

May 16, 2016

**By Email and Hand Delivery**

Mr. Brian P. Golden  
Mr. Raul Duverge  
Boston Redevelopment Authority  
One City Hall Plaza, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Proposed development of 533 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02111

Dear Director Golden and Mr. Duverge:

I write on behalf of the Millennium Place South Residential Association and the Millennium Place North High-Rise Residential Association (the "Millennium Residences") located on Avery Street in Boston. We have had an opportunity to review the Project Notification Form, dated March 31, 2016, submitted by, Rafi Properties, LLC (the "Developer"), regarding the proposed demolition and re-development of property located at 533 Washington Street, the historic "Weed Sewing Machine Company" Building, built in 1866 (the "Proposed Project"). The Millennium Residences respectfully request that the Boston Redevelopment Authority ("BRA") require the Developer to substantially revise its approach to redevelopment of this building which sits at a key location within the historic Ladder Blocks and Washington Street Theater Protection Area. The Proposed Project is grossly out of scale with the historic neighborhood and is also unworkable from a pragmatic point of view, as to loading, unloading, deliveries, waste removal and the like.

We respectfully ask the BRA to undertake a comprehensive analysis of this historic length of Washington Street before proceeding with specific project requests in order to ensure design which complements and protects the neighborhood. The historic Weed Sewing Machine Company/Adams Building is a turn-of-the-centuries 1900's classic, machine factory style building located in the Theatre District of downtown Boston. During the Theatre District heyday, it housed the New Adams House Restaurant, which is another name for the building. Set between the historic Modern Theatre and the Boston Opera House and just a few doors down from the Paramount Theatre, the existing building is essential to the fabric of this neighborhood and the history of the City.<sup>1</sup> As such, every effort should be made to respect and maintain the historic character of the building - not merely the existing façade - but also to complement the massing and character of this lovely section of Washington Street.

**1. The Proposed Project Grossly Violates the Dimensional Regulations of the Boston Zoning Code**

The Proposed Project is located in the Midtown Cultural District and as such is regulated pursuant to Article 38 of the Boston Zoning Code ("the Code"). Significantly, the Proposed Project is located within the historic Ladder Blocks and Washington Street Theater Protection Area.

Without justification, the Proposed Project grossly exceeds the dimensional requirements set forth in the Code to ensure safe, healthy and historically respectful development of this

<sup>1</sup> "The area's largest concentration of late nineteenth-and early twentieth century theaters is one of the best examples of an early theater district in the country." Midtown Cultural District Plan, February, 1989, Page 107.

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neighborhood. At the City Hall Community Meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup>, the only justification for these gross exceedances offered by the Project Proponent was that of his private economic benefit. Specifically, "It's not economically viable to build anything smaller." This private economic justification cannot and should not be sanctioned by the BRA in its review.

As discussed in more detail below, **the Proposed Project exceeds the allowed density (measured by the floor area ratio of the project) by almost 300%, exceeds the height maximum by over 200%, exceeds the street wall height by over 300%.** The upper floors of the Proposed Project are not properly setback from Washington Street, as required by the existing Zoning Code. The chart below identifies these gross exceedances of the Zoning Code.

Zoning Requirement:	Allowed by the Zoning Code:	Proposed by the Developer:
Floor Area Ratio ("FAR") (displayed as proposed total square footage)	36,480 sq. ft.	105,000 sq. ft.
Maximum Height	155'	302'
Street Wall Height	90'	302'
Sky Plane Setback	10' for building height from 90' to 155' and 15' for building height above 155'	Zero/None

We respectfully submit that the Project Proponent should be required to submit a design that complies with dimensional requirements as stated in the Zoning Code.

## **2. The Proposed Project Ignores and Overruns the Zoning Design Requirements**

In addition to the above gross dimensional exceedances, the Proposed Project ignores and demonstrates gross neglect for the additional design requirements set forth in Article 38 of the Code. As currently designed, the Proposed Project violates the purpose and intent of the Zoning Code as articulated in the provisions established for proposed development in the Midtown Cultural District. To the contrary, the Developer's vision for 533 Washington Street reflects a wholesale rejection of the Midtown Cultural Development standards and the Ladder Blocks and Washington Street Theater Protection Area. As proposed, the re-development would substantially detract from the existing historic nature of the streetscape and neighborhood.

Projects in the Ladder Blocks and Washington Street Theater Protection Area, according to the current Zoning Code, must have minimal adverse effect on the lot-by-lot appearance and notable facades of the District and must be designed so that exterior, proportion, scale, massing, window treatment, materials, colors, and architectural detailing are compatible with the observable historical and architectural character of the other buildings in the area.

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Notably absent from the PNF is any effort to ensure that any portion of the Proposed Project that is above 155' in height, should be designed so as to create a "visually distinctive roof or other termination of the façade".<sup>2</sup> The Proposed Project would demolish the existing building, with the exception of its façade, and construct a 30-story so-called "pencil tower". The euphemistic term "pencil tower" is misleading in this instance because it is an attempt to mask the wholesale destruction of a lovely historic building. The existing building is made of granite, cut stone, brick, metal and other historic materials. The Proposed Project also proposes to double the allowed height limit of 155 feet to 302 feet, without justification or any attempt to meet the existing design guidelines. Notably, the adjacent additions to the Modern Theater by Suffolk University and to the Paramount Theater by Emerson College, were limited to twelve (12) stories, not far below the thirty (30) stories sought here (both of these additions are also set back from Washington Street).

We respectfully request that the BRA require the Project Proponents and its able team to present alternatives for redevelopment of this historic building that conform with the scale, proportion and massing for the area and propose a redesign which supports – instead of supplants – the historic fabric of the District.

### **3. The Building to be demolished has National Historic Significance**

**The Adams House Restaurant/Weed Sewing Machine Co. is one of seven historic buildings in this District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Washington Street Theatre District.** This District was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 and is known for its architecture and performing arts significance. As such, special care must be taken to ensure the retention of the historic nature of this building in its context and the historic elements of the building itself. We ask the BRA to require the Project Proponent to undertake a historic preservation analysis of the building, both interior and exterior.

### **4. The Proposed Project Will Have Lasting Traffic and Pedestrian Impacts That Have Not Been Properly Analyzed**

The Millennium Residences have engaged a traffic engineer, Sudhir Murthy, P.E., PTOE and President of Trafinfo Communications, to study the traffic impacts of the Proposed Project and provide a critique of the PNF. A copy of Trafinfo's letter dated May 13, 2016, is attached hereto as Exhibit A. We ask the BRA to require the Project Proponent to address Trafinfo's important questions and undertake the rigorous traffic analyses identified by Trafinfo about Parking, Loading, Pedestrians, Transportation Demand Management and Construction. Trafinfo concludes:

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<sup>2</sup> "Because the central part of Midtown has traditionally been a theater district, builders and designers of new buildings in the Cultural District have a unique opportunity to use the themes of lighting, signs, and pedestrian environment amenities that are traditionally found in American and European theater districts. In new structures in the district that exceed the height of the prevailing cornice line, the façade of the base should take cues from the design of adjacent buildings within the district. The tower portion of the structure should, in turn, takes it façade cues from the base as well as other historic tower images. In this way, the building can be well integrated into the district's existing context. The tops of these towers can create a unique character for individual buildings and an identity for the district." Midtown Cultural Plan, Page 116.

**The information and data provided in the PNF is not sufficient to conclude that there will not be any significant traffic impact or other negative transportation impact in the vicinity of the site or beyond. The information presented in the PNF is limited and there are no traffic (vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle) counts, traffic operational analyses, and crash statistics to substantiate the conclusion.**

The Proposed Project is sited at a critical T intersection in the heart of the revitalized and vibrant Theater District. The intersection also supports dormitory residences for Suffolk University and Emerson College, as well as a growing retail destination. The idea of adding substantial density and traffic congestion at one of the worst performing intersections in the City of Boston is unjustified and will likely create an unsafe pedestrian environment. Notably, the Proposed Project site has frontage of only thirty-six feet (36') along Washington Street, at the T intersection, so that all loading, unloading and other services must take place within this awkward and already overloaded location.<sup>3</sup>

At the Community Meeting on May 5<sup>th</sup> in City Hall, the Project Proponent was asked how he would manage waste, deliveries, moves-in and moves-out, taxi and Uber drop-off and pick-ups and the like. Tellingly, no thoughtful answers were provided. Rather, the Project Team explained that they were working out these "details." We respectfully submit that these pragmatic matters are not "details" but are fundamental to the neighborhood. The Proposed Project cannot safely accommodate 94 new units of housing, without significantly caused deterioration of already compromised traffic flow in the Theater District and posing great risk to the high volume of pedestrians. For instance, the large preponderance of very small single occupancy units (76 out of 94 total units, with 42 studios and 42 one-bedrooms) - sandwiched between dormitories for Suffolk University and Emerson College - will undoubtedly result in a transient population (and possibly a high-end dormitory) of unit owners with many move-ins and outs.

The proposed plan for parking is misleading and cannot provide the basis for a reasoned analysis by the BRA or the community. The Project Proponent purports to identify 5,264 theoretical parking spaces within a quarter mile of the site, but has not identified the number of those spaces that are actually uncommitted. For instance, the PNF states that there are theoretically 563 spaces at the Millennium Garage, but the vast majority of these spaces are committed to the various Millennium condominiums, the Ritz Carlton Hotel and the like. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that new unit owners at 533 Washington Street would walk a quarter of a mile to a parking space on the regular basis. Rather, nearby parking usage and

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<sup>3</sup> The T intersection here at issue is located where Avenue de Lafayette runs perpendicular to and meets Washington Street. Three historic theaters are located immediately adjacent to the T intersection and the Proposed Project, as follows:

- 559 Washington Street Paramount Theater/Emerson College
- 537 Washington Street Opera House
- 533 Washington Street Adams House Restaurant/Proposed Project
- 523 Washington Street Modern Theater/Suffolk University

Many of the theater going patrons park their vehicles in the parking garage located just steps down Avenue de Lafayette from the T intersection.



attendant traffic will no doubt escalate as a result of the Proposed Project. The Developer's failure to define the exact location of actual parking for its buyers indicates a fundamental lack of planning, such that the BRA and the community have no way to predict – or manage – the real traffic impacts.

## **5. Shadow Impacts Would be Damaging and Are Undefined**

The Project Notification Form boldly asserts that the Proposed Project "complies with legislation regarding allowable shadows on the Common," without any substantiation. During the May 5<sup>th</sup> Community Meeting at City Hall, the Project Team said that shadow studies were underway, but had not been shared with the Community of the City. One resident commented that the tall height of the Proposed Project would put shadow onto the rooftop pool area of the Tremont on the Common, and others noted concern about casting the historic Ladder District streets into dark shadow (all for the private monetary benefit of a single developer).

The Millennium Residences respectfully request that the Project Proponent demonstrate the impact of shadows cast by its 30-story, 302' tower during all seasons of the year and all times of day. The shadow study should demonstrate no deleterious effects on the existing "Shadow Bank" or the historic Ladder Blocks and Washington Street Theater Protection Area.

## **6. Piecemeal Project Review For Private Benefit Should Not Substitute for Thoughtful and Comprehensive BRA Urban Planning.**

The Millennium Residences ask the BRA to forgo piecemeal review of individual projects in the Midtown Cultural District until it undertakes comprehensive urban planning and rezoning, if necessary. This is the second recent proposed project in this neighborhood seeking BRA approval despite in clear and unequivocal violation of existing zoning.

In February 1989, the BRA issued a thoughtful and far-reaching Plan To Manage Growth for the Midtown Cultural District (the "1989 Plan"). The 1989 Plan was issued following years of community-based public participation, neighborhood input and sophisticated and talented urban planning analysis. A copy of the 1989 Plan is attached hereto as Exhibit B for everyone's convenience and consideration. Notable, among the goals are:

- The Midtown Cultural District Plan will preserve the historic character of the area by protecting historic buildings, blocks, and street patterns; steering major development into areas that contain few historic structures; limiting building height in areas with historic buildings; and promoting the renovation of historic buildings. The commitment to historic preservation ends a 30-year era in which more than 1,200 historic downtown buildings were destroyed for such projects as Government Center, the Central Artery, and Charles River Park. Page 101.
- To enhance the character of the district by limiting the height of most new buildings in the district to about 12 stories, preserving the historic scale and character of the district's pedestrian oriented street-scape, protecting pedestrian areas from adverse environmental impacts, and ensuring the new development is appropriate to the Boston skyline. Page 8.
- To protect the area's more than 150 historic buildings by strengthening historic preservation laws and limiting new development in areas with large concentrations of historic buildings. Page 11.

