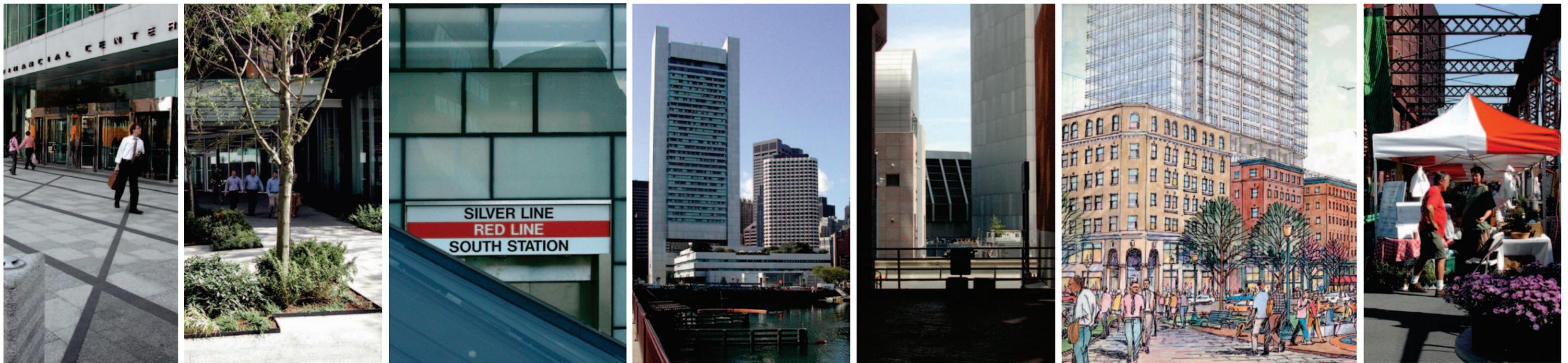


Financial District | Greenway EDGES STUDY



Design for Urban Edges along the Rose Kennedy Greenway

A STUDY SPONSORED BY THE ARTERY BUSINESS COMMITTEE AND A GRANT FROM THE BOSTON FOUNDATION
IN COOPERATION WITH THE BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY | BOSTON TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT | BOSTON DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION |
CENTRAL ARTERY TUNNEL PROJECT | MASSACHUSETTS TURNPIKE AUTHORITY



Financial District / Greenway western edge

Financial District | Greenway EDGES STUDY

ARTERY BUSINESS COMMITTEE HUBERT MURRAY Architect + Planner | Office of David Neilson

A STUDY SPONSORED BY THE ARTERY BUSINESS COMMITTEE AND A GRANT FROM THE BOSTON FOUNDATION
IN COOPERATION WITH THE BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY | BOSTON TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT | BOSTON DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION |
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The idea behind the Edges Studies is to explore the potential released and revealed by the development of the Greenway through the heart of the city. In both the Wharf and the Financial District there are properties that have existed since before the intrusion of the elevated highway, to which they adapted themselves, and which are now facing for the first time in generations, a prospect of open space where they can both see and be seen. There are also those properties recently developed that either anticipated the removal of the elevated highway and the development of the Greenway or more recently, have responded to this new condition. It is to these properties and more specifically the residual urban spaces between these properties and the city – including the Greenway – that the Edges Study directs itself. In exploring these residual spaces adjacent to the Greenway it is the intention of this study to permeate the surrounding urban fabric with an enhanced public realm that acts as a threshold to the major open space offered by the Greenway.

STUDY AREA

The northern boundary of the Financial District Edges Study is defined by Oliver Street, the southern boundary of the Wharf District. The southern boundary of the study area is loosely delineated by Summer Street, South Station and the Leather District as it abuts Chinatown. Summer Street and South Station act as the boundary between the city proper and the Postal Sorting Facility, the railroad tracks and the bus station, large-scaled infrastructure situated on the edge of the working city. The western edge to the study area was initially defined as being 'one block in' from the Greenway frontage properties. This edge, riddled with streets and connections to the center of the Financial District is characterized by its porosity and its organic connection to the center of commercial life in the city. To the east, the Fort Point Channel forms a definitive geographical boundary to the Financial District.

METHODOLOGY

Data for this study were derived from site surveys and documentation; other planning studies performed in the area; and planning and design data provided by others with regard to ongoing projects. Data, spatial analyses and proposed options for interventions were presented to the ABC project management team on a regular basis and to meetings of the Boston Redevelopment Authority staff and neighbors and abutters at critical milestones.

TOPOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

The urban fabric of this area has been as much determined by the patterns of railroad infrastructure as it has by the growth and decline of waterfront activity on the Fort Point Channel and by the highway.

TOPOGRAPHY AND HISTORY (cont'd)

The Fort Point Channel and a number of new wharves began to be formed in 1835 as part of the filling in of the South Cove. In 1836 the Boston and Worcester railroad was built, followed in 1845 by the Old Colony Railroad, sealing the character of the area south of Kneeland Street and east of Albany as a major transportation corridor with warehousing and industrial uses as the complement. South Station was constructed in 1897-99 consolidating the railroads under one headhouse, eliminating some old streets and wharves, and in the process creating a major work of civic architecture. By 1917 the Sanborn map shows passenger rail at three levels: underground (the Dorchester Line under the Channel); at grade on Essex Street and Summer Streets; and elevated, along Atlantic Avenue; and often at all three levels simultaneously.

The legacy of this transportation infrastructure is most obvious in the public open space created by the depression of the arterial highway and by the central role of South Station as an intermodal center that serves as an interface between long distance and commuter rail with the subway and the bus services. South Station serves as a regional gateway to the city used by thousands of commuters every working day but also of significance to newcomers and visitors as their first impression of the city.

TRANSPORTATION

South Station is the transportation hub of the Financial District serving the business area of the city and as a terminus and intermodal station for commuters from the South Shore and the Metro-West / Worcester line as well as being a gateway to Boston for travelers from New York and Washington arriving by bus and rail. Local bus and taxi services are also based at South Station. Within a quarter-mile radius of South Station there are approximately 4,500 structured parking spaces accessible to the public with an additional 600 reserved spaces for residents or building occupants.

LAND USE AND PROGRAM

The Financial District is predominantly commercial, characterized by tall buildings with large footprints covering an entire block. Physical consolidations and increased density have promoted a concentration of use that is primarily commercial with ancillary retail uses at the ground level serving office workers with morning and lunchtime fare during the weekdays, and to a lesser extent, evening meals. Similarly office supplies and services tend to predominate in the non-food retail uses.

RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

The market for retail development in the Financial District consists of three main user groups. The first is the market for offices and office workers who benefit from a network of small to medium-scale office supply stores as well as newsstands, sandwich shops and restaurants throughout the area. Larger retail chains for clothing and accessories are located at or near Downtown Crossing. The second user group is that of local residents, currently mainly in Chinatown and the Leather District but potentially over the Fort Point Channel and further north in the Broad Street / Oliver Street / High Street swath of the city. The BRA is actively encouraging residential uses downtown. The third group consists of commuters and out-of-town visitors who come in and out of South Station rail and bus terminals. South Station already provides a range of informal eating places as well as a bookshop and various sundries outlets. The Boston Public Market Association has temporarily located a food market on the Northern Avenue Bridge but is considering alternative sites closer to South Station. This would have the potential of attracting evening commuters to do last minute shopping to take home and at the same time create a focus of street activity.

PHYSICAL FABRIC

The Financial District has a variety of paving materials although not as wide a range or as varied as the Wharf District. Granite, brick, concrete and stone pavers are all represented as a sidewalk material. As themes are developed throughout the District there is the potential for paving and other streetscape features to introduce connections and continuities as well as variations and placemaking exceptions where required by the topography.

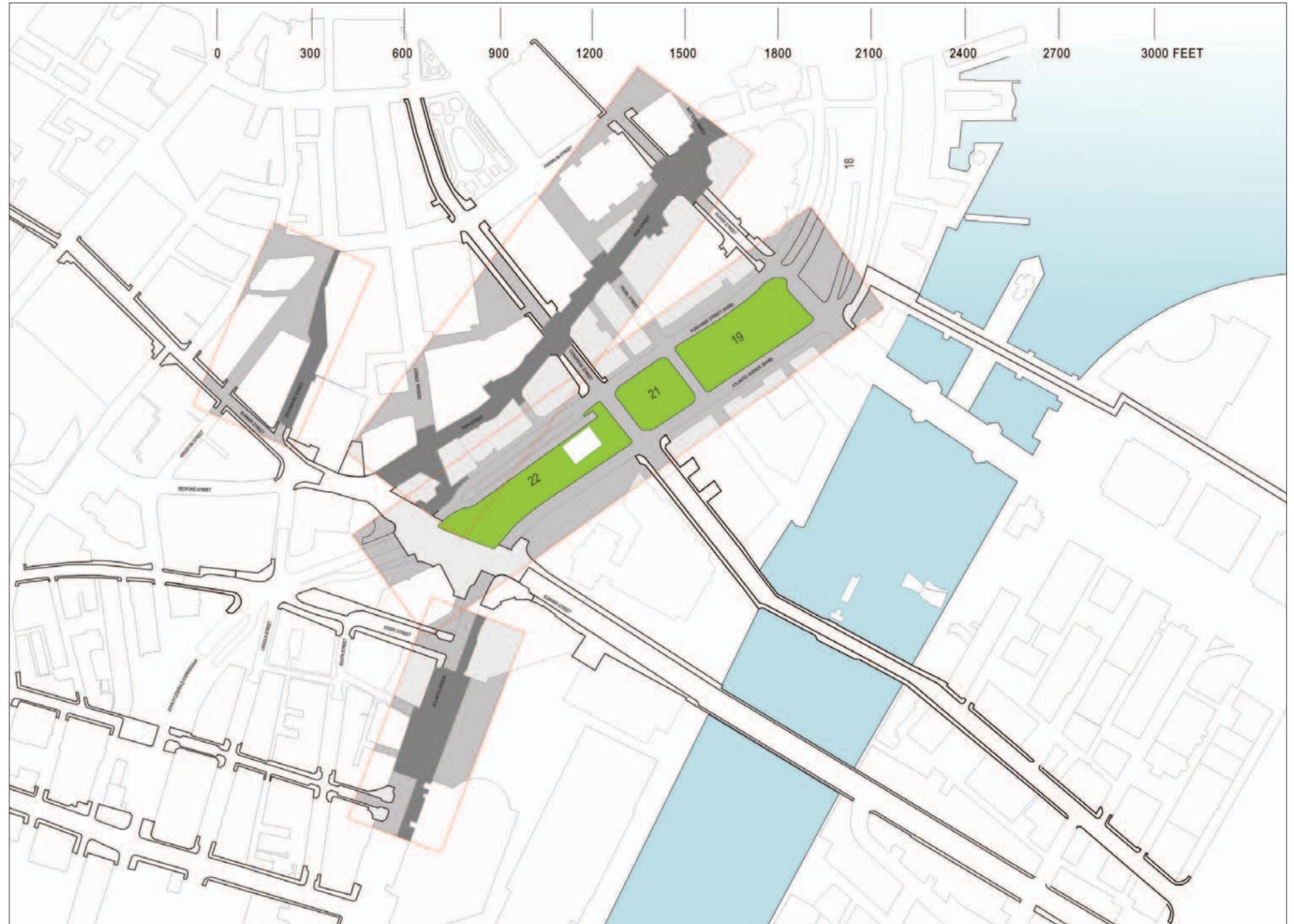
INVITING PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

Street trees, cafés, multiple front doors and brick or granite paving all suggest a successful street environment and indicate some investment in the public realm that makes it a pleasanter experience, particularly for pedestrians. Allowing for the large block-wide footprints of commercial buildings in the Financial District and the limited possibilities for introducing small-scale uses and multiple entries into buildings, there is an added challenge in the design of the streetscape itself to provide variety and attraction. Paving, planting, seating and lighting should be of exceptionally high quality with defining character to make up for the relative lack of variety in uses and built forms.

