and ending with 30,000 sf big box (supermarkets, Home Depot). As a visioning exercise, participants were asked to consider the district as though it were completely developed, devoid of inactive edges and undeveloped lots, and then imagine what permutations of lushness and retail would be most appropriate for each street.

By overlaying two scales of retail with maximum lushness, it became apparent that maximum lushness best suited large retail, where infrequent points of entry are not impeded by the presence of large sidewalk planters and thick tree cover. Conversely, smaller scale retail, and its reliance on visibility and access from the sidewalk, demands a pedestrian environment less obstructed by the heavy use of greenery.

Uses with fewer entry points, such as big box retail, may accommodate dense plantings. Boutique-sized retail will demand thinner and less frequent plantings for visibility and access.



Relative impact of small and large ground floor retail on lushness of streetscape



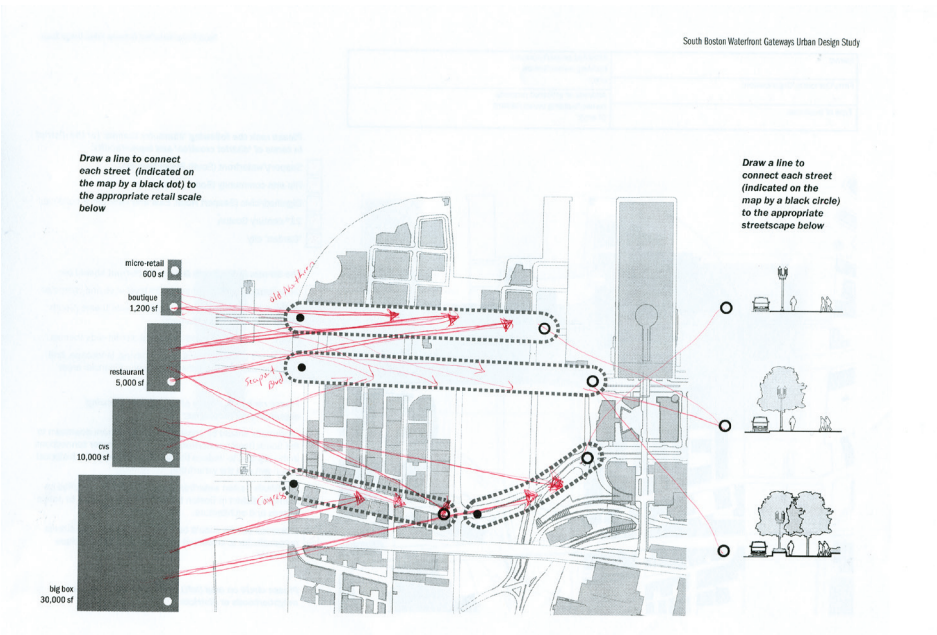
Minimum lushness



Maximum lushness

# Context and Methodology

## District Character

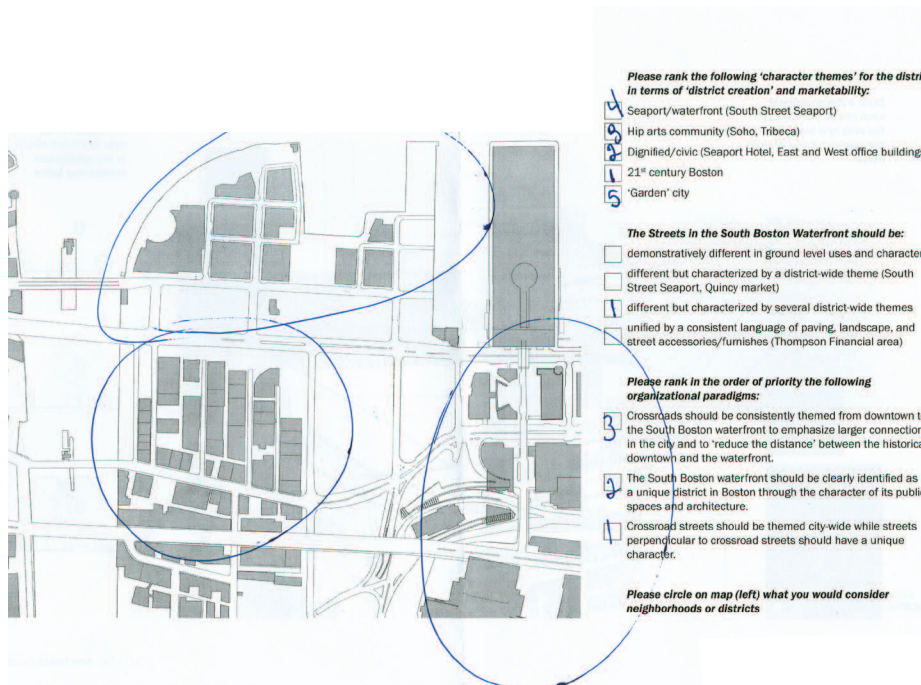


Example of survey response results for lushness and retail

## CHARACTER ZONES

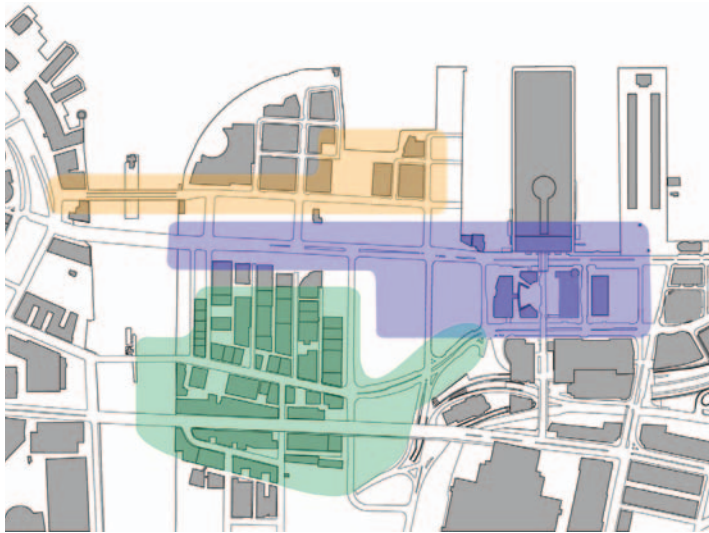
While the study looked to the individual characteristics of each street, it also considered the character of the district. More specifically, participants in the visioning exercises were asked to assign a shape to the overall district and its smaller constituent neighborhoods, if any, that would be nested within the larger area. If the purpose of the study was to ultimately make recommendations for the individual streets, it was necessary to first consider whether these streets would constitute character zones in and of themselves, or if they would be secondary to other distinct neighborhood clusters, like the Fort Point Channel for example.

Study participants were asked in a survey to identify the “character zones” and the desired levels of lushness and retail on each street.

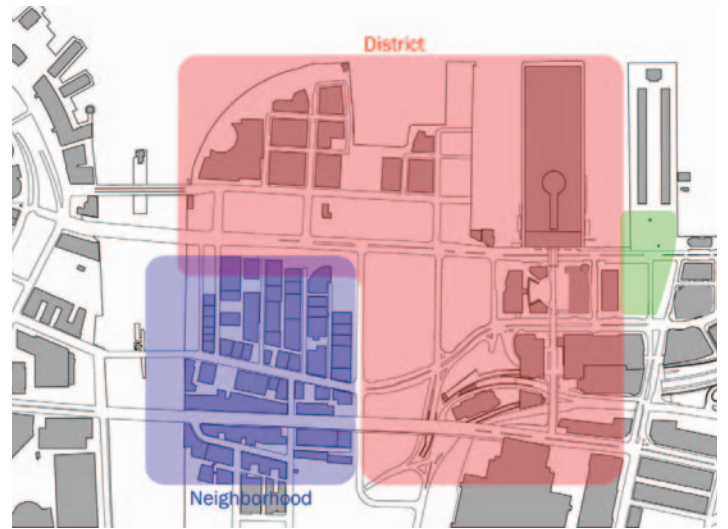


Example of survey response for zoning

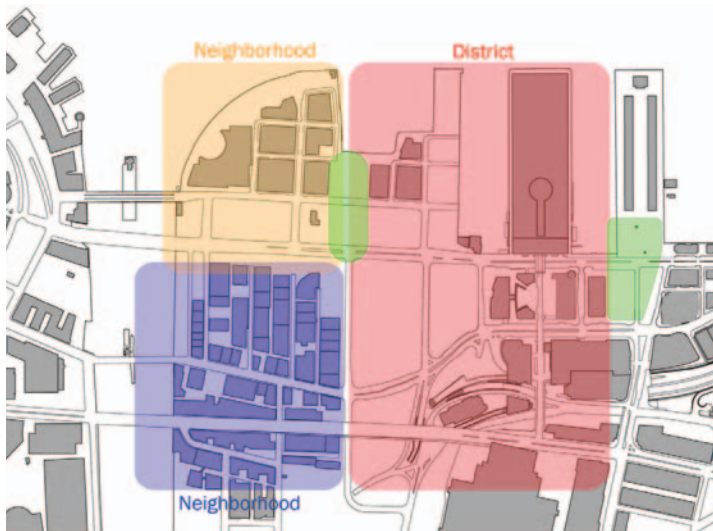




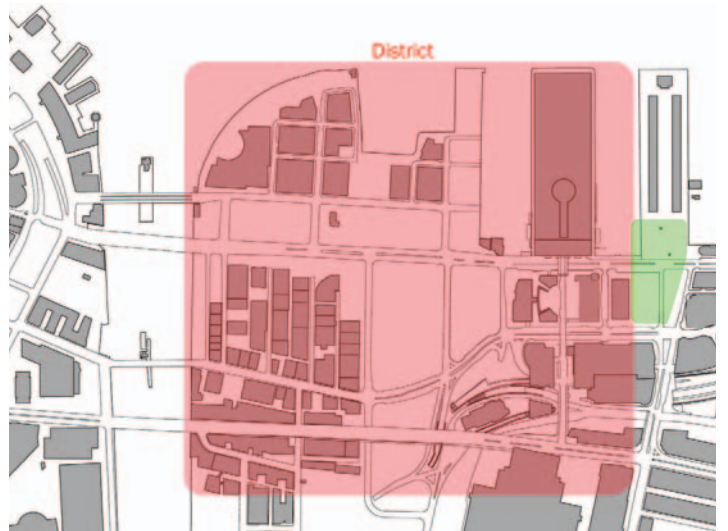
Neighborhoods zoned by east/west streets



Fort Point Channel as unique neighborhood within the district



Neighborhoods zoned by character



District as a unified whole

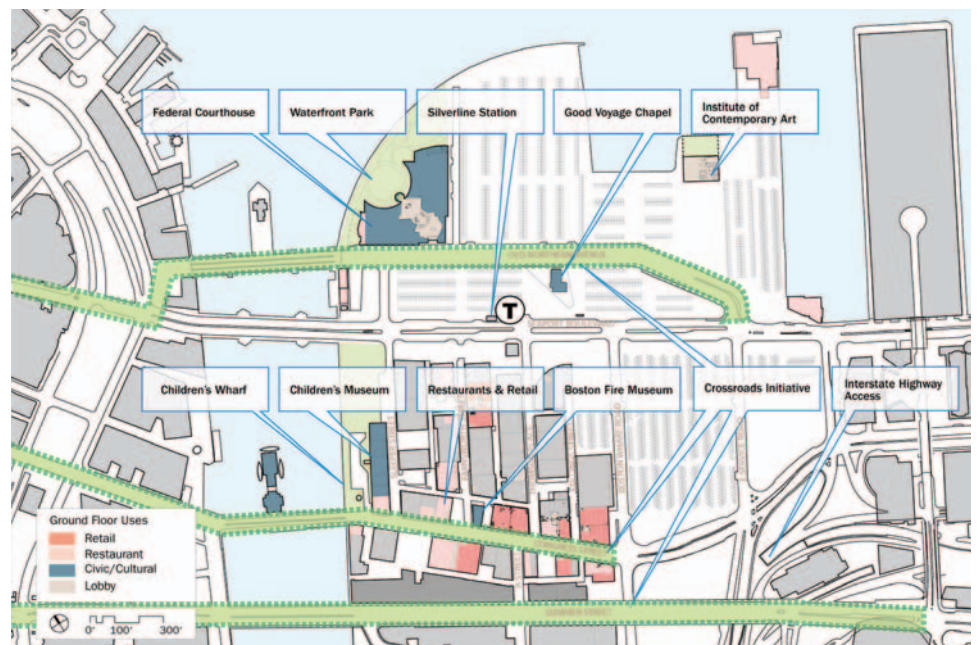
# Context and Methodology

## Phasing

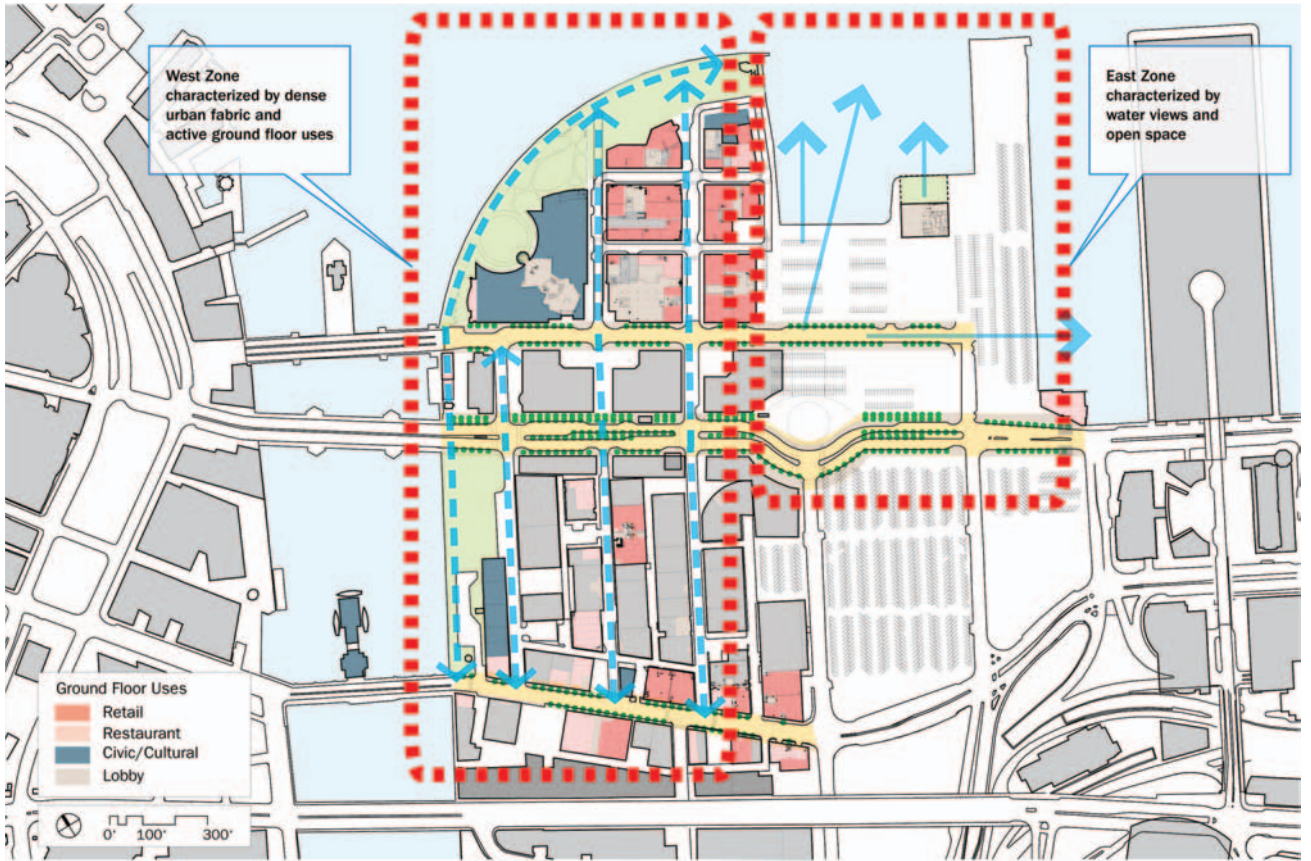
**Two scenarios were tested, one scenario A in which the primary development begins at the western end of Seaport Boulevard, and another scenario B in which Pier 4, the ICA and the Fan Pier properties to the north are the first to break ground. Each example produced greatly different centers of gravity and orientation for the new district.**

Having looked forward to a fully developed street edge and assessed how the landscaping density and size of retail and other active uses might affect the character of the different streets, the study pulled back from a “final” fully-developed neighborhood, and tried to envision a few development implementation scenarios. More specifically, the study examined the role of phasing with an eye toward its potential effect on the evolving character, design, and most importantly, the zoning of the district. Two scenarios were tested, one scenario A in which the primary development begins at the western end of Seaport Boulevard, and another scenario B in which Pier 4, the ICA and the Fan Pier properties to the north are the first to break ground. Each example produced greatly different centers of gravity and orientation for the new district: Scenario A resulted in a north-south orientation, with the smaller north-south through-streets playing a greater role in the neighborhood’s identity. This pattern suggested that the character of the larger through streets (Old Northern, Seaport and to a lesser extent, Congress) would vary along their lengths, rather than present a uniform condition. Scenario B, on the other hand, seemed to create a new and distinct, water-front oriented zone to north, while the existing 19th century fabric of the fort point blocks would retain and enhance their own identity to the

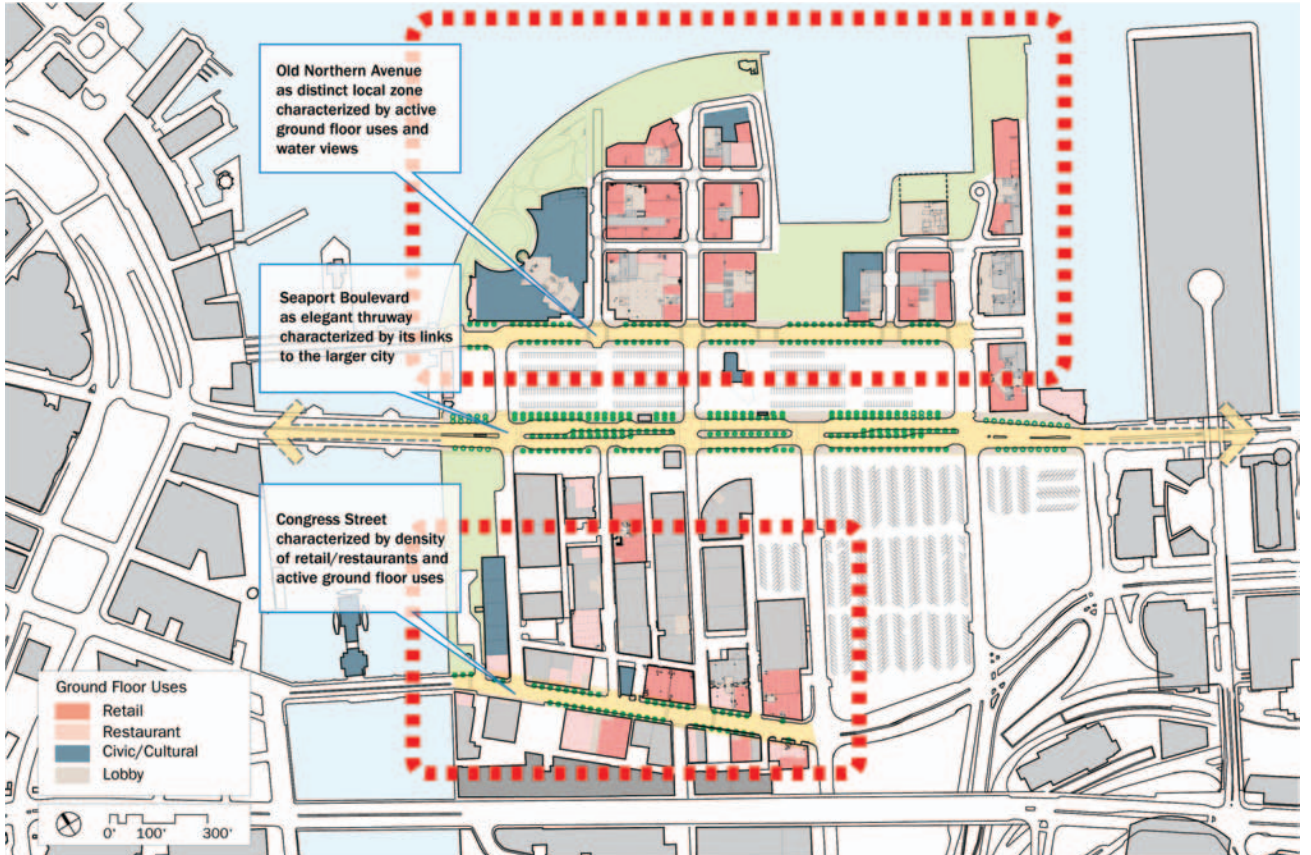
south. In this case, with fewer active uses along its edges, Seaport Boulevard would evolve more as a grand city-scaled east-west thoroughfare and less as a local destination in and of itself. The streetscape designs for each of the streets must consider not just the long term full-development scenario, but also the potentially lengthy “interim” conditions during which these streets will acquire their primary identity.