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Since 1989, the District has been transformed – consistent with the vision advanced in the 1989 Plan - from an area where half the historic theaters were vacant and where amenities were lacking for workers, visitor and residents, to a vibrant and beautiful neighborhood. The 1989 Plan explained that the Ladder Blocks, located between Tremont and Washington Streets, contain many good examples of nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture and sought to establish a development strategy that would reflect the scale and character of the District. The Proposed Project reflects no such "appropriate scale" and runs fundamentally afoul of the spirit and the letter of the 1989 Plan. The 1989 Plan also sought to:

- Require setbacks along the Washington Street retail corridor to ensure that neither the historic buildings nor the historic character of the street are compromised by new construction, and to allow sufficient light and air to penetrate one of the city's major pedestrian streets. Page 103.

The urban planning analysis behind the 1989 Plan is valid today:

- "On the Boston skyline, new Midtown buildings will be transitional elements that visually connect the office towers of the Financial District to buildings in the Prudential/Copley Square area. Mid-town buildings will also integrate these buildings into the low-rise profile of the city's 18th and 19th century buildings. New buildings will be located and designed in ways that create minimal new shadows and little additional wind in public spaces." Page 111 (emphasis added).
- "Design Guidelines: The guidelines ensure that new buildings in the district accentuate the historic character of the area by preserving historic street patterns and continuing historic cornice lines and streetwalls. The upper floors of new buildings will be set back so that the historic and human-scale character of the streets is preserved. Mid-rise buildings as tall as 34 stories will be allowed only on sites large enough to allow setbacks sufficient to protect the environment and visual quality of the area. To maintain the district's historic street pattern, which developed before the Revolutionary War and was expanded through 19th century landfilling, the preservation of existing streets and alleys and their rejuvenation and use as pedestrian-oriented ways is encouraged. Significant view corridors will be preserved and enhanced. The upper floors of new buildings will be set back so that the historic and human-scale character of the street is preserved." Page 114 (emphasis added).
- "Building Massing: The majority of buildings in the district are 70-to-125 foot high buildings from the 19th and the early 20th century. A few modern towers of 155-to-275 feet are on the edges of the district. Low-rise residential neighborhoods and the Boston Common are also adjacent to the district. To ensure that the character of the area is enhanced:
  - Bases of new buildings, up to approximately 90 feet or first setback - will respond to the height, width, bay rhythm, and massing of surrounding buildings.
  - New construction will adopt cornice lines that are consistent with the traditional range of building height in the surrounding area.
  - Taller building elements and towers that are higher than the prevailing cornice line will have significant setbacks from the building base that will

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reduce their visual impact from the street, admit light, give air and sky exposure, and prevent adverse effects from strong wind conditions. Recent buildings with significant setback include 101 Arch Street and 99 Summer Street." Page 117 (emphasis added).

The Millennium Residences urge the BRA to rigorously evaluate this Proposed Project and require the Proponent to conform with existing zoning.

**7. There is No Justification For Gross Violations of Existing Zoning and Planning**

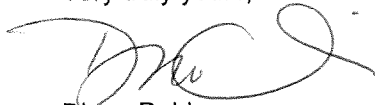
It is useful to review Article 1 of the Zoning Code which sets forth the purpose of the Code:

The purposes of this code are hereby declared to be: to promote the health, safety, convenience, morals and welfare of the inhabitants of the City; to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the City; to prevent overcrowding of land; to conserve the value of land and buildings; to lessen congestion in the streets; to avoid undue concentration of population; to provide adequate light and air; to secure safety from fire, panic and other dangers; to facilitate adequate provision for transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks and other public requirements; and to preserve and increase the amenities of the City.

We respectfully submit that the BRA look to the re-development of Godfrey Hall as precedent. The Godfrey Hotel at 505 Washington Street is a classic example of how the existing zoning works well to ensure quality restoration of historic resources in the Ladder District. By permitting projects to proceed in blatant violation of thoughtful existing zoning, the BRA is de facto encouraging developers – particularly developers who are not from Massachusetts and indeed from outside of the United States – to speculate and pay extraordinarily large amounts for buildings in historic parts of the City only to seek to demolish those buildings for private profit. Local developers and those who care about this historic neighborhood should not be outbid when properties become available for redevelopment.

Here, the Proposed Project will require a great many sizable variances and relief from the Code. These variances provide clear evidence that the Proposed Project is injurious to this historic neighborhood and not in harmony with the general purpose and intent for the Ladder Blocks and Washington Street Theater Protection Area or the BRA's plan for the City as a whole.

Very truly yours,



Diane Rubin

DRR/dmo  
Enclosures

cc: Councilor Bill Linehan  
Board of Managers, Millennium Place North Residential Association  
Board of Managers, Millennium Place South Residential Association  
Sudhir Murthy  
Don Wiest  
James Greene

# EXHIBIT A



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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Diane Rubin  
FROM: Deanna Peabody/Sudhir Murthy  
DATE: May 13, 2016  
SUBJECT: **533 Washington Street PNF** – Chapter 2 Transportation Analysis

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TrafInfo was engaged by the Millennium Residences (Millennium Place South Residential Condominium Association and Millennium Place North High-Rise Condominium Association) to review the Project Notification Form (PNF) submitted to the Boston Redevelopment Authority by Rafi Properties, LLC on March 31, 2016 for the proposed mixed-use project at 533 Washington Street in the City of Boston. The tenants of Millennium Residences are concerned about the potential impacts from the proposed development. A field visit was conducted with representatives of Millennium Residences to review traffic and pedestrian operations along Washington Street and at its intersection with Avenue de Lafayette.

The information and data provided in the PNF is not sufficient to conclude that there will not be any significant traffic impact or other negative transportation impact in the vicinity of the site or beyond. The information presented in the PNF is limited and there are no traffic (vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle) counts, traffic operational analyses, and crash statistics to substantiate the conclusion.

The introduction of the PNF indicates that the Proponent will prepare a Draft Project Impact Report (DPIR) subsequent to the PNF in accordance with Article 80B, Large Projects Review of the Boston Zoning Code. We expect the DPIR to include a detailed environmental analysis including but not limited to transportation, wind, shadow, daylight, air quality, water quality, flood hazards, wetlands, geotechnical/groundwater, solid waste, noise, infrastructure, and construction period impacts.

The transportation analysis in the DPIR should be based on data collected in the field including Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) counts and Turning Movement Counts (TMC) in the vicinity of the proposed development not only in the AM, midday, and PM weekday peak hours but also during the Saturday peak hour given the commercial nature of the project area. Given the close proximity of the proposed site to Boston Common, the Theater District, Emerson College, major tourist attractions, several hotels, retail shops, etc. the peak hours of traffic activity may not be consistent with peak hours normally observed (7-9 am and 4-6 pm). Turning movement counts (TMCs) should also be conducted at intersections in the vicinity of the project site.

As required by BTD, Traffic Impact Models for existing, no build, and build conditions should be created to analyze existing and future delay and queue lengths, and determine necessary changes to signal timing. Other developments in progress in the vicinity of the project should

also be considered as part of the future year traffic volumes. Given the complexity of the area and the modes of transportation present, a microsimulation model should be completed in addition to the typical traffic analyses using Synchro software. The microsimulation model should be developed and calibrated for the section of Washington Street from south of Avery Street to north of Avenue de Lafayette. This would allow for an assessment of the interaction between vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. More significantly, it will allow for the assessment of loss of travel lanes due to on-street parking, drop-off/pick-up, and loading/unloading activities. A full safety analysis using at least three years of crash data should also be completed so that safety issues can be identified and enhancements can be made if necessary.

The following sections provide comments and questions regarding Chapter 2 Transportation of the PNF.

### **Parking**

The PNF mentions a potential parking demand of 100 spaces, and that this demand will be absorbed by surrounding existing parking facilities. The PNF further indicates that the Traffic Consultants estimate a parking demand of less than 1 per residential unit and that current trends indicate that parking demand in downtown Boston is decreasing across all land uses.

Based on discussions with two major residential establishments in the vicinity of 533 Washington Street, the parking demand in reality is at least 1 per residential unit and many residents own more than 1 vehicle. Given that the proposed development has 94 residential units, the base level parking demand is likely to be at least that. If one were to add the parking demand from the office and restaurant spaces proposed in the development, the parking demand is likely to be higher than the estimate demand for 100 spaces. Furthermore, expecting the residents to walk  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile to park their vehicle is unrealistic as most prefer to park within  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile from their residence. Consequently, the DPIR should provide documentation on the number of parking spaces available within both a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile and a  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile radius from the proposed development.

The PNF provides information on the parking supply in the vicinity of 533 Washington Street. However, there is no discussion on the current occupancy levels of these parking facilities. The DPIR should include a parking occupancy study of the various parking facilities identified in the PNF and provide information on the number of available spaces, and whether these parking facilities allow for overnight parking. The DPIR parking analysis should account for the potential of some residents to park their vehicles during the day and use it only during evenings and weekends.

The DPIR should address the following:

- Provide detailed calculation on the estimation of parking demand by the proposed development that accounts for not only the parking demand by the residential units but also demand for parking by employees of the office space and patrons to the restaurant that are part of the proposed development.

- Provide documentation based on a survey of existing residential developments in the vicinity of 533 Washington Street regarding the number of vehicles owned on an average per residential unit.
- Account for the potential of day-long parking by residents of 533 Washington Street development.
- Conduct a parking occupancy study of the existing parking facilities identified in the PNF to determine the number of available spaces during a normal weekday, evenings/nights, and weekend within a ¼ mile and ½ mile radii.
- Identify which parking facilities allow for overnight parking.

### **Loading**

The PNF states that the deliveries will be limited to Single Unit trucks (SU-36) and small delivery vehicles. Is this an expectation or a commitment by the proponent? Tenants of existing residential developments in the vicinity of 533 Washington Street have noticed on several occasions' delivery trucks that are larger than a SU-36.

Furthermore, when commercial vehicles park along Washington Street in the vicinity of 533 Washington Street, as is allowed and common practice, a travel lane is blocked. Tenants of existing residential developments in the vicinity have observed that at least one lane is blocked a majority of the time, effectively making Washington Street a two lane roadway. This impacts the operations of Washington Street and the intersection of Washington Street and Avenue de Lafayette. Furthermore, this impacts the turning radii for heavy vehicles making a right hand turn from Avenue de Lafayette to Washington Street.

The DPIR should address the following:

- Provide turning templates for SU-36 trucks as well as other large vehicles that are typical to the area including tour buses, and semi-trailer trucks including WB-40 and WB-62.
- Account for potential lane blockages and existing commercial parking in the description and analysis of the intersections
- Demonstrate using microsimulation the effects of loading/unloading on traffic operations

### **Pedestrians**

As mentioned in the PNF, pedestrian activity is abundant along Washington Street and in the vicinity of the Project, especially given that Washington Street is a pedestrian zone north of Temple Pl. Furthermore, the PNF states as an urban design benefit that this project will create pedestrian activity. The PNF states that there are sidewalks on both sides of Washington Street but does not address whether they are wide enough to accommodate the pedestrian demand.

The crosswalk across Washington Street at the intersection of Avenue De Lafayette is wider than a standard sidewalk indicating the need for space. The PNF does not provide any indications on the future location of this crosswalk – will it remain in its current location or relocated given the separate entrances to the residential units and the restaurants in the proposed development.

This project is proposed to add 838 walk/bike trips per day and will be encouraged as the prime mode of transportation. In addition, the project is generate 402 transit trips per day which will also result in pedestrians walking to the nearest bus or train station.

The PNF does not have any discussion on the level of pedestrian traffic in the vicinity of the project site. It is an important pedestrian corridor connecting many major areas. The DPIR should include a detailed discussion and document the level of pedestrians crossing Washington Street at the existing crosswalk at Avenue De Lafayette and the high level of pedestrians along Washington Street. The DPIR should review the existing sidewalk widths and the level of pedestrian traffic.

The DPIR should address these questions related to pedestrian traffic:

- What is the level of service (LOS) for pedestrians under existing, no-build and build per the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) 2010?
- The number of pedestrians in the vicinity of the project site should be quantified to better understand their patterns and flow. Pedestrian counts should be completed as part of the previously mentioned TMCs. The future pedestrian traffic should account for not only the walk/bike trips but also pedestrian traffic resulting from transit trips.
- Are the pedestrian clearance intervals at the signalized intersections sufficient per the MUTCD, BTM, and MassDOT guidelines?
- The DPIR should review the existing crosswalk locations and its relationship to the level of pedestrian traffic, proposed locations of entrances to the building and the existing sidewalk widths along Washington Street.

