

# Urban Renewal: Kickoff Meeting

City Hall | March 31, 2015

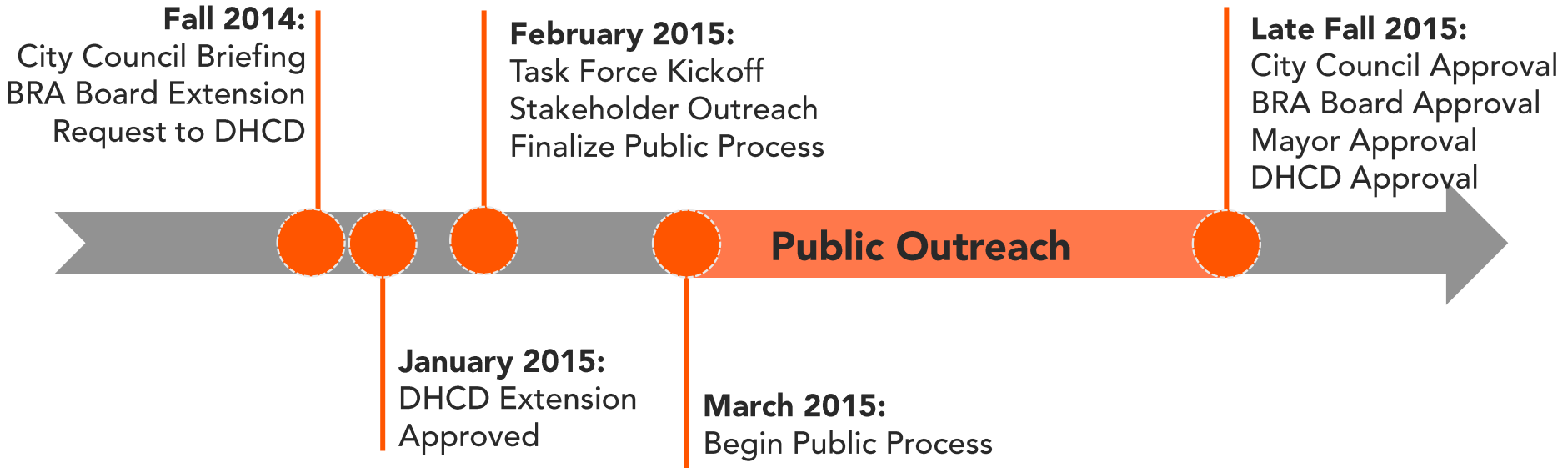
Blackstone Community Center | April 2, 2015

Madison Park High School | April 14, 2015

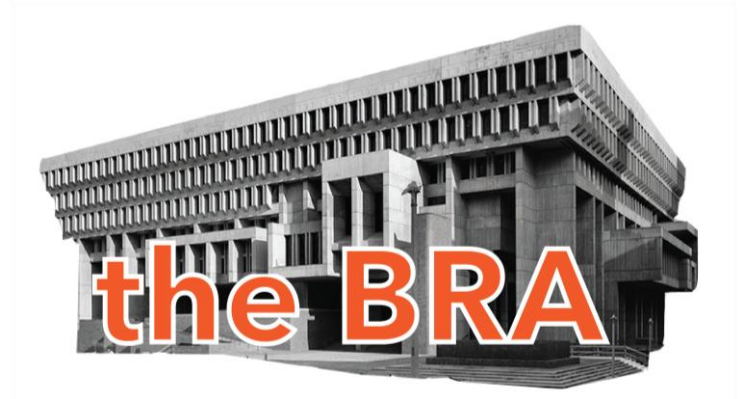


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# Simplified UR Extension Process



# Urban Renewal: The Big, Important Questions



# What the BRA is **NOT** doing:

- 1. Not modifying or extending the existing boundaries**
- 2. Not creating new urban renewal plan areas**
- 3. Not proposing projects, but focusing on process and planning**



# What the BRA **IS** doing:

- 1. Repositioning Urban Renewal as a contemporary planning and economic development tool**
- 2. Refresh plans to show current planning and projects**
- 3. Revisit original goals and planning objectives**

# The Questions

- **What is Urban Renewal?**
- **Where can I find it?**
- **Could past mistakes ever be repeated?**
- **Is Urban Renewal still useful and relevant today?**
- **How can I learn more?**

# What is Urban Renewal?

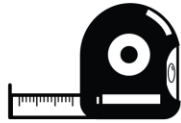


# WHAT IS URBAN RENEWAL?

Certain cities and towns in the Commonwealth contain areas that are substandard, decadent or blighted open.

Urban renewal is a **strategy for redeveloping and revitalizing** these disinvested, underutilized and blighted areas for residential, commercial, industrial, business, governmental, recreational, educational, hospital or other uses.

This is now a state, not federal, program.



## Blight Findings

Evidence of decadence or sub-standard conditions used to enact demonstration projects and negotiate incentives, etc.



## Eminent Domain

Taking property to accomplish a public purpose. Used for site assembly, title clearance and vertical discontinuances



## Urban Renewal Tools

## UR Overlay Districts

Special zoning areas within Urban Renewal Areas



## Land Use Controls

Use, height and design restrictions specific to each Urban Renewal Disposition Parcel



## Housing Affordability Restrictions

Affordability requirements established to create housing opportunities



## Demonstration Projects

Projects designed to eliminate blight outside of Urban Renewal Areas



# ADAPTING OUR VIEW OF URBAN RENEWAL

Responding to the changing needs of the City of Boston

## Original Approach

- Tackle blight
- Assemble land to develop infrastructure and public facilities
- Aggregate parcels to build streets for vehicular traffic
- Develop affordable housing

## Current Approach

- Create vibrancy
- Reinvest in already developed facilities to add density and diverse uses
- Make current streets efficient for multi-modal transportation
- Create a diverse housing stock with mixed income, family and TOD housing

# **Where can I find Urban Renewal?**





A

Assembly Row, Somerville



B

Kendall Square, Cambridge



C

Government Center, Boston

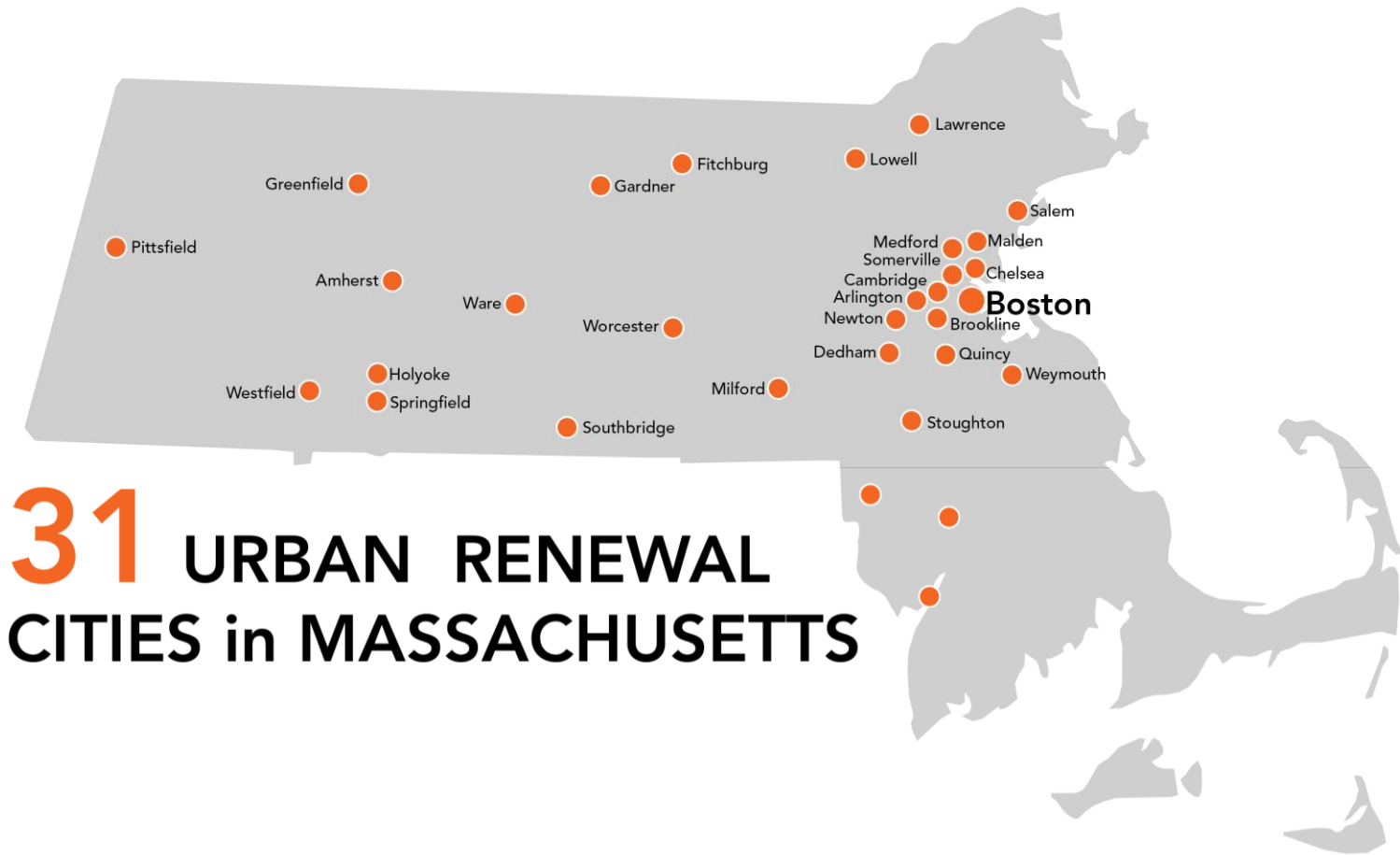


D

The Fenway, Boston







# 31 URBAN RENEWAL CITIES in MASSACHUSETTS



# UR Plans

**19 urban renewal plans approved in the Commonwealth since 1996**

**5 plans approved over past two years**

**Despite their age, many older plans continue to be active:**

- Assembly Square in Somerville
- Union Square intermodal transportation facility in Springfield
- Kendall Square in Cambridge