Existing Neighborhood Assets



Scenario B: two "character zones" oriented north/south



Scenario A: two east/west oriented character zones divided by Seaport Boulevard



# SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS





## Street Character

Pedestrian-scaled small retail environment identified by a strong relationship to the Old Northern Avenue Bridge and the nearby waterfront.

## Retail

A variety of sizes, but the majority being between 1200sf and 5000sf. The retail's primary orientation would be to the street so as to serve and encourage pedestrian use.

**Recommendations**

**Emerging Strategies**

**Requires Further Study**

# Old Northern Avenue

## Streetscape Elements

### Trees:

London Plane @ 22' O.C.

### Lighting:

Fort Point Single Fixture @ 70' O.C.

### Paving:

Continuity Strip or "Figure Field"

## Street Alignment and Parking

Parking: Metered

The permitting of Fan Pier presumes three travel lanes on Old Northern. Earlier concepts imagined 2 lanes. While the wider sidewalks associated with a 2 lane scheme are desirable, the anticipated traffic volumes, as well as the legal agreements already in place, would render a reconsideration of this issue difficult.

## Phasing Issues and Interim Uses

The parking lots on Fan Pier would provide an excellent location for an outdoor movie theatre, perhaps during the weekends and perhaps programmed in conjunction with the ICA.

Use the Fan pier parking lots as a tree nursery for the street trees that would eventually be placed along Old Northern Avenue.

The avenue will be anchored by the existing court house at one end and the soon-to-be-completed ICA as well Pier 4. Along with the programming on the Old Northern Avenue Bridge and the nearby Harbor Walk, this avenue is likely to evolve more as a visitor destination than as a self-sufficient neighborhood "Main Street."

The ICA, and Old Northern Avenue itself, would benefit from a direct pedestrian or visual connection to the Courthouse Station on Seaport Boulevard, currently obscured by numerous parking lots. This kind of "wayfinding" tool, implemented on a neighborhood scale and perhaps as an environmental art piece in and of itself, would allow the entire district to leverage a sense of place off the nearly completed cultural institution.

# Old Northern Avenue

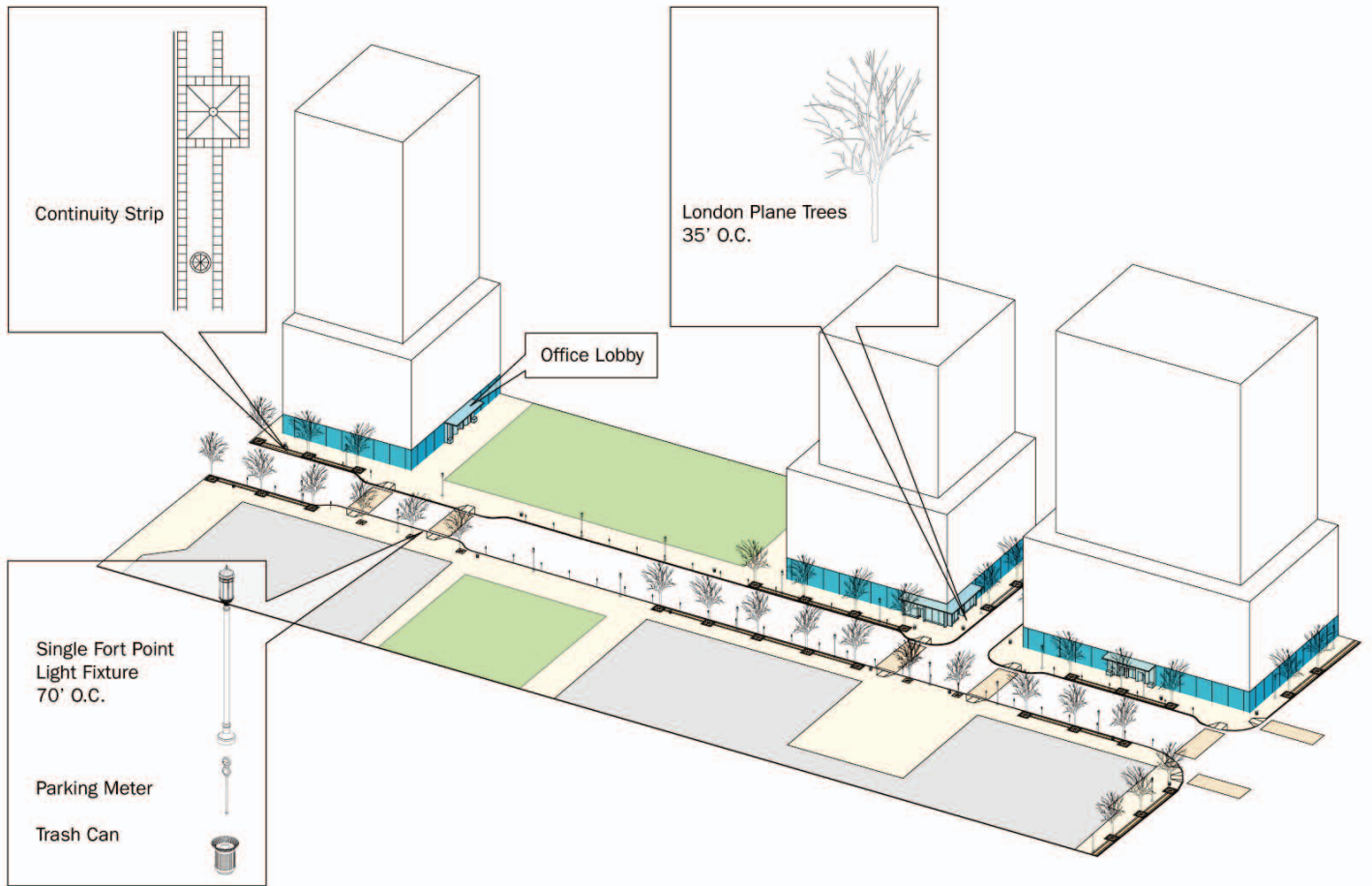
## Primary Recommendations



Existing Streetscape

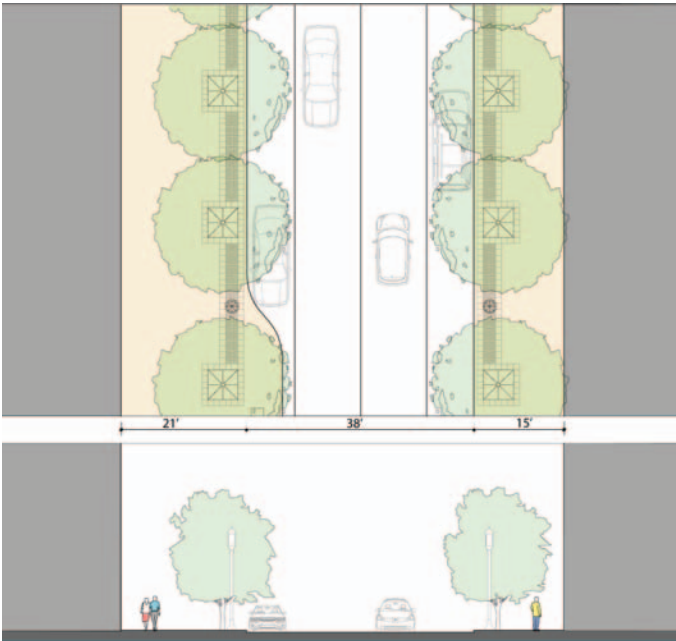
### STREET ALIGNMENT

The permitting of Fan Pier presumes three travel lanes on Old Northern Avenue. Earlier concepts imagined 2 lanes. While the wider sidewalks associated with a 2 lane scheme are desirable, the anticipated traffic volumes, as well as the legal agreements already in place, would render a reconsideration of this issue difficult.



Isometric diagram showing the recommended streetscape elements





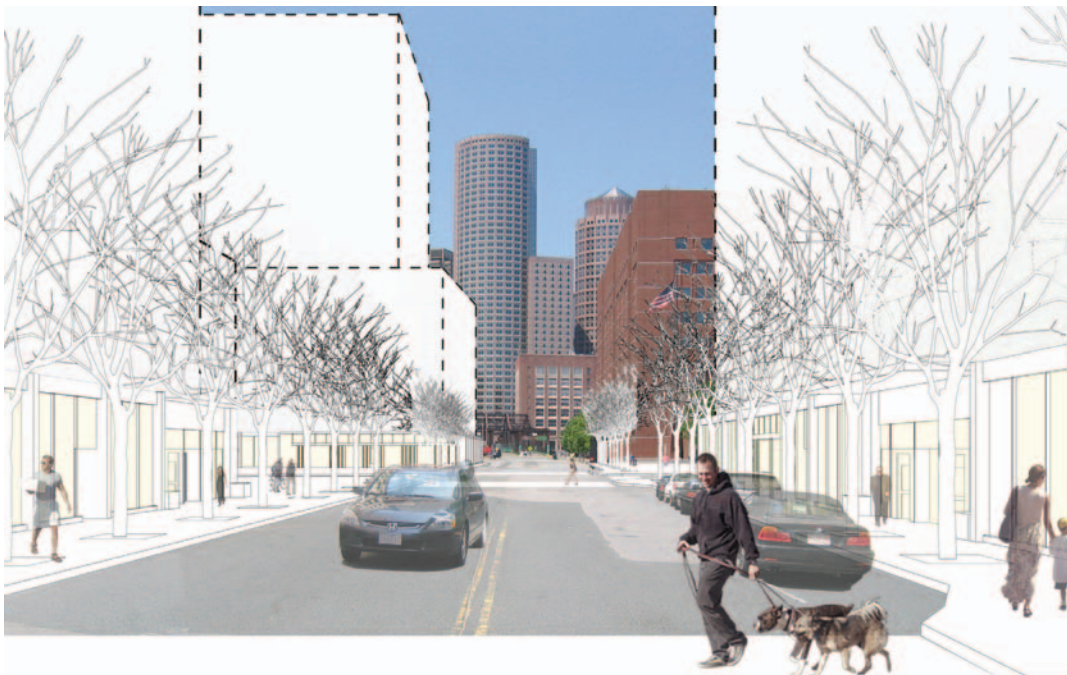
Proposed Street Plan and Section

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Old Northern Avenue should be a pedestrian-scaled small retail environment identified by a strong relationship to the Old Northern Avenue Bridge and the nearby waterfront.

The avenue will be anchored by the existing court house at one end and the soon-to-be-completed ICA as well Pier 4 at the other. Along with the programming on the Old Northern Avenue Bridge and the nearby Harbor Walk, this avenue is likely to evolve more as a visitor destination than as a self-sufficient neighborhood "Main Street."

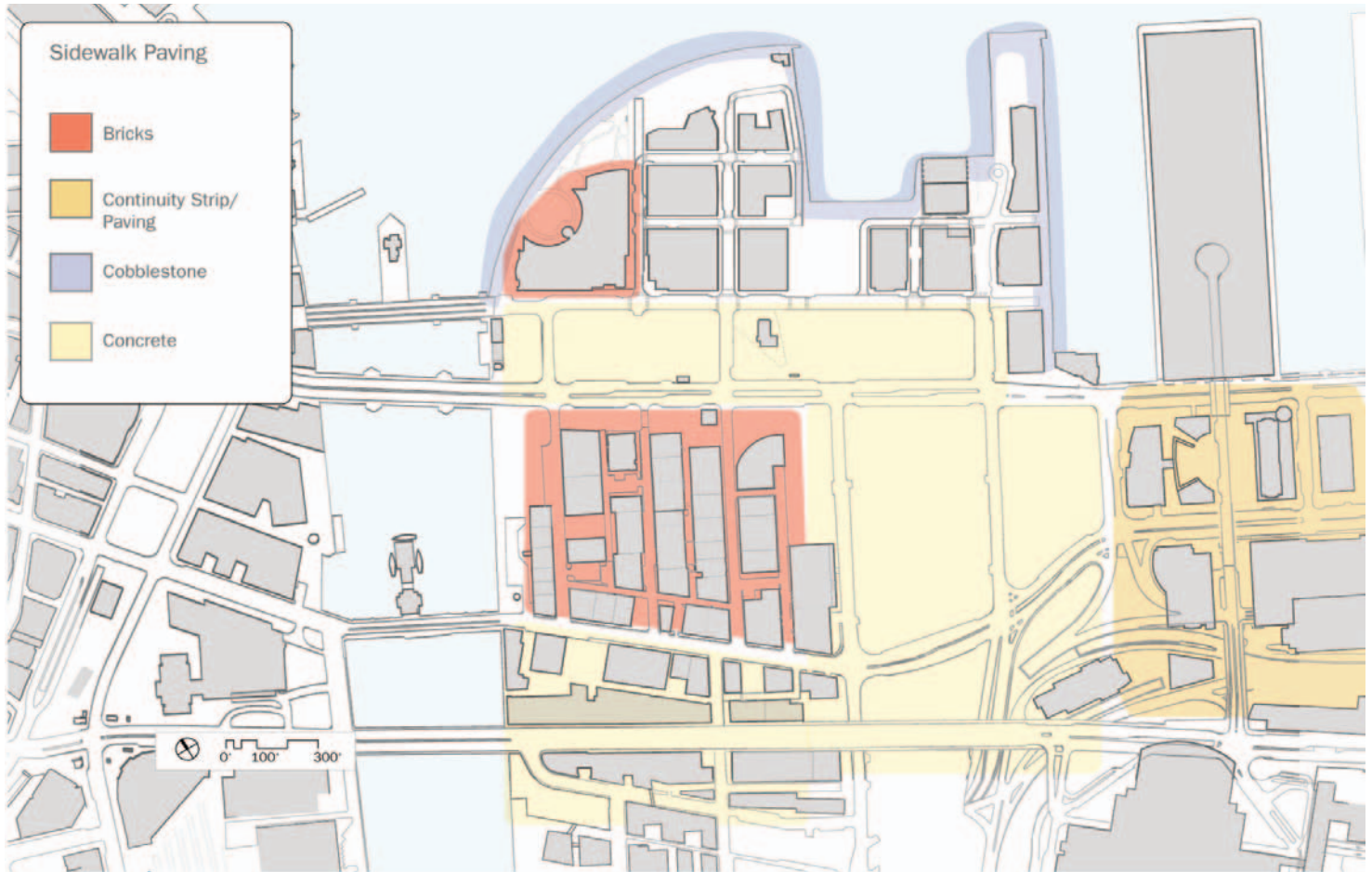
The dense coverage provided by London Plane trees would anchor the street as a single place as the various abutting developments slowly filled in the edges. The density of the plantings would also provide a stronger frame for the open views to the water which occurs mid-street.



Proposed Streetscape

# Old Northern Avenue and Seaport Boulevard

## Emerging Strategies - Paving



Existing district-wide variation in sidewalk paving

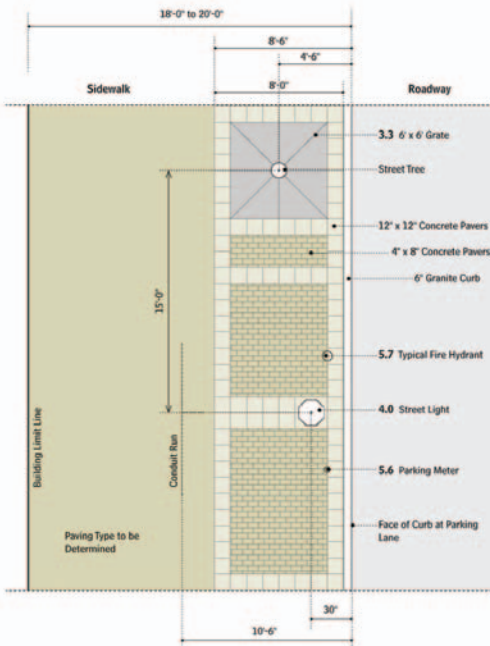


Continuity Strip, Seaport Boulevard at D Street

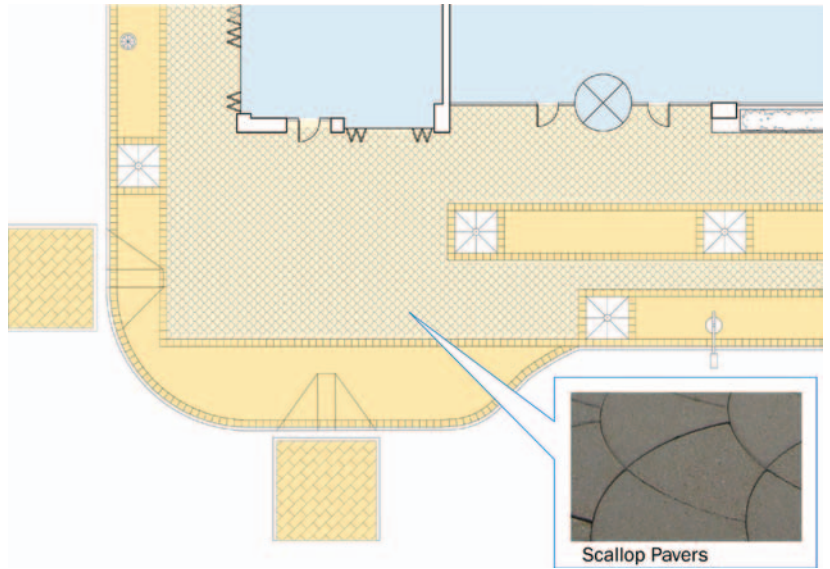
**PAVING STRATEGIES:  
CONTINUITY STRIP AND FIGURE / FIELD**

Two alternative paving strategies for Old Northern Avenue and Seaport Boulevard emerged as part of the study. The continuity strip, based on the standards developed for the Commonwealth Flats sidewalks, prescribes a single continuous paving pattern at the sidewalk's edge that organizes the tree pits, the parking meters, lights and other streetscape elements. The pavers on the inside of the sidewalk are then less tightly controlled, and perhaps change from block to block.

The Figure /Field approach, on the other hand, would mandate a field of single "background" pavers for the entire district, but would then allow exceptions to occur as distinct figures (an area of special paving at the entry of a building, for instance). Both strategies attempt to implement some level of uniformity in the district paving while still providing room for variations as desired by individual developments.



Continuity Strip per Massport guidelines provides a possible template for paving along Seaport Blvd. and Old Northern Ave.



Continuity Strip strategy

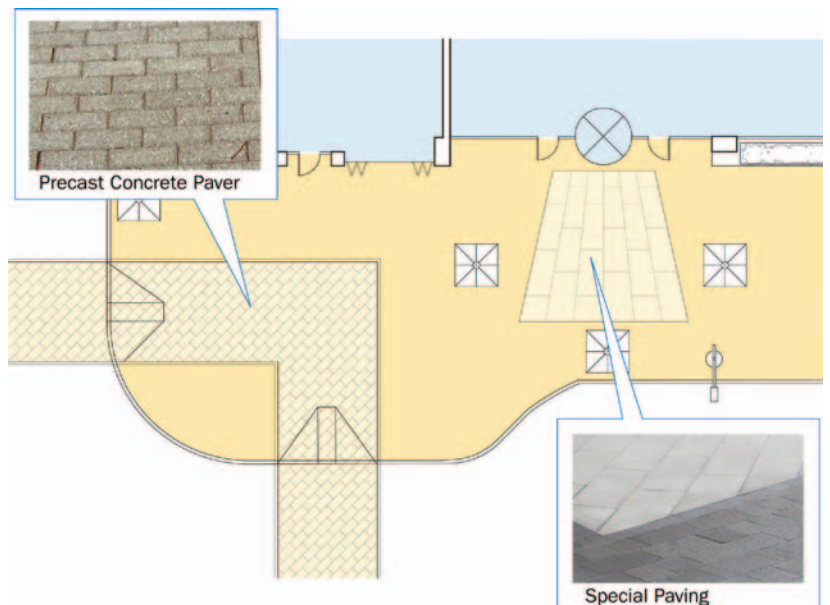
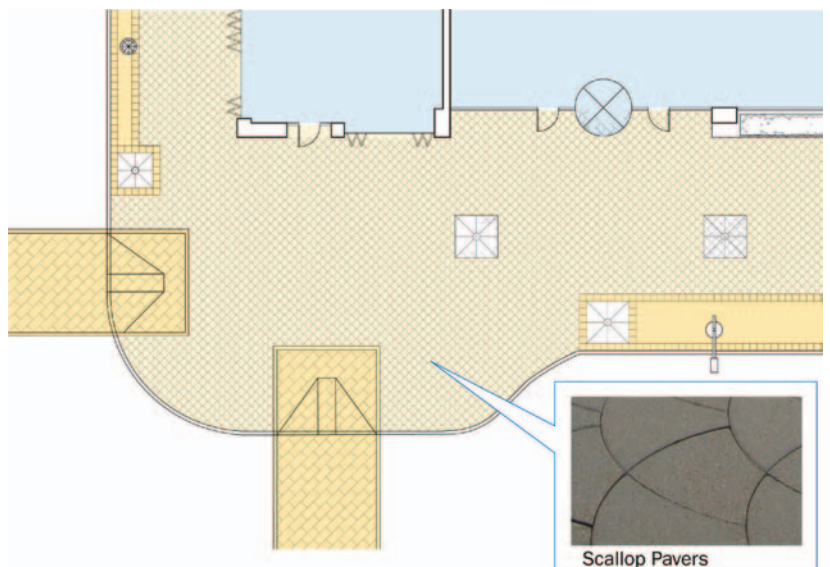


Figure Field strategy



Hybrid strategy emphasizing corner



## Street Character

City-scaled Boulevard which acts as the central spine of the district and also the primary connection to the rest of the city. Dense landscaping would give way to "clearings" at the corners where significant retail or other active uses could congregate. Abundant greenery would endow the boulevard with its primary character "anchor," independent of the uncertainties of the phasing of adjacent development and any active ground floor uses it may bring.