### **Transportation Demand Management**

**Bicycles:** The proposed project is said to include covered bicycle racks for residents. However, the floor plans included in the PNF do not show the proposed bicycle rack location. The DPIR should discuss the location of the covered secure bicycle storage location for residents. Furthermore, it should also discuss how bicycles by employees working at the office space and patrons to the restaurants will be accommodated.

**Ride-sharing Services:** One of the TDM strategies proposed is the use of ride-sharing services. While ride-sharing services may reduce the demand for parking, it will not result in a reduction in the level of vehicular traffic generated by the proposed development. The DPIR should account for the potential of ride-sharing services utilized by the development as part of their auto mode share percentages and adjust them accordingly.

**Transit Usage:** The project will result in an estimated 402 transit trips during a typical day. The DPIR should discuss the impact these additional riders will have on the existing transit service. Many of the MBTA bus routes and rapid transit lines are over-crowded. The DPIR should discuss the existing, no-build and build conditions in terms of transit capacity analysis.



## **Construction**

The project proposes the demolition of an existing building and the construction of a new 30-story mixed-use building. Given the high density of activity in the project area, construction is a major concern. Construction vehicle traffic needs to be estimated in terms of the number of trucks per day and the range (low and high) throughout the construction duration. The DPIR should provide a detailed description of the impacts and the location of the sidewalk closures and safety measures taken. The relatively high parking costs in the area parking facilities may force some construction workers to park on-site or on-street thereby not only impacting the availability of parking to other commercial traffic but also to the traffic operations.

The DPIR should include a detailed discussion of the construction staging, laydown areas and impacts including:

- What is the proposed construction staging of the demolition of the existing building and hauling of existing debris including the staging of demolition equipment, level of truck traffic generated, and noise and air quality impacts resulting from the demolition?
- What is the proposed construction staging of the building construction including laydown areas of construction equipment and materials, staging areas in the vicinity of the project, schedule of delivery of materials to the project site, level of truck traffic generated throughout the construction duration?
- How will the alley to the north side of the project be retained in terms of its intended emergency use during the entire duration of construction?
- Are any temporary road closures and detour of vehicles proposed? If so, what would be the duration and frequency of any temporary detours?
- Are any temporary lane closures and disruption of traffic along Washington Street and Avenue de Lafayette anticipated?
- Are any sidewalk closures and pedestrian detour routes anticipated?
- What are the proposed public outreach steps to be undertaken to keep all the stakeholders and neighborhood residents and business informed on the construction progress and expected disruptions to vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic?

A construction management plan (CMP) executed with BTDC will describe the need to occupy lanes surrounding streets during construction and discuss measures for minimizing negative impacts associated with trucking activity and construction worker parking, include demand management for construction workers.

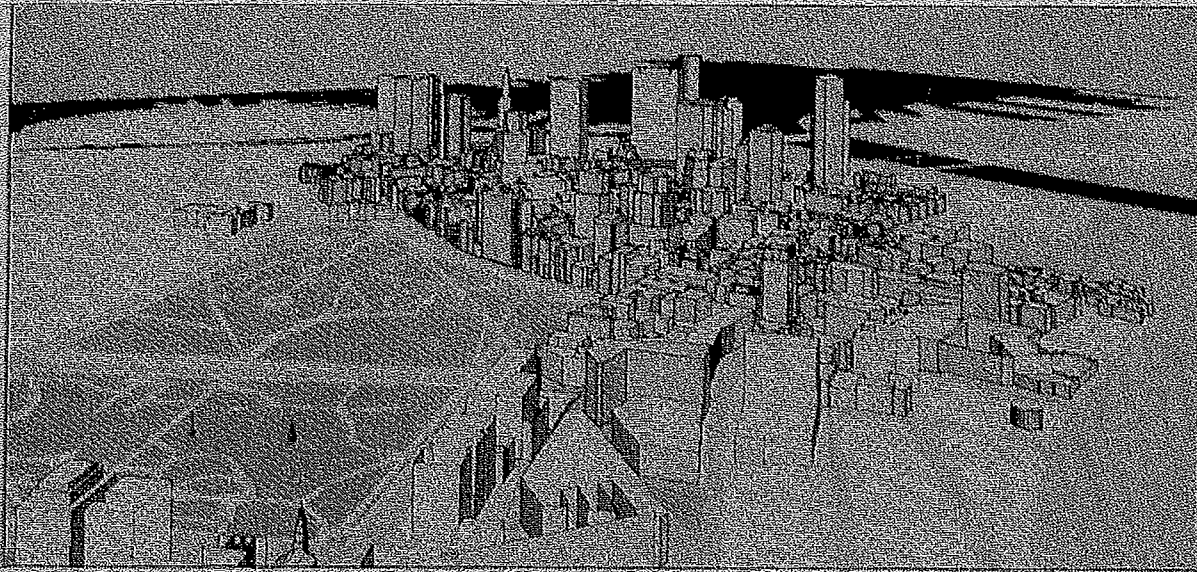
## **Conclusion**

The information and data provided in the PNF is not sufficient to conclude that there will not be any significant traffic impact or other negative transportation impact in the vicinity of the site or beyond. The information presented in the PNF is limited and there are no traffic (vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle) counts, traffic operational analyses, and crash statistics to substantiate the conclusion.

The DPIR should provide a microsimulation assessment of future traffic operations to comprehensive account for all the typical activities near the project site. Availability of parking in the vicinity of the project should be assessed rather than purely the parking supply. Construction impacts should be discussed in detail to allow for a clear understanding of the potential impacts to traffic operations, and pedestrian activity in the project area.

# EXHIBIT B

# MIDTOWN CULTURAL DISTRICT PLAN



## PLAN TO MANAGE GROWTH

February 1989

CITY OF BOSTON  
RAYMOND L. FLYNN  
MAYOR

OFFICE OF ARTS &  
HUMANITIES  
BRUCE ROSSLEY  
COMMISSIONER

BOSTON  
REDEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY

STEPHEN COYLE  
DIRECTOR

KRISTEN MCCORMACK  
DIRECTOR  
MIDTOWN CULTURAL DISTRICT

ROBERT J. FARRELL  
CHAIRMAN

JOSEPH J. WALSH  
VICE-CHAIRMAN

JAMES K. FLAHERTY  
TREASURER

CLARENCE J. JONES  
VICE-TREASURER

MICHAEL T. DONLAN

VICE-CHAIRMAN, SUB COMMITTEES

KANE SIMONIAN  
SECRETARY



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8. Transportation Access
9. Achieving the Plan



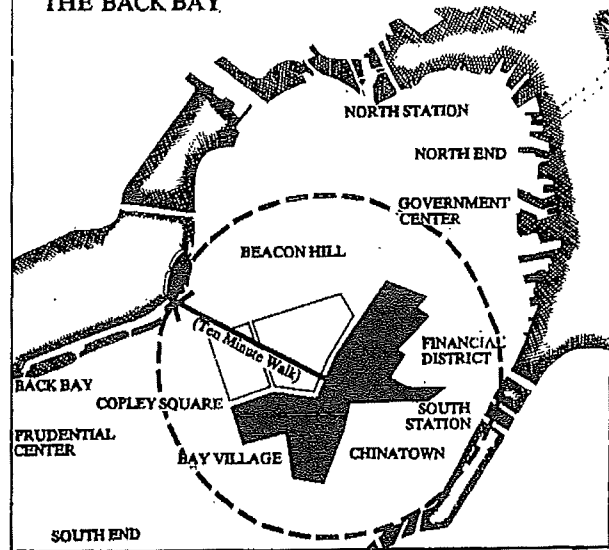
## FRAMEWORK FOR THE PLAN

The Midtown Cultural District Plan has been developed to guide the reemergence of Midtown Boston as a center of commerce, culture, and city life. The district stretches from the edges of Boston Common to Downtown Crossing, the Combat Zone, the Theater District, and Park Square. The area has many unique characteristics including a long history as the region's center for theater and retailing. It is centrally located in the middle of downtown Boston's thriving residential and business communities. Yet, the district also contains a high concentration of vacant land and underutilized historic buildings. This combination makes Midtown an ideal place for revitalization as a vibrant mixed-use district, with new and existing cultural facilities, homes, offices, shops, and restaurants in new and renovated buildings.

*Midtown is an ideal place for revitalization as a vibrant mixed-use district that will include new and existing cultural facilities, homes, offices, shops, and restaurants in new and renovated buildings.*

To ensure that future growth in Midtown Boston is managed in a way that protects the area's resources, the 1987 Downtown Interim Zoning Plan, the current zoning for the area, requires the creation of a district plan for the area. Similar studies are required in ten other downtown areas, including Chinatown where a draft community plan has been completed and ratified by the residents of the neighborhood. The Midtown Cultural District Plan and the Chinatown Community Plan are the first products of the community-based planning process initiated in the downtown plan. The Midtown plan will establish permanent zoning policies and programs to manage new growth, build mixed-income housing, meet cultural needs, preserve historic buildings, establish neighborhood business opportunities, protect and create open space, create day care facilities, and improve local transportation systems.

TEN MINUTE WALK FROM DOWNTOWN AND THE BACK BAY



The Midtown plan capitalizes on the district's central location at the heart of Boston. Each business day more than 300,000 people work, live, shop, or visit the one-square mile area which includes and surrounds the district. Many resources -- such as Government Center, the Financial District, Copley Square, Chinatown, Bay Village, Beacon Hill, the Faneuil Hall Marketplace, and the Charles River Esplanade -- are within a ten-minute walk. In addition, three of the region's four subway lines stop in the district, the South Station commuter rail station is within walking distance, and Logan Airport is only a subway ride away.

Despite Midtown's central location, many areas in the district are underutilized, uninviting, and often dangerous. In addition, half of the district's historic theaters are vacant, and the southeastern corner of Boston Common is run down and lacks amenities for downtown workers, visitors, and residents of nearby neighborhoods. Only 2,500 people live in the district, even though it is near open space, mass transit facilities, and downtown jobs.



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Many of the problems facing Midtown are the result of the economic decline of Boston that began during the Great Depression. This decline continued after World War II with the exodus of the middle class from the city to the suburbs and the slow deterioration of the New England economy. Since the 1960s, the city and the private sector have tried many times to revitalize the area. While some of these efforts produced sporadic successes, each has failed to generate a critical level of investment necessary to spur revitalization of the area as a whole. Today, although greater Boston's economy has grown rapidly in the last two decades, only six percent of the money invested in the city in that time has been directed toward Midtown.

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*The Midtown Cultural District Plan and the Chinatown Community Plan are the first products of the community-based planning process initiated in the downtown plan.*

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The Boston economy is now strong enough to carry reinvestment to the Midtown area. While the Financial District and the Back Bay, the city's two major office centers, cannot accommodate substantial new growth, the Midtown Cultural District's concentration of vacant parcels of land and underutilized buildings can be redeveloped to accommodate a significant portion of the city's projected future demand for new offices, stores, housing, and cultural facilities. Interest in the area is already high: a 1986 BRA Office Industry Survey found that 81 percent of the Back Bay firms considering relocation or expansion believe Midtown would be a desirable new location.

The Midtown Cultural District Plan will guide these forces, directing incremental growth from the district's relatively strong edges towards its generally underutilized center. This planning policy was

developed during a long community-based planning process led by the Cultural District Task Force, the Chinatown/South Cove Neighborhood Council, and other community and neighborhood groups.

### **New Development Strategy**

The development strategy that evolved in this bottom-up planning process calls for building new, appropriately-scaled, mixed-use buildings on vacant parcels or blocks that have few historic buildings and for directing some of the demand for growth into the district's many historic buildings. The new development will reflect the scale and character of surrounding areas, clustering new office uses near the Financial District, extending retail facilities in Downtown Crossing, building new housing near Boston Common, Chinatown, Bay Village, and the Back Bay; and creating new cultural facilities in the city's historic theater district.

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*To ensure that all the needs of the Midtown area are met, the city has been working for almost four years with representatives of groups with particular concerns about the district.*

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The strategy is a break from past plans for revitalizing the area that called for substantial public subsidies and for building a major new building at the center of the district.