Places to sit during lunch hour – or during a smoking break – are at a premium in the warmer months. Sheltered spaces are equally valued in the winter. Opportunities



Figureground of building footprints in downtown neighborhoods



Intervention Areas map

INVITING PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT (cont'd)

should be sought for inserting small-scale takeout eateries or convenience stores at a kiosk-like scale. These facilities are not only convenient but they serve as focal points for street activity in a predominantly working environment.

UNINVITING PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT

Garbage dumpsters, blank walls, machine rooms, entrances to parking garages and service access doors are some of the qualities in a streetscape that make it inconvenient and otherwise unattractive to pedestrians. Two examples present themselves in the Financial District. Facing onto the Greenway, the Purchase Street edge between Summer and Congress is characterized by major infrastructure buildings on the west side and by the tunnel ventilation building and the highway access ramp on the east side. While there is no sidewalk adjacent to the access ramp, the sidewalk on the west side is quite constricted, precluding the possibility of planting street trees. This combination of characteristics presents a design challenge that needs to be addressed as part of the Central Artery C17A6 contract. The second instance of a poor street edge is that of the Devonshire Street parking structure which faces both Devonshire Street and Federal Street on the other side. There is an opportunity to give both street elevations a facelift to present a more acceptable public elevation to Winthrop Square on the west and the Bank of America building on the east.

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

Over the last century, development in downtown Boston has entailed the consolidation of parcels and blocks in order to create larger and more economical footprints for commercial properties. The figure ground map of the city shows a markedly coarser grain of larger blocks and fewer intersections in the Financial District than the residential areas that have not been under such pressure to consolidate. The large-scale blocks at the water's edge are reflective of the larger scale maritime activity that formed the littoral around the Fort Point Channel and the harbor. This process was exacerbated by the insertion of major rail and highway infrastructure parallel to the shoreline.

This has left the Financial District with large blocks and in some cases some ragged edges which the building of the Rose Kennedy Greenway gives us an opportunity to address. The street patterns, though coarsened over time, have not lost their original alignments in those that remain. The spatial analysis picks up on the cues provided by the historical street patterns and the demands of the new city being built around the Greenway, to propose three general principles to guide the future development of public space in the district.

THREE PRINCIPLES**SMALL SPACES MAKE GREAT PLACES**

The legacy of more than a century of parcel rationalization to maximize building footprints is revealed in a scattering of small spaces, uneconomic anomalies left over at the edge of buildings as the marginal space between a rational footprint and a street pattern generated by cow paths or other 'irrational' influences. Unlike the Wharf District which has some larger scale public spaces, the Financial District has had none until the creation of Post Office Square and now the Greenway. The small spaces taken as a network of public spaces with common characteristics, present the potential to make a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts, creating a linked network of public places that becomes a recognizable characteristic of the Financial District.

CAPILLARIES TO THE ARTERY

If the 'small spaces' are the points in a network, the small streets are the lines connecting those points. The Crossroads Initiative aims to reconnect the cross streets that make lateral connections across the Greenway and at the same time create spaces on the Greenway that emphasize each cross street location as a special place. The small streets or 'capillaries' leading into the Crossroads streets connect these major laterals back into the city fabric, creating a hierarchy of streets leading from the smallest of spaces through to the grand corridor of open space. At the same time the capillaries make the connections between each of the 'small spaces' to create a multi-directional network of pedestrian oriented paths through the city itself as well as to and across the Greenway. This approach encourages the influence of the major open space of the Greenway to emanate outwards into the surrounding streets.

FRAMING THE SQUARE

The principal effect of the major insertions of railway and highway through the urban fabric – and now their removal – is to have left large unformed spaces in their wake. First of these is Dewey Square, ill-defined with irregular edges, crossed by city streets and punctuated by highway ramps. To the north, divided from Dewey Square by the highway ventilation structure, are two parcels on the Greenway flanked on either side by high towers and to the north by a major crossroads from Oliver Street to the Moakley Bridge – as well as access and exit ramps to the highway on the southern end of Parcel 18. The principal proposed is therefore to 'frame the square', to give definition to both these spaces so that potential of their position within the Greenway and as they relate to the city on either side can be maximized.

INTERVENTION AREAS

Four areas of intervention have been selected to illustrate the principles proposed to guide the development of the public realm in the Financial District. The four selected have some claim for early attention and have the virtue of illustrating – and testing – the urban design principles outlined in the Spatial Analysis of Chapter 3. The examples chosen also draw on the lessons learned from the analysis of existing conditions found in Chapter 2, particularly with regard to the qualities of street edge associated with successful pedestrian environments. In assessing the feasibility of implementation, it is clear from the mix of ownerships that a steering committee of public and private interests would have to lead, oversee and construct any of these proposals. This study does not considered the structure of such a body but strongly suggests leadership from the city with support from private owners in developing these ideas further.

Four areas of intervention are proposed:

Atlantic Avenue – there is potential for the temporary location of a public market on the vacant land between the back of sidewalk and the station platform between the south Station headhouse and the bus terminal is proposed as a practical retail asset for commuters, Leather District residents and visitors, and as a means of filling in dead space between the two ends of the transportation complex. This is an illustration of the 'Small Spaces' principle.

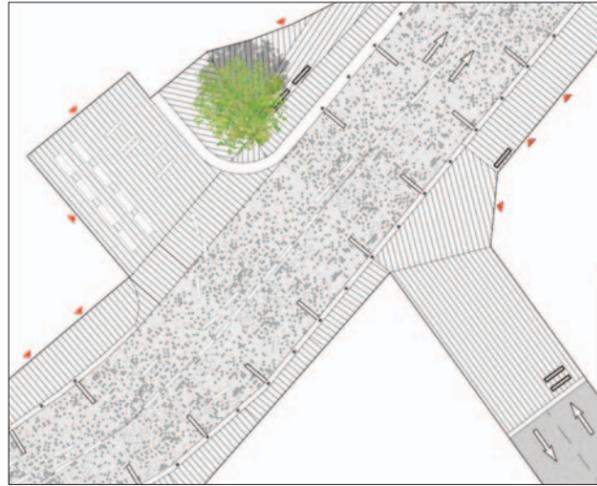
High Street – to be modified as a 'shared use' street accommodating pedestrians and vehicles. Distinctive paving and the substitution of formal curblines with bollards and variations in material will create a predominantly pedestrian environment to which vehicles have access. This case study illustrates the 'Small Spaces' and the 'Capillary' principles.

Winthrop Square – this intervention illustrates the potential for a facelift for the Devonshire Street garage that forms the east side of Winthrop Square. The aim of the proposal is to encourage the upgrading of this side of the square. This case study combines both the 'Small Spaces' and the 'Capillary' principles.

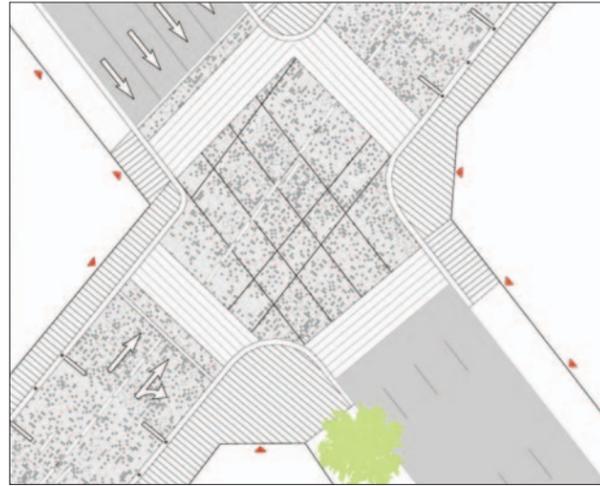
The Parcels 19, 21 and 22 study is an exercise illustrating combinations of massing, built form and open space to achieve a 'framing of the squares'. The representation of an 'object building' accommodating a botanical or horticultural program on Parcel 22 is intended to illustrate the potential of a central focal point in Dewey Square to mitigate the lack of formal, integrating strength in the surrounding buildings.



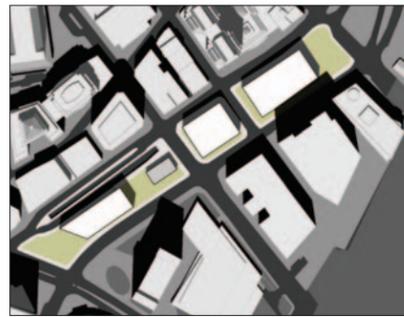
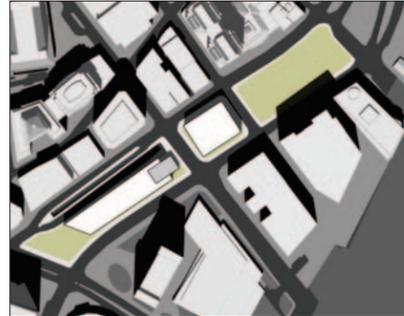
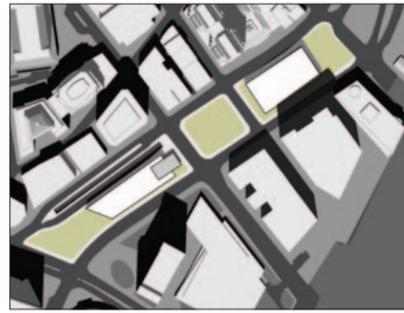
View of High Street and Federal Street intersection



73 High Street and 150 Federal Street View Corridor



High Street / Congress Street intersection



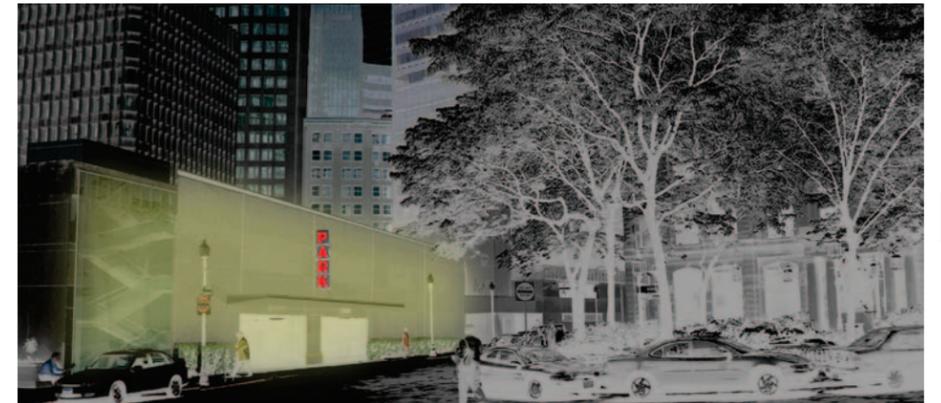
Built / open space scenarios for Parcels 19, 21, and 22: 'framing the Square' at Dewey Square



Potential Public Market on Atlantic Avenue



Potential Public Market in plan



Winthrop Square, Devonshire Garage

1 | INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This study of the 'Edges' of the Rose Kennedy Greenway as it passes through the Financial District is an extension of an earlier study of the Wharf District Edges. The idea behind the Edges Studies is to explore the potential released and revealed by the development of the Greenway through the heart of the city. The edges of the Greenway, with the advent of this new open space, are now in a position to reciprocate and, quite literally, to face up to their new prospect.

In both the Wharf and the Financial District there are properties that have existed since before the intrusion of the elevated highway, to which they adapted themselves, and which are now facing for the first time in generations, a prospect of open space where they can both see and be seen. There are also those properties recently developed that either anticipated the removal of the elevated highway and the development of the Greenway or more recently, have simply responded to this new condition. It is to these properties and more specifically the residual urban spaces between these properties and the city – including the Greenway – that the Edges Study directs itself. In exploring these residual spaces adjacent to the Greenway it is the intention of this study to permeate the surrounding urban fabric with an enhanced public realm that acts as a threshold to the major open space offered by the Greenway.

DEFINITION OF STUDY AREA

The northern boundary of the Financial District study is defined by Oliver Street the crossroads that links the city and the Greenway to South Boston. The southern boundary of the study area is loosely delineated by Summer Street, South Station and the Leather District as it abuts Chinatown. Summer Street and South Station act as the boundary between the city proper and the Postal Sorting Facility, the railroad tracks and the bus station. The Leather District and Chinatown radiate out from the focal points of South Station and Dewey Square where the boundary lines are less certainly informed by use or fabric, more by the felt limits of that immediate zone of influence around the center.