## Retail

Primarily 5000sf and larger. A combination of "Small Big Box" and large restaurants is anticipated. In initial developments, street-accessible retail and active uses should be anchored in double-height volumes on the corners to maximize visibility. Additional retail would fill in the mid-block areas as market absorption would allow.

**Recommendations**

**Emerging Strategies**

**Requires Further Study**

# Seaport Boulevard

## Streetscape Elements

### Trees:

North: Double Row London Plane @ 35' on center, staggered

South: Single Row London Plane @ 35' on center

### Lighting:

Sidewalks: Fort Point Single @ 70' on center

Street: Hess Corona @ 120' on center

### Median:

2' raised planter to accommodate dense plantings or trees. Low plantings on the median would permit a clear view across the boulevard, reinforcing the reading of Seaport as a single street. Trees in the median, in conjunction with those on the sides, would be characterized more as a "green way."

### Paving:

Continuity Strip or "Figure Field"

The continuity of the median will be subject to further discussions with the BRA and other city agencies regarding a larger city-wide position on pedestrian fencing. Fencing in the median is being implemented on Northern Avenue near the Seaport to prevent mid-block pedestrian crossings, and it is uncertain whether there are similar safety considerations on Seaport Blvd.

## Street Alignment and Parking

Parking: Metered

Two visions for the intersection of Seaport and Boston Wharf Road include a semi-circular bend and a continuation of its current straight alignment. Both schemes anticipate a significant view and open space to the north, as well as open space and connection to the Silver Line Station at the intersection.

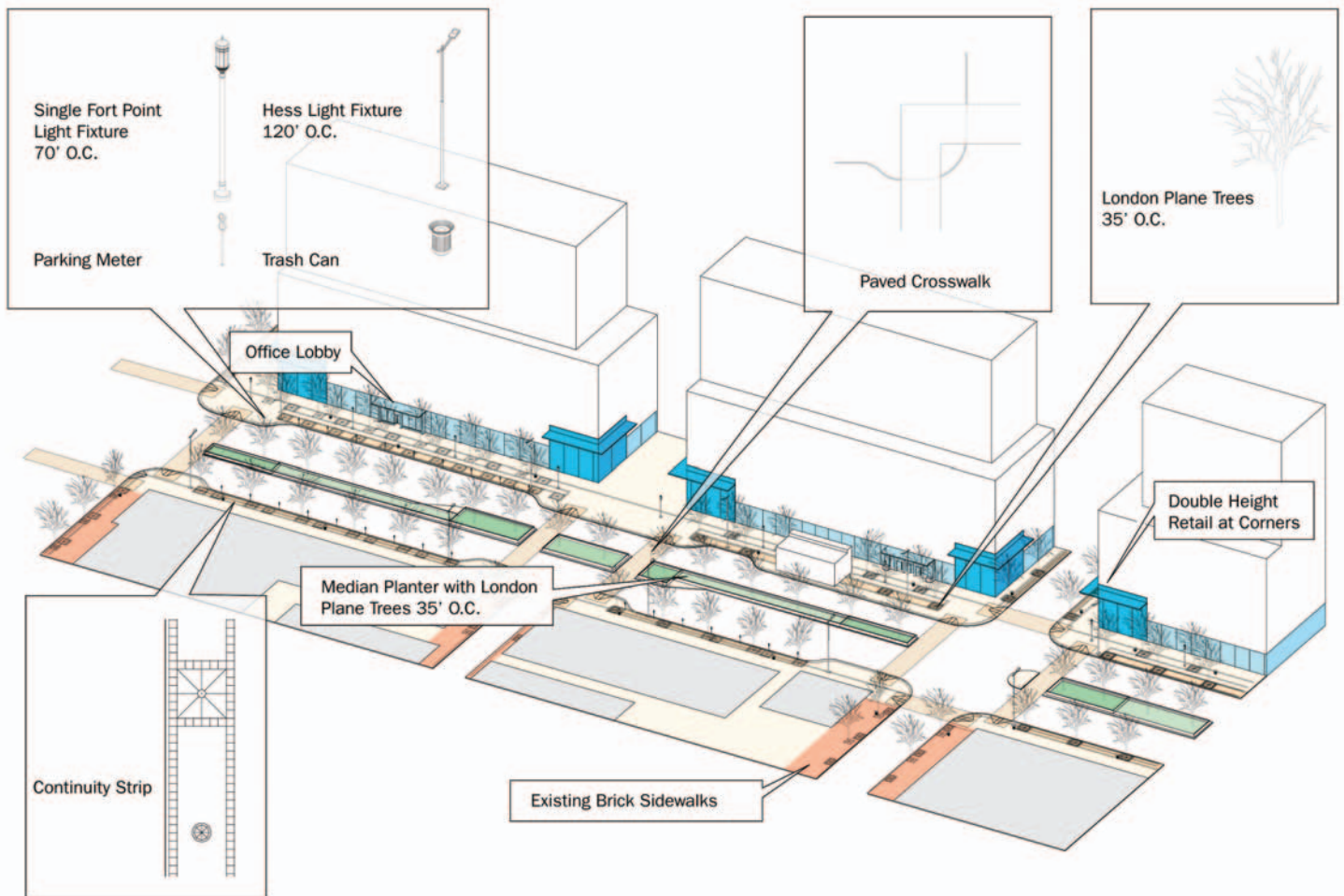
## Phasing Issues and Interim Uses

The ICA, and Old Northern Avenue itself, would benefit from a direct pedestrian or visual connection to the Courthouse Station on Seaport Boulevard, currently obscured by numerous parking lots. This kind of "wayfinding" tool, implemented on a neighborhood scale and perhaps as an environmental art piece in and of itself, would allow the entire district to leverage a sense of place off the nearly completed cultural institution. The direct connection to Old Northern Avenue might occur at the eastern edge of the Seaman's Chapel, or through the planned extension of Pittsburgh Street.

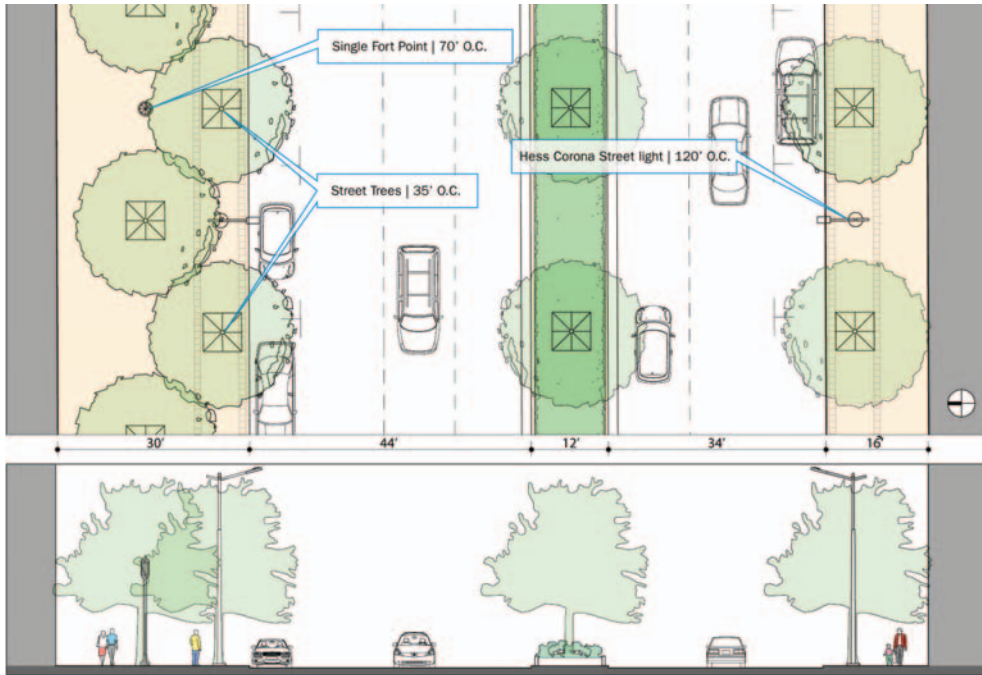
# Seaport Boulevard

## Primary Recommendations

**Seaport Boulevard should be a city-scaled Boulevard that acts as the central spine of the district and also as the primary connection to the rest of the city.**



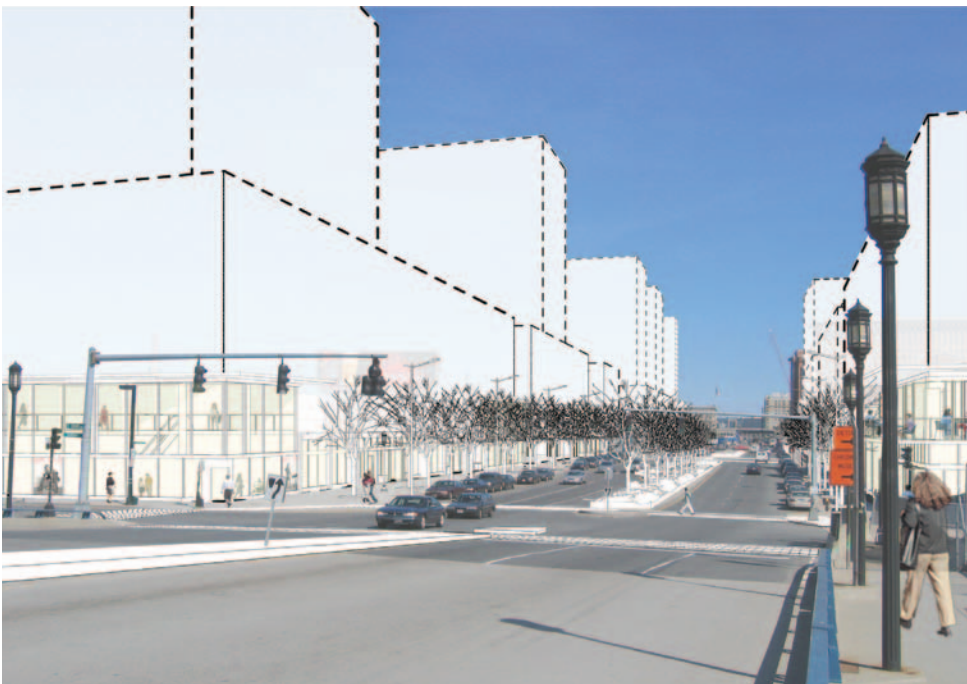
Isometric diagram showing recommended streetscape elements



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Seaport Boulevard should be a city-scaled Boulevard that acts as the central spine of the district and also as the primary connection to the rest of the city.

Dense landscaping would give way to "clearings" at the corners where significant retail or other active uses could congregate. Abundant greenery would endow the boulevard with its primary character "anchor," independent of the uncertainties of the phasing of adjacent development and any active ground floor uses it may bring. Dense plantings will help mitigate the scale of the Boulevard and provide a "green" identity to the street.



Before (above) and after (left) views of Seaport Boulevard Streetscape.

# Seaport Boulevard

Cross Streets and Pedestrian Ways

**In initial developments, street-accessible retail and active uses should be anchored in double-height volumes on the corners to maximize visibility. Additional retail would fill in the mid-block areas as market absorption would allow.**

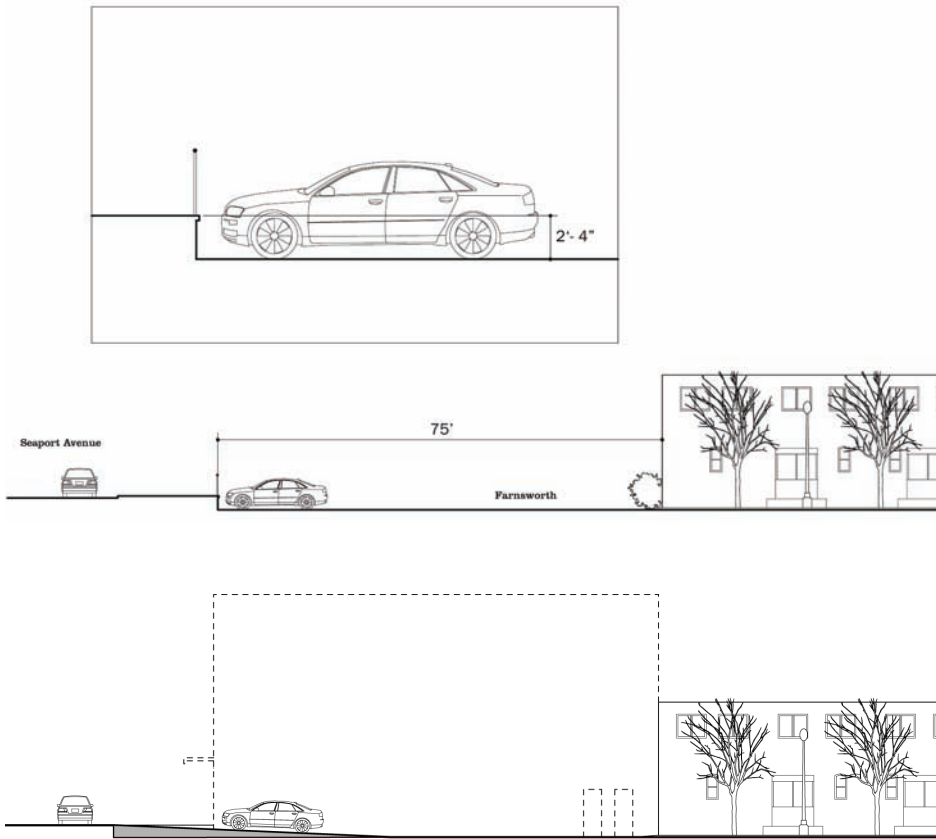


Proposed Streetscape



Existing Streetscape





Analysis of grade change at Farnsworth Seaport Blvd Intersection

## CROSSING SEAPORT BOULEVARD

Crucial to the success of a lively and actively used Seaport Boulevard is its relationship to the North South cross streets. One challenge is to maintain a north south view corridor and sense of continuity over the Silver Line 'hump'.

An analysis of the grade change at Farnsworth Street revealed that the Silverline "hump" could be easily overcome by a gradual sloping of the Farnsworth Street sidewalk. The adjacent lot is deep enough for a future development to negotiate the grade change internally, such as a ramp located inside the lobby of a future office building, for example.



Existing View from Farnsworth Street toward Seaport Boulevard



View from Old Northern Avenue of Proposed Thompson Street Extension



View from Old Northern Avenue of Proposed Farnsworth Street Extension (pedestrian only)

# Seaport Boulevard

## Tree Alignment



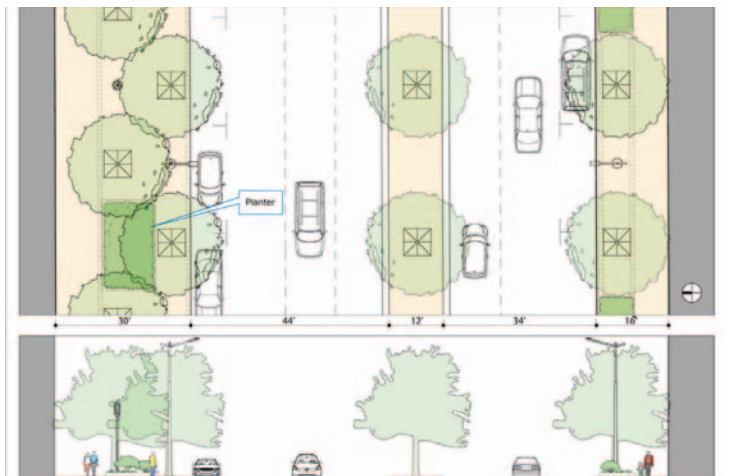
Street Cafe



Staggered trees with Cafe



Sidewalk Planters



Staggered trees with Planters

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Staggered trees on the north side of Seaport Boulevard will permit a wide variety of active and passive uses to take place, taking full advantage of the additional sidewalk width there. The configuration also maximizes the visual effect of the trees while allowing room for healthy growth. London Plane trees at 35' on center will create the density of "Lushness" required to anchor the wide expanse of the Boulevard.



Boston Farmers Market



Staggered trees with Market



Street Benches



Staggered trees with Benches

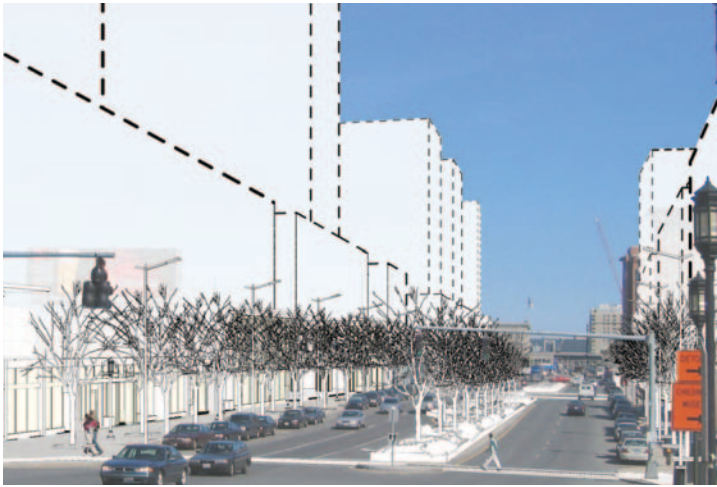
# Seaport Boulevard

## Emerging Strategies - Median

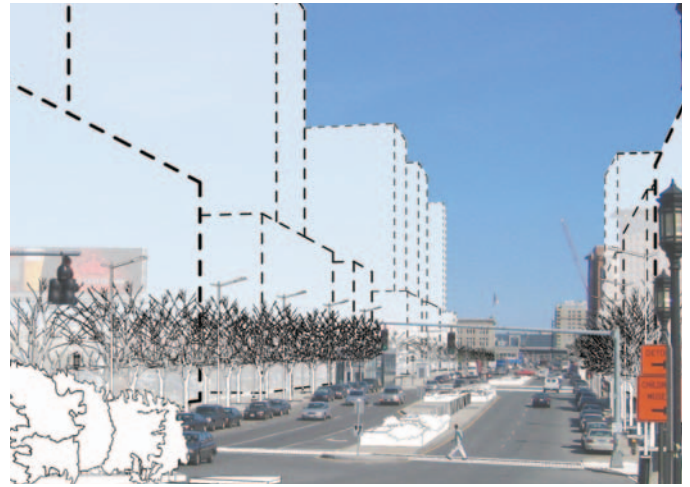
### MEDIAN - 2 STRATEGIES

Two alternatives for the median emerged. In one version, there would be no trees, which would allow views across the boulevard and enable broad, single-street views to the east and west. In the second alternative, the median would contain a 2' raised planter and dense plantings and trees. Trees in the median, in conjunction with those on the sides, would characterize the street more as a "green way."