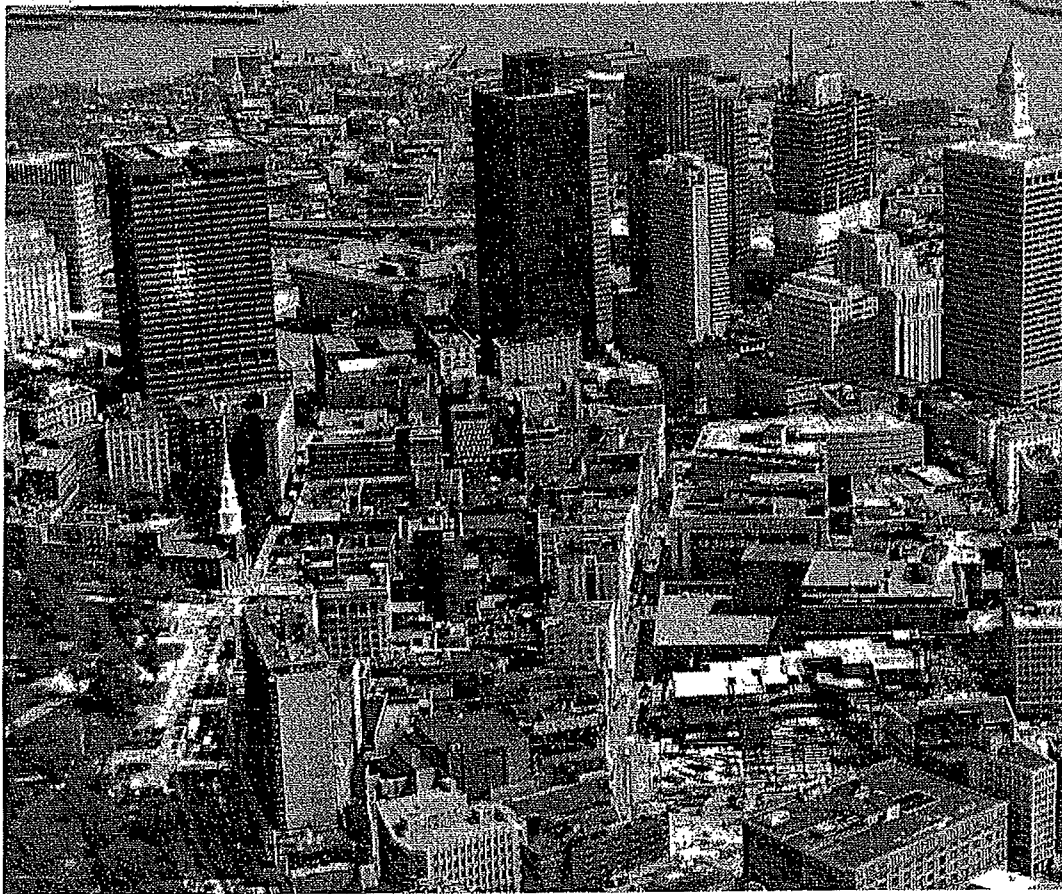
Instead the Midtown Cultural District Plan guides revitalization forces towards the district's center, reducing the need for either substantial public subsidies or a high-rise office building. In this process, rising residual land values in the center of the district will make it economically feasible to construct more appropriately-scaled new buildings. These buildings will include a variety of uses that will contribute to the vitality of both the Midtown Cultural District and nearby Chinatown.

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Ultimately the revitalization of the Midtown Cultural District will create a new mixed-use neighborhood of offices, homes, stores, restaurants, hotels, and cultural facilities and will help preserve and enhance the adjacent historic Chinatown neighborhood.

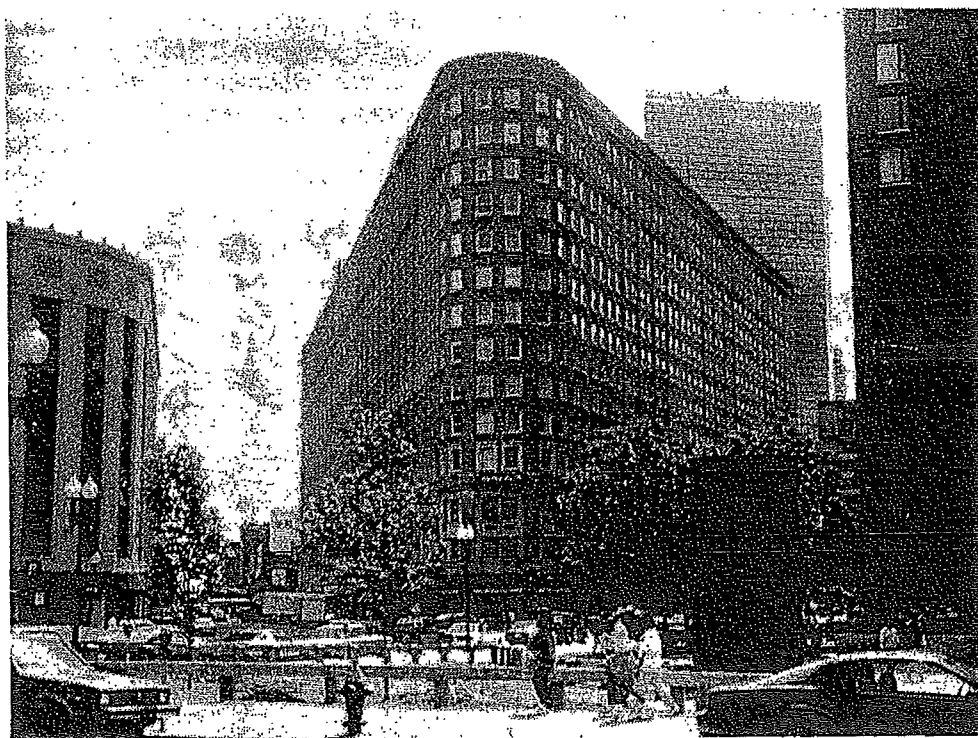
Many of the changes envisioned by the plan are already underway. New development projects such

as 125 Summer Street, the Heritage on the Garden housing project, and Parkside West are either finished or under construction. Park Square has been improved by the construction of the State Transportation Building and the Four Seasons Hotel. Downtown Crossing continues to be a vibrant regional retail area, a role it has played for over 100 years.



#### **Ladder Blocks**

*The ladder blocks, which are located between Tremont and Washington Street contain many good examples of nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial architecture.*



*Park Square*

The area's cultural facilities are also improving. Programming has increased in the district's major theaters. The Wang Center has been renovated and the Saxon/Majestic Theater, which has been closed since 1983, is scheduled to reopen in the spring of 1989. Warrenton Street has become a center for Boston's comedy club activity. Boylston Place features new nightclubs. CityPlace, located in the ground floor of the State Transportation Building, features restaurants, an art gallery, and an indoor performance space.

In addition, eight new and recently renovated hotels with a total of 3556 rooms are in or near the district, making the area a well-known destination for business travellers and tourists.

Change has also come to the Combat Zone, where approximately two-thirds of adult-oriented establishments that were operating in March 1986 have closed. Many of these establishments have been replaced by Asian-owned businesses serving Chinatown and the region's growing Asian community. All told, retail uses now outnumber adult entertainment uses in the Combat Zone area.

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*The reemergence of the Cultural District as a center of arts and entertainment and the growth of Chinatown will speed up transformations already occurring in the Combat Zone.*

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While encouraging these trends, the Midtown Cultural District Plan also ensures that the area's historic resources and character are respected. Revitalization of the area will create new cultural facilities and reestablish Midtown as a center of the arts, a role the area has played for almost 200 years. Supporting the arts is critically important. While more than 7.6 million people attended non-profit cultural events in 1986, generating more than \$500 million in economic activity, rising real estate costs have left more than 50 of the city's non-profit performance groups and visual artists without regular access to performance, rehearsal, office, and gallery space. The program of new cultural facilities has been developed by the Cultural District Task Force which represents non-

profit arts groups, business and community leaders, and residents of nearby areas.

The new district will become a mixed-income residential neighborhood that will help the city meet a growing demand for both market-rate and affordable housing. The presence of new residents in the area will help make the district a lively and inviting area seven days a week. To ensure that all city residents have access to new Midtown jobs, the plan also requires the inclusion of day care facilities in major new office buildings.

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*The presence of new residents in the area will help make the district a lively and inviting area seven days a week.*

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The plan also addresses the acute need for affordable housing in Chinatown by requiring the construction of at least 800 units of affordable housing for Chinatown residents. These units are critically needed because since 1980 the population of Chinatown has risen by 37 percent but only 70 units of new housing have been built. In addition to new housing, reinvestment in the Midtown Cultural District will also help to address Chinatown's pressing need for commercial facilities, community services, open space, and parking facilities while improving pedestrian access, and controlling traffic flow in and around the area. These measures have been designed to support the goals and principles of the Chinatown Community Plan which has been prepared by the Chinatown/South Cove Neighborhood Council and other community groups and residents.

A major challenge in achieving the plan will be problems associated with the Combat Zone that have

helped stymie plans for the area for more than 20 years. While the plan recognizes that legitimate First Amendment activities cannot be outlawed, the plan takes advantage of tools allowed by the U.S. Supreme Court to reduce negative impacts, such as crime and prostitution, that have become associated with the area.

United States Supreme Court's rulings in cases involving adult-oriented facilities. In addition, the reemergence of the Cultural District as a center of arts and entertainment and the growth of Chinatown will speed up transformations already occurring in the Combat Zone.



The city's licensing authorities are strongly encouraged to continue policies that hold the owners of establishments accountable for illegal activities that occur on their premises. The licensing authorities are also encouraged to continue requiring that the true owners of the clubs identify themselves on licensing applications. This policy is important because in some cases the true owners of Combat Zone clubs may have criminal records disqualifying them from holding city liquor and entertainment licenses. City zoning laws are also being rewritten to reflect the

The Supreme Court has upheld laws providing for the closing of adult businesses where the premises are used for illegal activities, such as prostitution. In the *Arcara v. Cloud Books, Inc.* case, the court decided that the First Amendment did not bar the closing of an adult bookstore where solicitation took place, because the sale of the books does not create a First Amendment right to ignore a law aimed at penalizing and terminating illegal uses of premises.

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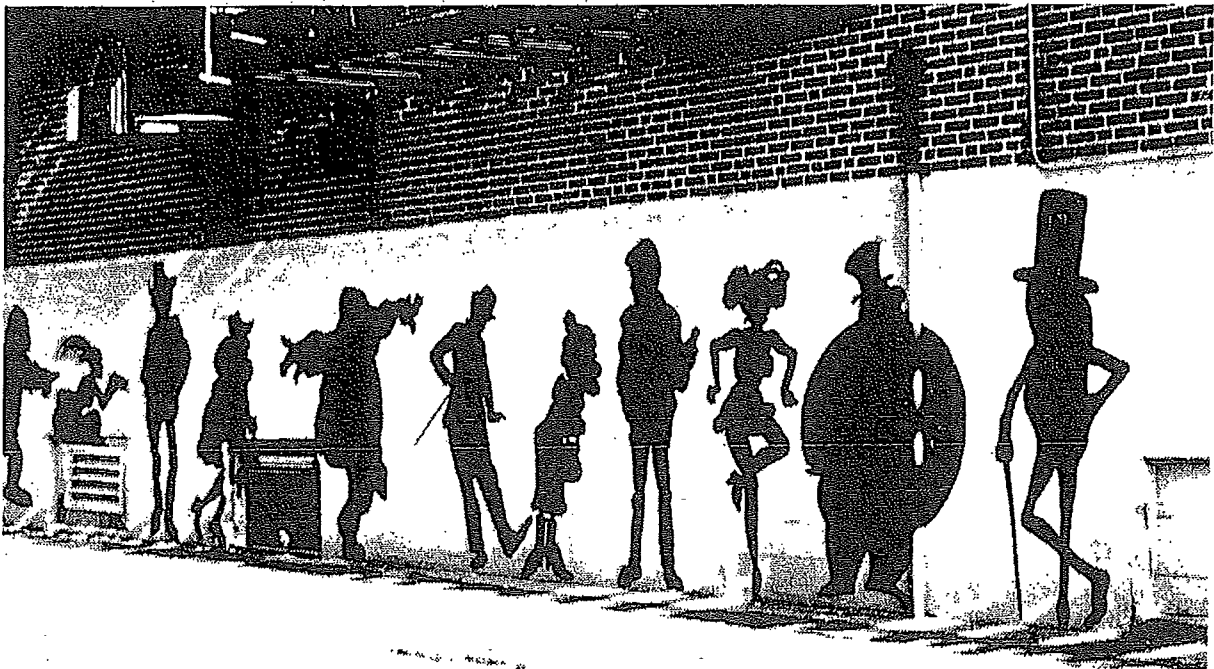
*This program will help knit together the city by linking the Back Bay and Financial District office markets and by reconnecting downtown's residential neighborhoods with each other and with the Boston Common and Public Garden.*

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In the leading cases of *Young v. American Mini Theaters* and *City of Renton v. Playtime Theaters*, the court affirmed the legality of zoning ordinances designed to reduce the undesirable secondary effects of businesses that sell sexually-explicit materials. The court ruled that the laws can be legitimate without unconstitutionally infringing upon liberties protected by the First Amendment.