# UR Recent Plans

Attleboro: Industrial/Business Park Urban Revitalization and Development Plan - 2003

Attleboro: Downtown Urban Revitalization and Development Plan – 2007

Chelsea: Everett Avenue Urban Revitalization and Development Plan - 1999

Fall River: Municipal Airport Urban Renewal Plan/Commerce Park - 1997

Fall River: Kerr Mill Revitalization and Development Plan – 2000

Fitchburg: Downtown Revitalization and Development Plan - 2001

Gardner: Downtown Urban Renewal Plan – 2011

Gardner: Mill Street Corridor Urban Renewal Plan – 2013

Greenfield: Bank Row Urban Renewal Plan – 2007

Holyoke: Connect.Construct.Ceate. - Center City Revitalization Plan – 2013

Lowell: Acre Urban Revitalization and Development Project - 2000

Lowell: Ayer's City Industrial Park Urban Revitalization and Development Project – 2014

Lowell: Jackson-Appleton-Middlesex Revitalization and Development Project – 2000

**Quincy: Quincy Center District Urban Revitalization & Development Plan – 2007**

**Somerville: Assembly Square Revitalization and Development Project – 1980**

2002 amendment for redesign as mixed-use TOD project

**Somerville: Union Square Revitalization Plan – 2012**

**Southbridge: Downtown Urban Revitalization Project – 2012**

**Springfield: Smith & Wesson Industrial Park Urban Renewal Plan – 2005**

**Springfield: Indian Orchard Business Park Urban Renewal Plan – 2009**

**Springfield: Court Square Urban Renewal Plan– 1970**

2001 amendment for Union Square intermodal transportation facility; hotel, community center, and parking garage

2002 amendment for renovation and expansion of Civic Center

2006 amendment to revitalize downtown (e.g., historical preservation and streetscape improvements)