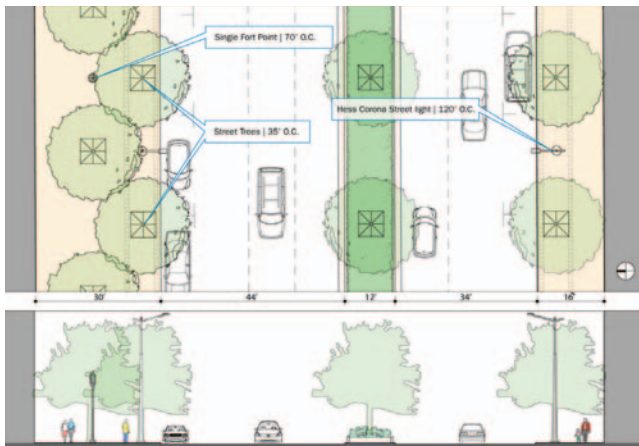
In both cases, the continuity of the median will be subject to further discussions with the BRA and other city agencies regarding a larger city-wide position on pedestrian fencing. Fencing in the median is being implemented on Northern Avenue near the Seaport to prevent mid-block pedestrian crossings, and it is uncertain whether there are similar safety considerations on Seaport Blvd.



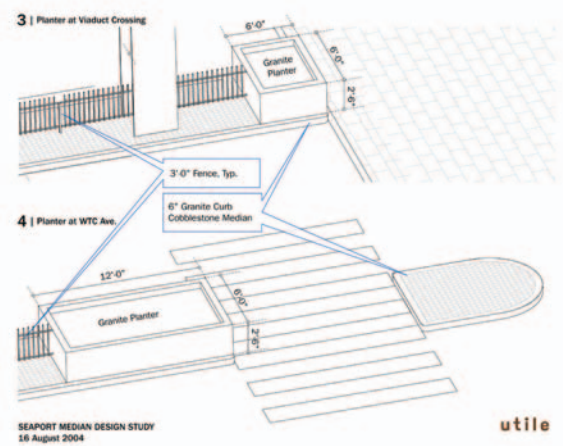
Median with planter and trees



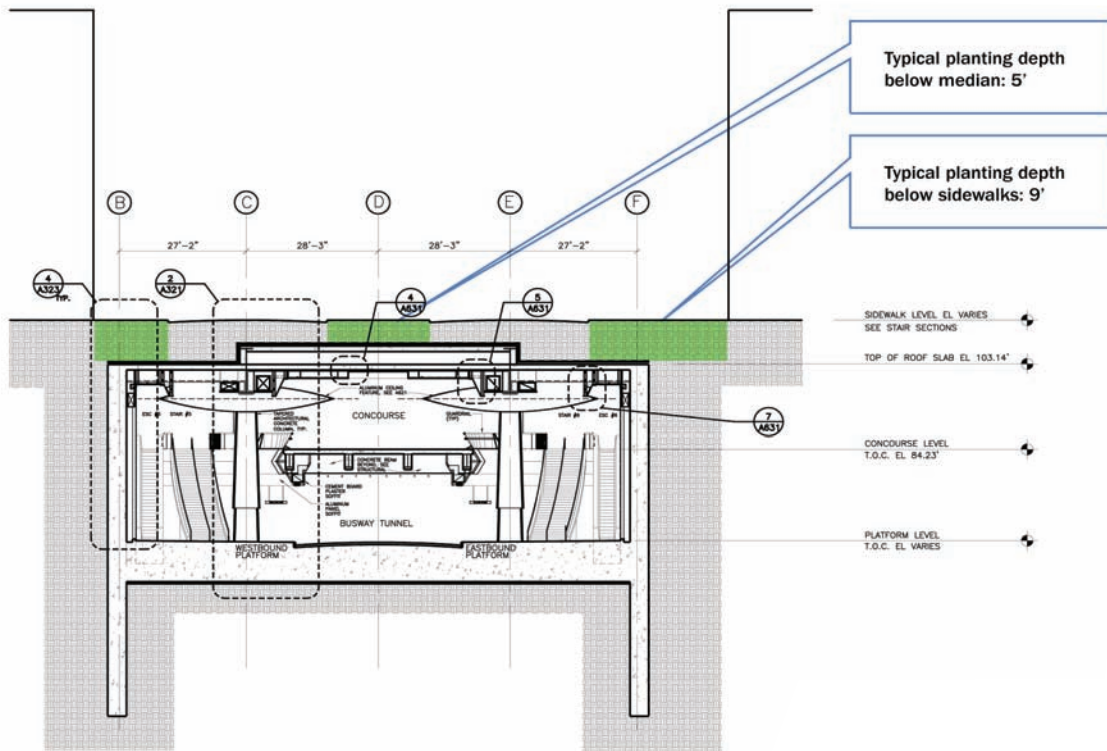
Median with continuous fence and planter at intersections



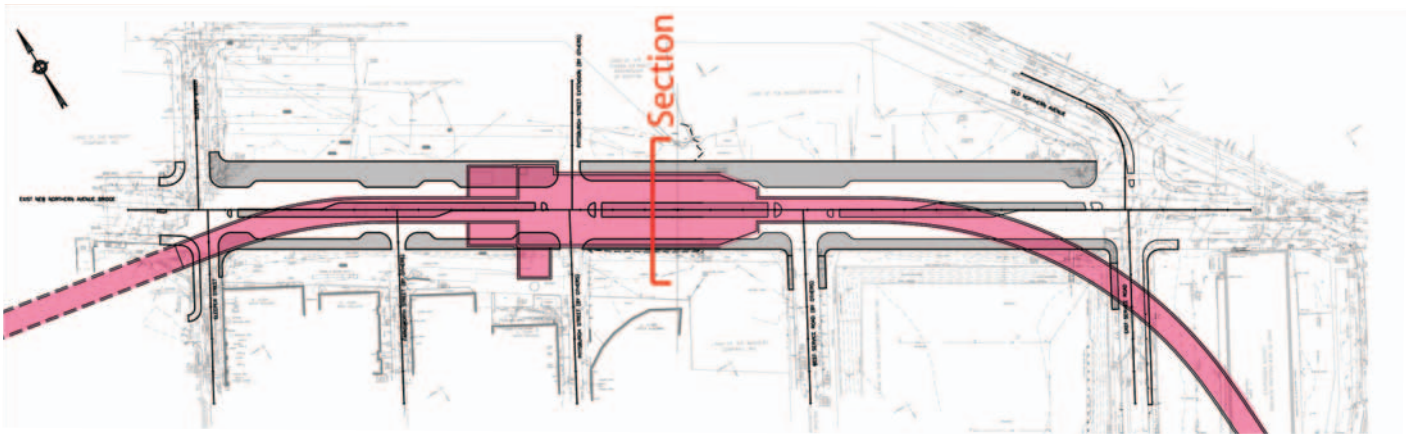
Median with planter and trees



Median with continuous fence and planter at intersections



Section of Silverline at Courthouse Station



Plan of Silverline underneath Seaport Blvd.

## FEASIBILITY OF PLANTINGS ON THE MEDIAN

Construction documents provided by the MBTA indicate that the roof of the Silverline tunnel is close to the surface of the Seaport Blvd. median, but not so close as to preclude a slightly raised planter with trees. Further research on the as-built conditions will be required to determine the appropriate planting details and soil depths.

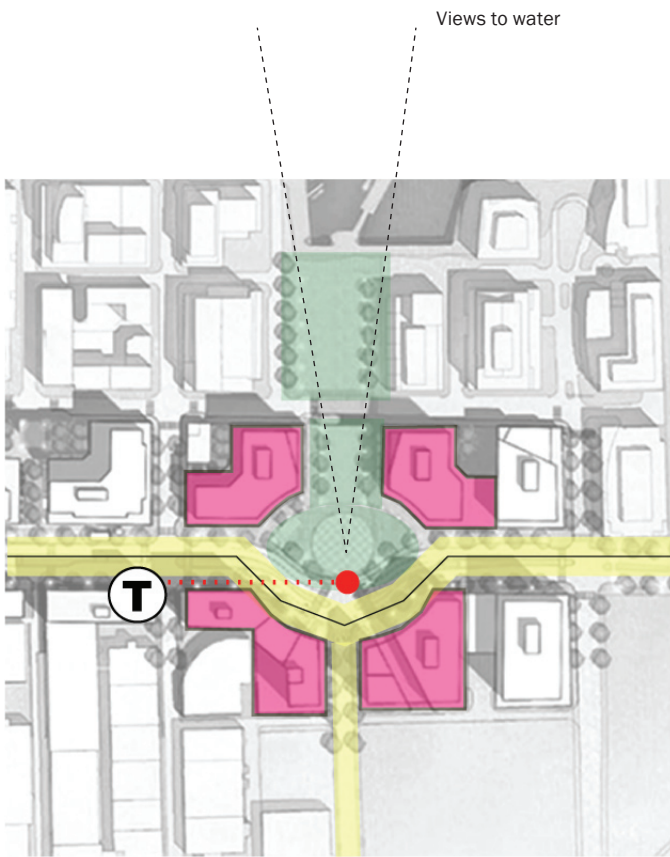
# Seaport Boulevard

## Emerging Strategies - Street Alignment

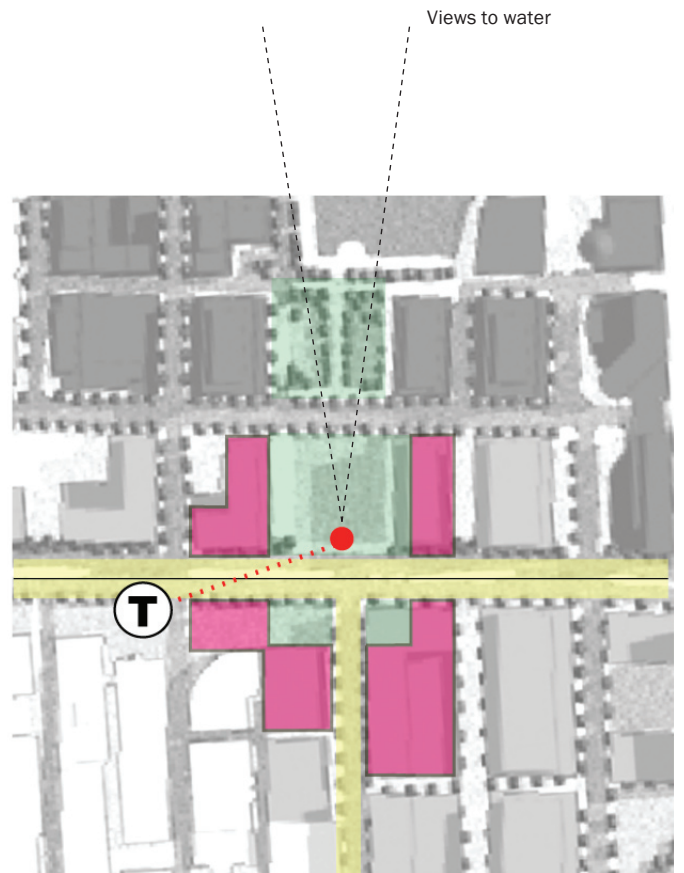
The Omnibus Settlement Agreement between The McCourt Company, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and the Mass Highway Department envisioned a semi-circular bend in the street at the intersection of Boston Wharf Road. The plan, made possible in part by a land-swap agreement between The McCourt Company and the City of Boston, attempted to create a large-scale urban design gesture that would act as the new center of gravity for the evolving district. In addition to providing a much needed focal point, the plan would allow for the new grand Silver Line station to emerge in the middle of the circle and connect directly to the open space to the north. Time has elapsed since the agreement took place, and other visions for the neighborhood have been presented: Fan Pier has been permitted, the ICA is under construction, and Pier 4 is actively seeking

approvals. As a result of this altered planning “landscape,” the BRA is reconsidering the need for the curved street alignment. Its position is that a gesture of this magnitude may not be necessary any longer, that it may pose a traffic hazard, and that the presence of the Silver Line station can be achieved without it. Despite these differences on the alignment issue, all parties still agree on the basic planning goals that the curved street plan attempted to provide:

- A significant, district-centering place at the intersection of the Boston Wharf Road and Seaport Boulevard.
- Expansive views of the water to the north.
- A strong presence for and access to the eastern end of the Silver Line station.



Curved Road



Straight Road



## Street Character

Congress Street should capitalize on its existing urban fabric of retail and restaurants and cultural institutions in historic brick buildings. Widening the sidewalks by 2-3' would permit the installation of a consistent layer of new street trees and light fixtures, which would further consolidate the street as a destination.

**Recommendations**

Additional on-street parking, implemented as part of an overall lane reconfiguration, would increase the number of visitors to the street as well as provide a buffer for pedestrians.

**Emerging Strategies**

**Requires Further Study**

## Retail

Existing retail would be supplemented by new locations, both on the street and in the adjacent cross-streets.



# Congress Street

## Streetscape Elements

Trees:  
Single Row Honey Locust @ 35'  
O.C., planters at curb edge.

Lighting:  
Fort Point Double @ 70' O.C.

Paving:  
Because materials of the adjacent buildings are known, and because the street already presents a relatively unified character, a single neutral paving strategy is recommended. A high quality saw-cut concrete with granite curbs, for example, would not conflict with the multiple varieties of brick on Congress Street.

## Street Alignment and Parking

Widen the sidewalks on both sides of the street by 2-3'

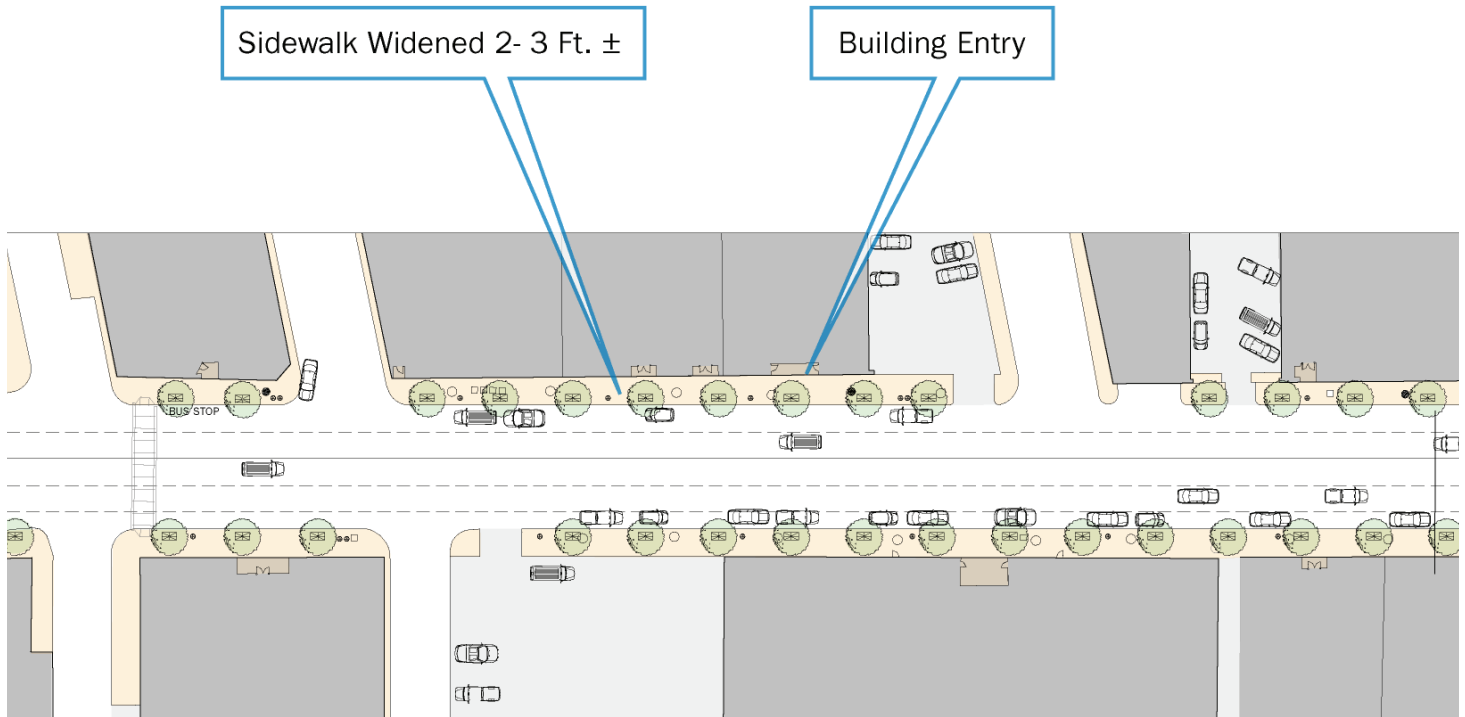
Parking: Metered

## Phasing Issues and Interim Uses

# Congress Street West

## Primary Recommendations

**Congress Street should capitalize on its existing urban fabric of retail and restaurants and cultural institutions in historic brick buildings.**



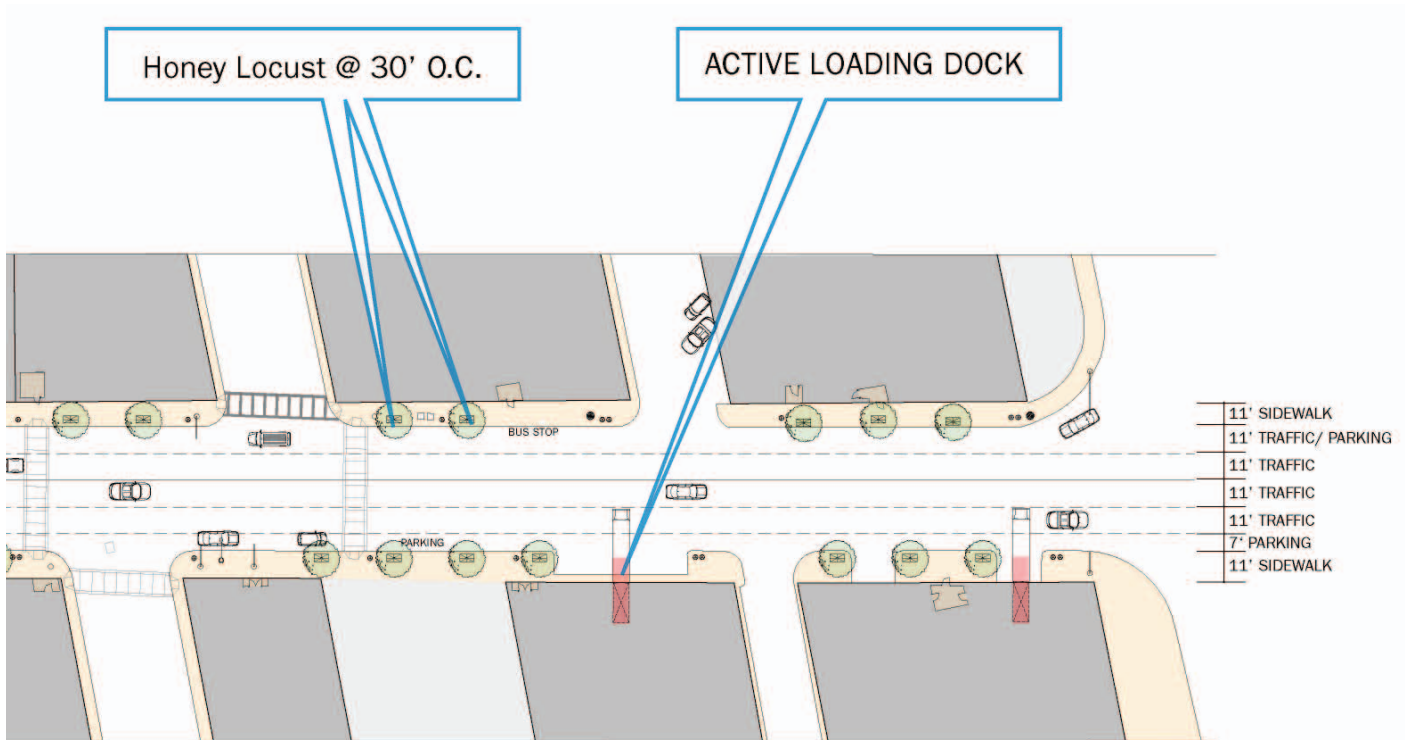
## RECOMMENDATIONS

Congress Street should capitalize on its existing urban fabric of retail and restaurants in historic brick buildings. Widening the sidewalks by 2-3' would permit the installation of a consistent layer of new street trees and light fixtures, which would further consolidate the street as a destination.