Recently the court further discussed the meaning of laws aimed at regulating the secondary effects of adult entertainment businesses. In *Boos v. Barry*, decided March 22, 1988, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor explained that regulations aimed at effects that are almost unique to businesses featuring sexually explicit fare do not suppress free expression. Rather, such regulations are legitimate when they are aimed at the prevention of crime, maintenance of property values, and protection of residential neighborhoods.

To ensure that all the needs of the Midtown area are met, the city has been working for almost four years with the Cultural District Task Force, the Chinatown/South Cove Neighborhood Council, and other neighborhood, community, and business groups.



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The planning program that emerged from this process calls for the creation of a mixed-use downtown community. This program will help knit together the city by linking the Back Bay and Financial District office markets and by reconnecting downtown's residential neighborhoods with each other and with the Boston Common and Public Garden. Specifically, the plan calls for a program of balanced growth that will:

- Transform Boston's historic theater district into a multi-faceted Cultural District by adding ten small- and medium-sized performance spaces, art galleries and museums, and a system of pedestrian-oriented streets and public spaces full of cafes, public art and performances and lined with restaurants, nightclubs, and shops open into the evening hours.
- Address Chinatown's needs by using the linkage money from new Midtown Cultural District office buildings to fund affordable housing for Chinatown residents, by encouraging the continued expansion of the Chinatown business community and community services into lower Washington Street, and by building new affordable housing for Chinatown residents within the Midtown Cultural District.
- Expand the existing downtown residential community by building 3,000 units of new housing, 25 percent of them affordable for low- and moderate-income households. The units will include 900 new units of affordable housing in and near Chinatown.
- Create a vibrant, mixed-use economy by directing the downtown office economy into currently underutilized areas, enhancing the city's retail core, encouraging neighborhood-oriented businesses, strengthening the area's existing entertainment and visitor sectors, and ensuring that

neighborhood residents share in the economic benefits of Midtown's revitalization.

- Improve the area's transportation system by upgrading mass transit facilities, constructing a new Midtown subway line, creating better vehicular access without increasing traffic in nearby neighborhoods, building new parking facilities, and developing attractive pedestrian ways.
- Protect the district's historic buildings by steering development away from areas with historic buildings, strengthening the city's power to protect historic buildings and create historic districts, and helping fund the renovation of important historic buildings.
- Upgrade and maintain the area's open space network by improving public areas in Downtown Crossing and Park Square, building a new public gathering spot in the center of the Cultural District, and creating small new public areas throughout the Cultural District.
- Enhance the character of the district by limiting the height of most new buildings in the district to about 12 stories, preserving the historic scale and character of the district's pedestrian oriented street-scape, protecting pedestrian areas from adverse environmental impacts, and ensuring that new development is appropriate to the Boston skyline.

New development proposed in the plan will also generate a number of benefits for the community including more than 15,000 permanent new jobs and 8,500 construction jobs, \$5 million in jobs linkage, \$25 million in housing linkage, and \$17 million in new property taxes. The development will also assist in





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*The challenge facing these groups is to manage growth in a way that protects the area's resources while reestablishing Midtown as a premier center of the arts and business, making the area an important residential community and supporting the unique resources Chinatown has long provided for the area.*

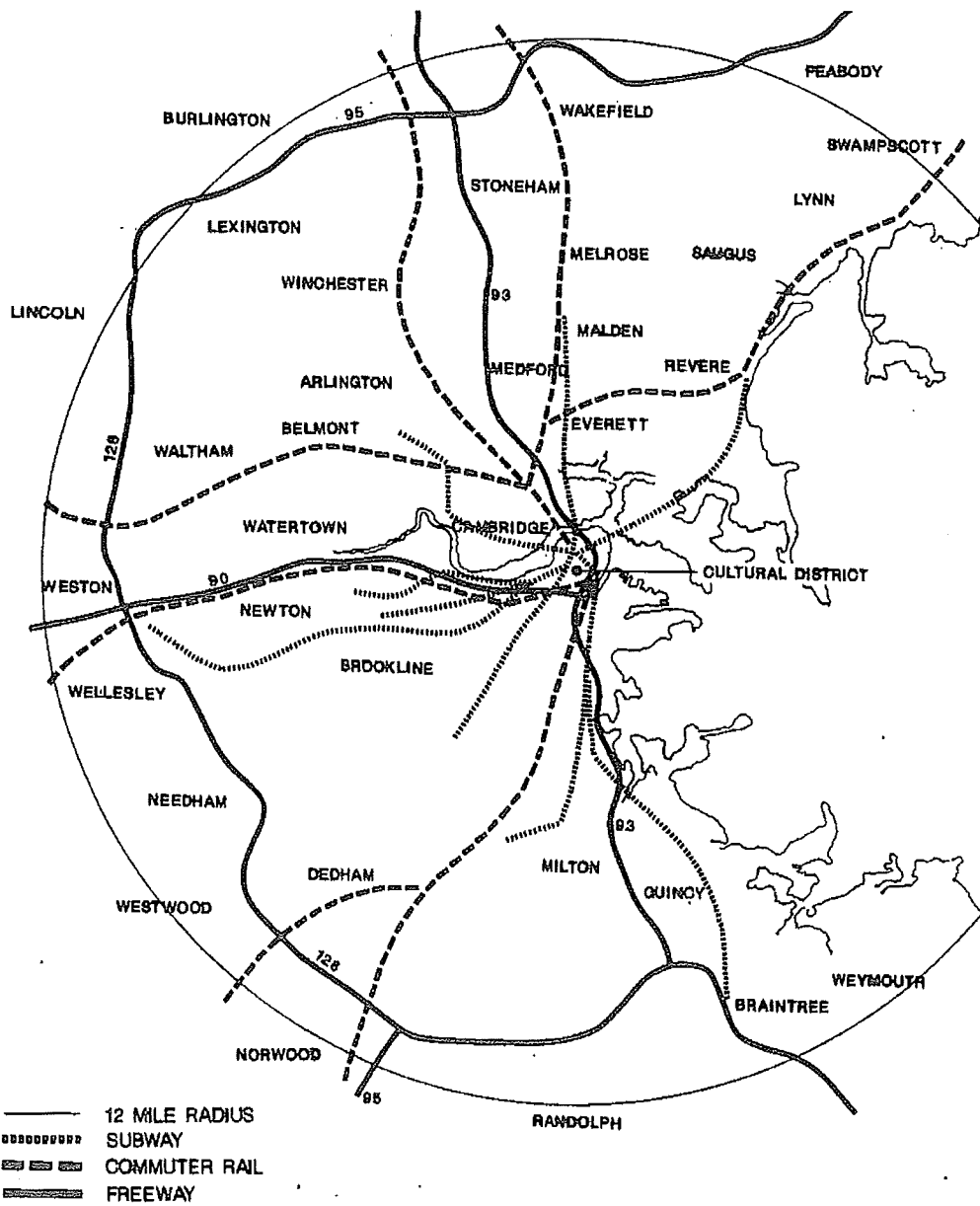
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funding the construction of new cultural facilities and public spaces, the renovation of historic theaters and buildings, and the creation of new day care facilities.

Residents of the district and neighboring areas, arts groups, preservationists, businesspeople and other interested parties are already working with the city to implement the plan for the district. The challenge of this planning process is to manage growth in a way that protects the area's resources while reestablishing Midtown as a premier center of the arts and business, making the area an important residential community and supporting the unique resources Chinatown has long provided for the area. Ultimately, the Midtown Cultural District will become a well-known destination for residents, workers, and visitors alike. In addition, cities nationwide are looking to Boston as a model for creating cultural districts and bringing life back to downtown centers.



# ACCESS FROM THE METROPOLITAN AREA



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## Summary

*The Midtown Cultural District Plan outlines a balanced program of growth that will create a new downtown community of residences, businesses and cultural facilities. Specifically, the plan proposes ways to:*

- Create a new center of culture that will include 10 new theaters, new art galleries, satellite museums, and public art installations.*
- Upgrade and expand the area's open space network by building a new gathering place on the Hinge Block, improving public areas in Downtown Crossing and Park Square, and creating smaller gathering areas and pedestrian-oriented walkways.*
- Aid Chinatown's community-based planning efforts by funding the construction of 800 units of housing (two-thirds of them affordable), requiring the affirmative marketing of neighborhood commercial space in new Midtown buildings, targeting job training funds for Chinatown residents, expanding open space facilities, jointly developing a traffic plan, limiting institutional expansion, and encouraging minority equity participation in new Midtown developments.*
- Expand the existing downtown residential community by building 3,000 units of new housing, one-quarter of them affordable, directing linkage money from Midtown developments to Chinatown, and setting aside 75 percent of the new affordable units built through inclusionary zoning for Chinatown residents.*
- Create a vibrant mixed-use economy by extending the office economy up the Bedford/Essex corridor, protecting and expanding the Downtown Crossing retail economy, creating day care facilities, and strengthening the area's cultural, hotel, and visitor economies.*
- Protect the area's more than 150 historic buildings by strengthening historic preservation laws and limiting new development in areas with large concentrations of historic buildings.*
- Improve the area's transportation systems by creating new east/west traffic connections, improving subway service, building a new Midtown subway line, carefully locating new parking facilities, and enforcing existing traffic codes.*
- Protect the district's historic scale and character through land use and urban design guidelines that ensure that new development is in character with the district.*

*The plan also generates a number of other benefits including more than 15,000 permanent new jobs, 8,500 construction jobs, \$5 million in jobs linkage funds, \$25 million in housing linkage funds, additional day care facilities, and \$17 million in new property taxes. The policies outlined in the plan will be implemented through a variety of measures, including final zoning for the district. The new zoning, combined with coordinated actions by the city and state government, will reestablish Midtown as a premier center of the arts and business, make Midtown an important residential community, and support the unique resources that Chinatown has long provided for the area.*

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## CULTURAL DISTRICT

A new center for culture and the performing arts will be the core of the Midtown Cultural District. This new Cultural District, which was conceived and planned by Boston's non-profit arts community, will include ten new theaters for non-profit performing arts groups, visual arts facilities, and new public spaces as well as the area's existing large commercial theaters and legitimate nightclubs. A network of pedestrian-oriented streets lined with restaurants, shops, and nightclubs, as well as new offices, residences, and hotels will also contribute to the revitalization of the district.



Together this mix of uses will give the Cultural District a special character that combines the festive atmosphere of Faneuil Hall Marketplace, with the accessibility of Downtown Crossing, the excitement and affordability of First Night's celebration of the arts, the spirit of Broadway, and the richness of Boston's ethnic communities. The rejuvenation of the area will continue the area's almost 200-year history as the region's center for arts and entertainment.

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*A vibrant, multi-faceted Cultural District will be at the heart of the revitalized Midtown Cultural District serving as the region's center for the performing and visual arts.*

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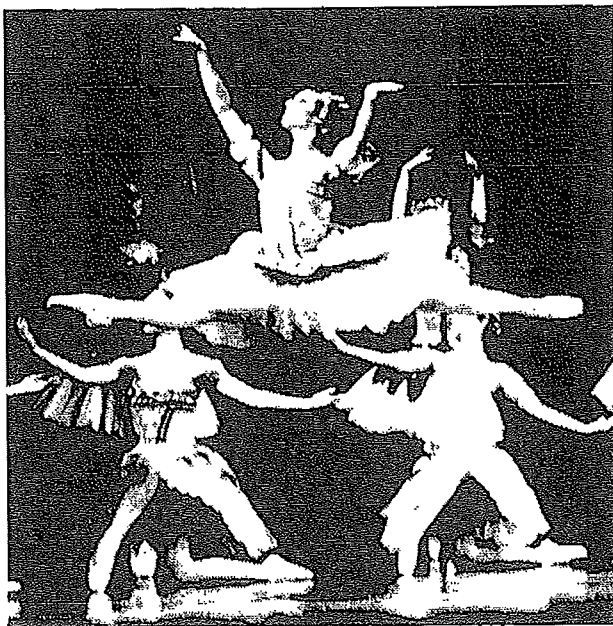
### Goals/District Concept

A coordinated reinvestment program for the Cultural District will create a vibrant mixed-use district with a variety of uses that complement and support each other. Together the uses will ensure that the district is lively and interesting at least 18 hours a day, seven days a week.