To the east, the Fort Point Channel forms a clear and definitive geographical boundary to the Financial District. Even this edge is penetrated by Northern Avenue (old and new), Congress Street and Summer Street, each forming a strong link between the old city and the new Seaport development over the Channel. The intensity of planning studies around the Fort Point Channel not only informs this work but is a clear indication that this eastern edge to the study area is as much focal point as it is a boundary. Lastly, the western edge to the study area has been initially defined as being 'one block in' from the Greenway frontage properties. This edge, riddled with streets and connections to the center of the Financial District is characterized by its porosity and its organic connection to the center of commercial life in the city.

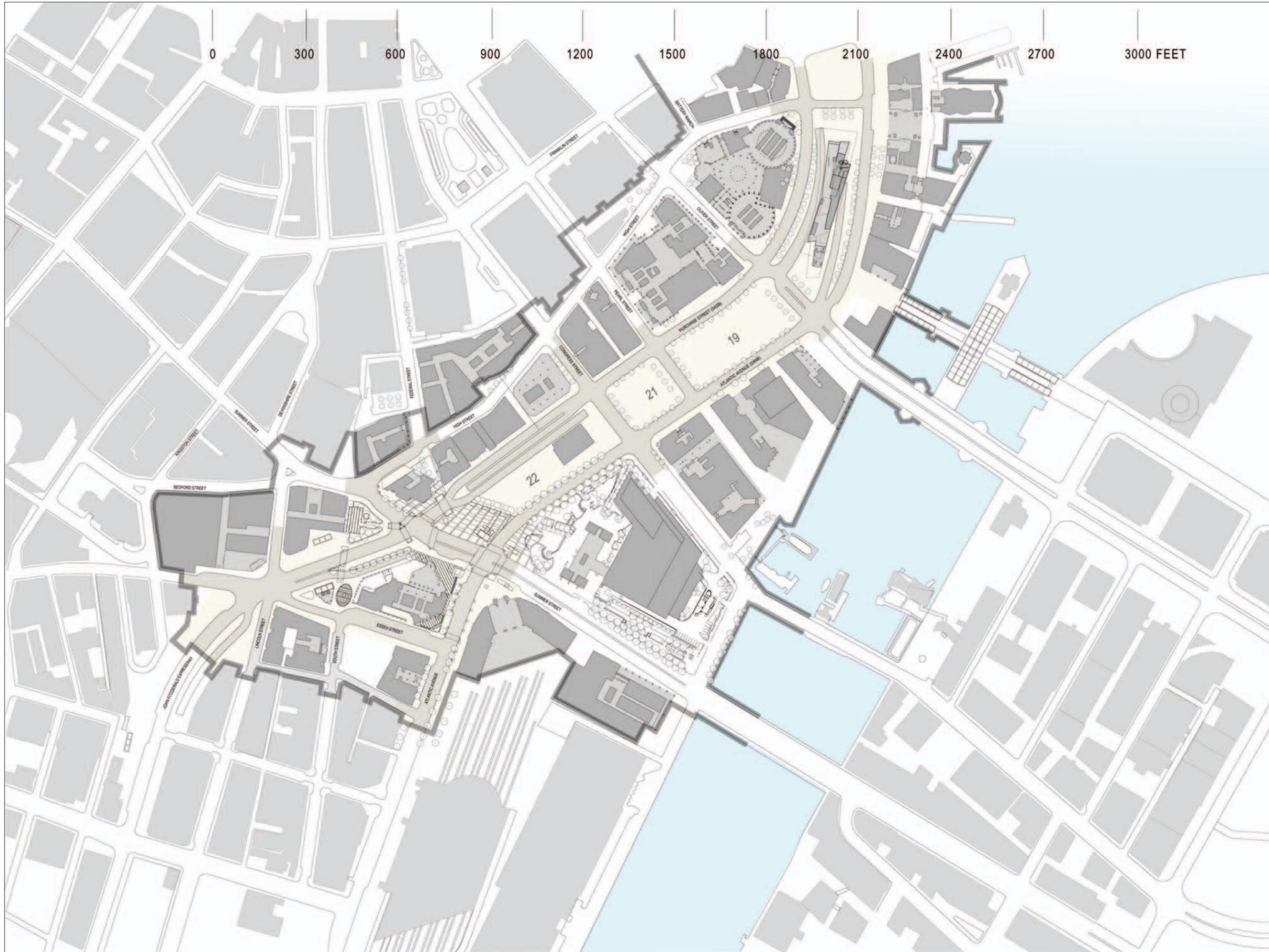


Bird's-eye view of High Street, the main east-west pedestrian route through the Financial District



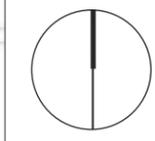
View of Dewey Square from South Station

GROUND FLOOR PLANE showing Dewey Square Master Plan and C17A6 Contract



-  Study Area
-  CA/T Surface Restoration
-  Publicly Accessible
-  Privately Accessible
-  Parcel 18 Proposed Concept Design submitted to MassPike in response to RFP

1 | INTRODUCTION



METHODOLOGY

Research for the Edges Study has taken the form of site surveys, mapping and photographic documentation as a continuation of the earlier effort. The *Edges Study* also inherits the work for the Central Artery surface restoration undertaken by the Turnpike Authority and its consultants, in contracts C11A1 and C17A6. This includes Dewey Square, the paving and planting of Atlantic Avenue south of the square and the extension of Purchase Street to Lincoln Street. Parcels 19, 21 and 22 are currently designated for development as public facilities with botanical and horticultural gardens although designs for these have not been advanced beyond conceptual sketches.

Three major planning studies have been undertaken in and around the Fort Point Channel: the *Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan*¹; the *Municipal Harbor Plan (Fort Point Downtown Waterfront)*²; and the *Seaport Public Realm Plan*³. In addition, the *ABC South Boston Gateways Study*⁴ is being undertaken concurrently with this Edges Study. The City of Boston and BRA's *Greenway District Crossroads Initiative*⁵ has the objective of developing and enhancing the major streets that cross the Greenway. In the Financial District these are Oliver Street / Old Northern Avenue, Congress Street, Summer Street and Essex Street. In addition to these studies and ongoing projects, the Edges Study has been informed by meetings with property owners and abutters within the study area and with City and Turnpike officials.

How the Financial District is different from the Wharf District

There are significant differences in the respective urban conditions of the Wharf District and the Financial District. Whereas in the Wharf District the single overriding urban principle has been the reconnection of the city with the harbor, in the Financial District that strong linear cross connection is superseded by the centrality of South Station as a transportation hub from which the energy of the district radiates. Whereas the Wharf District is strongly characterized as a tourist destination, the Financial District is correspondingly the heart of the working city, not a destination in itself, more a working environment. Lastly, whereas the Wharf District is characterized by large public spaces around destination buildings (Quincy Market, Custom House, Central Wharf and others), the Financial District is more an archipelago of small spaces located in front of or between buildings, none more than a pocket park. In sum, the Wharf District has been conceived and designed for both residents and tourists with predominantly recreational and cultural programming in the Greenway and along its edges. The Financial District on the other hand is experienced and used daily by residents and workers. It is this constituency that must set the terms for generating the quality of the urban environment as a humane and sustaining workplace.



Financial District Ground Floor Land Use



Wharf District Ground Floor Land Use



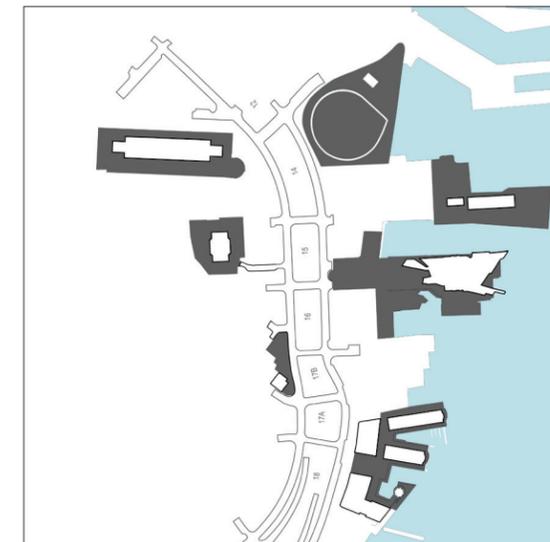
Financial District Figure Ground



Wharf District Figure Ground



Financial District Open Space



Wharf District Open Space

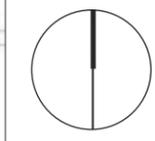
¹ BRA: Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan, May 2002² BRA: A Municipal Harbor Plan for the City of Boston, Phase 1, May 2002; Phase 2, September 2003³ BRA: The Seaport Public Realm Plan, February 1999⁴ Artery Business Committee: South Boston Gateways Study (in progress)⁵ City of Boston / BRA: Greenway District Crossroads Initiative (in progress)

EDGES STUDY AREA



- Study Area
- Primary Edge Properties
- Secondary Edge Properties
- CA/T Surface Restoration
- CA/T Edge Interventions
- Other Sidewalk Treatments
- Parcel 18 Proposed Concept Design submitted to MassPike in response to RFP

1 | INTRODUCTION



2 | EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

TOPOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

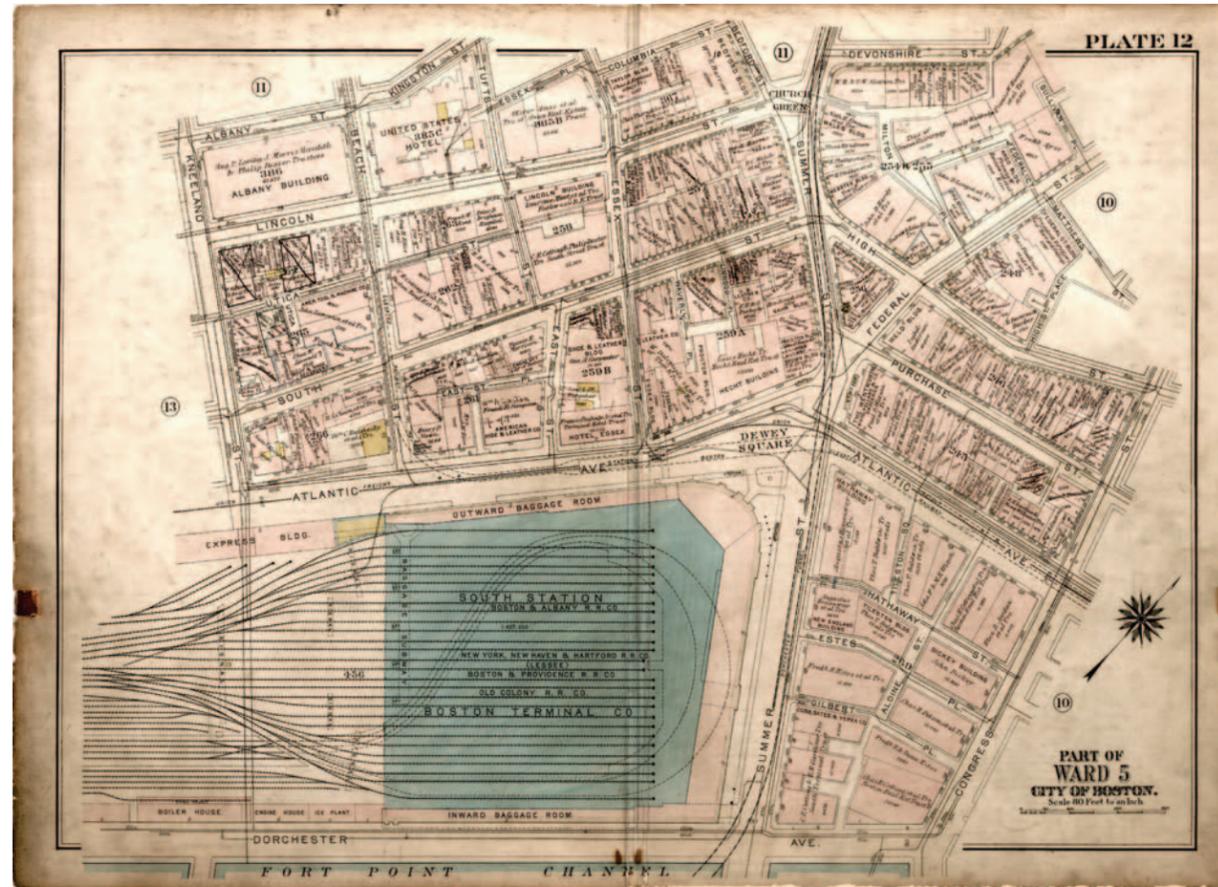
The urban fabric of this area has been as much determined by the patterns of railroad infrastructure as it has by the growth and decline of waterfront activity on the Fort Point Channel and by the highway.