**Westfield: Elm Street Urban Renewal Plan – 2013**

**Could past  
mistakes be  
repeated?**

# KEY FACTS AND DATES

**1954:** Boston's first Urban Renewal Plan created (the now expired New York Streets)

**1980:** The North Station Urban Renewal Area was established. This is Boston's youngest UR Plan

**April, 2015:** 16 of our active plans will expire. We are seeking to renew 15 of them (as well as North Station)

**2020:** The North Station Urban renewal Plan will expire

**1949:** Federal government establishes the Urban Renewal program

**1957:** BRA established as the Boston's Urban Renewal Agency

**1973:** 22 Urban Renewal Plans have been established in Boston

**2005:** 16 Urban Renewal Plans were renewed for 10 years

# URBAN RENEWAL'S STIGMA

## BEFORE



West End, 1957

## AFTER





Government Center, 1961



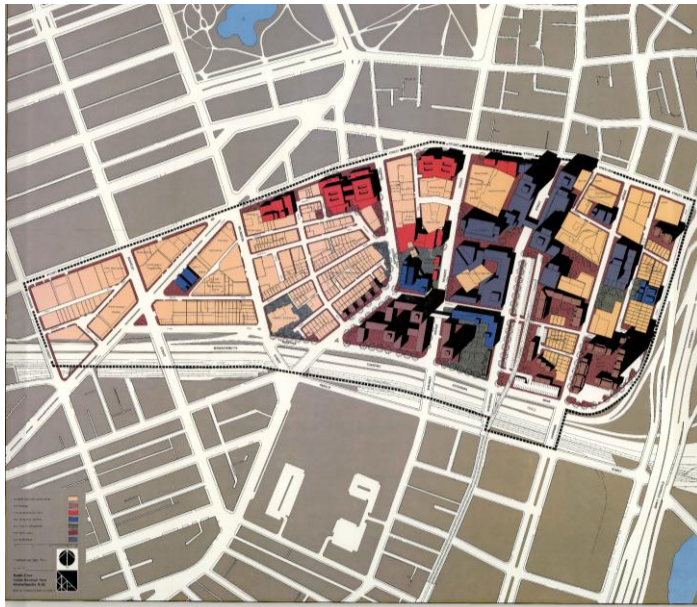




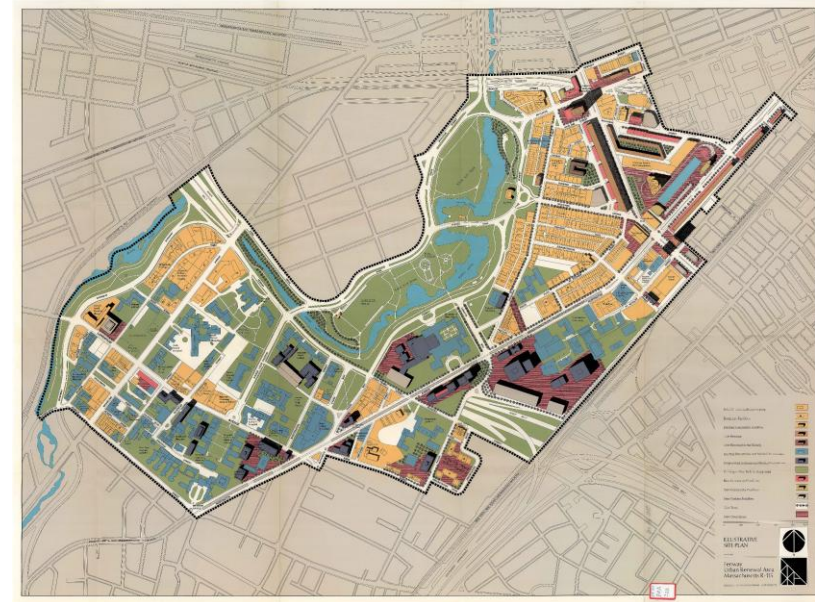
South End, 1962



Charlestown, 1965



South Cove, 1965



Fenway, 1965



# 1957

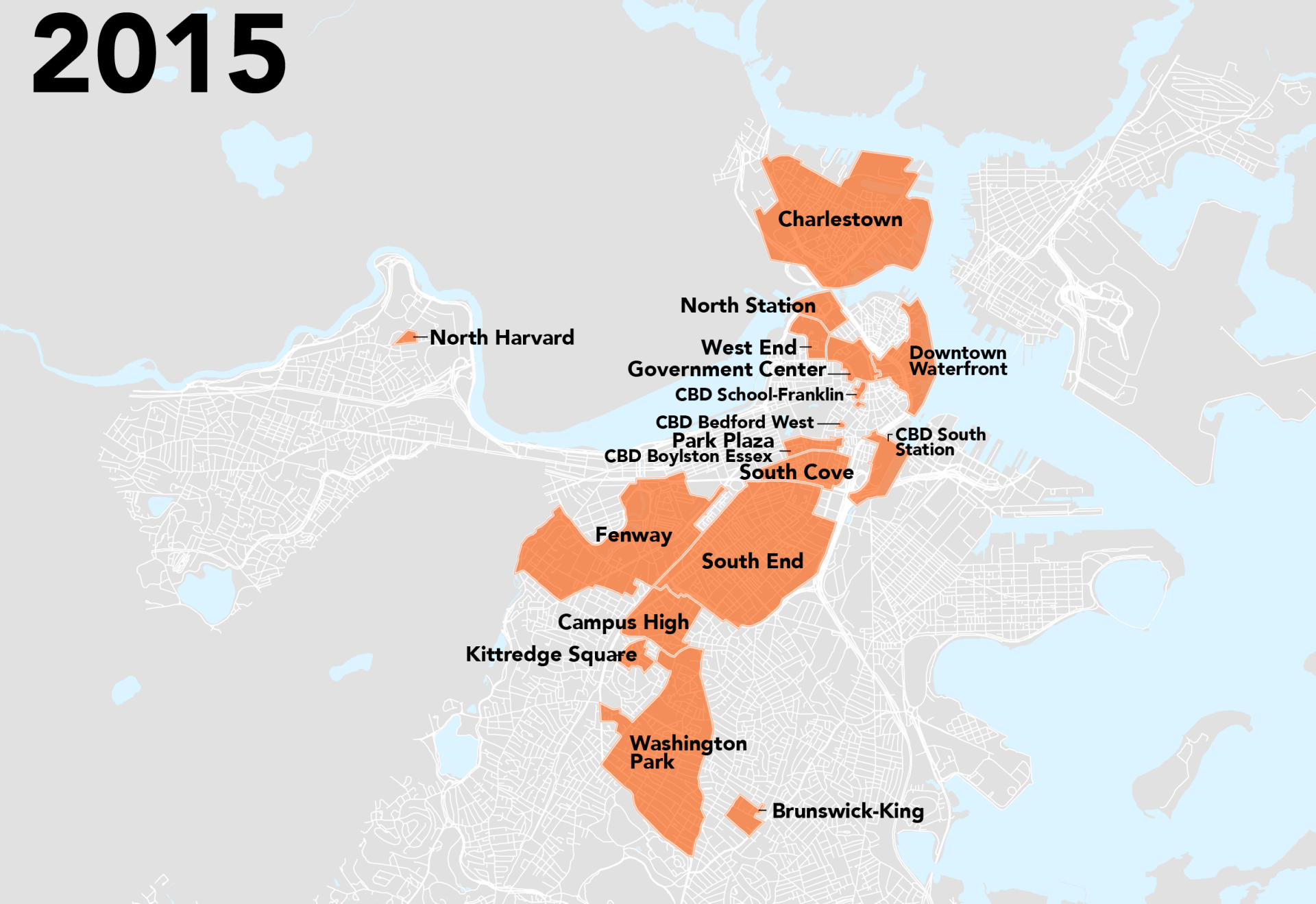


## West End



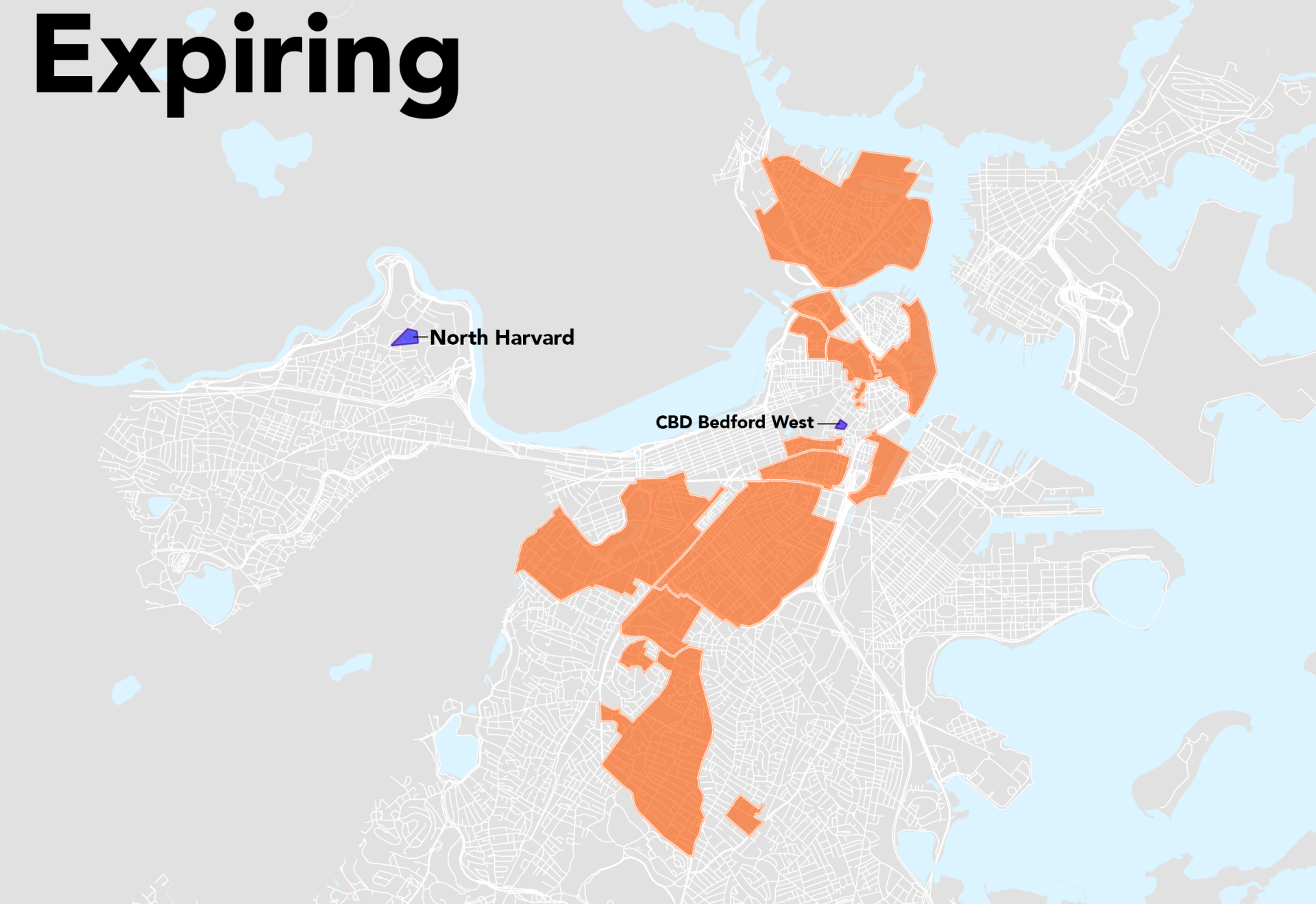
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# 2015



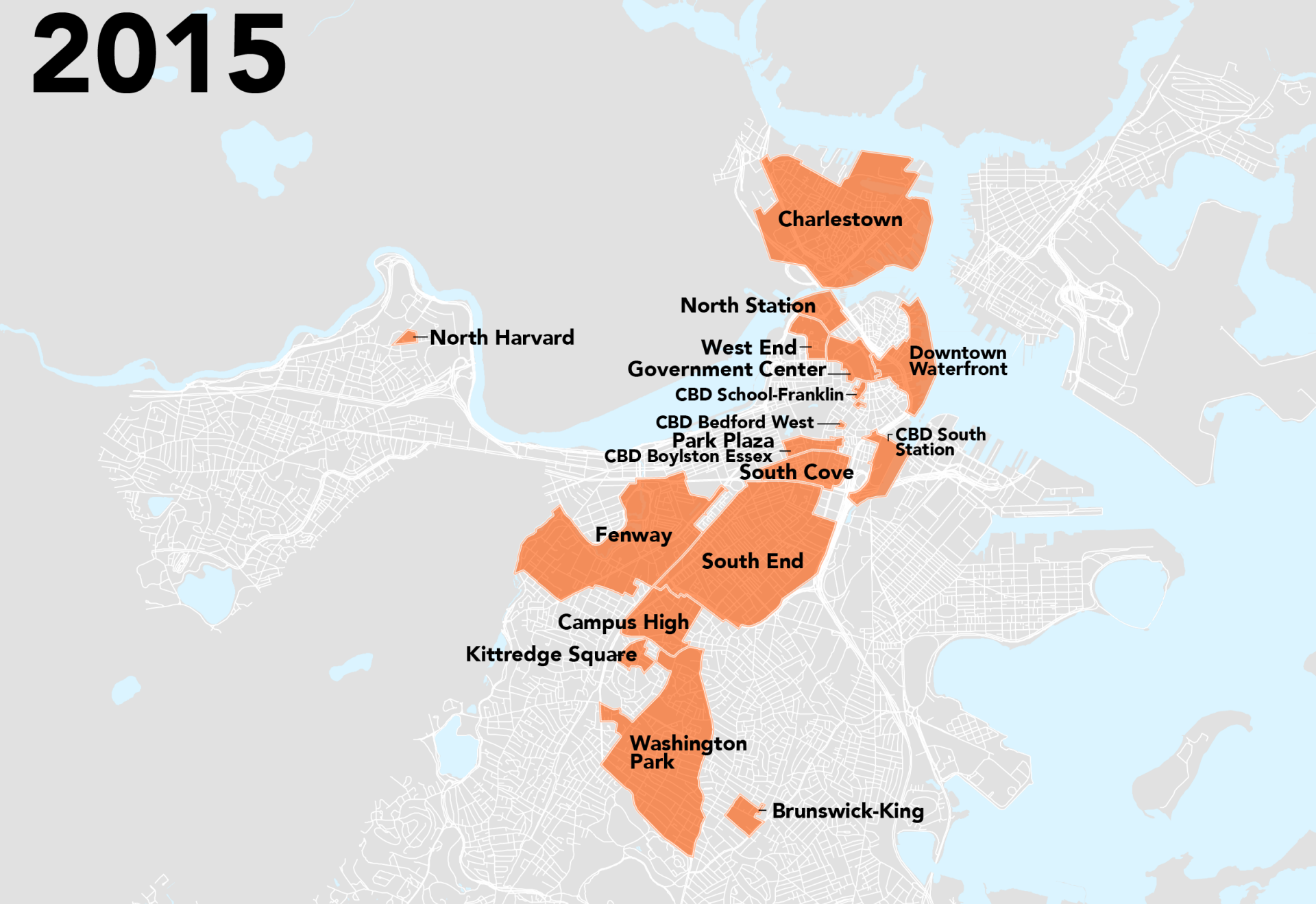
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# Expiring