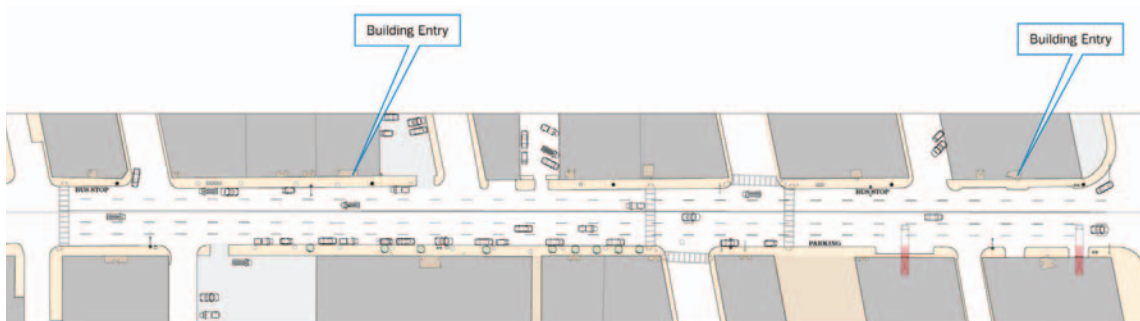
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lane reconfiguration, would increase the number of visitors to the street as well as provide a buffer for pedestrians.

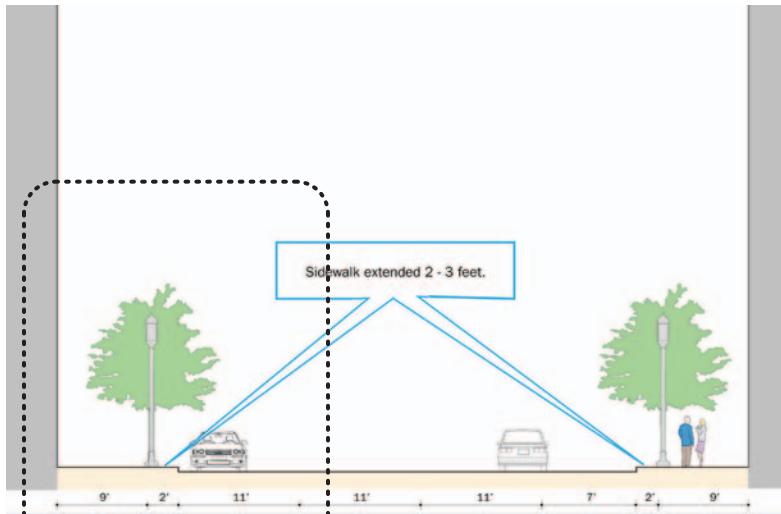
Because materials of the adjacent buildings are known, and because the street already presents a relatively unified character, a single neutral paving strategy is recommended. A high quality saw-cut concrete with granite curbs, for example, would not conflict with the multiple varieties of brick on Congress Street.



Proposed Streetscape



Existing Conditions Plan



Proposed streetscape section

## RECOMMENDATION

More on-street parking, or at least the perception of it, would help establish Congress Street as a destination in and of itself. Widened sidewalks will create a level of pedestrian comfort that would encourage visitors to spend more time exploring the street.



Proposed streetscape showing widened sidewalks, street trees and metered parking

# Congress Street East

## Primary Recommendations

Between Boston Wharf Rd. and B Street CoreBlock only the sidewalk and street lights are in place



## RECOMMENDATION

Congress Street east, because of its discontinuity with Congress Street west, and because it is likely to be the last street to acquire new active uses, presents an anomalous and somewhat “orphaned” condition. In the absence of firm plans for its future, it would benefit most from an extension of the existing London Plane trees on the Commonwealth Flats area to the east.



Congress Street East



Within the Core Block area the streetscape is complete



## Street Character

Summer Street should leverage off the presence of the Artist community, anchored at 300 Summer Street to create a more permanent Arts and cultural district. Such uses would complement the cultural institutions in Fort Point and the Waterfront District, as well as provide a draw to the increased pedestrian traffic connecting the Convention Center and South Station. Visible public art in designated sidewalk areas would reinforce this character.

**Recommendations**

**Emerging Strategies**

**Requires Further Study**

## Retail

Many of the existing ground floor uses are currently devoted to office use. A coherent strategy for creating more active ground floor uses on the street will account for future residential conversions of the existing buildings as well as the construction of new hotels

# Summer Street

## Streetscape Elements

Trees:  
Single Row Honey Locust @ 35'  
O.C., planters at curb edge.

Lighting:  
Fort Point Double @ 70' O.C.

One possibility is to link the paving strategy of Summer Street to that of Congress street, and use a consistent neutral material to complement the brick buildings. Another strategy would be to link the paving identity to Dewey Square and the Convention Center as the focal ends of the street. The Dewey Square paver, an 8x8 Managanese Ironspot Brick, fo rexample, could be extended from the Federal Reserve across the channel.

## Street Alignment and Parking

Widen the sidewalks on both sides of the street by 4', realign traffic lanes, neck downs at all intersections and crosswalk locations.

Parking: Resident Permit

## Phasing Issues and Interim Uses

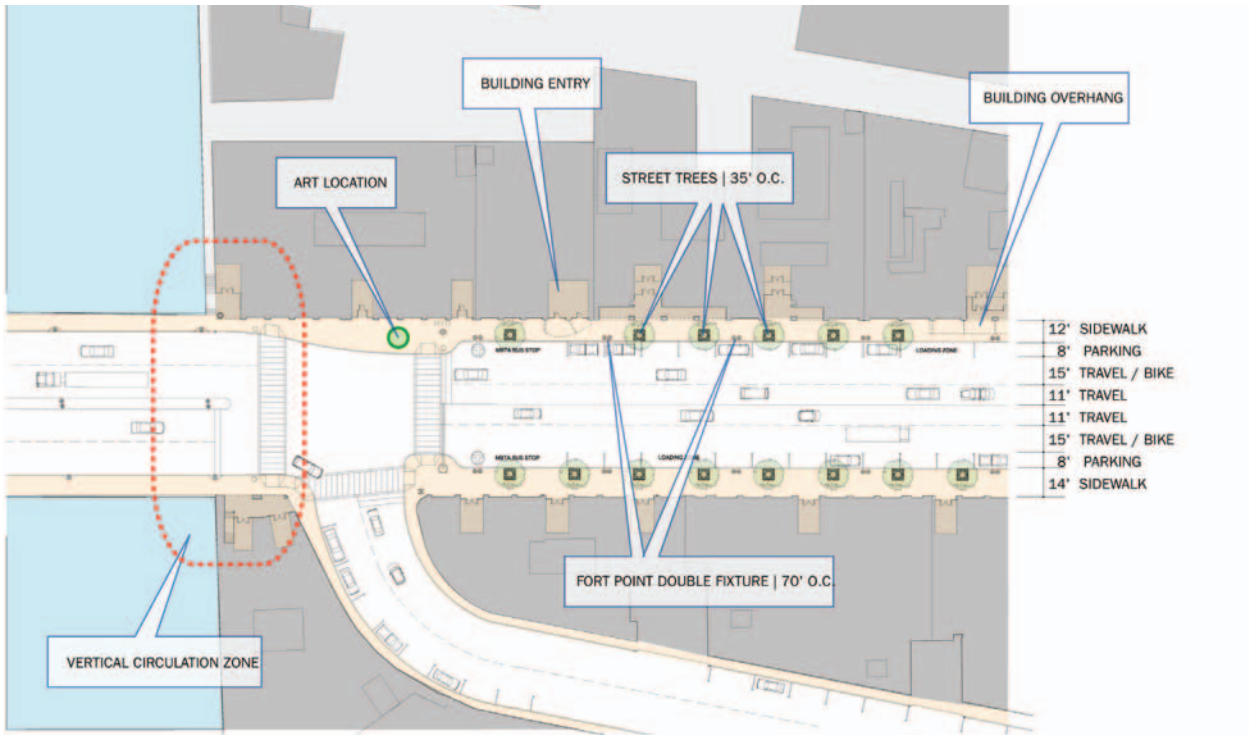
Replace the stair connecting Summer Street to A street with an accessible elevator and new stair by relocating an existing transformer. The well-lit elevator would in itself act as a marker inviting more pedestrian traffic connections to Congress Street.

A vertical connection at the eastern end of the street would most likely occur as part of a private development on the Beck Parcel. A large Hotel lobby, for instance, would accommodate a generous stair and elevator which would be open to pedestrians seeking a way from the Convention Center down to Congress Street.

The steep stairs down to the boardwalk on the Fort Point Channel pose the greatest challenge to handicapped accessibility. Either an additional ramp is installed over the Channel to the west, or internal circulation is acquired from the abutting property owners. Both possibilities present physical and legal challenges.

# Summer Street

## Primary Recommendations

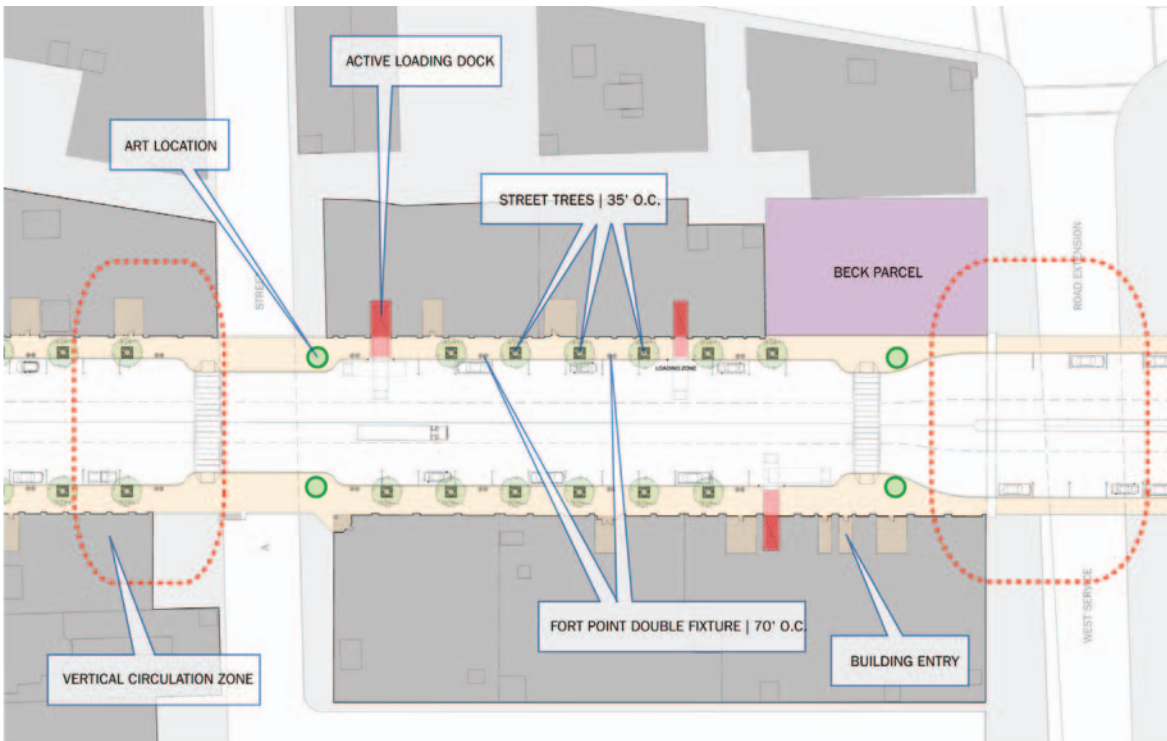


Proposed streetscape



Existing streetscape





## RECOMMENDATIONS

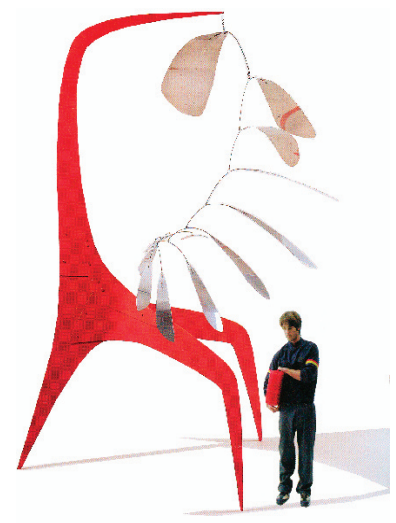
Proposed streetscape plan

Summer Street should leverage off the presence of the Artist community, anchored at 300 Summer Street, to create a more permanent Arts and cultural district. Such uses would complement the cultural institutions in Fort Point and the Waterfront District, as well as provide a draw to the increased pedestrian traffic connecting the Convention Center and South Station. Visible public art in designated sidewalk areas would reinforce this character.

One possibility is to link the paving strategy of Summer Street to that of Congress street, and use a consistent neutral material to complement the brick buildings. Another strategy would be to link the paving identity to Dewey Square and the Convention Center

as the focal ends of the street. The Dewey Square paver, an 8x8 Managanese Ironspot Brick, for example, could be extended from the Federal Reserve across the channel.

Many of the existing ground floor uses are currently devoted to office use. A coherent strategy for creating more active ground floor uses on the street will account for future residential conversions of the existing buildings as well as the construction of new hotels.



Proposed streetscape with neckdowns at crosswalks, street trees and large scale sculptures

# Summer Street

## Vertical Access

### AT BOSTON WHARF ROAD

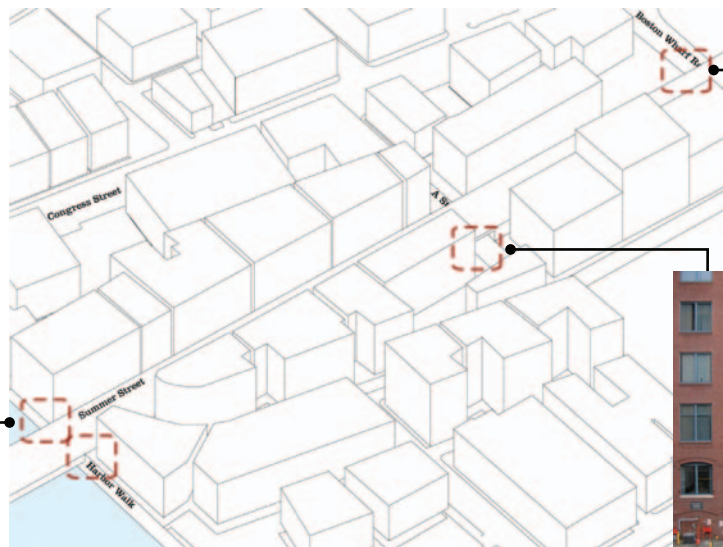
The best access from Summer Street to Boston Wharf Road would occur through a private development, such as the lobby of a new hotel. Ample dimension exists to create an inviting publicly accessible lobby space with stairs, an elevator and escalator.



Proposed vertical access at Boston Wharf Rd. (above) Existing conditions (opposite page)

## AT FORT POINT CHANNEL

The steep stairs down to the boardwalk on the Fort Point Channel pose the greatest challenge to handicapped accessibility, as well as those with limited abilities or baby-strollers. Either an additional ramp is installed over the Channel to the west, or internal circulation is acquired from the abutting property owners. Both possibilities present physical and legal challenges.



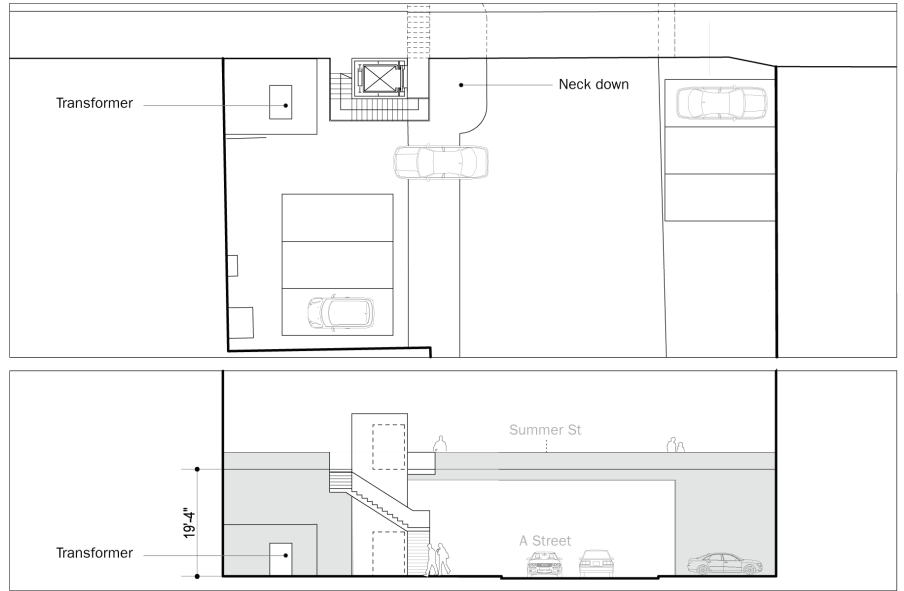
Summer St. vertical access points

# Summer Street

## Vertical Access

### AT A STREET

The most significant improvement to vertical access from Summer Street would result from replacing the stair connecting Summer Street to A street with an accessible elevator and new stair. This would require the relocation of an existing transformer. The well-lit elevator would in itself act as a marker inviting more pedestrian traffic connections to Congress Street.



Plan and section of proposed vertical access at A Street



Proposed vertical access Summer St. view at A Street



Proposed vertical access: View from Congress St. toward the Summer St. overpass

# District Wide

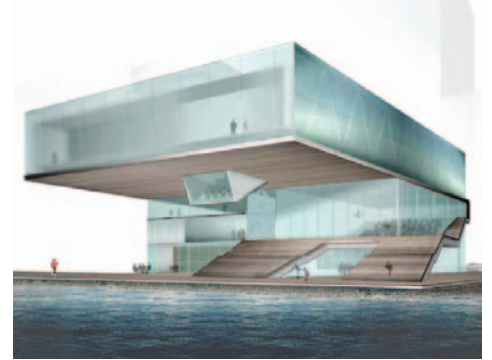
## Interim Uses

“DO YOU KNOW THE WAY TO THE ICA?”

The ICA, and Old Northern Avenue itself, would benefit from a direct pedestrian or visual connection to the Courthouse Station on Seaport Boulevard, currently obscured by numerous parking lots. This kind of “way-finding” tool, implemented on a neighborhood scale and perhaps as an environmental art piece in and of itself, would allow the entire district to leverage a sense of place off the nearly completed cultural institution.