The program for the area, developed in four years of planning by the Midtown Cultural District Task Force and the city's Office of Arts and Humanities, will strengthen the district's concentration of historic theaters and quality evening activities. Those facilities will be connected through the creation of a new Visual Arts Center and public gathering place on the now-underutilized Hinge Block. This block, at the center of the district, is bounded by Stuart, Washington, Boylston and Tremont Streets. The new cultural facilities and open space would utilize only a small portion of the square footage in the district's developments and would, in return, give the area a new identity and vitality. The plan has been designed to create a special identity and character for the Cultural District based on a series of interrelated images. The district should be:

- A place that provides performing and exhibition facilities for Boston's resident arts community.
- A daytime place that has a stable mixture of activities, a commercial and residential center which complements its location within the downtown.

- A nighttime place that is safe as well as festive and full of lights, the arts, and entertainment activities.
- A place where the arts and theaters are visible, affordable, and accessible and bring together residents and visitors to celebrate their common cultural heritage as well as their ethnic diversity.
- A weekend and holiday place that draws people from all over the region to gather and interact.



Specifically, the district will include new, renovated, and already-active theaters, galleries, museums, and clubs. The facilities will be tied together by an open space system that will include the on Boston Common, a new gathering place at the center of the Cultural District, smaller public areas in and near mixed-used developments, and a network of pedestrian-oriented streets and walkways full of

stores, cafes, public art, and performances. These leisure time facilities will be complemented by the presence of residences, retail, offices, hotels, and expanded Chinatown businesses.

To ensure that the district's uses are connected, new zoning for the area will require the inclusion of active cultural and retail uses in the ground floors of all new buildings. Incentives will be provided to buildings that include cultural facilities. In addition, the zoning will require the developers of major new developments in Planned Development Areas to either build an on-site cultural facility, fund the renovation of an historic theater or building in the district, or build mixed-income housing.

The new zoning will continue to allow adult entertainment uses in the Combat Zone as the only area in the city designated for such uses. However, problems associated with the Zone, such as crime and unsightly conditions, will continue to be addressed through police enforcement, licensing policies, and physical improvements to the area.

### Elements

The initiative that led to the development of the Cultural District Plan came from Boston's active non-profit arts community. Under the leadership of Bruce Rossley, then the city's arts administrator; Larry Murray, the executive director of Arts/Boston; and other leaders of the non-profit arts community, the Performing Arts Development Task Force was formed in October 1984. The Task Force was later renamed the Midtown Cultural District Task Force and was enlarged to include residents of the area and of abutting neighborhoods, representatives of the business community, and community leaders concerned with such issues as historic preservation, open space, and urban design. Working with the city, the business and neighborhood interests in the area, and a team of



urban designers and city planners, the Task Force established the framework for the Cultural District Plan. This framework is based on a planning strategy that uses the revitalizing quality of the arts to help transform the city's historic, but now-underutilized entertainment district. Instead of meeting the need for cultural facilities in a single self-contained complex, Boston will spread its new theaters, galleries, and museums throughout a district. This system of public attractions will create the basis of the district's structure.

#### **New Performance Facilities**

Ten new or renovated small- and medium-sized performance facilities and associated rehearsal studios for non-profit music, dance, drama, and performance

art will be added to the Cultural District's existing facilities. All but one of these theaters and concert halls will contain between 199 and 499 seats. These facilities, which together will have about 4,000 seats (less than the total number of seats in the Wang Center), will augment the facilities offered by the district's existing large theaters. In addition, new public areas in the district will be used for outdoor performances. This facilities program was developed with the assistance of Robert Brannigan of Brannigan-Lorelli Associates, a New York-based theater consulting firm.

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*Ten new or renovated small- and medium-sized performance facilities and associated rehearsal studios for non-profit music, dance, drama, and performance art will be added to the Cultural District's existing facilities.*

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The new and renovated facilities will be well-distributed throughout the district in identifiable clusters that will reinforce existing concentrations of active theaters and recreate the historic pattern of cultural uses in the district. While the bulk of the new theaters (or museums) can be located in the windowless core of a building, the location of the marquees and entrances must be highly-visible on well-travelled public ways. The presence of both existing and new cultural facilities will be highlighted by the creation of "Theater Boulevards" in stretches that include the major theaters and "Theater Alleys" on minor streets and pedestrian walkways that are home to smaller theaters and clubs.

Some projects, already underway will aid the transformation of the area. The Emerson College Board of Trustees has appropriated funds to renovate the Saxon/Majestic Theater which is scheduled to reopen in April 1989. In addition to Emerson College produc-



*Cultural District Model Benjamin Thompson Associates*

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tions, this new facility will serve as a 799-seat proscenium theater needed by three resident performing groups, the Boston Dance Umbrella, the Handel and Haydn Society, and the Boston Lyric Opera. Actor's Enclave, a theater troupe of nationally known actors, has committed to moving to Boston and will also use the Saxon/Majestic. In addition, private developers have agreed to renovate the Paramount Theater, Boston's landmark Art Deco Theater, potentially for use as a 499-seat non-profit dance facility and other cultural uses. Feasibility studies are being undertaken to determine whether it is possible to renovate the Modern Theater and Steinert Hall, facilities which both have superb acoustics. The Liberty Tree Building and the Chauncy Street power station which both have large spaces with high ceilings, could be renovated for use as rehearsal studios.

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*The presence of both existing and new cultural facilities will be highlighted by the creation of "Theater Boulevards" in stretches that include the major theaters and "Theater Alleys" on minor streets and pedestrian walkways that are home to smaller theaters and clubs.*

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The reuse potential of the Publix/Gaiety or Pilgrim Theaters in the Hinge Block needs further study. Other large historic theaters, such as the State, Essex, and Pilgrim have lost their architectural integrity but will be studied for reuse. Mixed-use developments on the parcels containing these theaters could include the conversion of existing facilities into smaller theaters. For example, the Essex Theater could be replaced with a 199-seat experimental theater in approximately one-eighth of its present volume while the Publix/Gaiety Theater or the Pilgrim Theater could become a new Asian performing arts center. These policies will maintain the historic and well-distributed pattern of theater uses throughout the district.

New cultural facilities could also be included as part of major new developments on sites such as the parking lot next to the Shubert Theater (Parcel C-4), the lot next to the Wilbur Theater (Parcel P-7), the city parking lot at Hayward Place, the former Gary Theater lot behind the Saxon/Majestic Theater, the Hinge Block, and the lower Washington Street parcel bounded by Avery and Boylston Street. The parcel includes the now-closed State Theater, one of the oldest existing theater structures in the city.

#### Visual Arts Facilities

The visual arts will have an important presence in the Cultural District with galleries, art exhibition space, museums, and revolving temporary art installations in the district's public spaces. These facilities will be open every day including Mondays and holidays, during both business and evening hours.

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*The visual arts will have an important presence in the Cultural District with galleries, art exhibition space and museums, art work embellishing new theaters, and revolving temporary art installations in the district's public spaces.*

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Many non-profit and commercial galleries being displaced by rising rents in Back Bay have expressed an interest in relocating within the Cultural District. Possible new visual arts facilities include a 12,000 square-foot satellite museum, five 1,500-to-2,000 square foot membership galleries, ten 1,500-to-2,000 square foot commercial galleries, a theater for performance art, and a non-profit experimental film/video cinema, perhaps with three 100-seat screening rooms. A feasibility study is underway to analyze the potential of building a new home within the Cultural District for the Institute of Contemporary Art. Many visual arts





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facilities could be clustered as a Visual Arts Center as part of a coordinated mixed-use development on the parcels which make up the large Hinge Block. This Visual Arts Center would serve as a central unifying feature for the Cultural District.

#### **Public Realm**

Public spaces, the activities which occur within them, and the environment that surrounds them, collectively comprise the public realm. Nowhere in Boston will the public realm be more extensive and intensive than in the Cultural District.

The district is envisioned as the place where people from around the city will be drawn in their free time to sample the artistic and ethnic culture of Boston. Many of the district's attractions will be affordable if not free for the average Bostonian. Large and small theaters will provide a set of gathering places where the public can experience live performances and artistically decorated interiors. Museums and galleries, as well as restaurants, cafes, and shops, will also bring together the people of the city. This program of entertainment and retail uses will fill the streets of the district. Above the streets, a mix of residences, offices, and hotel rooms will both benefit from the special activity and special identity created by the arts and contribute to a sense of vitality and liveliness in the Cultural District.

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*Nowhere in Boston will the public realm be more extensive and intensive than in the Cultural District.*

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Public spaces within the Cultural District will also become cultural facilities and a stage set for community activities. Throughout the day, the public areas will be filled with street performers, changing

art installations, and the active everyday street life of the city. A variety of shops, restaurants, and cafes open into the evening hours will surround the public areas, contributing to the overall sense of vitality in the district.

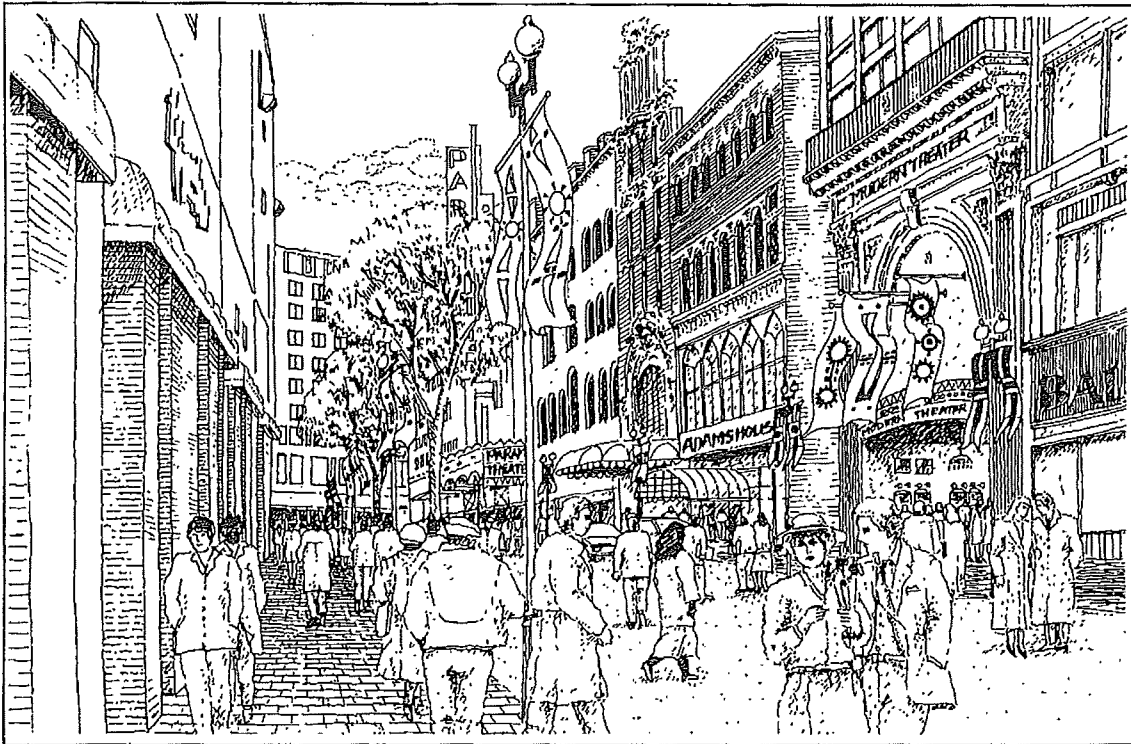
These spaces will be a center for spontaneous and programmed sidewalk activities and special events. They will be designed to accommodate not only the everyday needs of residents, workers, and visitors but also the activities of street musicians, actors, poets, dancers, magicians, and acrobats as well as art installations, interactive sculpture, art shows, and artists at work. In this way, art will play a special role in bringing together the people of the city. These activities, will, in the words of urban planner William Whyte, initiate "that process by which some external stimulus provides a linkage between people and prompts strangers to talk to each other as though they were not." For example, a street performer or sculpture would become a conversation piece which would transcend social differences and give people of diverse backgrounds and ages something in common. These street events attract people, creating a process in which watching the crowd is part of the entertainment.