Reviewing historical maps of the growth of the waterfront we see the development in the eighteenth century of myriad smaller scale wharves serving the south side of the Shawmut peninsula, served by the streets leading to what was through most of the nineteenth century a mix of commercial and residential development that constituted the 'downtown' part of Boston. Charles Dickens, on arriving in Boston harbor one Sunday morning in 1842, describes the city with enthusiasm: "...the houses were so bright and gay; the sign boards were painted such bright and gaudy colors;...the bricks were so very red, the stone was so very white, ... It rarely happens in the business streets that a tradesman...resides above his store; so that many occupations are carried on in one house; and the whole front is covered with boards and inscriptions."¹

The 1830's brought the railroad to Boston first as a freight interface with the docks and then as a passenger service. Rail connections to Worcester and points west, as well as to Connecticut and New York became, with the docks, the backbone of Boston's prosperity as the port for a prosperous and productive hinterland thriving on trans-Atlantic trade, for which Boston was the principal New England port.

The Fort Point Channel and a number of new wharves began to be formed in 1835 as part of the filling in of the South Cove. In 1836 the Boston and Worcester railroad was built, followed in 1845 by the Old Colony Railroad, sealing the character of the area south of Kneeland Street and east of Albany as a major transportation corridor with warehousing and industrial uses as the complement. South Station was constructed in 1897-99 consolidating the railroads under one headhouse, eliminating some old streets and wharves, and in the process creating a major work of civic architecture. In 1901, an elevated railway was constructed on the alignment of Atlantic Avenue cutting across the street that had been the link between the city and its harbor, establishing rail as the dominant infrastructure, later to be superseded by the highway. By 1917 the Sanborn map shows passenger rail at three levels: underground (the Dorchester Line under the Channel); at grade on Essex Street and Summer Streets; and elevated, along Atlantic Avenue; and often at all three levels simultaneously.

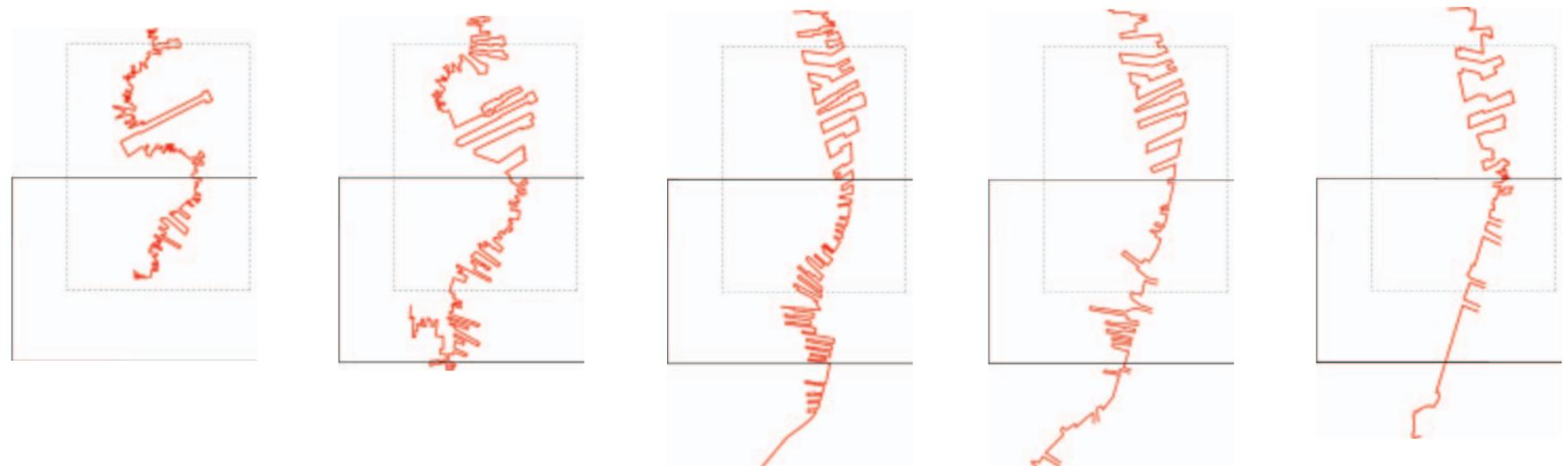
The legacy of this transportation infrastructure on the form of the city is most obvious in the public open space created by the depression of the arterial highway but also by the central role of South Station as an intermodal center that serves as an interface between long distance and commuter rail with the subway and the bus services. As such South Station serves as a regional gateway to the city used by thousands of commuters every working day but also of significance to newcomers and visitors as their first impression of the city. Less obviously, but perhaps just as profound, is the legacy of the smaller scale wharves and the tight network of streets that served them.



1917 Sanborn map showing original, much larger footprint of South Station



The Federal Reserve: an icon in the Financial District today



1796 Shoreline

1862 Shoreline

1870 Shoreline

1934 Shoreline

Present Shoreline

¹ Charles Dickens: American Notes, Gloucester, Mass., 1968

HISTORICAL SITES AND SHORELINE

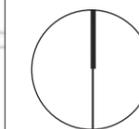


- Study Area
- 1630 Shoreline
- M1** Maritime History
- I1** Immigration History
- L1** Landforming History
- H1** Colonial and Revolutionary History

The cluster around Fort Hill is notable for its role in colonial history and landmaking, and substantially as a mid-19th century tenement for Irish immigrants.

The cluster around South Cove is notable for its immigrant history as the first center of settlement for Chinese laborers and merchants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Sources:
 Boston's History Interpretation Panel,
 BRA, September 2000
 Gaining Ground, Nancy Seasholes,
 MIT Press, 2003



Transportation

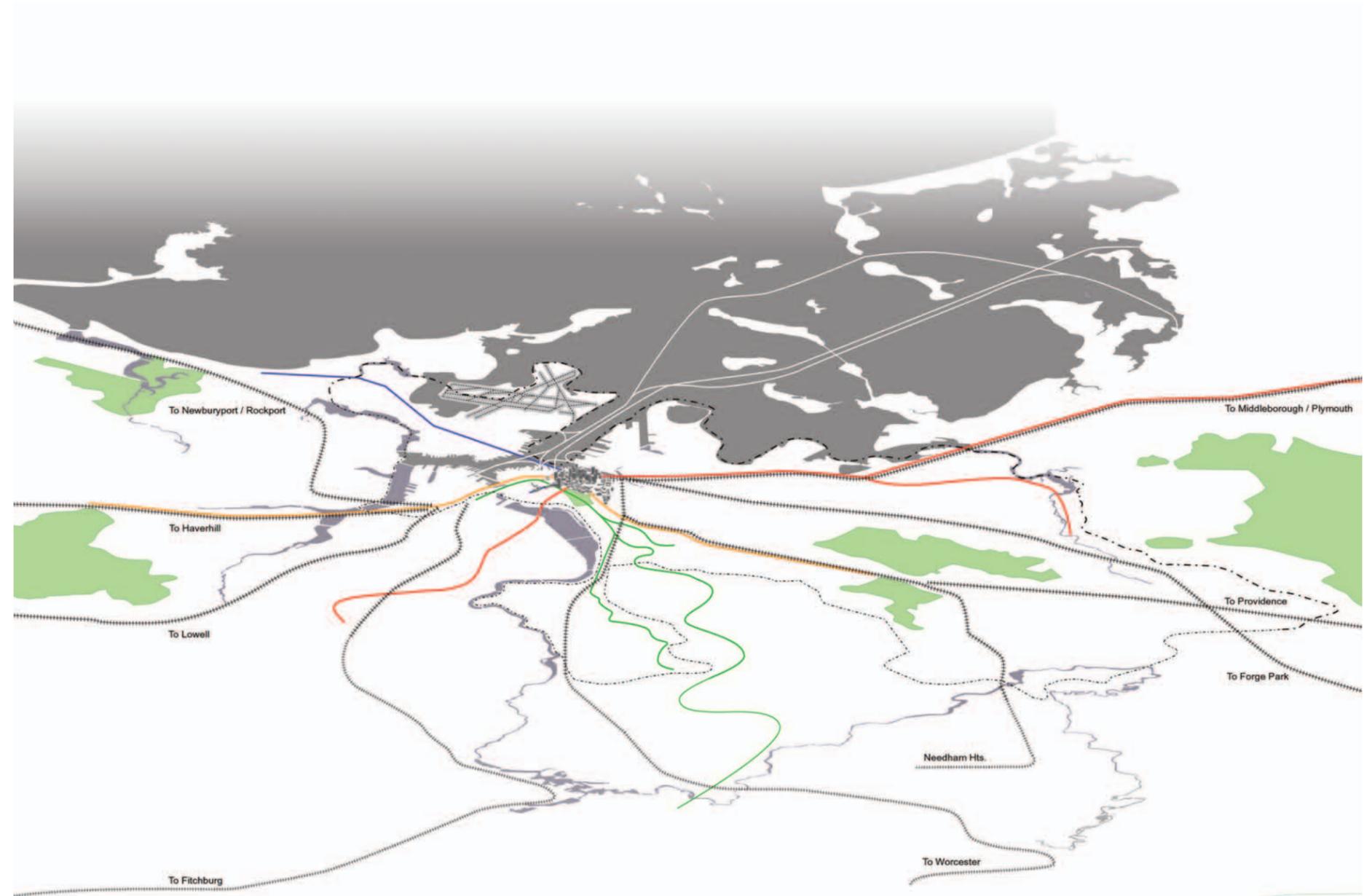
South Station is the transportation hub of the Financial District serving the business area of the city. The station is a terminus and intermodal station for commuters from the South Shore and the Metro-West / Worcester line as well as being a gateway to Boston for travelers from New York and Washington arriving by bus and rail.

The main railroad into South Station serves Amtrak intercity trains from the south (including the Acela high speed train) and the MBTA commuter rail trains from Franklin, Providence, Stoughton, Lakeville, Plymouth, Worcester and the soon to open Greenbush Line. There are 69,500 daily boardings at North, South and Back Bay stations and 38,000 daily boardings on southside commuter lines². South Station is also served by the Red Line with connections to Alewife in the northwest and Ashmont / Mattapan and Braintree in the south. Weekday ridership on the Red Line amounts to 233,000 daily boardings of which 20,800 are at South Station (not including transfers).³ The South Station Bus Terminal also serves MBTA buses, commuter rail, and lines extending to Connecticut and New York.

The Silver Line, a rapid transit dual fuel bus line that will eventually connect Dudley Square with Logan Airport through South Station, is being built in three phases. Phase One, between Dudley and Chinatown / Essex Street has been operating since 2002. Phase Two, between South Station and the Seaport opened in December 2004, extending to Logan Airport in June 2005. Phase Three will make the connection between Boylston station and surface routes to South Station under Essex Street to complete the route. As of June 2005 ridership between South Station and the Seaport is 7,000 per day⁴.