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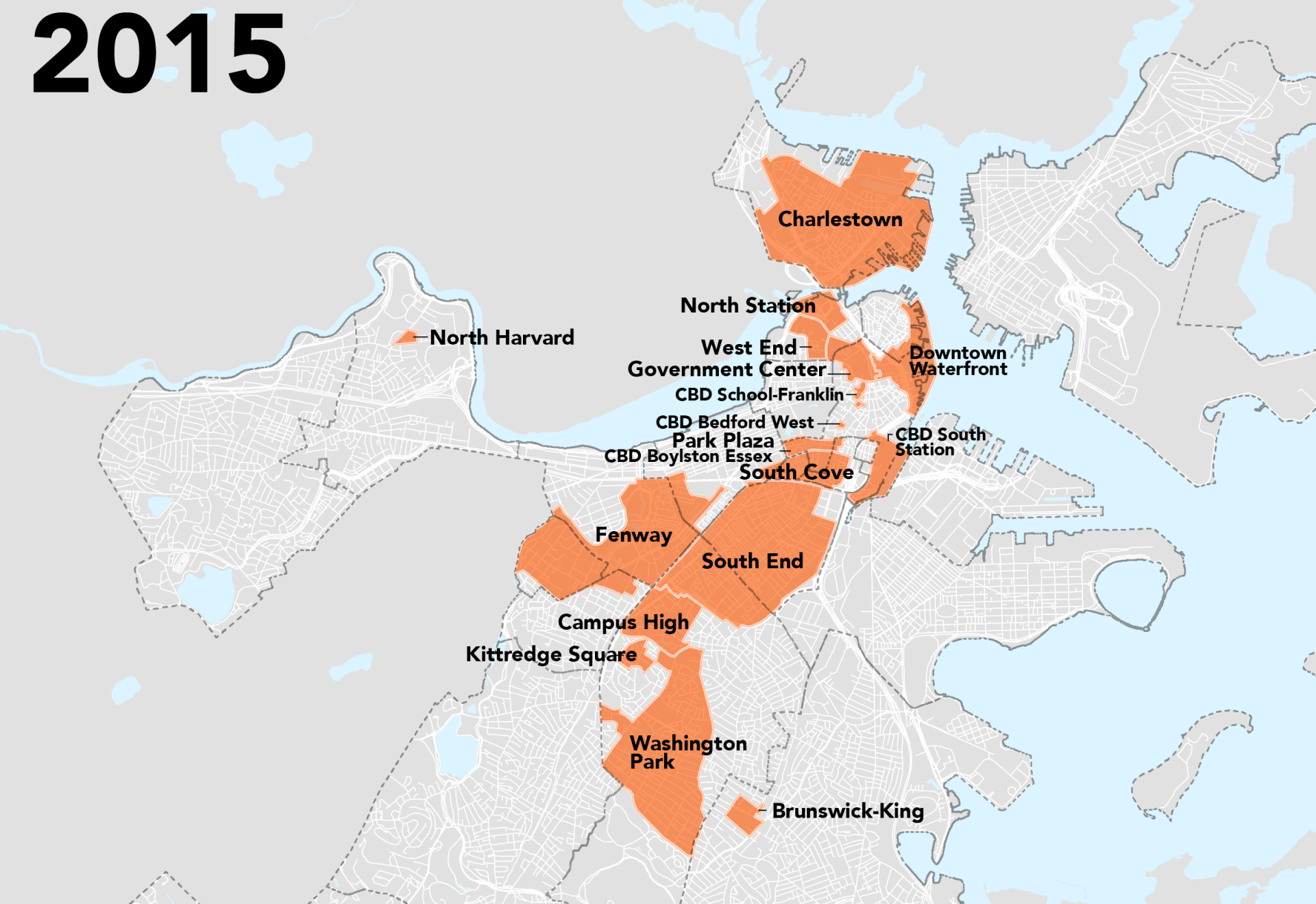
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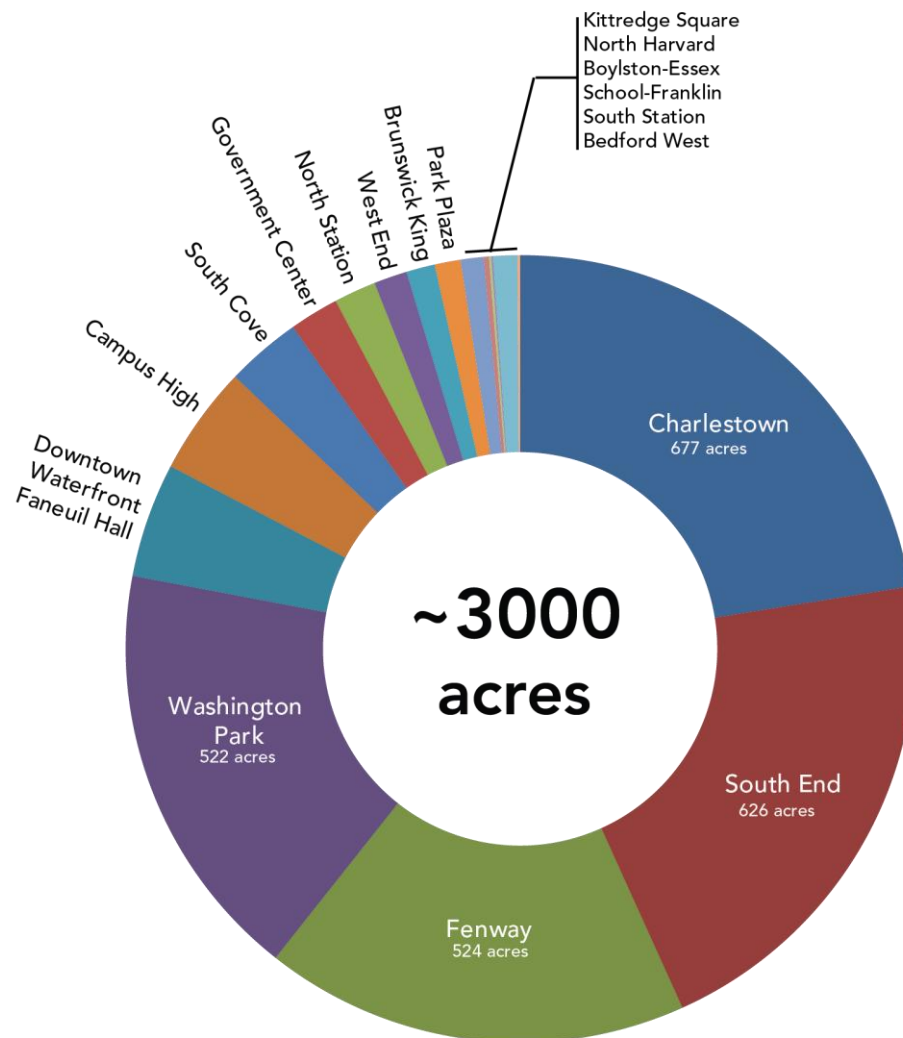


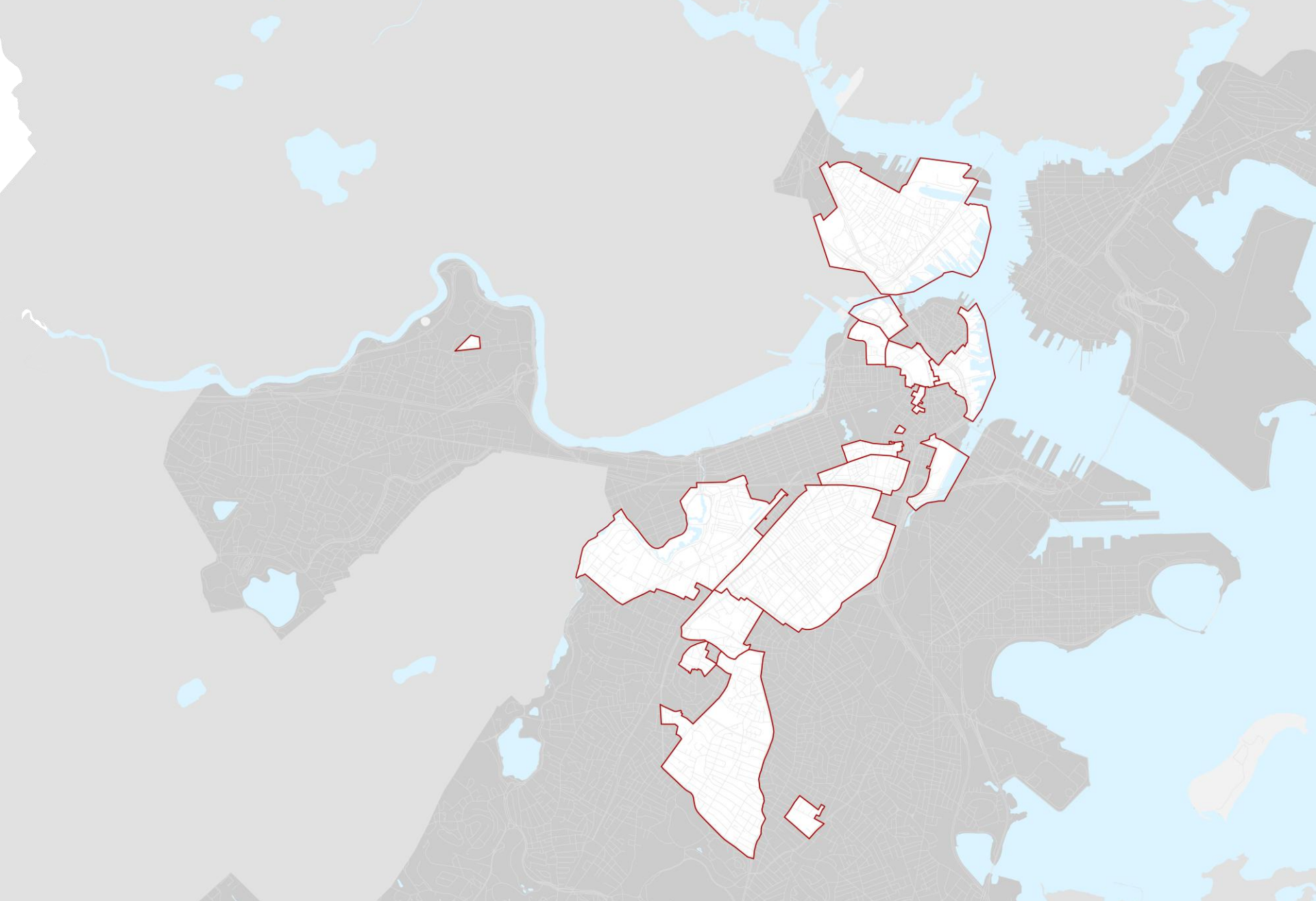
# 2015



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<b><u>Plan Area</u></b>	<b><u>Year</u></b>	<b><u>Acres</u></b>
Charlestown	1965	676.9
South End	1962	626.2
Fenway	1965	524
Washington Park	1962	522
Downtown Waterfront	1964	141.7
Campus High	1966	134.7
South Cove	1965	92.9
Government Center	1961	60.9
North Station	1980	52.1
West End	1957	41.1
Brunswick King	1972	35.4
Park Plaza	1971	31.9
South Station	1968	30
Kittredge Square	1972	28.3
North Harvard	1962	6.5
Bedford West	1973	3
Boylston-Essex	1968	3
School-Franklin	1968	2