Central Park Gates by Christo & Jeanne-Claude



Rendering of the ICA



Proposed path from Court House T stop to future ICA

# District Wide

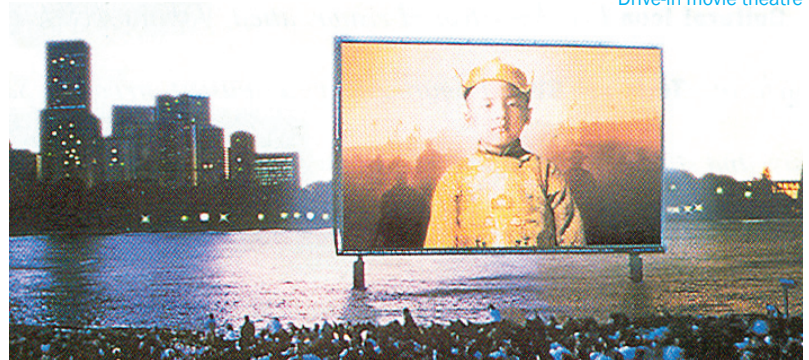
## Interim Uses

### DRIVE-IN MOVIE ON THE WATERFRONT

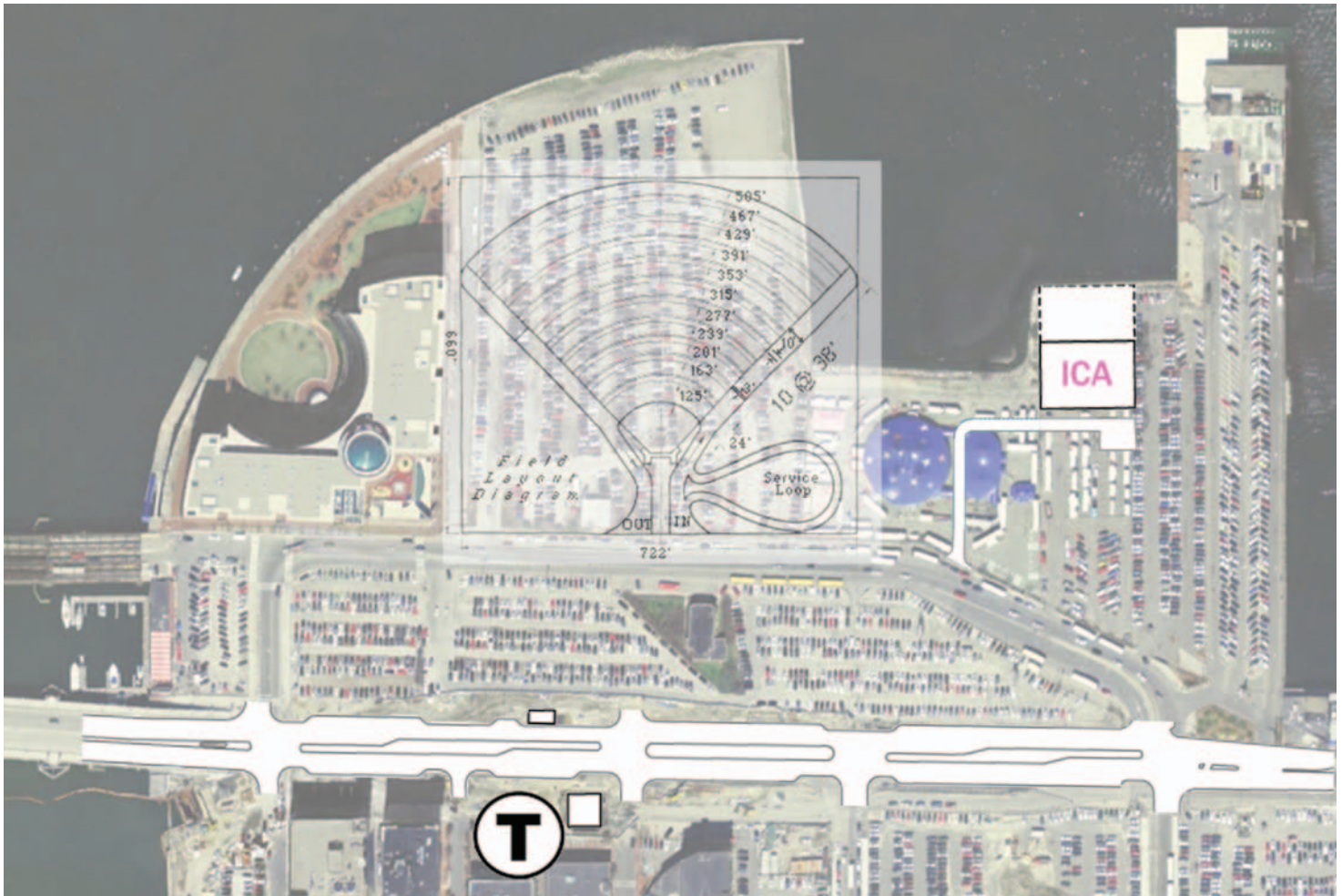
The parking lots on Fan Pier would provide an excellent location for an outdoor movie theatre, perhaps during the weekends and perhaps programmed in conjunction with the ICA.



Drive-in movie theatre



Outdoor theater in Sydney Harbor



Drive-in plan overlaid on Fan Pier

# District Wide

## Interim Uses

### TREE NURSERY

A proposal to use the Fan pier parking lots as a tree nursery for the street trees that would eventually be placed along Old Northern Avenue.



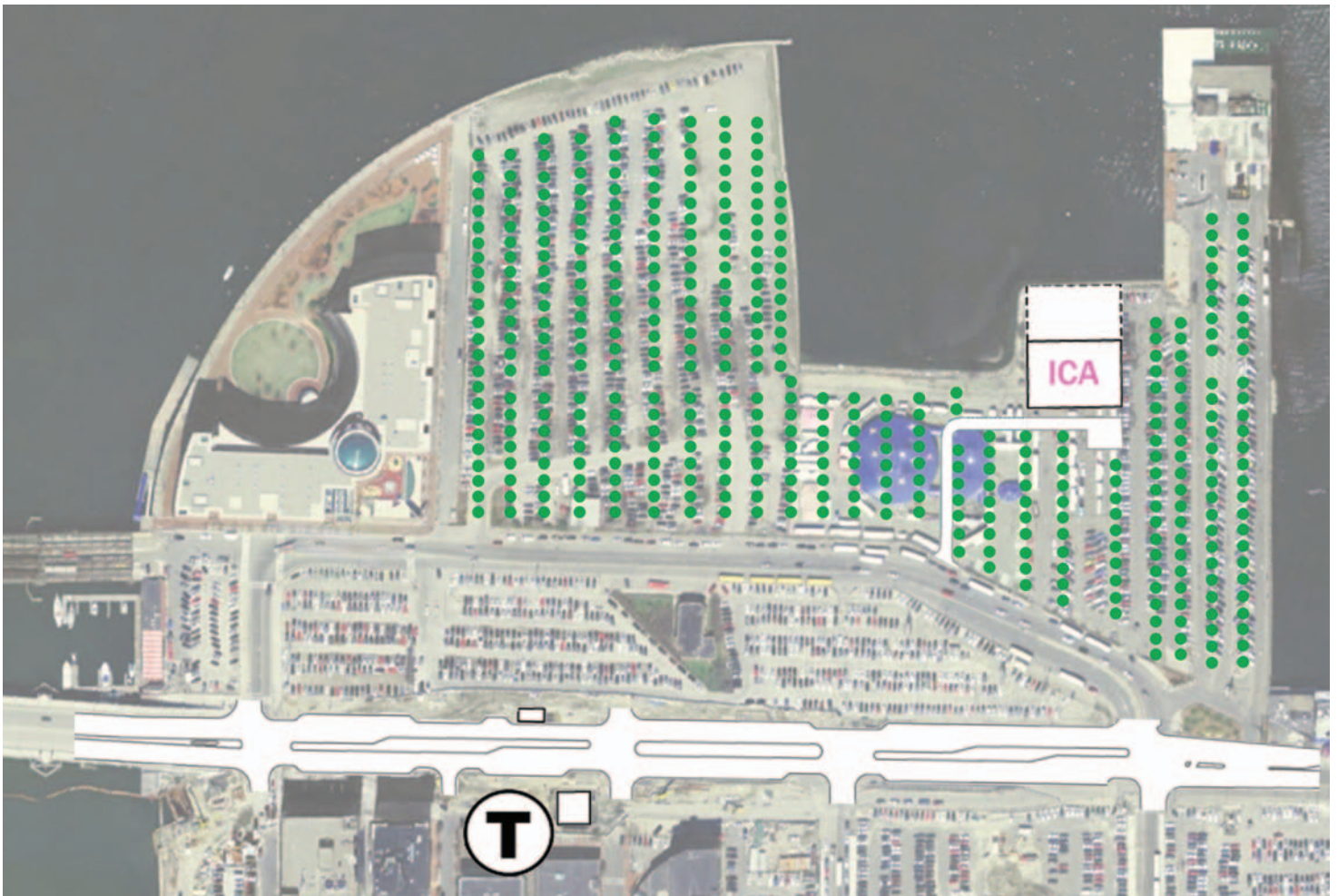
London Plane tree



Trenches like these can be used to grow street trees in existing Fan Pier parking lots



Parking lot designed by Desvigne and Delnoky



Rows of trees in Fan Pier parking lots





# IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES



# Implementation Matrix

## Primary Recommendations

**As is typical in the public realm in Boston, many of the streetscape improvements would be implemented and maintained by a complex combination of private and public entities.**

Seaport Boulevard's future improvements, for example, are likely to result from further negotiations between the Massachusetts Highway Department, the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority and The McCourt Company (or the developer of the land it currently owns). Congress and Summer Streets, on the other hand, may receive substantial upgrades mainly through the Mayor's Crossroads initiative, with some private abutters

perhaps entering into long term maintenance and indemnification agreements with the City as a precondition for their implementation. In all cases, some form of partnership between the participating public and private parties will be required. The following is a matrix of potential (though there may be additional) contributors to the future improvements on individual streets.

	Old Northern Avenue	Seaport Boulevard	Congress Street	Summer Street
Mayor's Crossroad Initiative	●		●	●
Existing Abutting Property Owners	●	●	●	●
Massachusetts Highway Department		●		
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority		●		
Boston Public Works Department			●	
Boston Convention and Exhibition Center				●
Owners and Developers of Future Development	●	●	●	●



# **DISTRICT-WIDE BACKGROUND INFORMATION**



# District-Wide

## Background Information

As a point of departure for the study, the area was surveyed and analyzed for those existing conditions relevant to the future character of the four streets. The surveys fall into roughly three groups: 1. Pedestrian Paths , 2.Existing uses, and 3. Existing physical conditions.

Pedestrian Paths consist of critical distance analyses, as well as a map of all the pedestrian itineraries organized by “user”: visitors, tourists, workers, scenic. These are both essential for understanding the current behavior of pedestrians in the area. They will also help this and future planning efforts

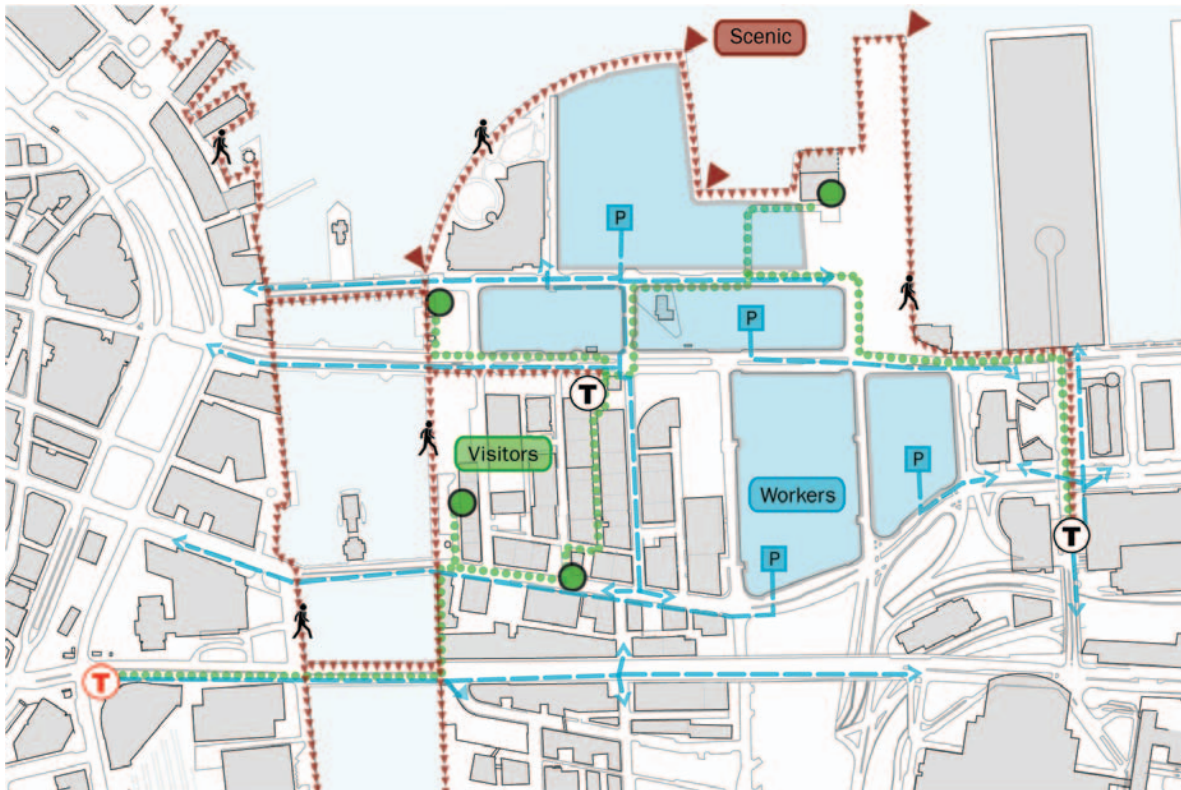
to identify and direct future desire lines and trends which will shape the character of the streets.

The existing use surveys include an exhaustive ground floor commercial use map, as well as a map locating all existing and permitted residential uses in the area. The evolution of residential use and ground floor uses is critical in understanding the emerging character and character “zoning” within the neighborhood.

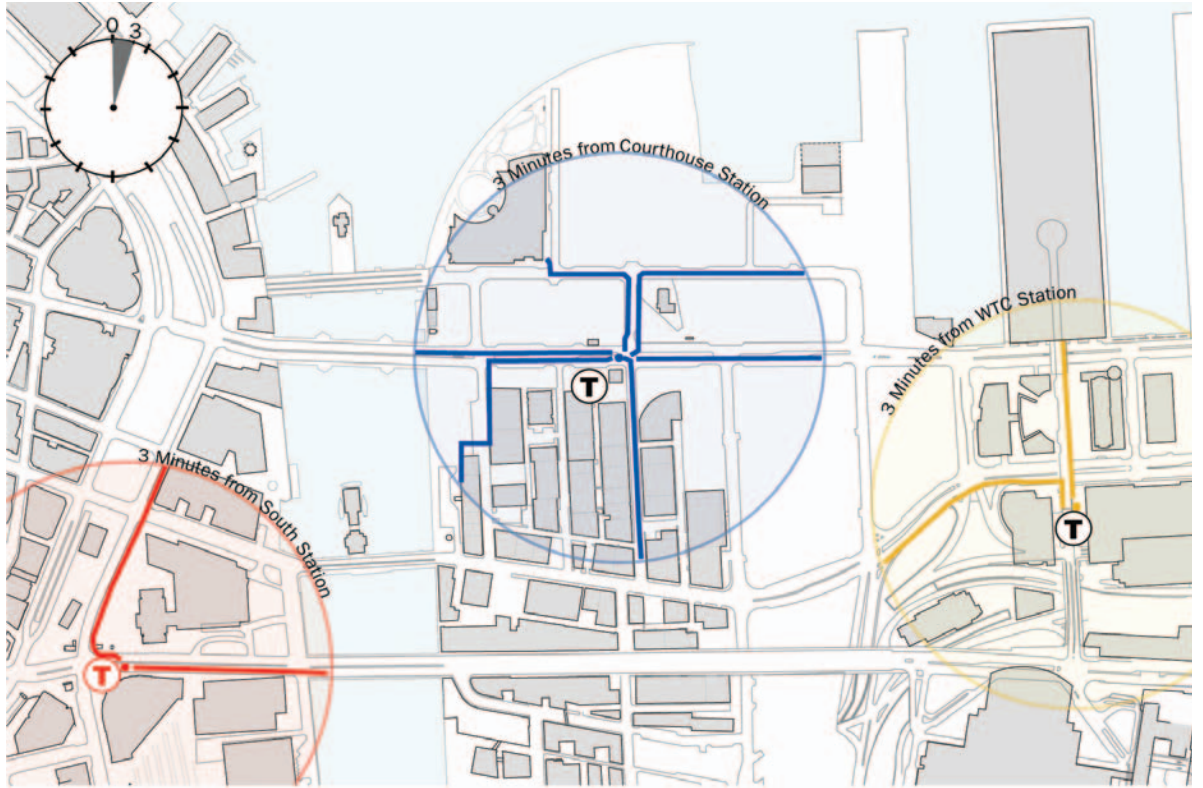
Finally, all the existing physical conditions were surveyed. This includes the composite

CAD file of recent measured surveys, as well as documentation of existing paving and light fixtures. Much of the data collected will provide valuable source material for those entities responsible for implementing streetscape improvements as well as those developing or improving abutting properties.