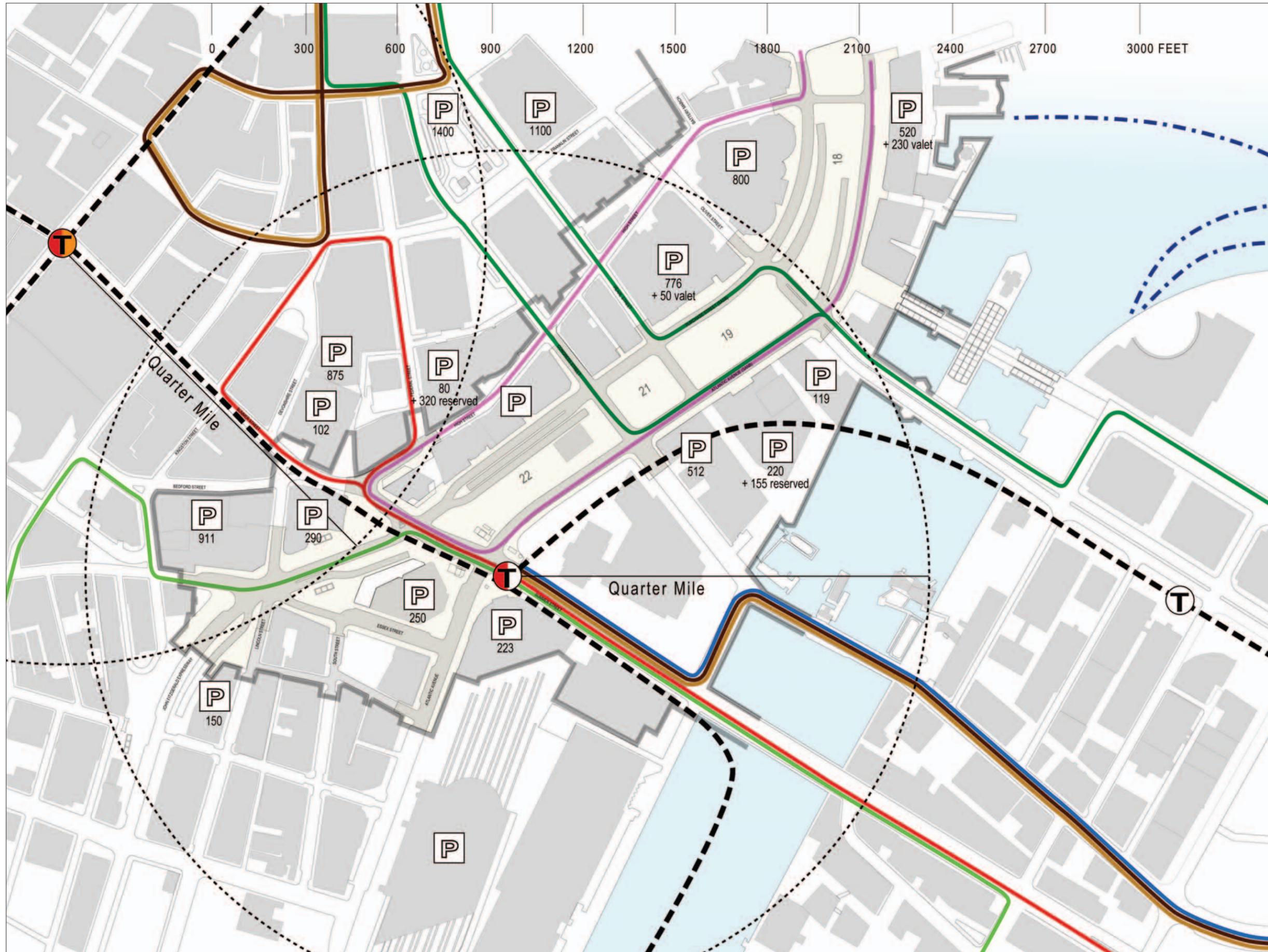
In addition to public transportation and tourist trolleys (see Appendix 3), the potential of the Greenway as a pedestrian commuter route can build on the development of the waterfront Harborwalk in the Seaport, along the Fort Point Channel (with links back into South Boston and the Albany Street / New York Streets area leading to the South End). The BRA's Crossroads Initiative is also intended to make pedestrian and bicycle commuting routes more inviting and a realistic transportation choice for commuters from the inner city.

While there is a parking freeze in downtown Boston, the Financial District is well served with parking, almost all of it below grade underneath Class A office space and limited curbside parking (see map in Appendix 3). Within a quarter-mile radius of South Station there are approximately 4,500 structured parking spaces accessible to the public with an additional 600 reserved spaces for residents or building occupants. The above grade structured parking on Devonshire Street is one of the few remaining garages constructed under Mayor Hynes' administration in the 1950's as a part of the policy of keeping Boston open for business in the face of a massive demographic shift to the suburbs following World War II. One Lincoln Place and Post Office Square are two recent examples of these structures having been replaced by a 'higher and better use' while retaining parking capacity in the city.



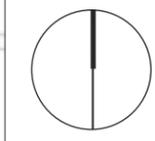
Financial District within network of city transportation systems including subway, commuter rail, water taxi, and airport

² City of Boston, Boston Transportation Department: Boston Transportation Fact Book and Neighborhood Profiles, May 2002
³ ibid.
⁴ www.mbta.com/insidethet, June 2005



- Study Area
- CA/T Surface Restoration
- MBTA Bus Routes
- MBTA Subway Routes
- Water Transit
- MBTA Subway Station
- Parking / Lot Capacity

Source:
 Boston Air Pollution Control Commission



Land Use

For most of the nineteenth century this area of Boston contained a mixture of uses: residential, commercial, manufacturing, transportation and maritime warehousing. After the great fire of 1872 however, there followed a period of rebuilding and restructuring, a consolidation of capital investment that left commercial and transportation uses predominant with some manufacturing remaining in the Leather District. South Station and the railroad lines were reorganized and consolidated in the 1890's and the Fort Point Channel developed on its east edge with the technically progressive Boston Wharf Buildings. Chinatown, in the first decade of the twentieth century, was already well established as a residential and working community that continues to this day. With the decline in manufacturing, the Leather District has in the last two decades re-emerged as a desirable residential area bringing some of the mixed land use back to the area.

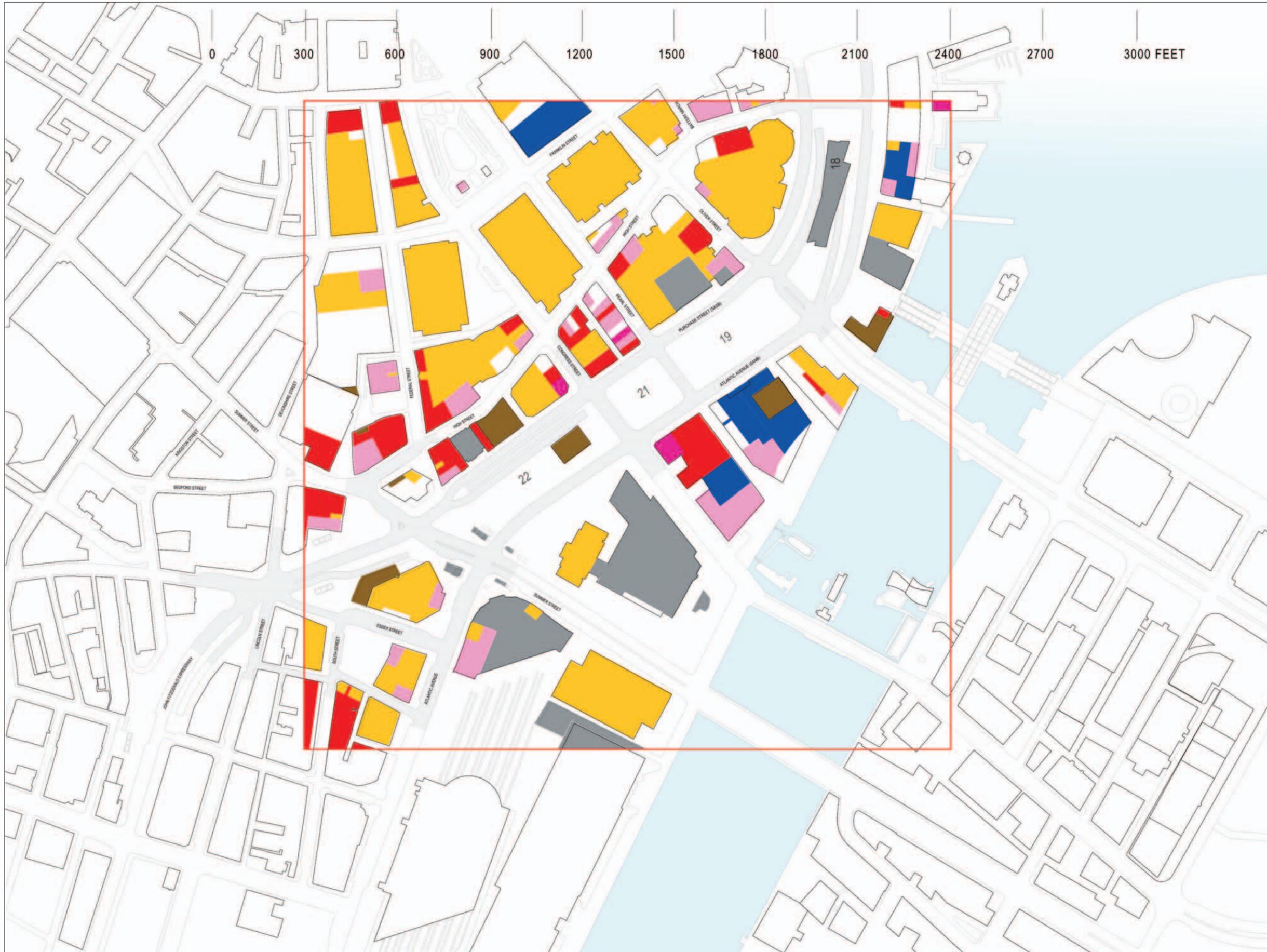


The Financial District, as one would expect from the name, is predominantly commercial, characterized by tall buildings with large footprints covering an entire block. Reference to the 1917 map (on page 10) shows a mass of smaller properties with narrow frontages, some of which exist to this day in the section of High Street and Purchase Street between Summer and Congress. More typical are the 'full block' consolidations such as that at 125 High Street, and even 'multi-block' consolidations such as the nine city blocks that became one with the construction of the Federal Reserve Bank in 1977.

These physical consolidations and increased density have promoted a concomitant concentration of use that is primarily commercial with ancillary retail uses at the ground level serving office workers with morning and lunchtime fare during the weekdays, and to a lesser extent, evening meals. Similarly, office supplies and services tend to predominate in the non-food retail uses.



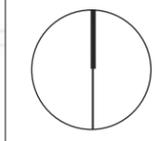
Land use and activity in the Financial District



- Commercial
- Restaurant
- Entertainment
- Retail
- Hotel
- Parking Garage
- Mechanical Room
- Institutional

2 | EXISTING CONDITIONS

Source:
Office of David Neilson
Survey, April 2005



Retail Development

The market for retail development in the Financial District consists of three main user groups, one existing and two potential.

The first is the market for offices and office workers who benefit from a network of small to medium-scale office supply stores as well as newsstands, sandwich shops and restaurants throughout the area. Larger retail chains for clothing and accessories are located at or near Downtown Crossing. Following the pattern of office hours these retail outlets flourish on weekdays during working hours but tend to be closed in the evenings and on weekends.

The second user group is that of local residents, currently mainly in Chinatown and the Leather District but potentially over the Fort Point Channel and further north in the Broad Street / Oliver Street / High Street swath of the city. Currently the downtown residential population is relatively underserved (except in old established areas such as the North End and Beacon Hill). The BRA is actively encouraging residential uses downtown and is at this time being assisted by a market that places higher returns on residential investment than it does on commercial office space. With this growth in downtown residential population there will be an increasing demand for an infrastructure of retail outlets and neighborhood services.

The third group consists of commuters and out-of-town visitors who come in and out of South Station rail and bus terminals. South Station already provides a range of informal eating places as well as a bookshop and various sundries outlets. In addition, the Federal Street extension leading into Dewey Square has successful retail stores placed opportunely on a direct route between the Financial District and the bus and train stations.