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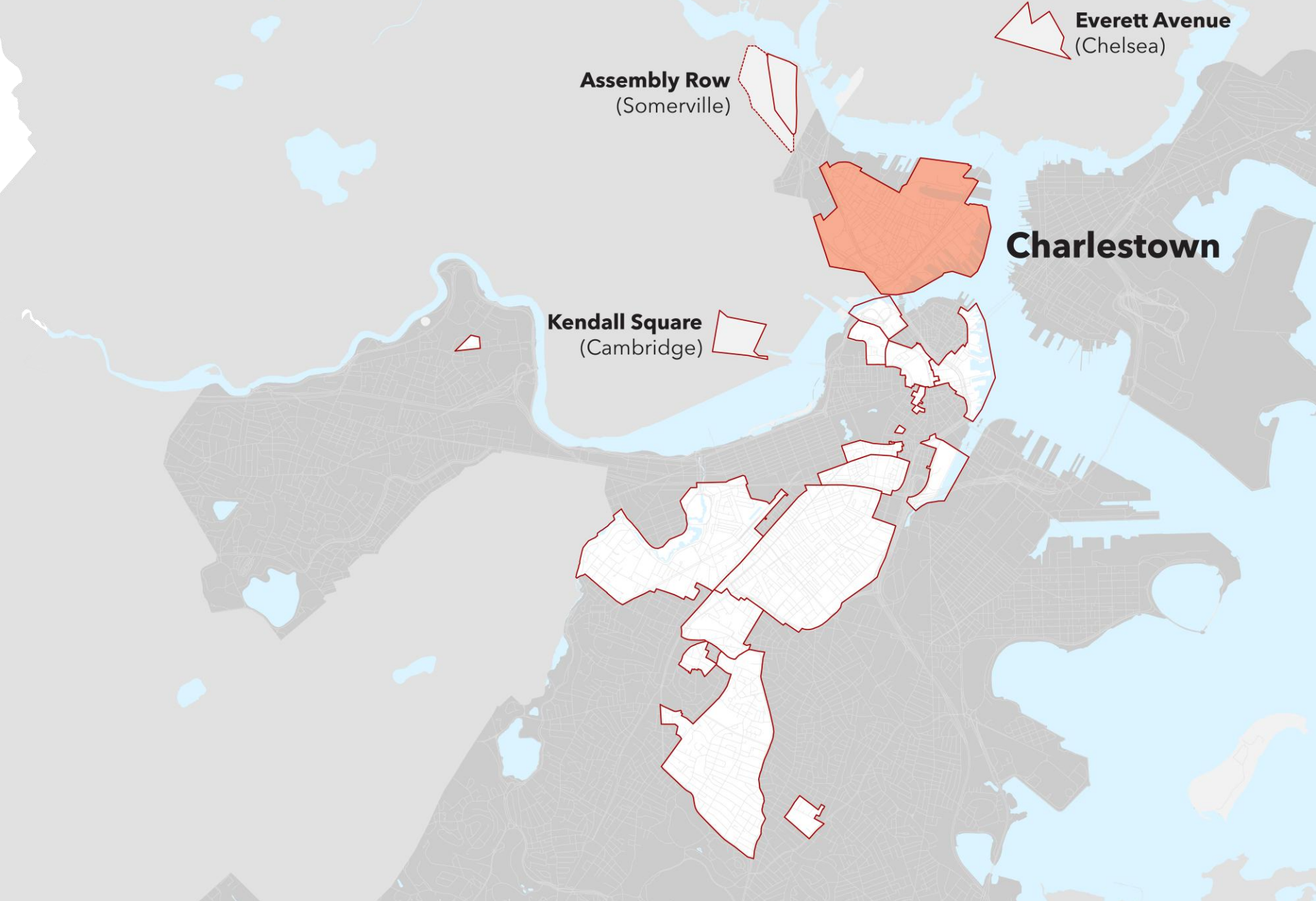
A map of Boston, Massachusetts, showing the city's layout. The Charlestown neighborhood is highlighted in a solid orange color. Several other areas, including parts of the North End, Downtown Crossing, and South End, are outlined in a thin red line. The surrounding areas are in a light gray color, and the water bodies are in a light blue color. The word "Charlestown" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font to the right of the orange area.

**Charlestown**



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**Assembly Row**  
(Somerville)

**Everett Avenue**  
(Chelsea)

**Charlestown**

**Kendall Square**  
(Cambridge)



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**Is Urban Renewal  
still useful and  
relevant today?**



# ADAPTING OUR VIEW OF URBAN RENEWAL

Responding to the changing needs of the City of Boston

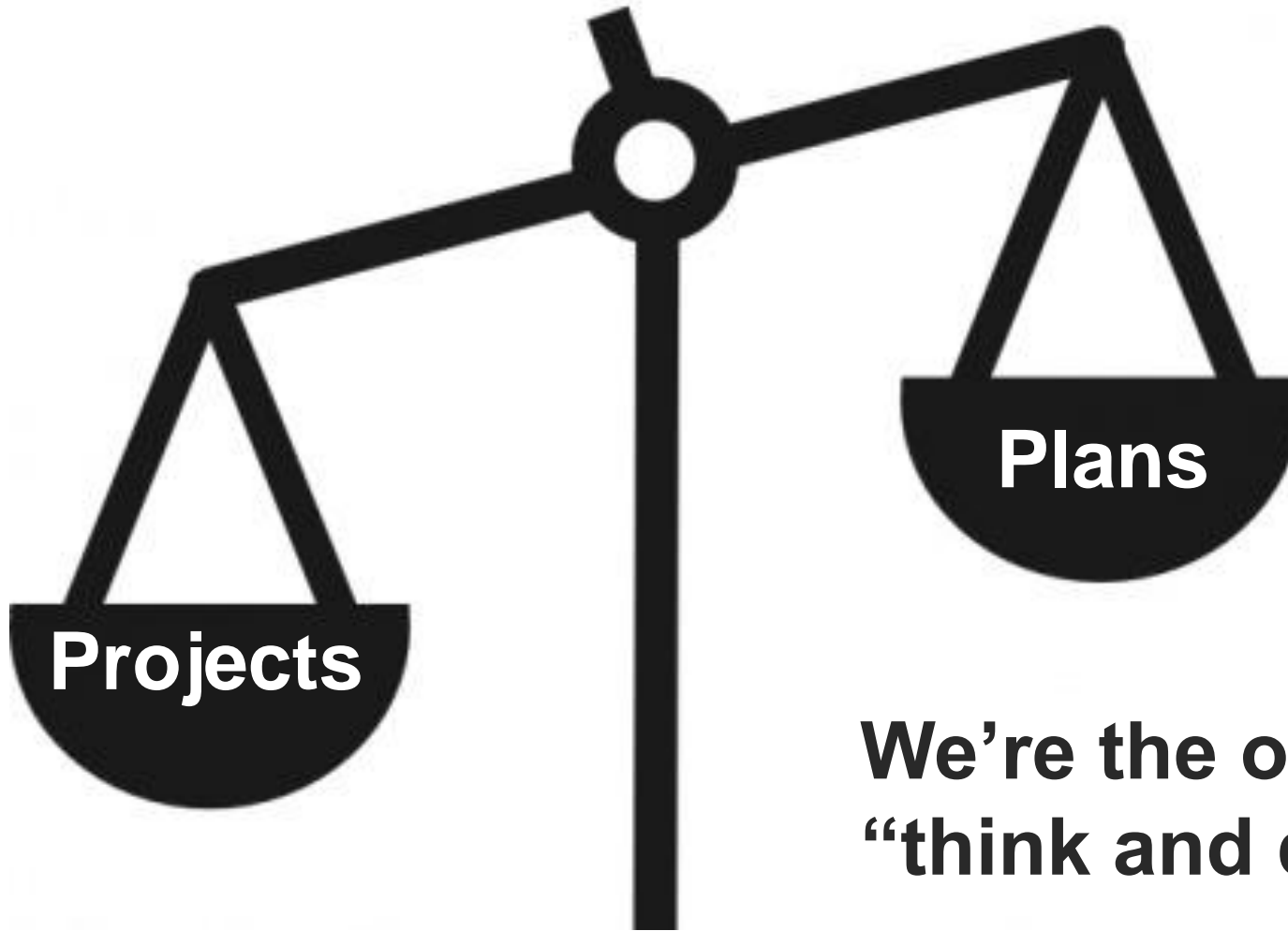
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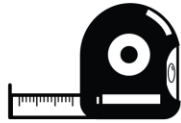
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- Create vibrancy
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# Urban Renewal is intended to balance planning with projects.