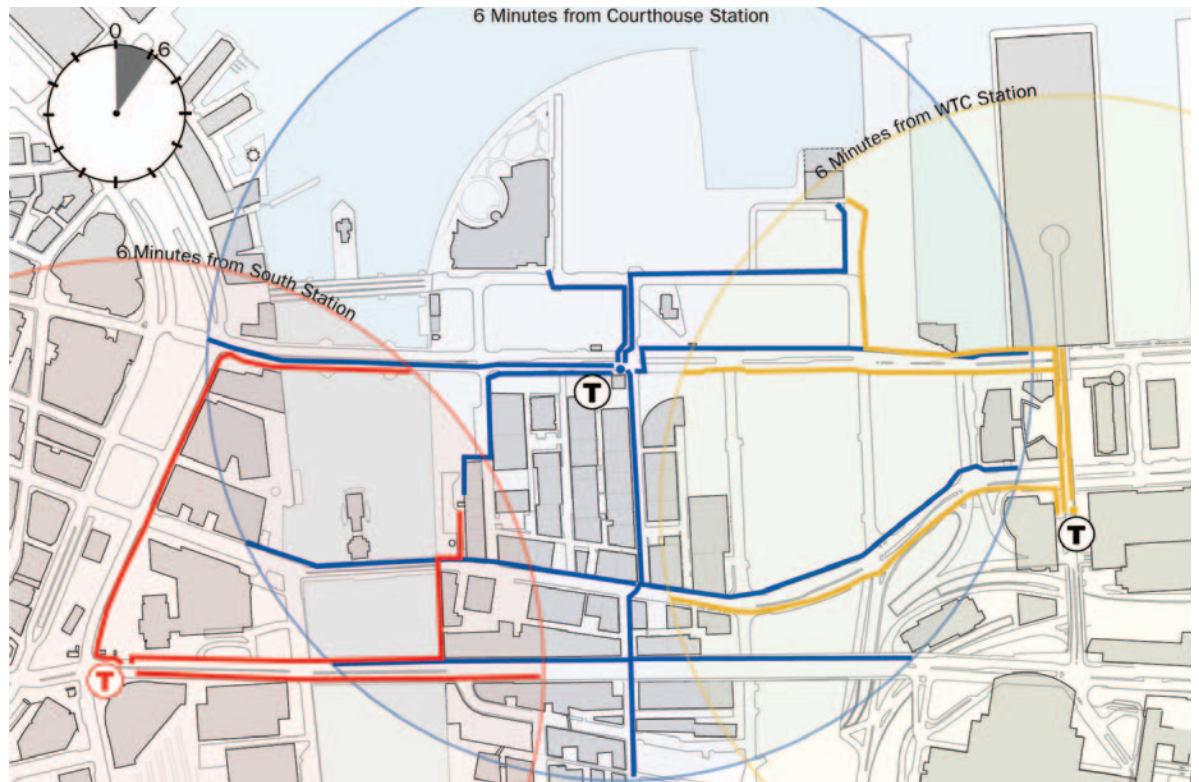
## PEDESTRIAN PATHS



Existing pedestrian itineraries

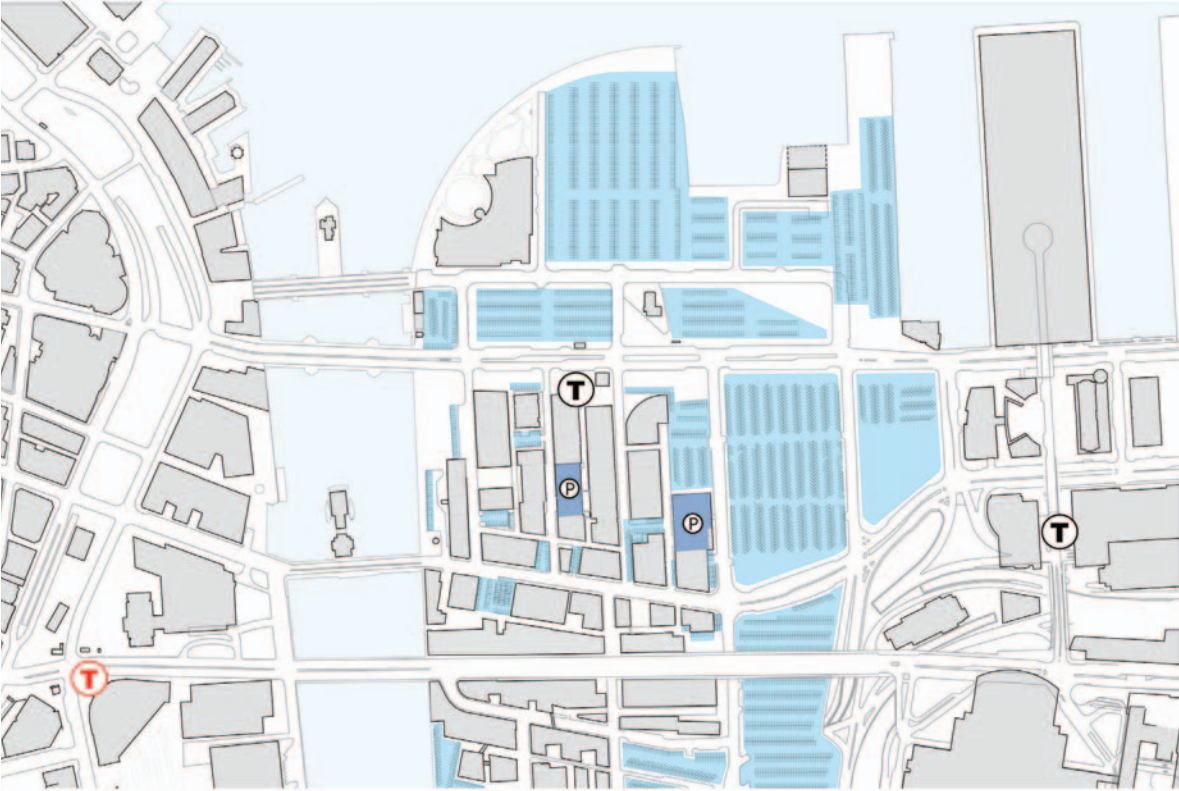


3 minute walking radius from public transportation

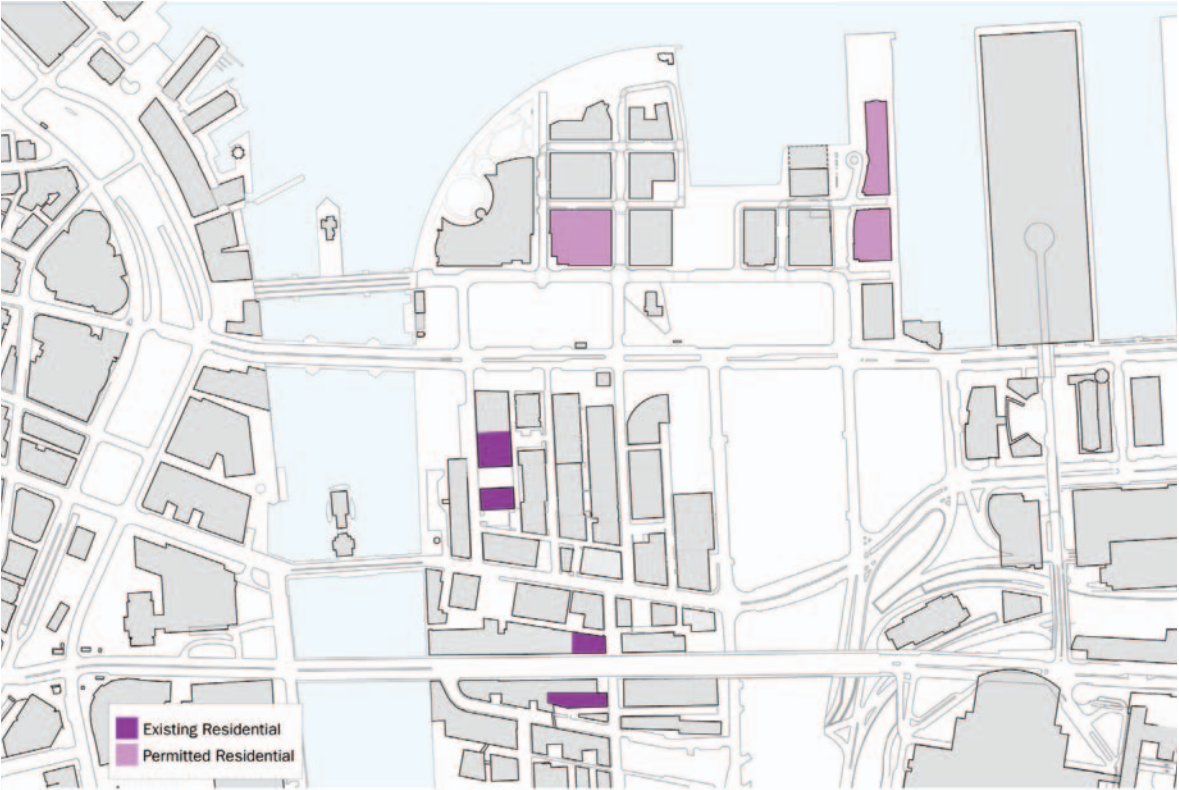


6 Minute walking radius from public transportation

EXISTING USES



Existing parking



Existing and permitted and planned future residential use





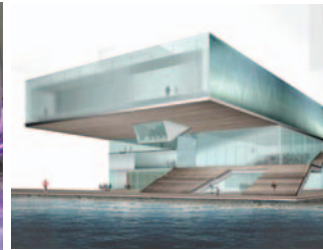
Waterfront park



John Joseph Moakley  
Boston Federal  
Courthouse



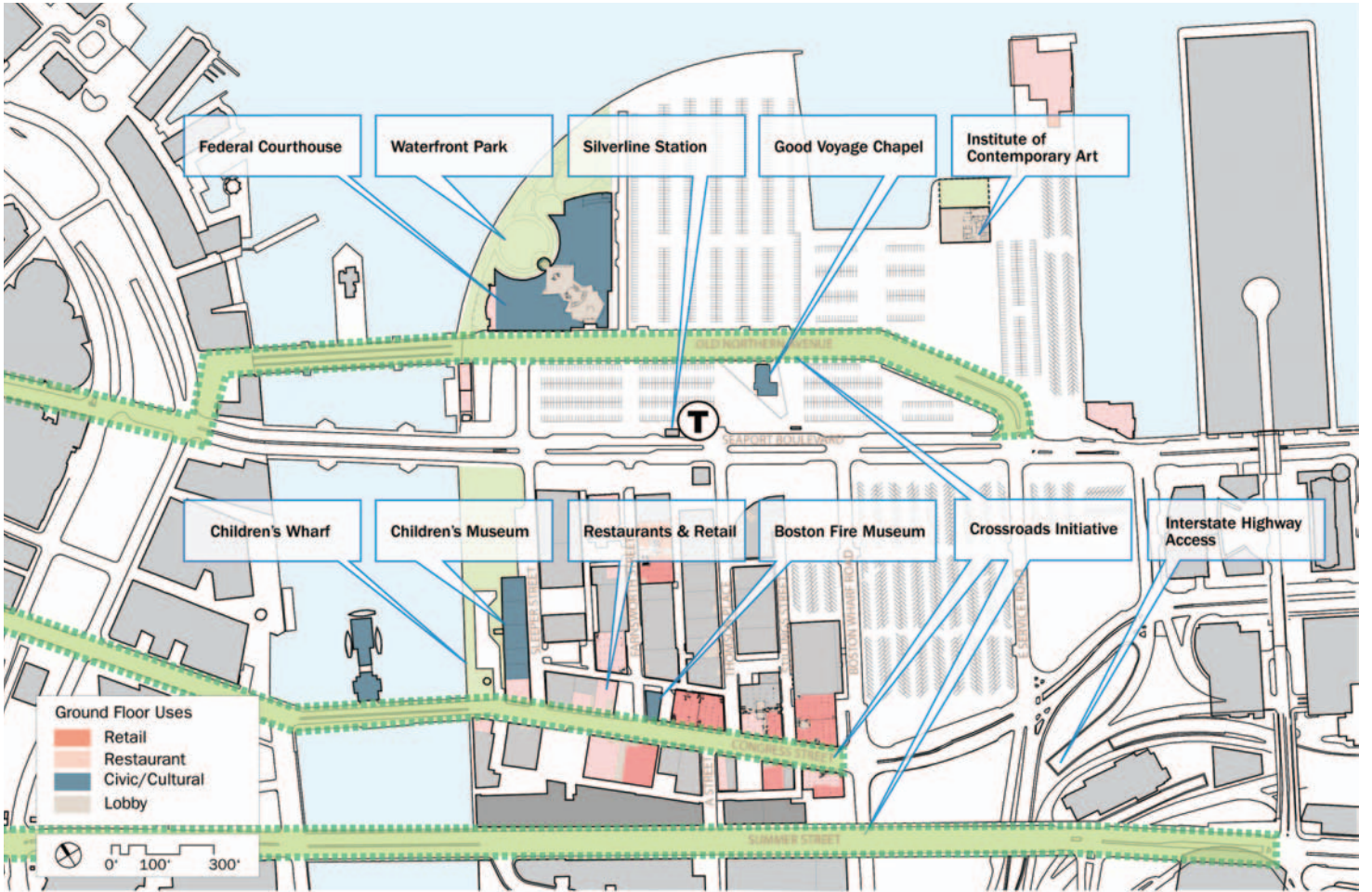
Silverline Station



The ICA



Good Voyage Chapel



Existing neighborhood assets

Children's Wharf



Children's Museum



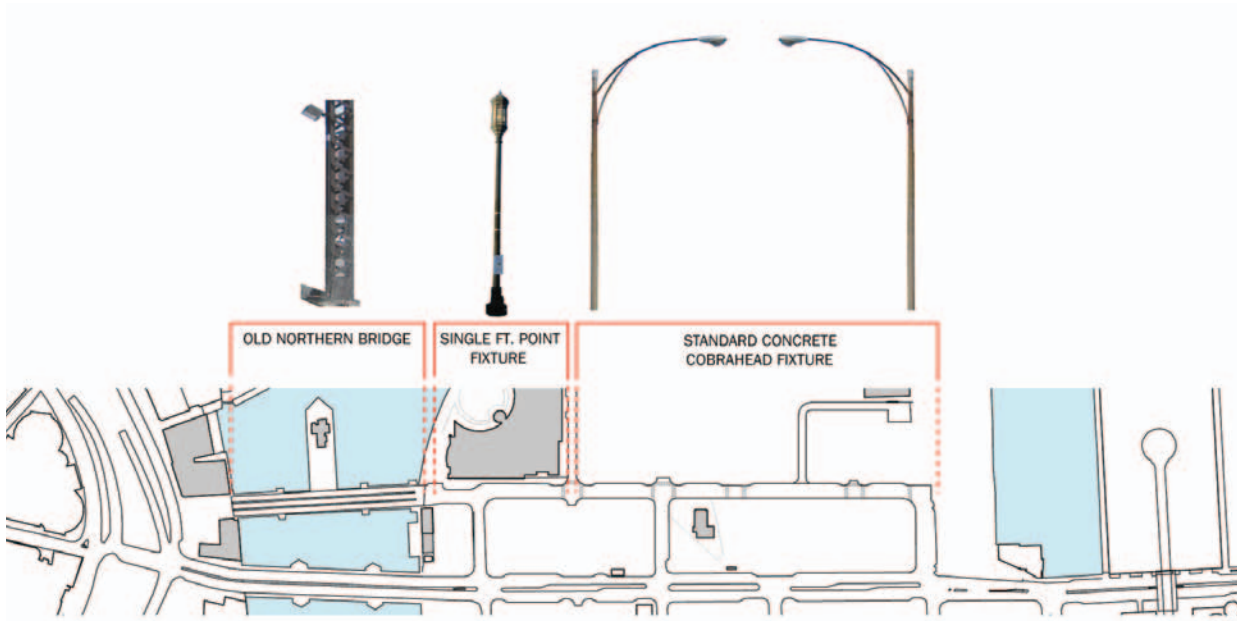
Congress street shops



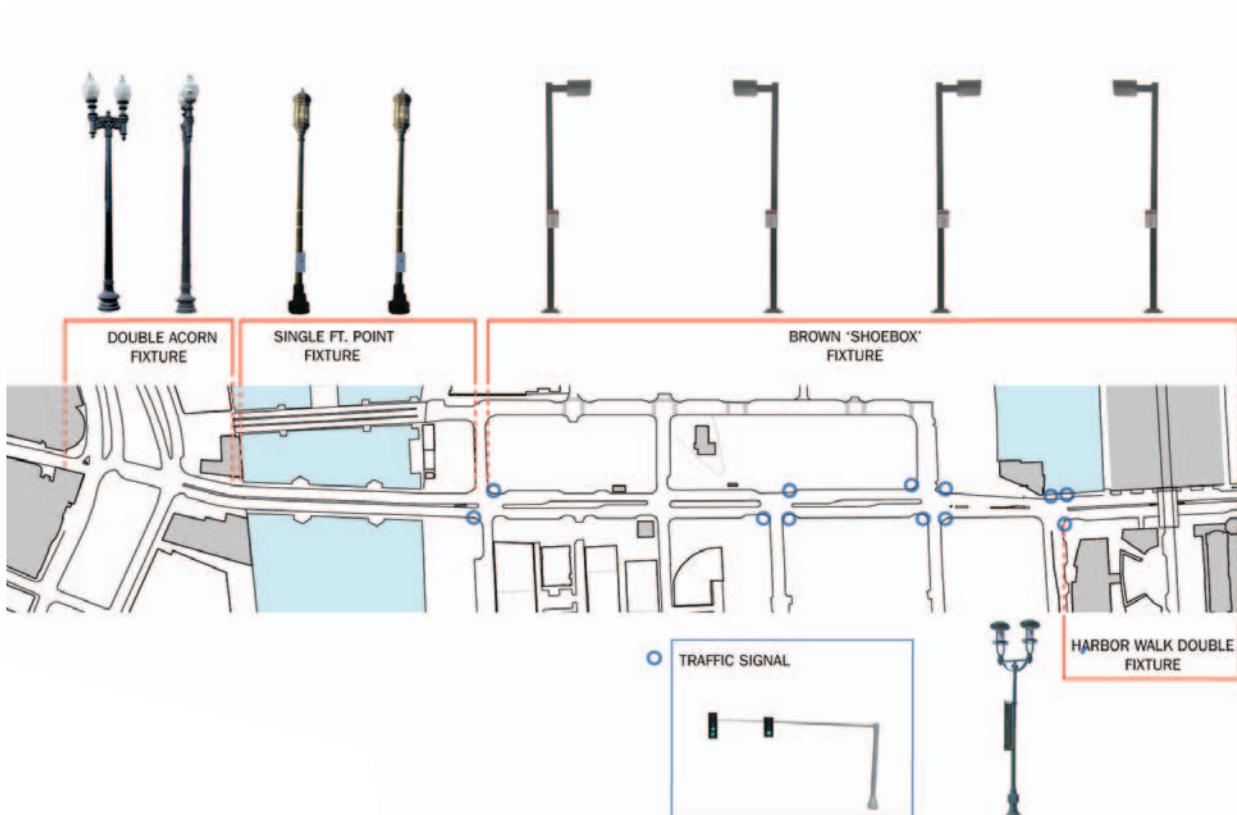
Boston Fire Museum



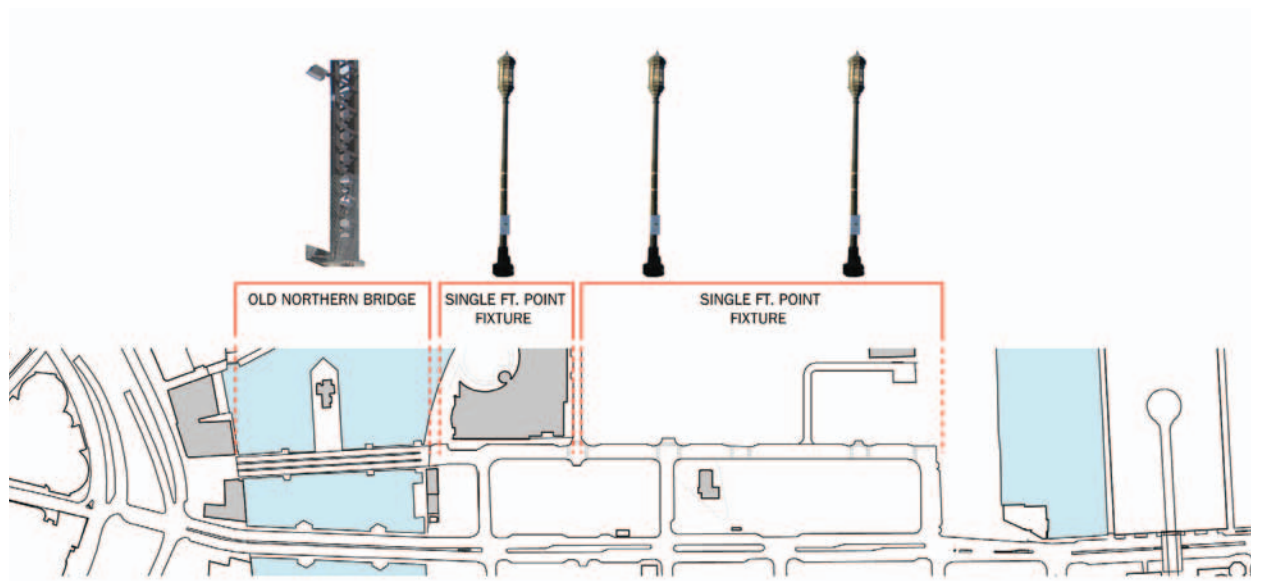
# PHYSICAL CONDITIONS



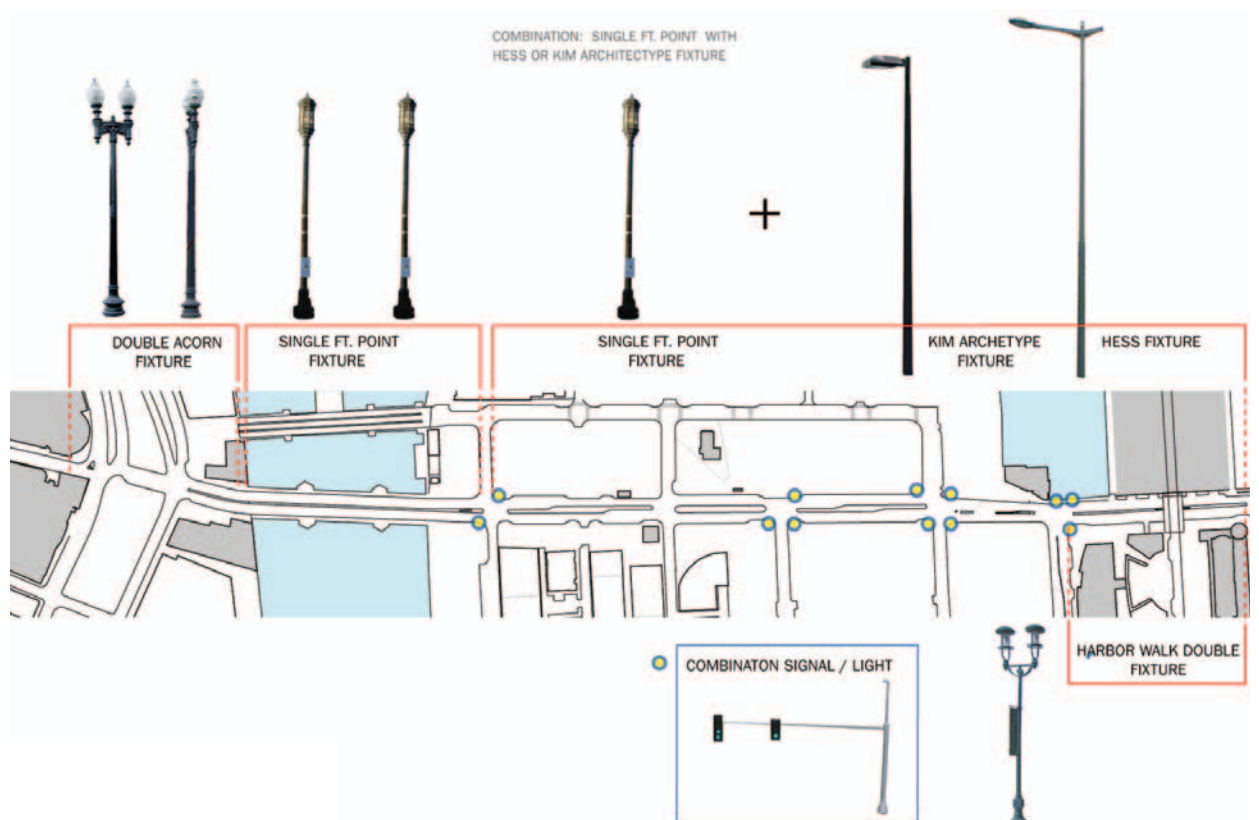
Old Northern Ave. existing street lighting