The Boston Public Market Association Inc. has pioneered an open Market on the Old Northern Avenue Bridge which is however only a temporary location. Other potential locations for the future may be closer to South Station, particularly in the stretch of Atlantic Avenue between the station cross-platform and the bus terminal. This proposal has the potential of attracting evening commuters to do last minute shopping to take home and at the same time create a focus of street activity.

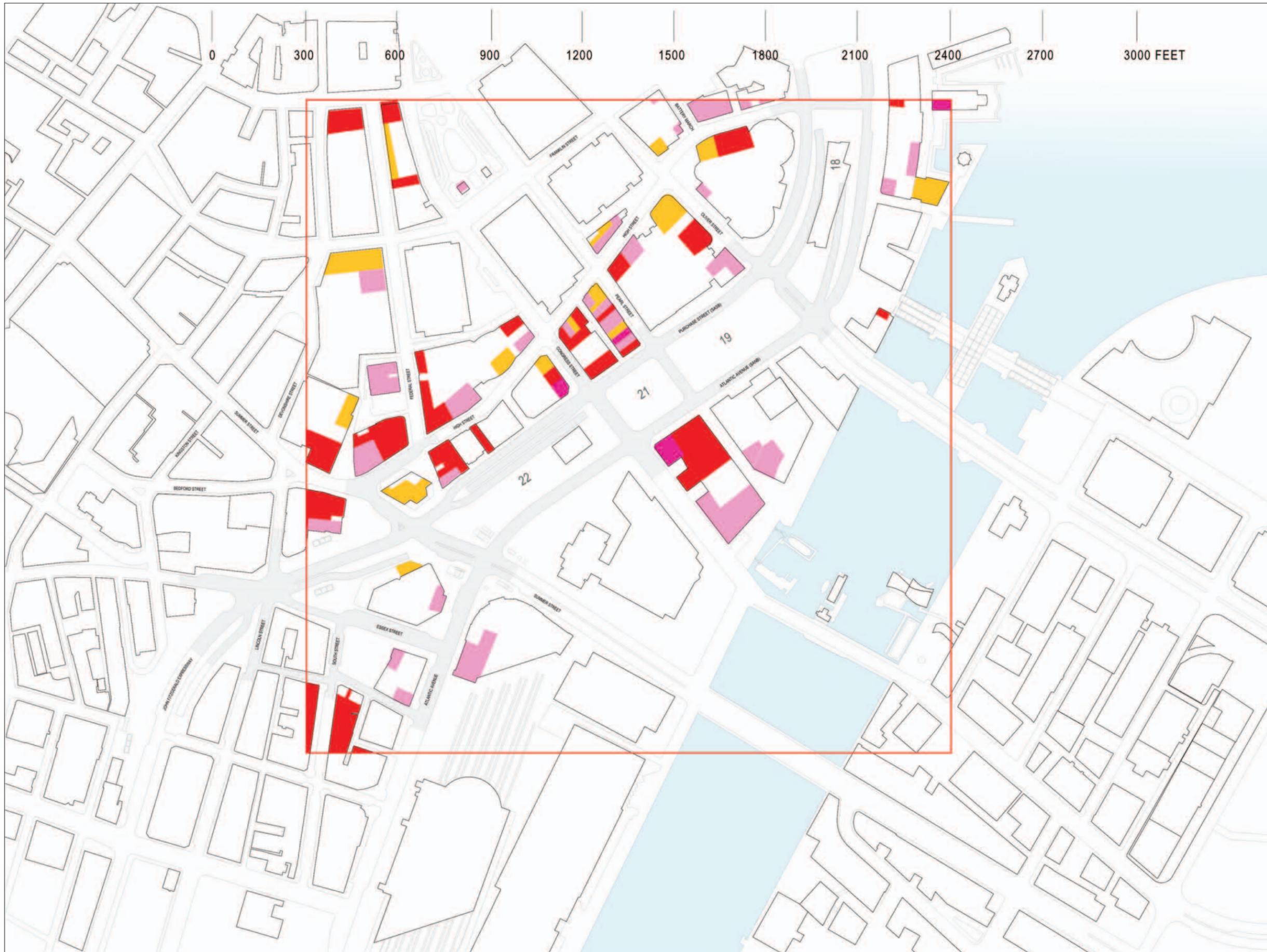
Every opportunity should be sought to expand the number of retail outlets on the edges of Dewey Square and the Greenway. The development under construction at 245 Summer Street will include ground floor retail and the proposed redevelopment of Russia Wharf incorporates retail and restaurant uses in addition to the residential and commercial space above.



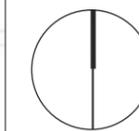
Retailers in the Financial District

RETAIL LAND USE
GROUND FLOOR

- Local Services
- Restaurant
- Entertainment
- Retail



Source:
Office of David Neilson
Survey, April 2005

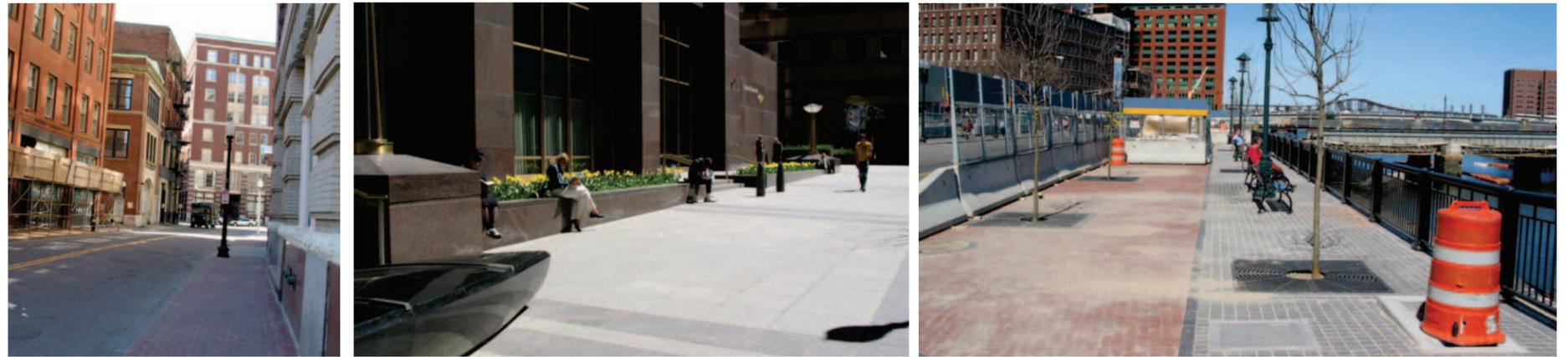


2 | EXISTING CONDITIONS

Paving: Continuity of Experience

As the map opposite indicates, the Financial District has a variety of paving materials although not as wide a range or as varied as the Wharf District. Granite tends to be the material of choice around the high-rise commercial buildings fronting Franklin and High Streets. Brick on the other hand is more prevalent on the east side of the Greenway in the blocks adjacent to the Channel and the Harbor (e.g. the Federal Reserve Bank, Russia Wharf, 500 Atlantic Avenue). The Russia Wharf development is using hardwood decking as a surface material on the area immediately abutting the Channel, as does 470 Atlantic Avenue. It is to be hoped that wood decking will become the characteristic material of the Harborwalk in this section of the city, to recall the predominant material of the old wharves and to distinguish the waterfront from the city streets proper.

While the general distribution of materials seems reasonable, there tends to be a lack of creativity in the mix and patterning of paving materials – with the notable exception of the plaza fronting One Financial Center, recently renovated as part of Dewey Square. As themes are developed throughout the District there is the potential for paving and other streetscape features to introduce connections and continuities as well as variations and placemaking exceptions where required by the topography. Examples of such 'lines' and 'points' are brought out in the analysis of findings, followed up in the suggested interventions.



Paved surfaces in the Financial District

LIGHTING THE BRIDGES

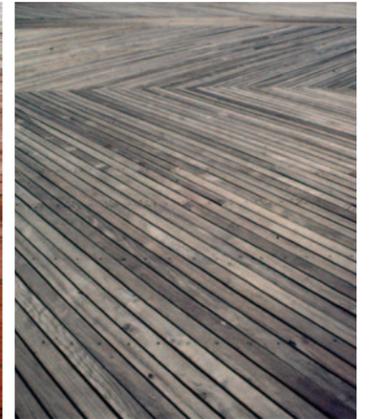
Another continuing theme in the streetscape is the City of Boston's program to light the bridges on the Fort Point Channel to promote an attractive and lively pedestrian environment. The Congress Street Bridge is currently being restored. Proposals for the Old Northern Avenue Bridge include a public market (see page 40)



Black brick with granite inlay



Granite pavers with accent stripe City Hall pavers



Wood Decking

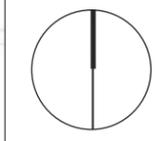
PAVEMENT MATERIALS

- Brick Paving
- Concrete Paving
- Asphalt Paving
- Granite Paving
- Wood Decking



2 | EXISTING CONDITIONS

Source:
Office of David Neilson
Survey, April 2005



19

Financial
District
Greenway

ARTERY BUSINESS COMMITTEE
HMAP

June 2005

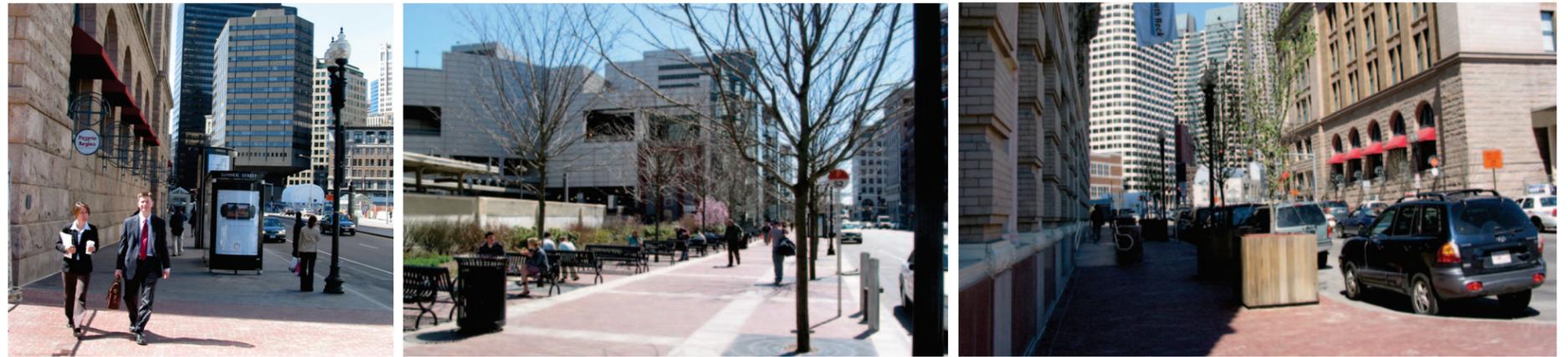
EDGES
STUDY

Inviting Pedestrian Environment

The equation of street trees, cafés, multiple front doors and brick or granite paving with a successful street environment may be too simplistic. Nonetheless, these features, severally or together, do at least indicate some investment in the public realm that makes it a more pleasant experience, particularly for pedestrians. While there are a number of locations that are predominantly green (e.g. the Federal Reserve Bank) or pleasantly paved (One Financial Center) there are few that combine these materials with a mix of uses or multiple 'front doors'. Where the combination of use and material occurs, however modestly, there is arguably a greater contribution to the quality of the urban environment than is the case where high priced material predominates in an otherwise barren sidewalk.

Allowing for the large block-wide footprints of commercial buildings in the Financial District and the limited possibilities for introducing small-scale uses and multiple entries into buildings, there is an additional challenge in the design of the streetscape itself to provide variety and attraction. Paving, planting, seating and lighting should be of exceptionally high quality with defining character to make up for the relative lack of variety in land use and built form.