**We're the original  
“think and do” tank.**



## Blight Findings

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# **When are Urban Renewal tools needed for redevelopment?**

- 1. When other plans and initiatives are less successful**
- 2. Revitalization can't be accomplished by private sector alone or with existing regulatory powers**
- 3. Need for land assembly for private or public development**
- 4. As a last resort after exhausting all other tools**

**Under the urban renewal statute M.G.L. c. 121B, a redevelopment authority is authorized to act as a municipality's developer in order to:**

- Address conditions that contribute to disinvestment and underutilization in specific neighborhoods**
- Create an environment that supports private investment and promotes sound growth**



# LAND ASSEMBLY

Allows for the creation of spaces of a variety of scales

## Creating space for:

Housing  
Jobs  
Retail  
Cultural institutions  
Open space

The Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, *Dudley Square*

# TITLE CONFIRMATION

## An Essential Tool in a 400 Year Old City

- 164,151 individual parcels of land in contemporary Boston
- Founded in 1630, expanded by land fill and annex neighboring towns beginning in late 1800s
- Creates a new record of clear ownership
- Only mechanism for clearing title in Boston
- 
- Cleared title required for developers to get financing and title insurance
- Used to help facilitate and expedite the City's foreclosure process





# REGULATORY CONTROL

**Helps to create and preserve the best use for the area**



- Extra layer beyond zoning (additional studies and plans have been conducted to determine best use for Urban Renewal Areas and corresponding Disposition Parcels)
- Controls established as a result of the extensive studies conducted when the Urban Renewal plans and goals were created
- Allows Urban Renewal goals to continue to be a priority even with changing disposition parcel ownership

Apartment

City view

# URBAN RENEWAL OVERLAY DISTRICTS

## Streamlines permitting and community input

- After the zoning commission approval of the U District map amendment, the BRA approves uses and dimensions for specific projects within that district
- The BRA serves as the broker between the developer and the community to evaluate any competing interests



Millennium Bostonian Hotel



The W Hotel & Residences



# PROJECTS



# Recent Urban Renewal Projects



**Spaulding Rehab Center and Park (Charlestown)**



**Charlesview Apartments (Brighton)**



**Whittier Street Health Center (Campus High)**





# Abutter Program Example: 18 Sussex Street

South End Urban Renewal Area

**Before**



**After**







# LIBERTY MUTUAL

One of the few commercial  
development projects under  
construction during the  
recession.