Ultimately, in this city of neighborhoods, Boston's Cultural District will be everyone's neighborhood. The district will provide its visitors with the best of city life. In sharing the art and human activity in its theaters, museums, and public spaces, people will form the bonds of a common culture.

#### **Open Space**

Improvements and additions to the district's network of open space, streets, and alleys will help better define the district.

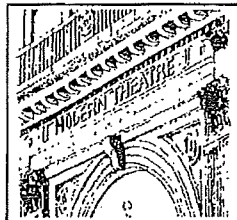
## Washington Street



## Theater Boulevard



OPERA HOUSE



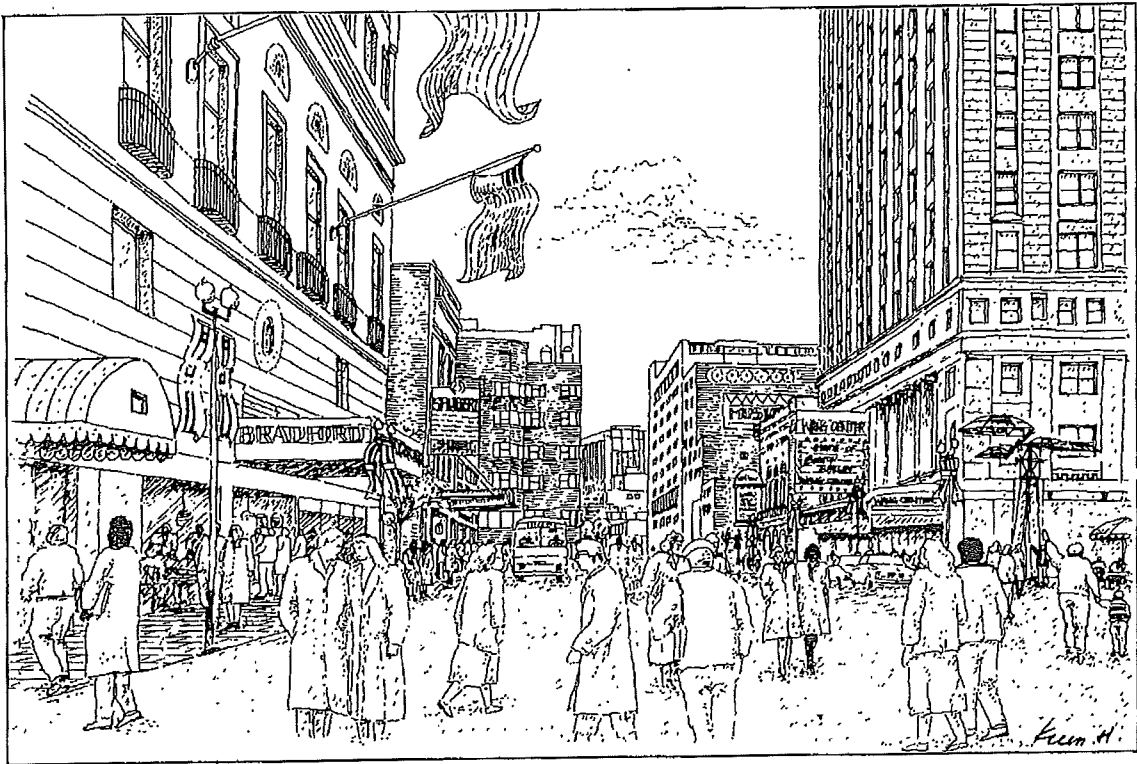
HISTORIC THEATERS



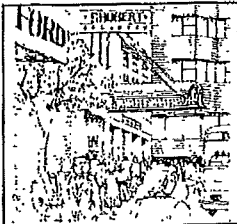
PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED STREET

## Perspective Views of the Cultural District

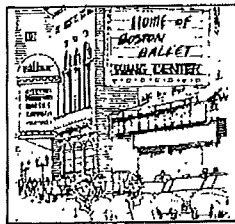
## Tremont Street



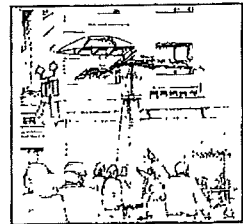
## Theater Boulevard



SHUBERT THEATER



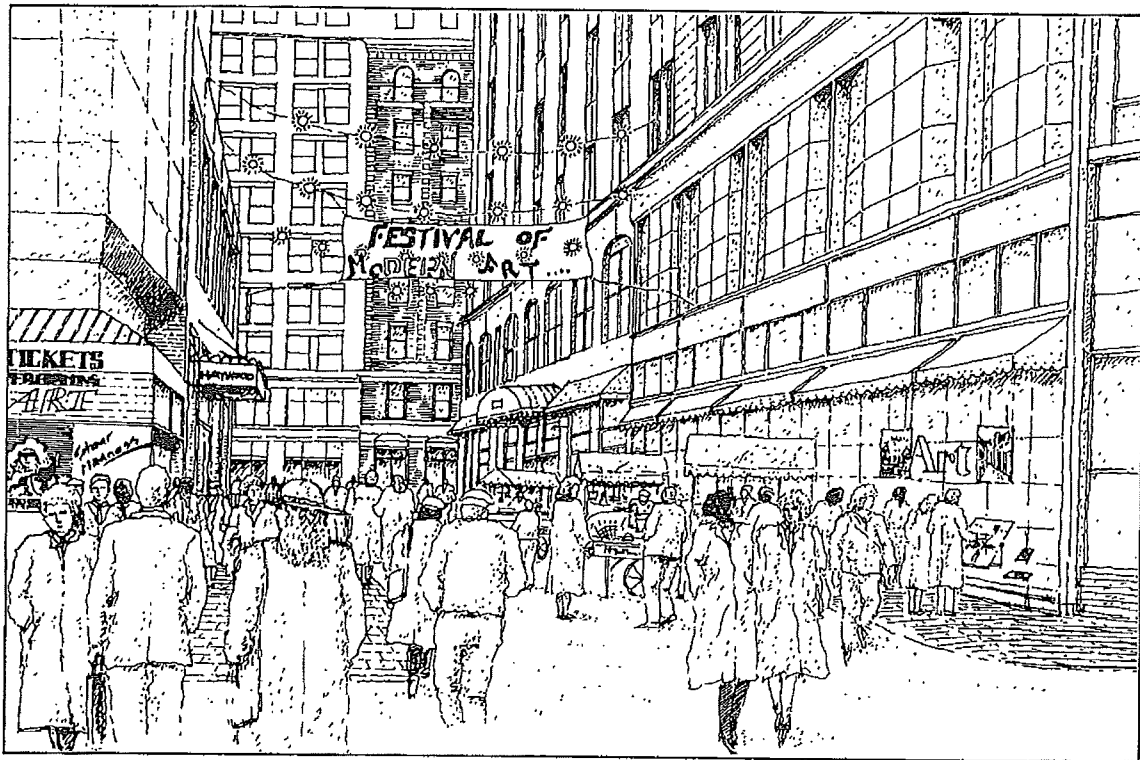
WILBUR WANG CENTER



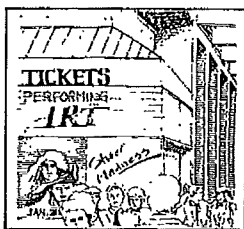
PUBLIC ART

## Perspective Views of the Cultural District

Hayward Place



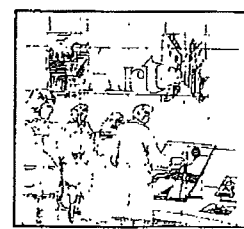
Theater Alley



THEATERS & CONCERT HALLS



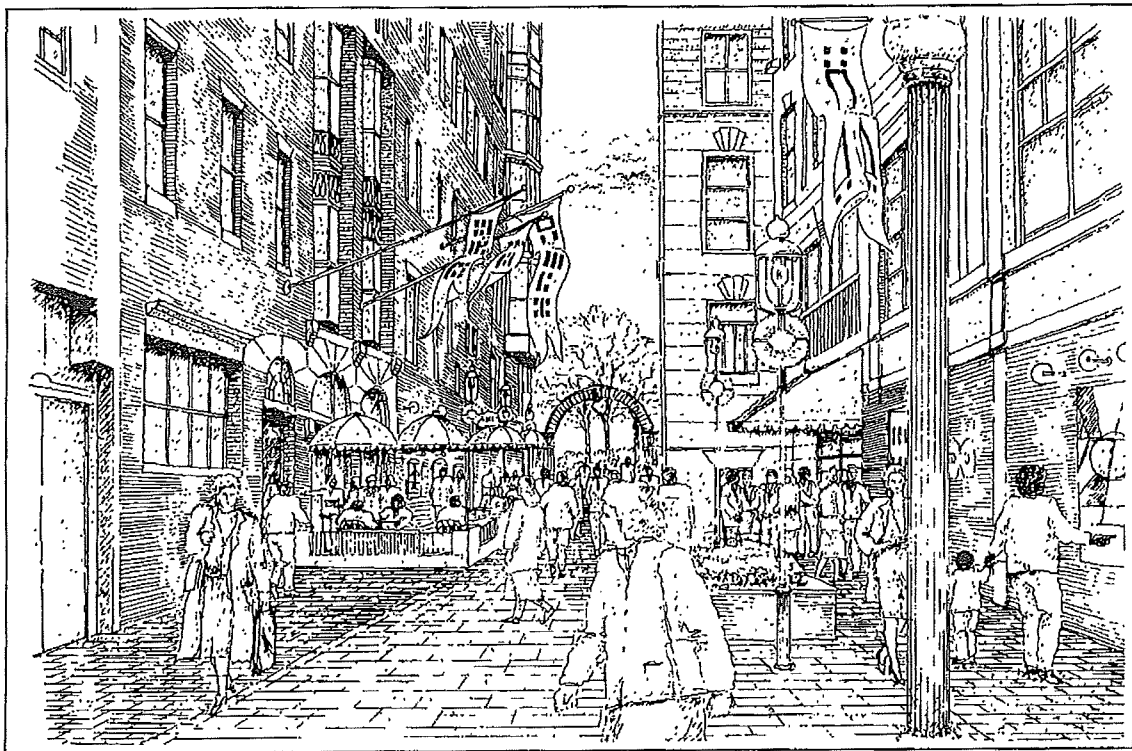
SPECIAL EVENTS



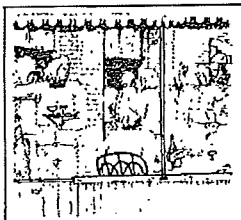
ART GALLERIES

*Perspective Views of the Cultural District*

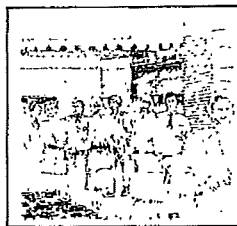
## Boylston Place



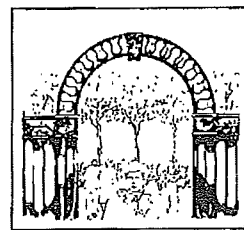
## Theater Alley



SIDEWALK CAFES



MUSIC AND DANCE CLUBS



FESTIVE STREETSCAPING

## Perspective Views of the Cultural District

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A new major public gathering place will be created on the Hinge Block at the center of the district. Boston Common's now-underutilized southeastern corner is undergoing improvement in the Boston Parks Department Master Plan for the Boston Common. A network of Theater Boulevards and Theater Alleys will connect the district's many cultural facilities through lively and diverse street activity. In addition, major new developments in the district will be reviewed to ensure that they include adequate, well-designed public areas and that they do not create serious wind, shadow, or visual impacts on other public parks, sidewalks, and plazas. City Place, which has been developed by a public/private/non-profit partnership in the State Transportation Building as a meeting place and focal point for free performances and public art, serves as a model for development of interior public spaces in the district.

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*Ultimately, in this city of neighborhoods,  
Boston's Cultural District will be  
everyone's neighborhood.*

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Improvements to the district's open spaces have already been funded and are in the planning stages. The city's 1985 capital plan includes \$575,000 to renovate Elliot Norton Park; \$940,000 to install brick sidewalks, as well as new lights and trees on lower Washington Street; and more than \$500,000 for Boston Common improvements.