Places to sit during lunch hour – or during a smoking break – are at a premium in the warmer months. Sheltered spaces are equally valued in the winter. From December through March there is often snow on the ground and the outside climate is generally inhospitable. 'In-between' social spaces that are neither out in the street nor within the private realm of individual buildings should be an urban form on the agenda of this winter city. Opportunities should be sought for inserting small-scale takeout eateries or convenience stores at a kiosk-like scale. These facilities are not only convenient but they serve as focal points for street activity in a predominantly working environment.



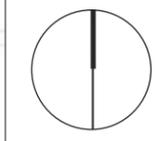
Inviting pedestrian streetscapes in the Financial District

INVITING PEDESTRIAN STREETSCAPES



- Curbside Parking
- Pedestrian Entrances
- Sidewalk Cafes
- Trees
- Planters and Lawns

Source:
Office of David Neilson
Survey, April 2005



2 | EXISTING CONDITIONS

21
Financial
District
Greenway
Edges
Study

Uninviting Pedestrian Environment

Garbage dumpsters, blank walls, machine rooms, entrances to parking garages and service access doors are some of the qualities in a streetscape that make it inconvenient and otherwise unattractive to pedestrians. Since the old elevated highway descended below grade just north of South Station at Dewey Square, the characteristic 'saw-tooth' appearance of buildings fronting the Greenway in the Wharf District is absent in the Financial District. There are nevertheless two notable examples of sidewalk edges that could be made more pedestrian friendly.

Facing the Greenway, the Purchase Street edge between Summer and Congress is characterized by major infrastructure buildings on the west side (the MBTA Control Center and the NStar transformer sub-station) and by the tunnel ventilation building and the highway access ramp (PS-CASB) on the east side. Furthermore, while there is no sidewalk adjacent to the access ramp, the sidewalk on the west side is quite constricted, precluding the possibility of planting street trees. This combination of characteristics presents a design challenge that needs to be addressed as part of the Central Artery C17A6 contract.

The second instance of a poor street edge is that of the Devonshire Street parking structure which faces both Devonshire Street and Federal Street on the other side. While the utility of the parking garage is not in doubt, there is an opportunity to give both street elevations a facelift to present a more acceptable public elevation to Winthrop Square on the west and the Bank of Boston building on the east.

500 Atlantic Avenue, currently in construction, has the challenge of servicing the building and the parking garage and providing pick-up and drop-off for the hotel, cutting across the pedestrian sidewalk without causing disruption to pedestrian flow.

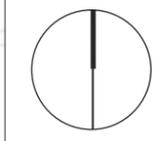


Uninviting pedestrian streetscapes in the Financial District



--- Major Pedestrian Routes

2 | EXISTING CONDITIONS



New Civic Spaces on the Greenway

CIVIC SPACE

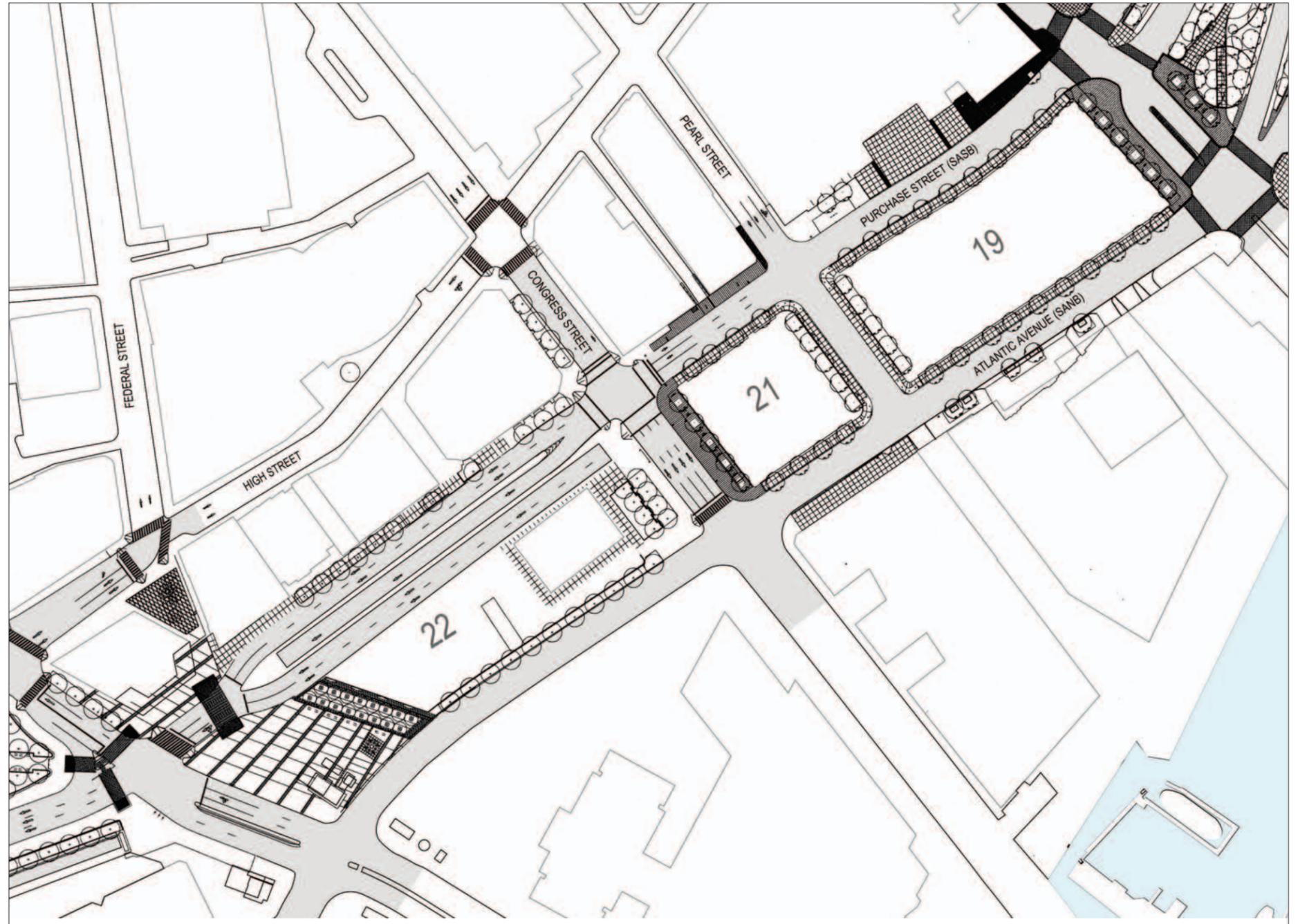
Dewey Square is currently somewhat ill-defined by individual buildings, each with its own distinction but architecturally unrelated. In clockwise rotation, they are the Federal Reserve Bank, South Station, One Financial Center, the Fiduciary Trust Building and the ventilation structure on Parcel 22, to be completed by the end of 2005. While the surface above the tunnel is criss-crossed with heavy traffic, the aim of the streetscape design has been to integrate this ill-disciplined space with a continuity of form and material on the ground plane. New station headhouses and vendor kiosks will be prominent street features adjacent to South Station. The expanse of paved open space at the south end of Parcel 22 will be the threshold to the adjacent gardens to be developed by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

Paving and planting around the edge of South Station have already been installed as part of the Central Artery's C17A6 contract. The design synthesizes the streetscape with the subway headhouses and the rest of Dewey Square, currently under construction. In anticipation of the reconstruction of Dewey Square many of the surrounding buildings have already upgraded their forecourts and elevations to make a positive contribution to the public realm. The most significant design challenge will be to define Dewey Square by creating a focal point within Parcel 22.

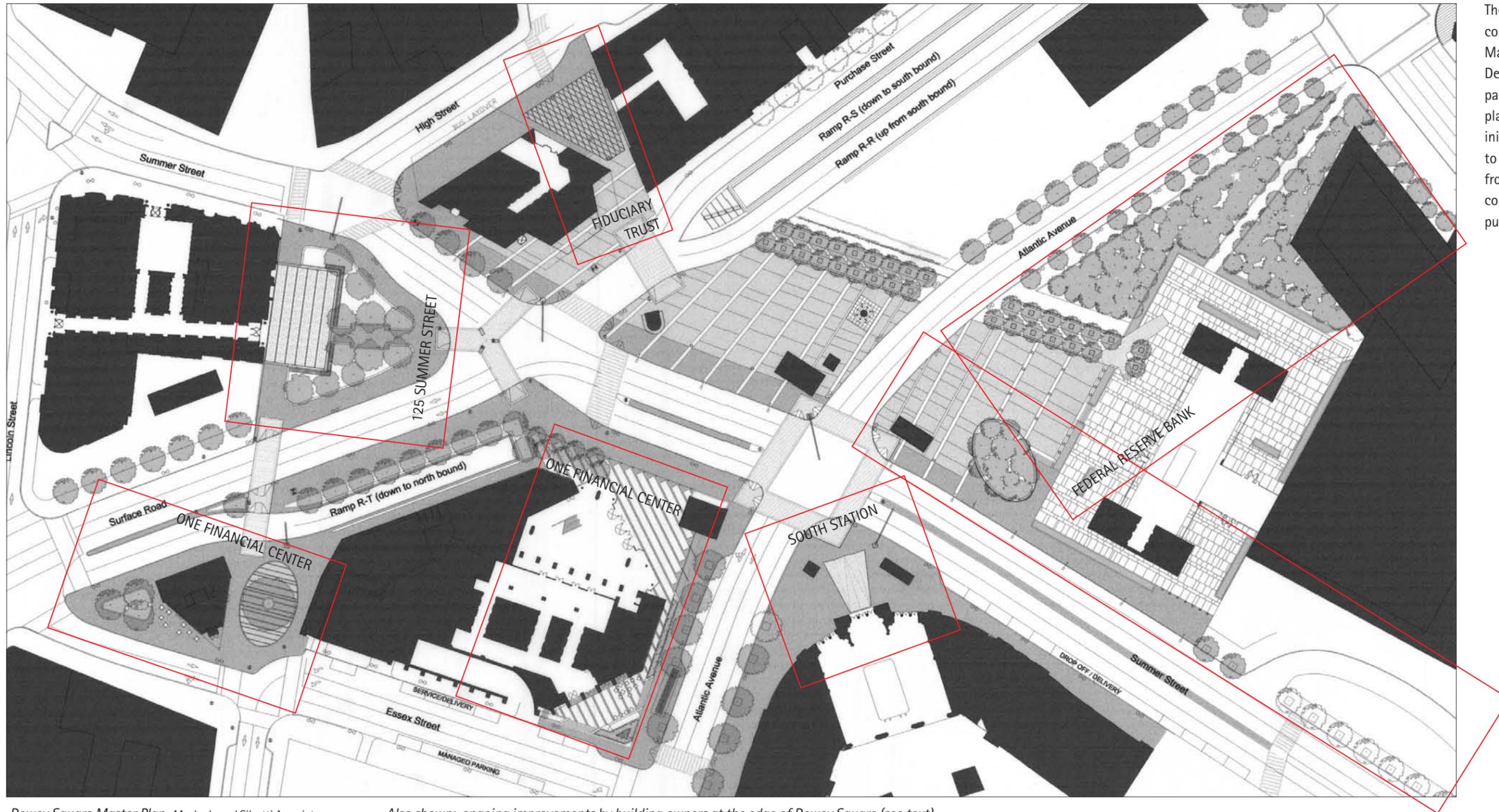
A significantly difficult edge condition is the length of Purchase Street between Summer Street and Congress Street and, to a lesser extent, between Congress and Pearl. The main problem is the narrow sidewalk and the parallel adjacency of the access and exit ramps to the highway below. In addition, the MBTA Operations Control Center and the Boston Edison transformer sub-station do not contribute to the vitality of this part of the Greenway edge. The hardware store at 51 High Street, wedged in between the two utility buildings, has its main entrance on High Street, turning its back on Purchase Street. These features make for an uninviting pedestrian environment in the center of the block presenting few opportunities for upgrading over and above the repaving that is part of the C17A6 contract (see page 38).