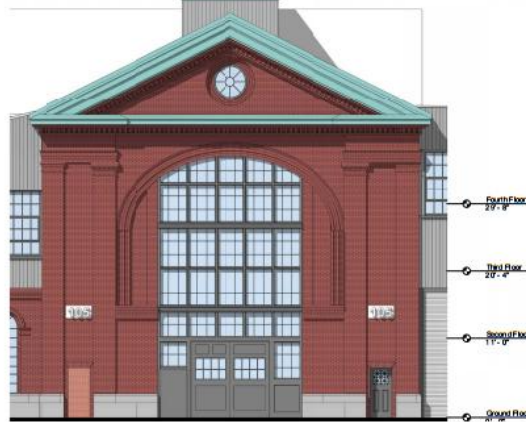


# Upcoming Urban Renewal Projects



**Crescent Parcel,  
Washington Park**

**The Chain Forge Hotel,  
Charlestown**



**The Ropewalk,  
Charlestown**



**City Hall Plaza, Government Center**

**The Little Building (Emerson),  
Park Plaza**



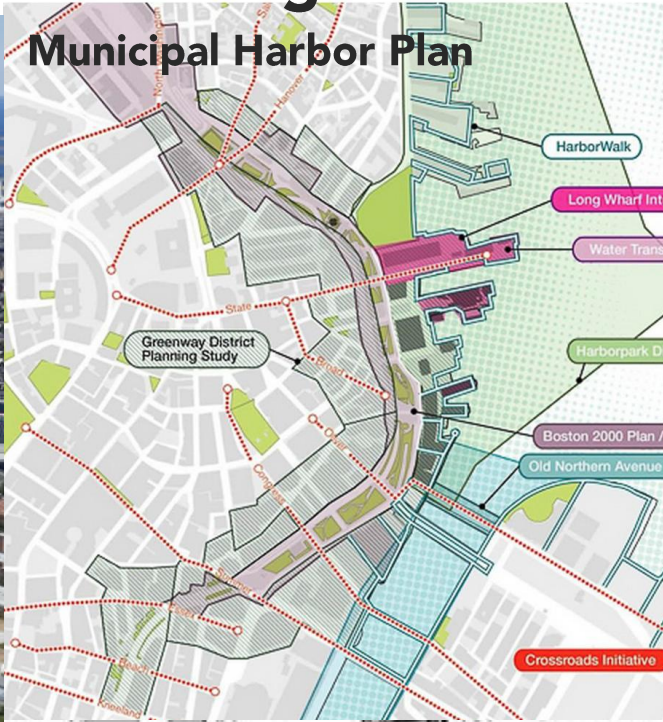


# Upcoming Urban Renewal Planning

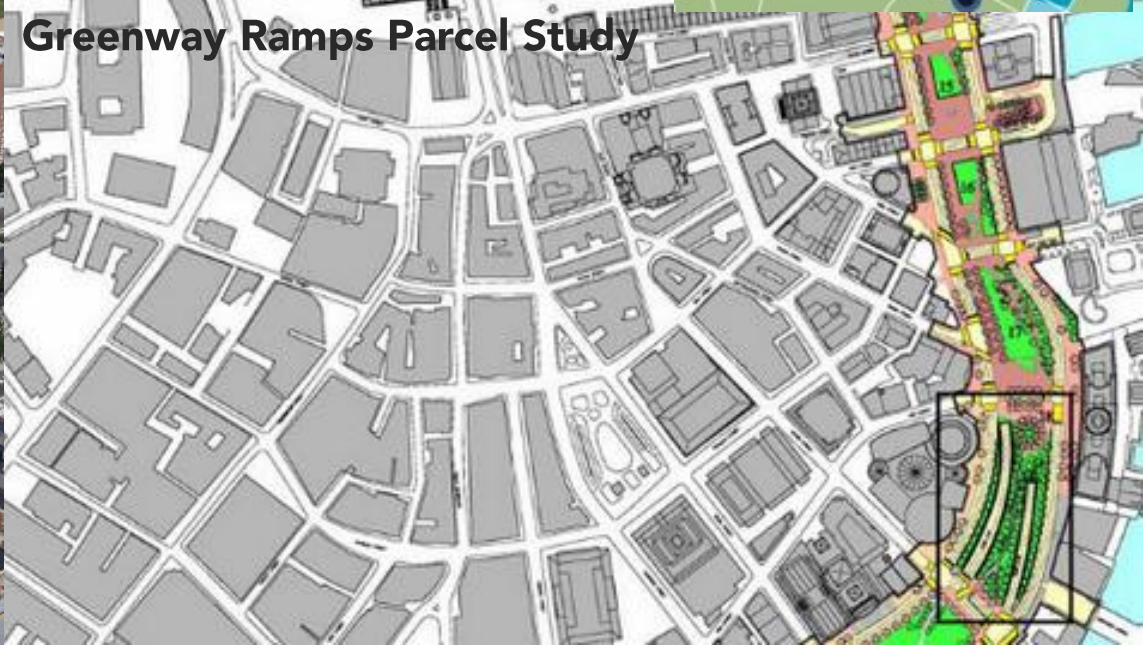
## Huntington Avenue Study



## Municipal Harbor Plan



## Greenway Ramps Parcel Study



**How can I  
learn more?**



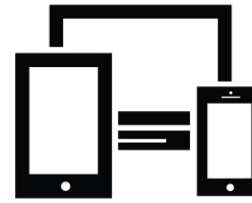




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**Public  
Meetings**



**Interactive  
Website +  
Social Media**



**Enlightened  
Partnerships**



**Stakeholder  
Roundtables**

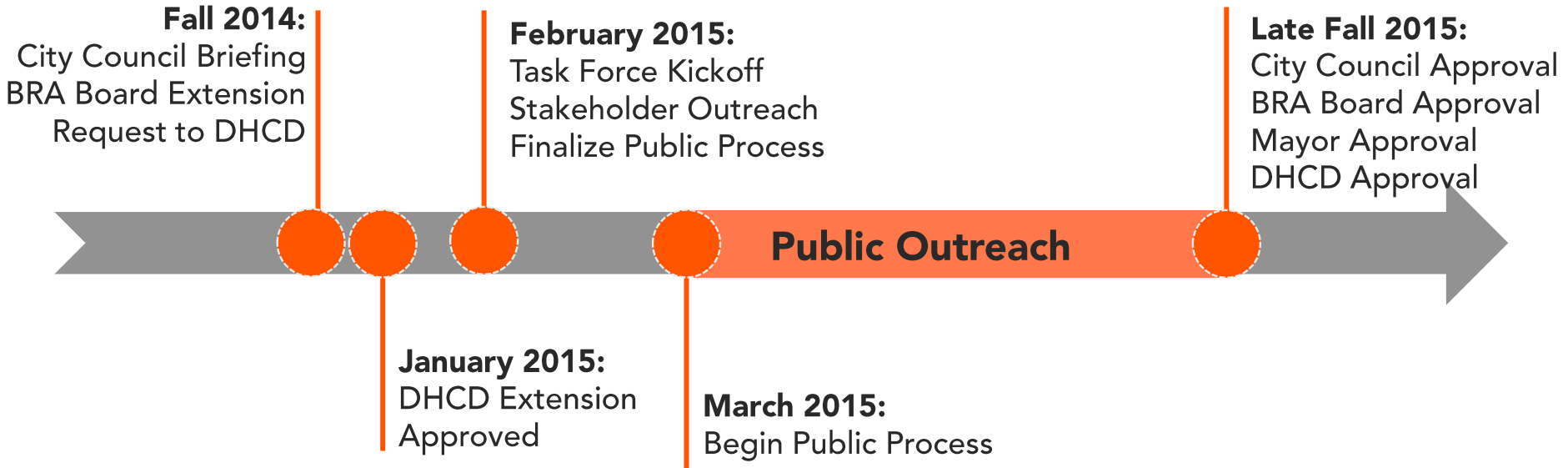


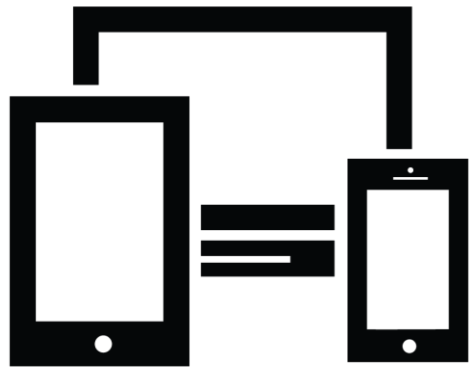
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# Public Meetings



# Simplified UR Extension Process





# **Interactive Website + Social Media**





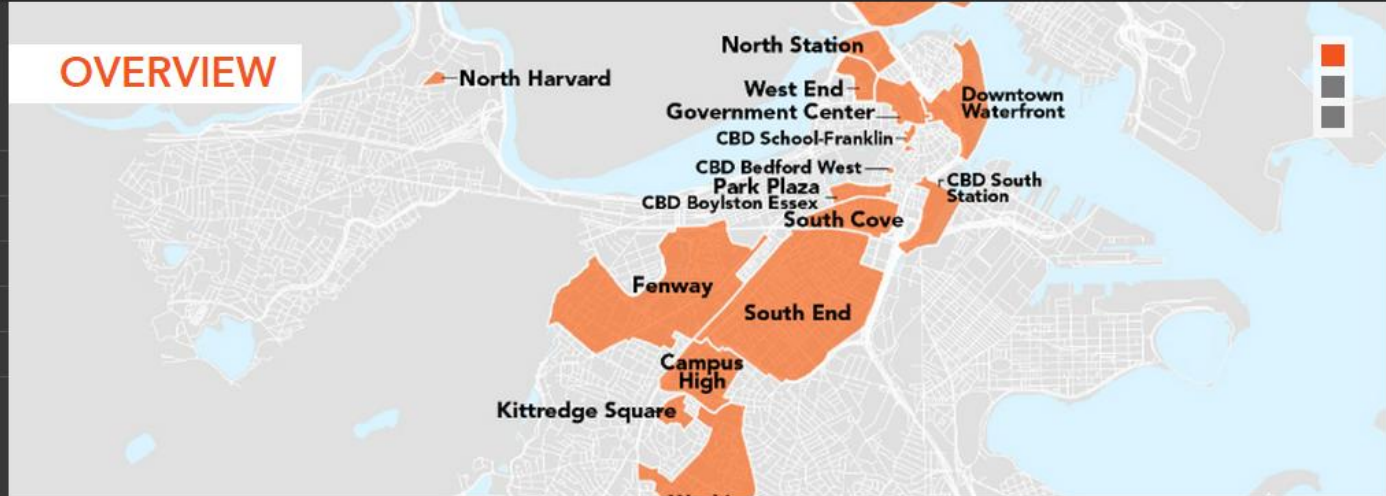
## PLANNING

[What is Planning?](#)[Planning Initiatives](#)[Community Planning](#)[Institutional Planning](#)[Waterfront Planning](#)[Urban Design](#)[Urban Renewal](#)

- [Overview](#)
- [Map](#)
- [Featured Projects](#)

[Zoning Viewer](#)

## OVERVIEW



The BRA is seeking to extend [urban renewal](#) plan areas that cover over 3,000 acres of the city and include parts of Charlestown, the Fenway, Chinatown, the South End, Roxbury, the Downtown Waterfront, the West End, North Station area, and Government Center.

Urban renewal dates back to the American Housing Act of 1949, when the federal government began to invest great sums of money to redevelop cities that were rapidly declining after World War II. Early urban renewal efforts attempted to tackle widespread blight by assembling land to develop massive infrastructure and public facilities, usually at the expense of displacing poor and marginalized residents. The current effort is focused on a contemporary reframing of urban

## EVENTS

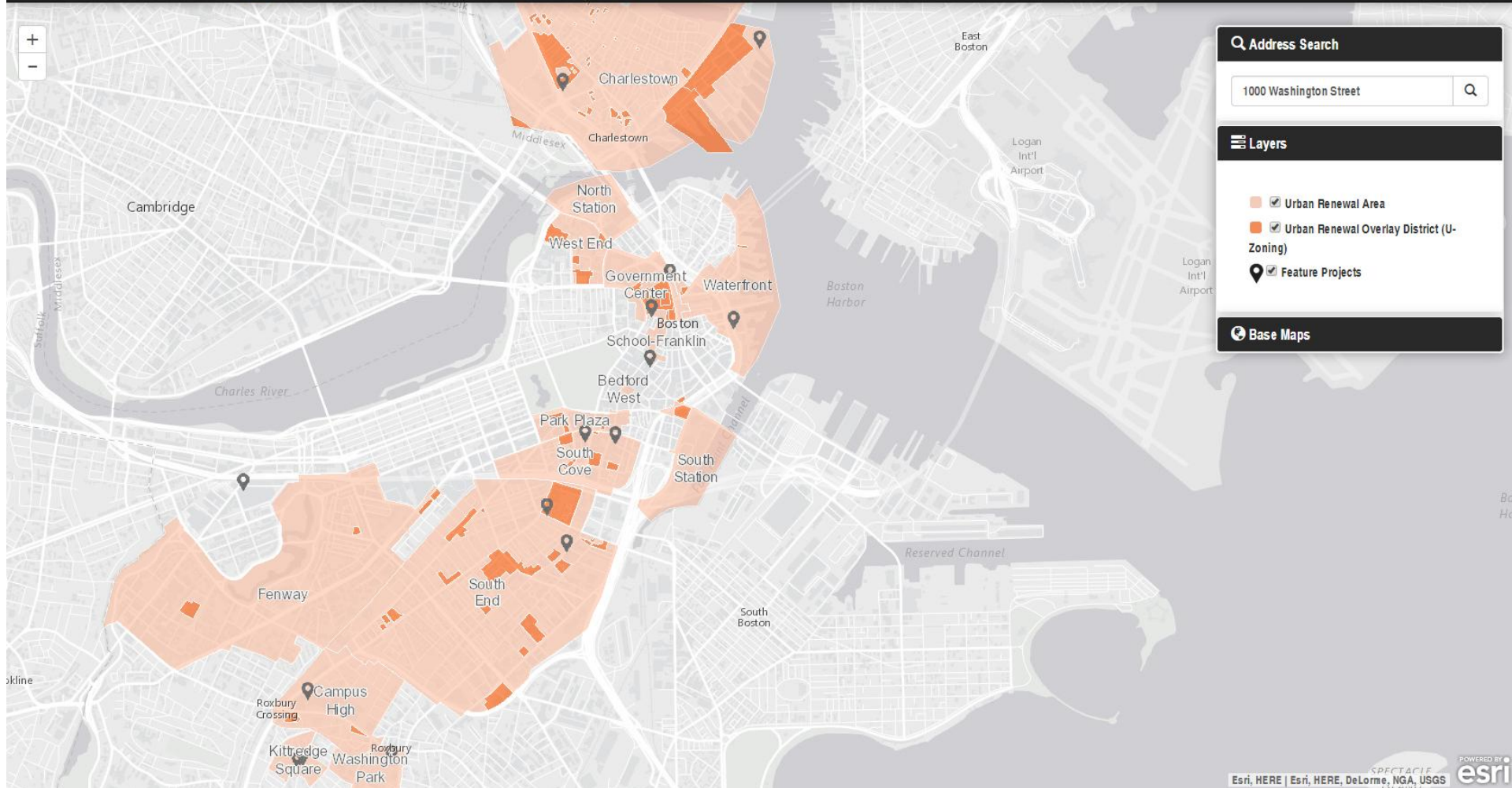
**23**  
FEB[Urban Renewal  
Task Force  
Meeting](#)

## NEWS

December 17, 2014  
[BRA begins community  
engagement process to  
extend urban renewal](#)