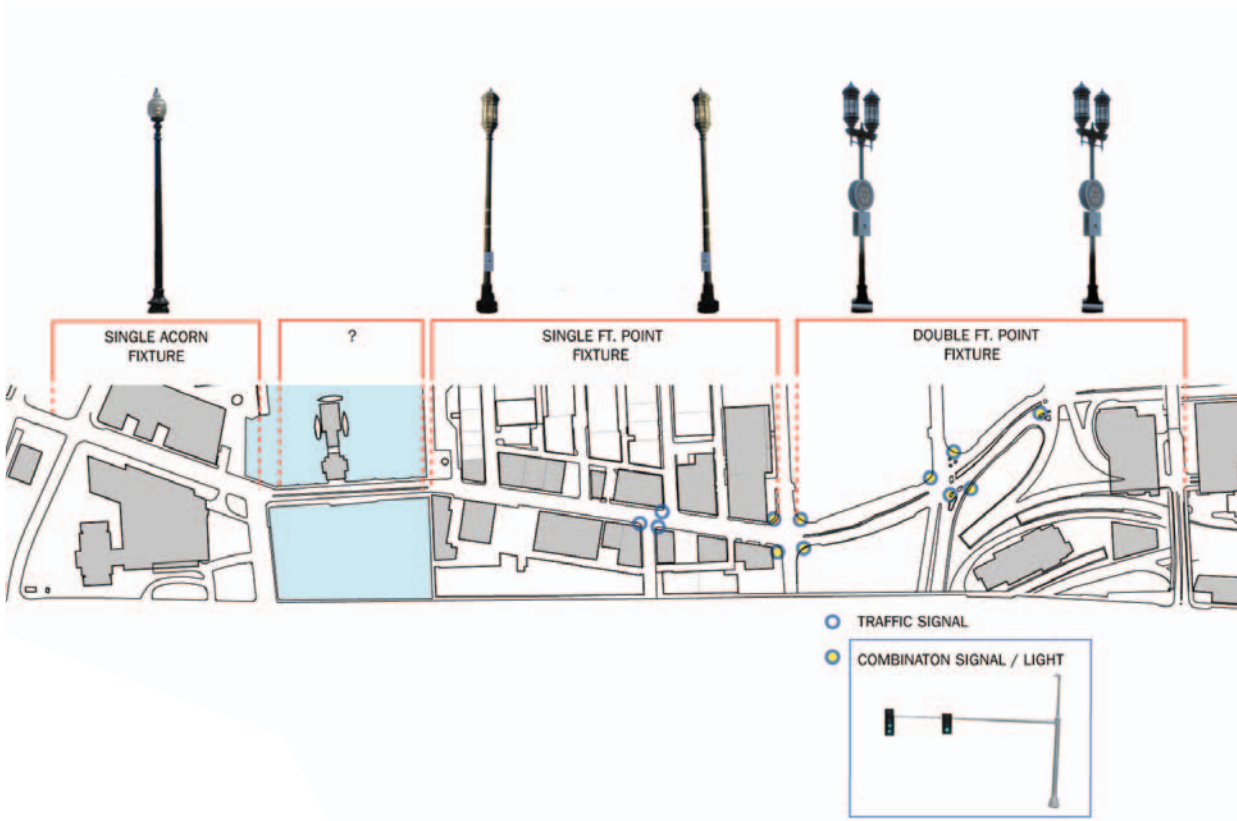
Seaport Boulevard existing street lighting



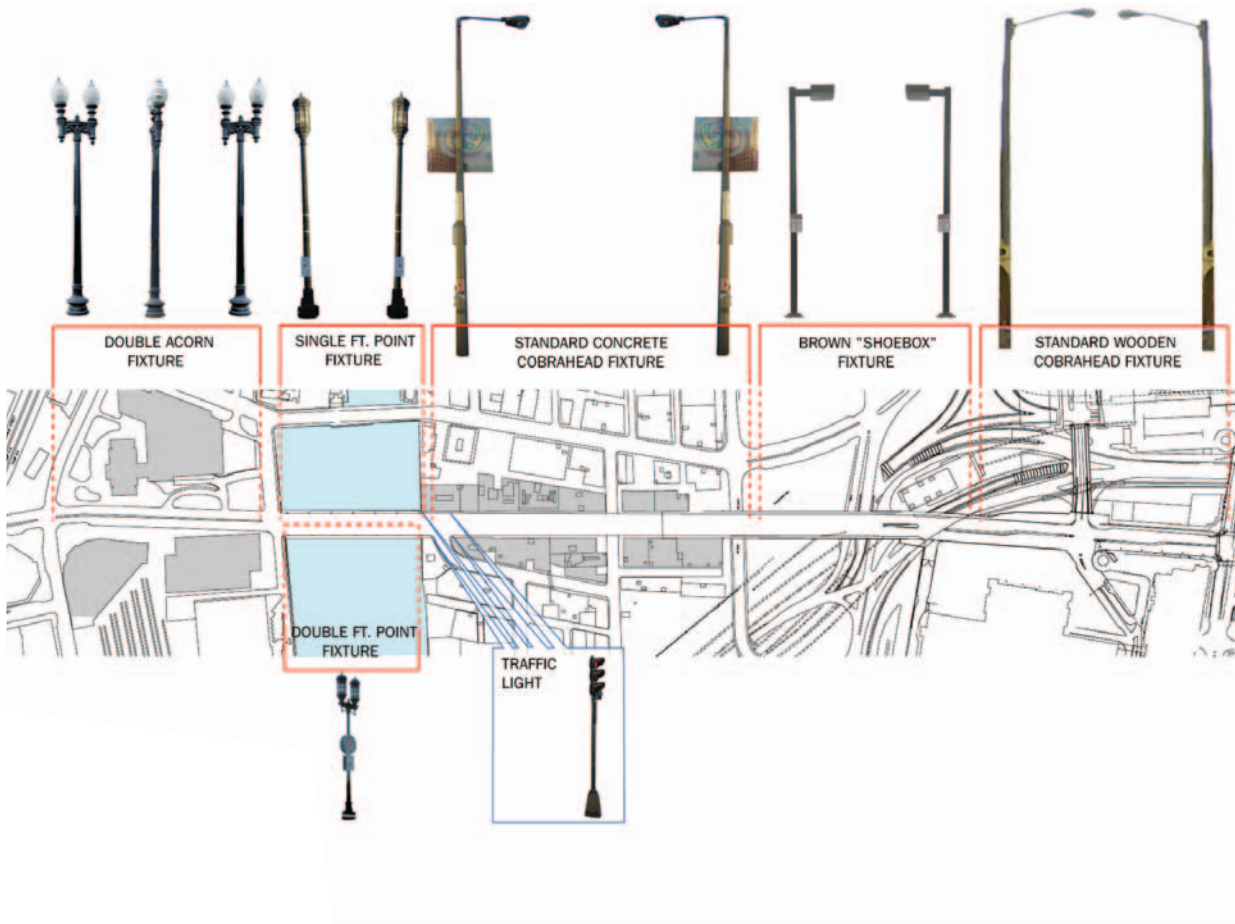
Old Northern Ave. proposed street lighting



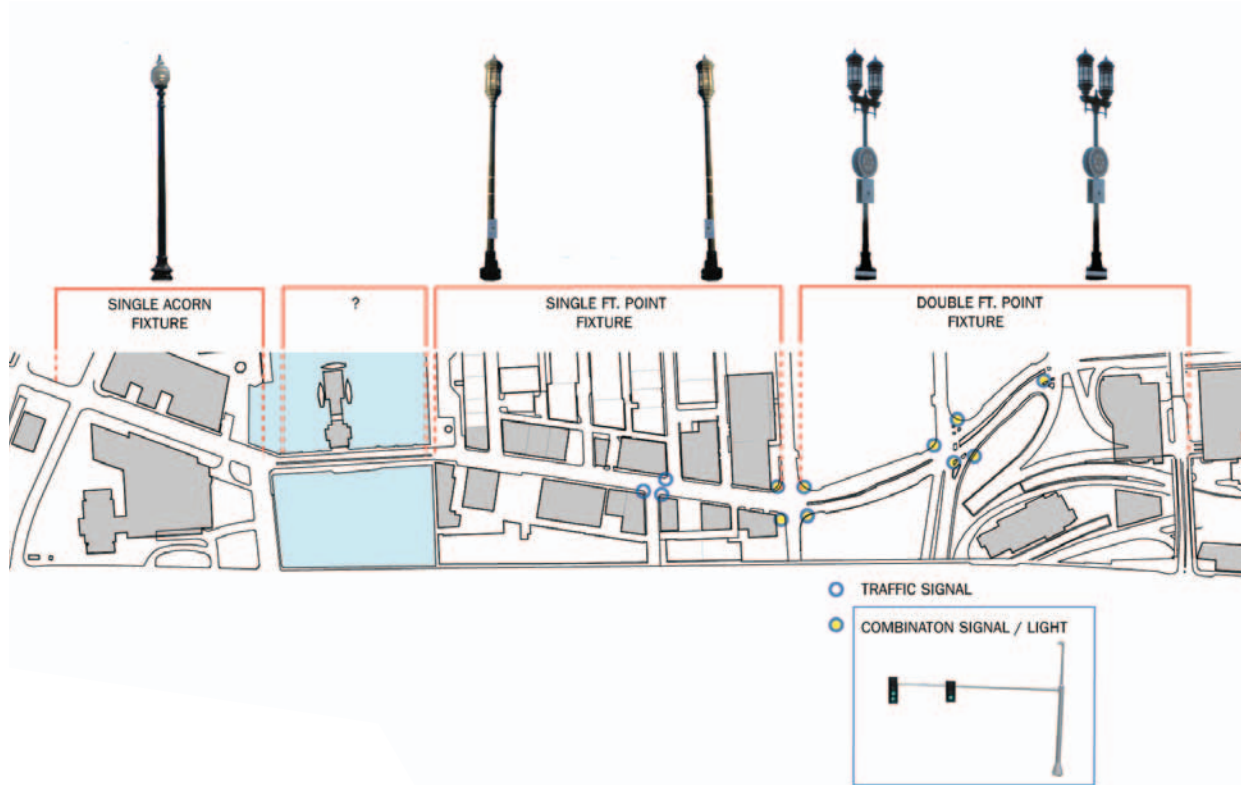
Seaport Boulevard proposed street lighting



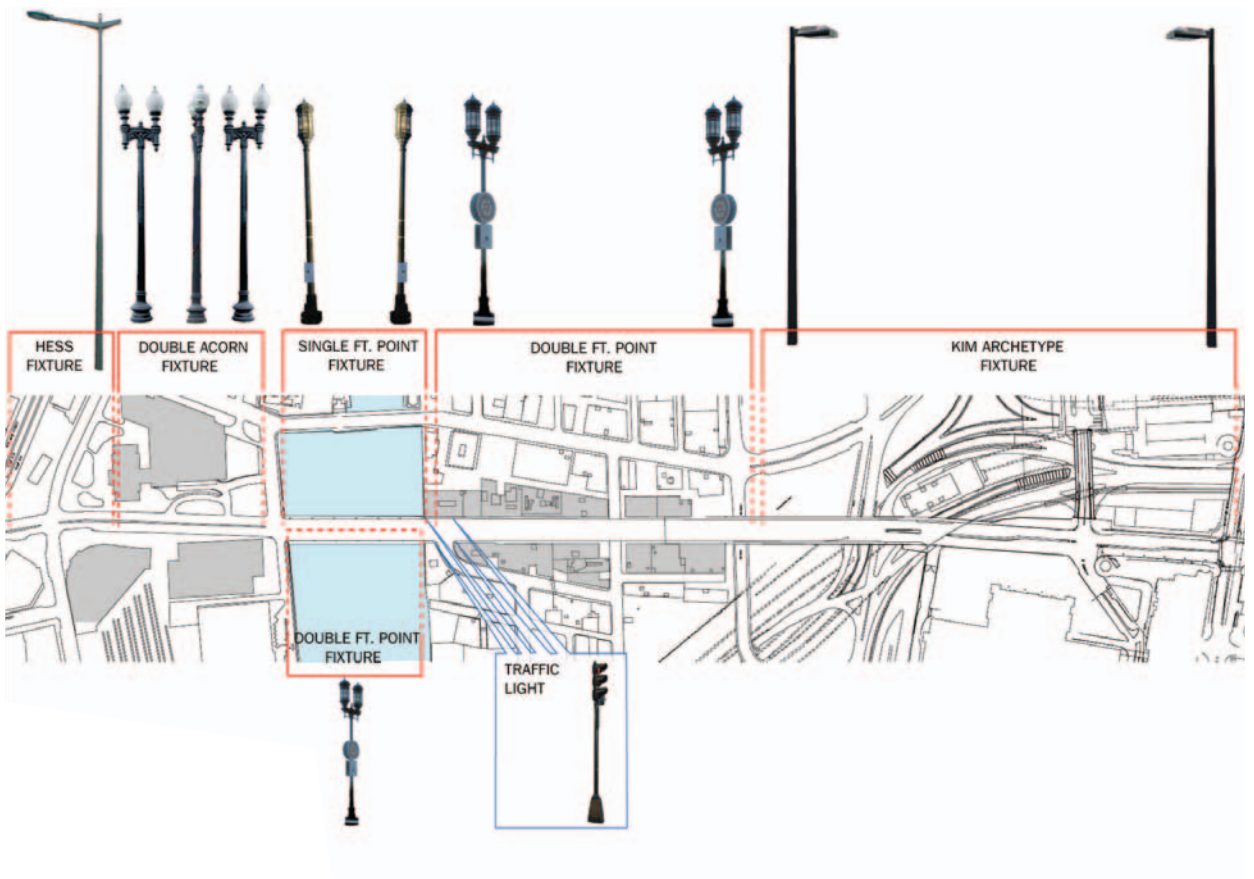
Congress Street existing steet lighting



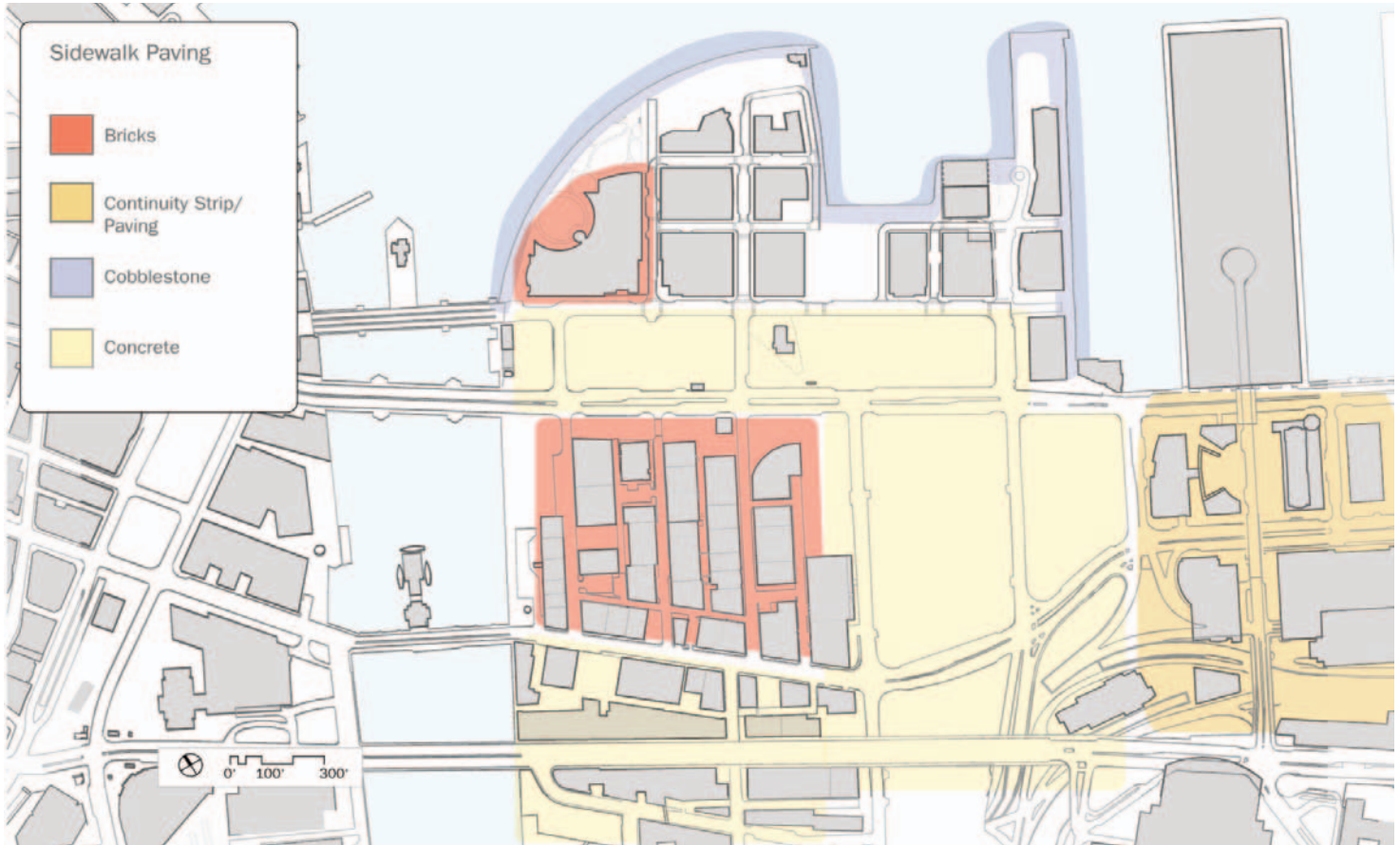
Summer Street existing steet lighting



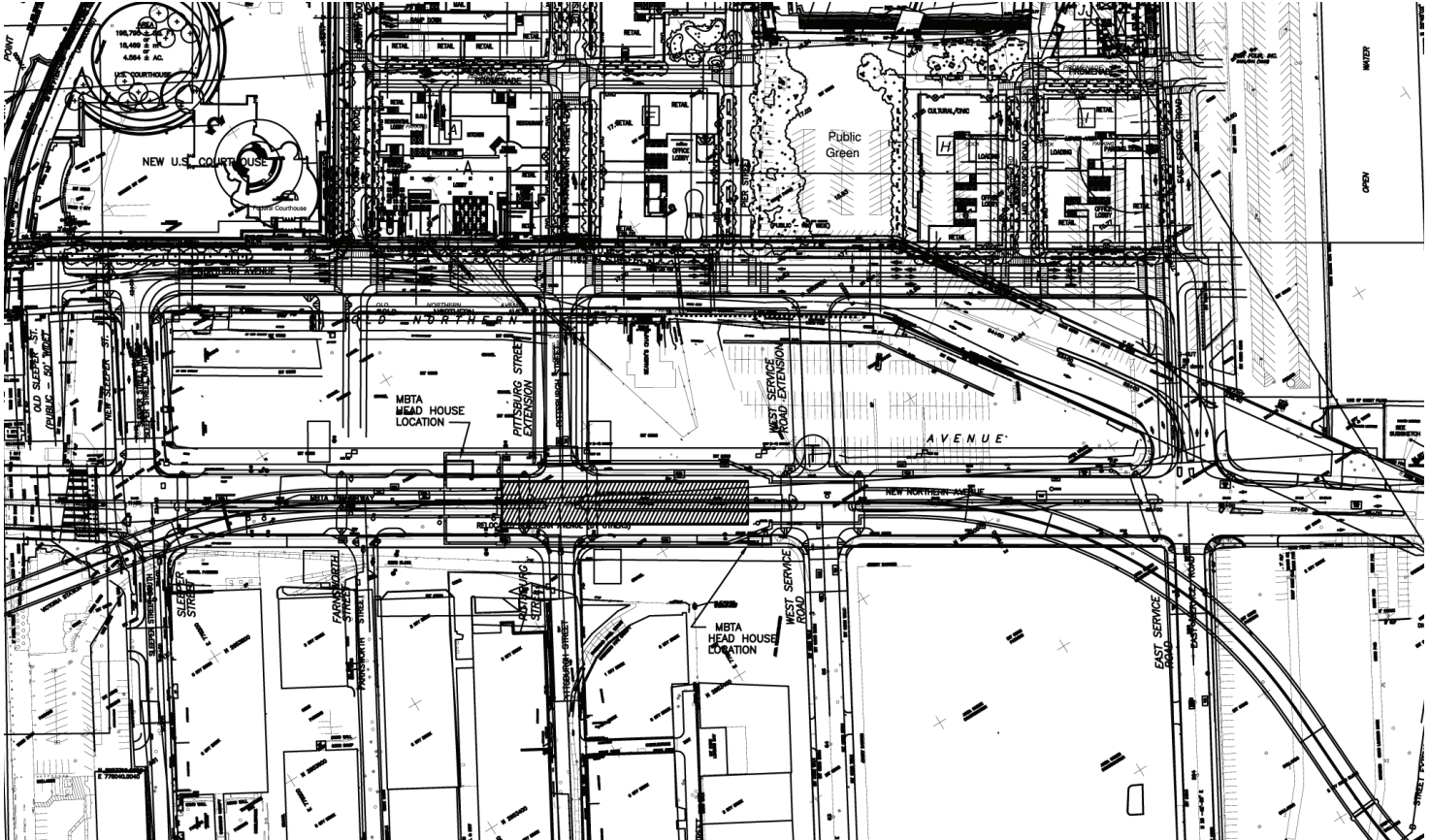
Congress Street proposed street lighting



Summer Street proposed street lighting



Existing district-wide variation in sidewalk paving



Composite CAD file (portion)



# utile

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