North and south of this part of Purchase Street there are high grade, mostly quite recently developed, commercial buildings at 125 High, 73 High and the Fiduciary Trust Building on the corner of High and Summer. Opportunities for private properties to engage and enhance the public realm include the front and edges of 125 Summer Street; the "funnel" at One Fiduciary Trust (connecting Dewey Square and Federal Street); and the forecourts of One Financial Center, South Station and the Federal Reserve Bank, either recently completed or under construction.

Concurrent with these improvements is the upgrade to the edge of the Fort Point Channel which, when finished, will form a significant new link in the Harborwalk. Components of this include improvements at 470 Atlantic Avenue, 500 Atlantic Avenue, Russia Wharf and the Federal Reserve Bank. The future development of the Post Office site will complete this edge of the Fort Point Channel Harborwalk.



C17A6 Construction Contract Massachusetts Turnpike Authority



The Central Artery C17A6 contract is based on the Machado Silvetti plan for Dewey Square shown on this page. To complement this plan there are a number of initiatives by building owners to upgrade the public space in front of their buildings thereby contributing to a greater public realm.

Dewey Square Master Plan Machado and Silvetti Associates

Also shown: ongoing improvements by building owners at the edge of Dewey Square (see text)

Transformations of the Greenway Edges

While the Central Artery has been under construction a number of properties have been developed or have been significantly upgraded on the edges of the Greenway in the Financial District. These pages summarize some of those improvements.

One Financial Center has redesigned the series of plazas surrounding the building. While the paving and lighting on Summer Street were completed in 2004, the subway headhouse will be completed in 2006. An opportunity exists at the southwest corner of the building for creating more active space at the conjunction of Essex, Lincoln and Surface Road.

Development plans for South Station contain a proposal in three parts: a 40-story, 1,050,000 square foot office tower; a 500-room hotel and a nine story office / R and D building with associated parking for 800 cars.

245 Summer Street is a 12-story, 154-foot high office building. Pembroke Real Estate is currently upgrading the Summer Street frontage of the building creating retail space at sidewalk level and redesigning the small plaza between the office building and the south annex entrance to the South Station concourse.

The Federal Reserve Bank is a 600-foot high office tower and is in the process of constructing a new landscape around its periphery, incorporating a new security building on the Dorchester Avenue side and security barriers within the landscape. The paving, tree species and the alignment of features have been designed to work harmoniously with those of Dewey Square and the Greenway. A new museum within the Federal Reserve complex with a focus on economic history and an entrance on Congress Street is projected to be completed by 2008. The Federal Reserve is also upgrading the edge of the Fort Point Channel.

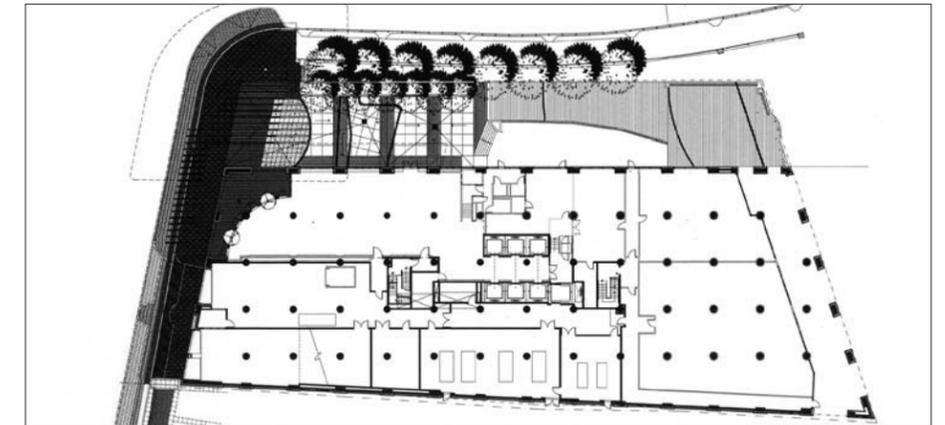
Russia Wharf, at 530 Atlantic Avenue and 270-290 Congress Street, consists of three existing 7-story buildings located on a 95,000 sf site. Constructed in the 1890's the buildings comprise a National Register District eligible for Boston Landmark status. The new 861,000 square foot development will consist of 200 residential units within the historic structure, a 31-story, 500,000 square foot commercial tower above and 650 car parking spaces underground. The MBTA is reconstructing the Harborwalk along the edge of the Channel as part of the mitigation for the Transitway construction.

500 Atlantic Avenue is a 792,000 square foot mixed-use hotel and residential development wrapped around the Central Artery Ventilation Building #3 whose fan rooms are below grade. At the edge of the Channel there will be a ferry terminal constructed adjacent to the paved waterside park which forms part of the Harborwalk, extending south through Russia Wharf and north through Independence Wharf.

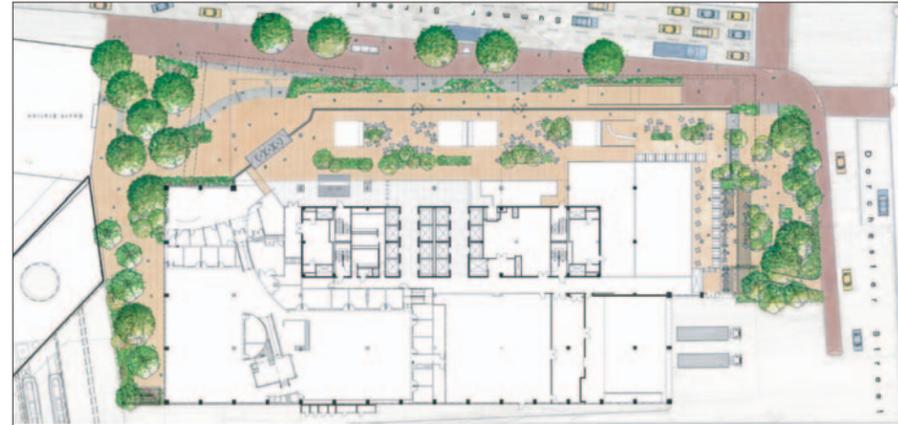
470 Atlantic Avenue (Independence Wharf) has recently been upgraded, including the plaza that connects the building to Atlantic Avenue and the Moakley Bridge. Public assets include the extension of the Harborwalk through the last bay of the building at ground level. There is also a public viewing area on 14th floor, an historic exhibit, a restaurant and 24-hour accessible public bathrooms.



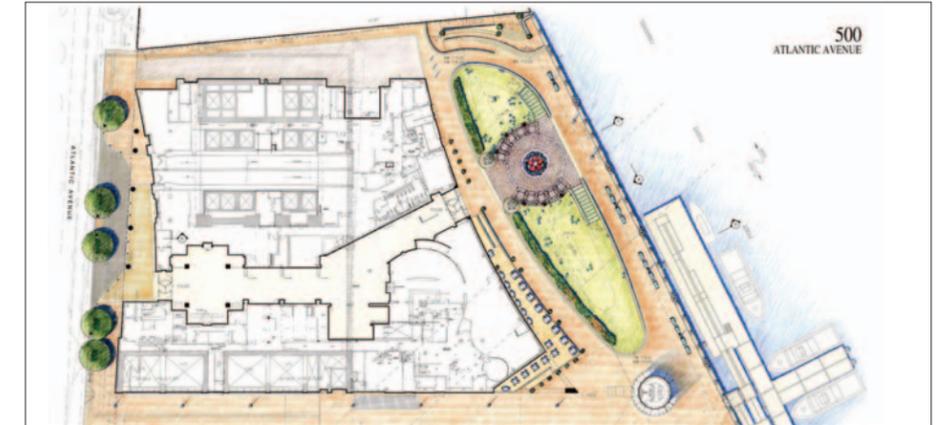
One Financial Center Carol R Johnson Associates



470 Atlantic Avenue / Independence Wharf Jung Brannen Associates



245 Summer Street Gensler / Pressley Associates



500 Atlantic Elkus / Manfredi Architects



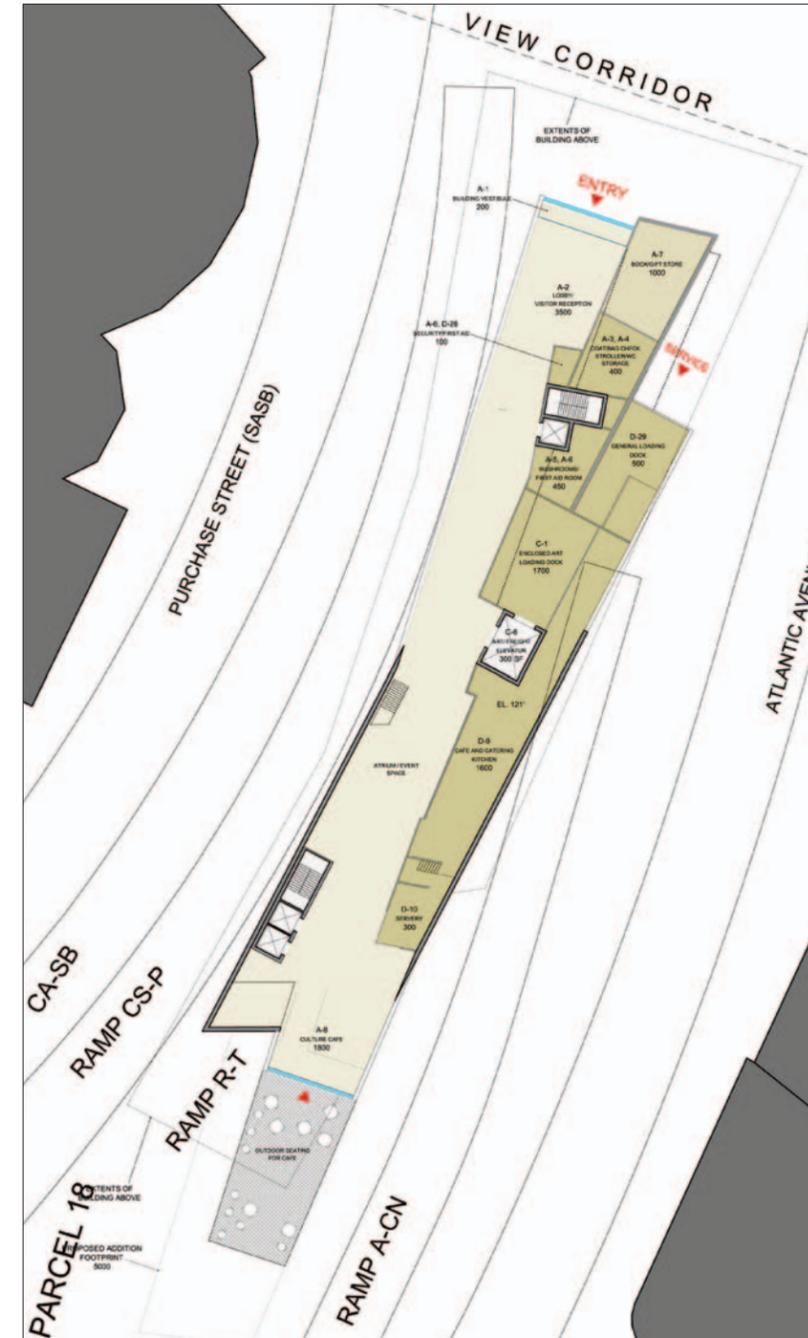
Federal Reserve Bank Halvorson Design Partnership



Russia Wharf CBT Architects



Parcel 18 New Center for Arts and Culture Studio Daniel Libeskind



Parcel 18 New Center for Arts and Culture Site Plan

Parcel 18 / New Center for Arts and Culture is proposing a building of approximately 67,000 square feet to be built over the highway ramps on parcel 18. The New Center will include a transformable performance theater that can accommodate dance, theater, lectures, music, lectures and film. In addition it will have museum quality galleries that can host a variety of exhibitions; hands-on exploration areas as well as seminar and meeting rooms. The building will also have a café, a rooftop terrace and an atrium. Outdoor features include a café, fountains and sculptures extending outwards from each end of the building to make connections with the street. The building is scheduled to open in 2008.

NOTE
 The plan and rendering shown on this page were part of the Proposed Concept Design submitted to Massachusetts Turnpike Authority in response to the Parcel 18 Request for Proposals. The design may change.