Address Search

1000 Washington Street



Layers

- ☒ Urban Renewal Area
- ☒ Urban Renewal Overlay District (U-Zoning)
- ☒ Feature Projects

Base Maps





**Spaulding Rehab Center and Menino Park**

[Transforming a brownfield into a healing environment](#)

🔍 Address Search

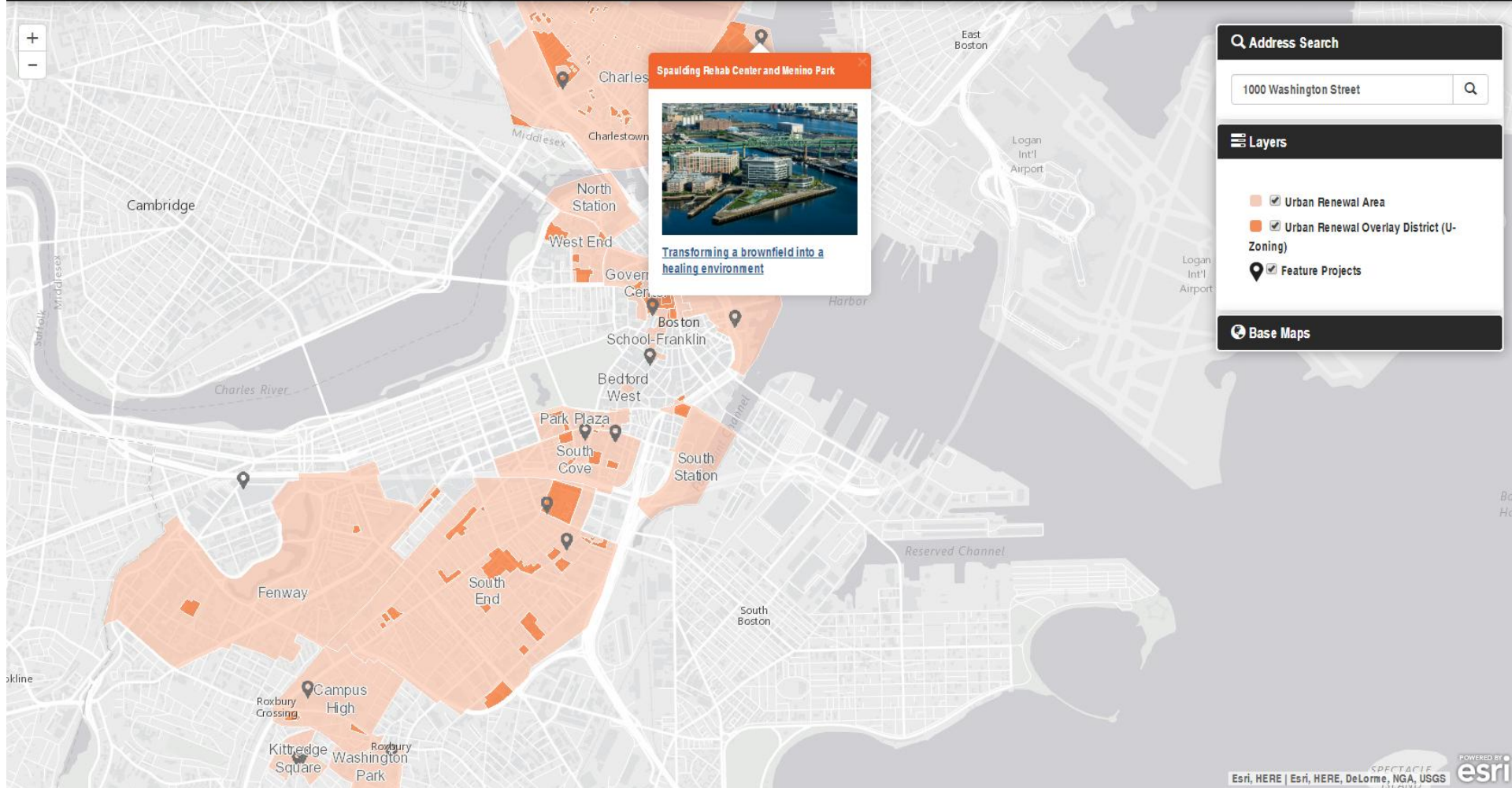
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### Zoning Viewer

Enter Address or Parcel ID



## FEATURED PROJECTS



## Urban Renewal Featured Projects

Urban renewal tools can be the key to facilitating development that might otherwise not be possible. Learn more about some of these recent projects located throughout Boston!



**Boston Public Market at  
136 Blackstone Street**

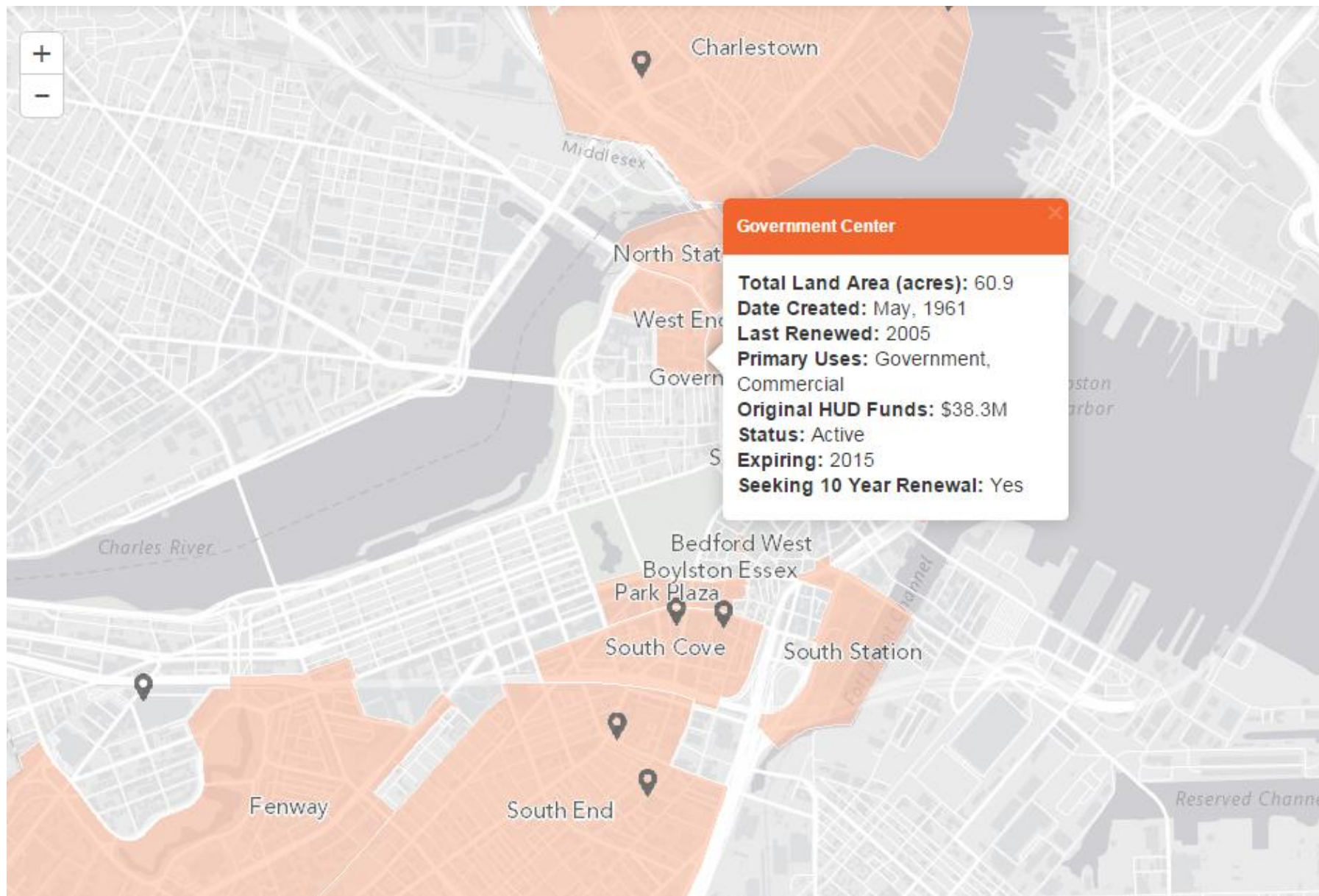


**Millenium Tower and  
Burnham Building**



**Government Center  
MBTA Station**





**bostonurbanrenewal.org**

**#URBoston**

**@BostonRedevelop**



# Enlightened Partnerships



# The West End Museum

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ARCHIVES  
PRESERVING THE PAST  
FOR BOSTON'S FUTURE



City of Boston

*Boston  
Public  
Library*



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# What's next?



# Goals | Downtown Waterfront



## Original (1965)

The Plan contains four (4) basic goals:

1. To revitalize a key portion of downtown Boston;
2. To upgrade the pattern of land uses close by the North End residential community;
3. Establish a functional connection between the area and its surrounding districts: the North End, Government Center, and the Financial District;
4. To provide an environment suitable to the needs of contemporary real estate development.



# BRA Mission Statement

How do urban renewal tools and plans align with the mission of the BRA?

**The Boston Redevelopment Authority plans Boston's built environment while respecting the City's communities and their history. The BRA's mission is to drive economic growth and socioeconomic progress in order to build a more prosperous, resilient, and vibrant city for all.**