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*A new major public gathering place will  
be created on the Hinge Block at the center  
of the district.*

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The concept for future public space improvements was developed with the assistance of Benjamin Thompson, a driving force behind the creation of the Faneuil Hall Marketplace. Thompson's efforts

focused on animating the Cultural District through an approximately \$20 million streetscaping program that includes specially-designed theater marquees, festive street lighting, dramatic facade lighting, and creative street furnishings including paving, benches, kiosks, vendors' carts, banners, awnings and tree planting. Artists and artisans will assist the city in developing the guidelines and creating streetscape elements as works of art.

At the center of the Hinge Block, a major new public gathering area, open or glass-covered, might be created to be used for outdoor performances and art installations. A network of walkways and spaces lined with shops, galleries, and cafes could connect the central gathering place with the main streets. The block's public space system could also include a sculpture garden, multi-level walkways and performance platforms, cafes and artisans-at-work. The spaces and walkways should unify the various visual arts facilities, tie together the major streets, and connect the district with Chinatown. The many possibilities for the form and programming of this space will be pursued as part of the planning process for the block.

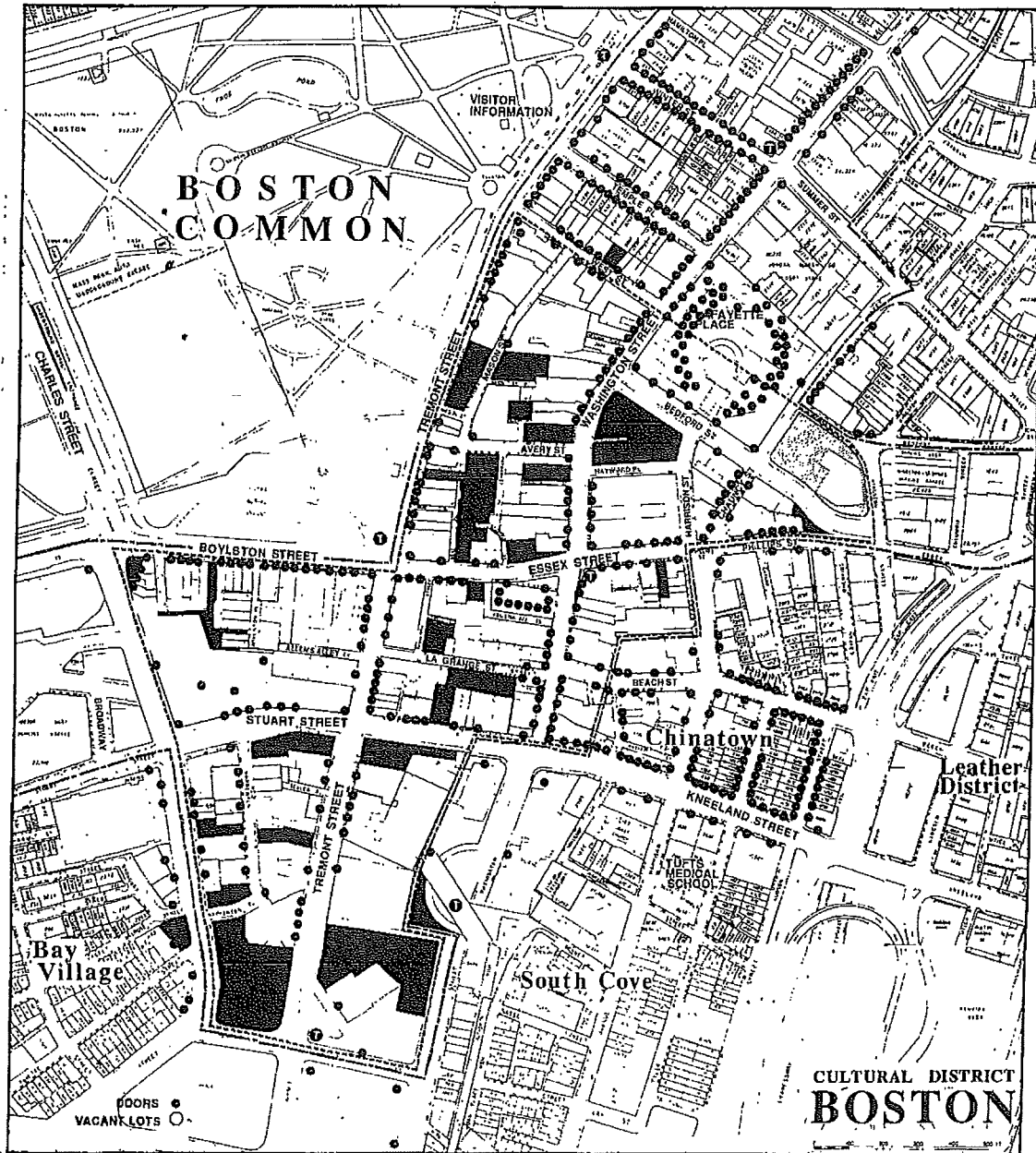
The Midtown Cultural District Task Force has been invited by the Parks Department to participate in the Master Plan process for the Boston Common. The city's Parks Department has already initiated a more than \$1 million Boston Common renovation and maintenance program that will result in the most extensive renovations to Boston Common since the early 20th century.

As part of this program, the city and the state installed a new \$1 million pedestrian lighting system for the Common in November 1987. In addition, more than 50 new signs were installed on the Common as part of a system of signs that was based on a master plan









## DOOR LOCATIONS

Survey of existing door locations in the Midtown area prepared by Benjamin Thompson Associates, indicating small scale historic parcel sizes and a busy pedestrian street level activity.

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for the Common developed by the Friends of the Boston Common and Public Garden. A history wall detailing the Common's heritage was installed on the back of the Visitor Information Center. About 70,000 square feet of new sod was planted to return sections of the Common to their former elegance. Fixtures, statues, and plaques were repaired. Some 100 park benches were repaired and painted. More than 150 new trash baskets were installed. A trash collection system using three Cushman Carts was implemented, reducing the need for heavy vehicles on the Common.

A new Boston Common maintenance plan has also been put in place. During warmer months, each morning at 5 am the Park Street Corner is steam cleaned. About 25 other defined tasks are regularly performed according to a master schedule that can be regularly monitored. These tasks include emptying trash barrels, picking up litter, cutting grass, and pruning and planting flowers, shrubs, and trees. This work will continue with the restoration of the Brewer Fountain and the Parkman Bandstand, and the rehabilitation of the Common's two ballfields. A design competition will also be held as the first step in building a new Visitor's Information Center on the Common.

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*The city's Parks Department has already initiated a more than \$1 million Boston Common renovation and maintenance program that will result in the most extensive renovations to Boston Common since the early 20th century.*

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In the warmer months, Parks Department staff are also coordinating a recreation, entertainment, and education program that includes organized tennis, baseball, and soccer as well as environmental educa-

tion, arts and crafts, wading in the Frog Pond, organized Boston Park Ranger tours and outdoor concerts. In the winter, thousands have attended the Light-a-Light holiday festivities. In 1988 the Parks Department, with the assistance of private business, has reinstated public skating on the Frog Pond and in the Lagoon.

Other city departments have contributed to the restoration of the Common. The police department has stepped up patrols in targeted areas. The Environment Department lent technical expertise in archaeology, arts, and landmarks. The Community Schools Department recruited children for parks department programs and the city's Public Facilities Department helped with the planting of trees and the planning of park structures. Other organizations and institutions have also joined in public/private partnerships that are helping improve the Common. These partners include Northeastern University, the Boston Foundation, the Friends of the Boston Common and Public Garden, and the Boston Greenspace Alliance.

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*This public space system could include a sculpture garden, multi-level walkways and performance platforms, cafes and artisans-at-work.*

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Smaller open areas should be created as part of other mixed-use projects in the district, in order to provide adequate public space in this soon to be intensely active area. Some new projects should include through-block pedestrian arcades and interior spaces that would serve as walkways during inclement weather.

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*The overlap between the Cultural District and adjacent Downtown Crossing, Chinatown, and Park Square will be emphasized through special treatments.*

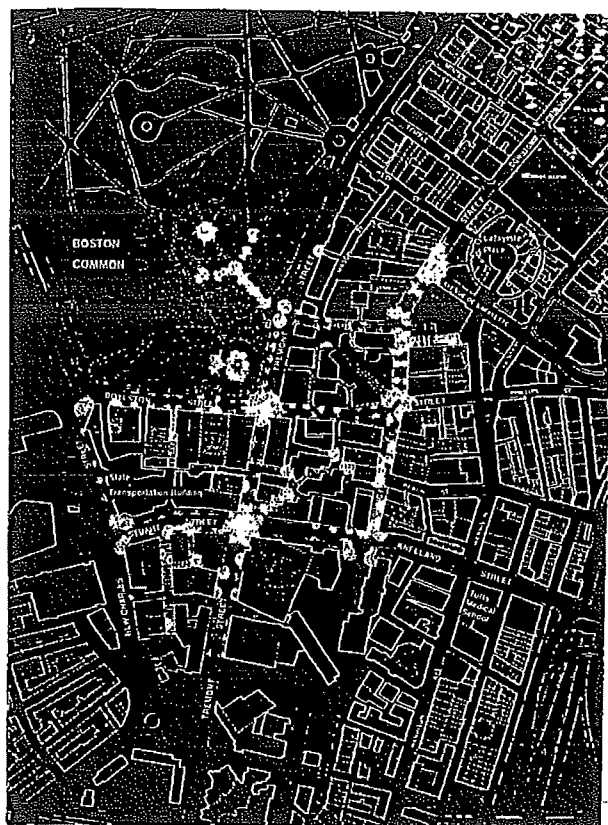
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The public realm program for the district should also enhance and define the character of the district. Stretches of Tremont and Washington Streets should be reinforced as "Theater Boulevards" which will emphasize the presence of the district's large theaters. Those theaters serve as the Cultural District's major institutions, providing the anchors which maintain the district's identity and stability. Grandly-scaled marquees, special street furnishings and dramatic lighting would give these stretches the atmosphere of a "Great White Way". Special treatment should also be given to key Theater Boulevard Intersections such as Tremont and Stuart Streets, Boylston and Tremont Streets, Boylston and Washington Streets, and to the gateway from Downtown Crossing to the Washington Street theaters. New developments at these intersections can add small open and glass-covered gathering spaces, special architectural and public art features, and more intense lighting to signal that the areas are important arrival and meeting points.

Boylston Place and Warrenton Street are pedestrian-oriented streets that have begun to house a string of smaller entertainment uses such as experimental theaters, cabarets, and clubs. Smaller scale, multi-colored marquees, street furnishings and lighting would give these "Theater Alleys" a lively, experimental image. Other opportunities exist within the district to transform small streets and pedestrian ways into Theater Alleys with new cultural facilities, clubs, and streetscaping.

*Smaller scale, multi-colored marquees, street furnishings and lighting would give these "Theater Alleys" a lively experimental image.*

Other district streets will be improved by zoning policies that mandate active ground floor uses in the district's buildings. In addition, the overlap between



**Street Lighting Plan for the Midtown Cultural District**  
by Benjamin Thompson Associates

the Cultural District and adjacent Downtown Crossing, Chinatown, and Park Square will be emphasized through special treatments. Streetscaping and architectural features can be used to signal the transition between districts along Washington, Essex, Beach, Stuart, and Boylston Streets and the entryway to the Cultural District up Kneeland Street.

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## Public Art

Public art throughout the district will help unify and give an identity to the currently-fragmented area. An extensive public art plan for the entire city is being developed with the arts community in conjunction with the Public Art Task Force of the city's Office of Arts and Humanities. The effort will include policies for the Cultural District's public art program. Public art will be used to create identities for areas and define focal points in the district. In addition, artists would be engaged to create architectural detailing on new buildings, to embellish theater marquees, lobbies and auditoriums, and to design street furnishings which will contribute to the special character of the district. Public spaces would also be used for temporary art exhibits, transforming the Cultural District itself into an art gallery.

## Complementary Facilities

Complementary uses such as art and music supply stores, restaurants, nightclubs, cabarets, and commercial theaters will be encouraged throughout the Cultural District. Facilities for the Asian arts community are being studied with the assistance of the Chinese Culture Institute, the Asian American Resource Workshop and the greater Chinatown community. The groups will also identify other opportunities for including Asian performing and visual arts, workshops and studio space within the district for Asian artists and artisans, as well as restaurants and import shops. Non-profit arts groups and arts service organizations also need affordable office space within the district.

## Implementation

### Funding

Funding for the renovation and construction of cultural facilities will come from a number of sources. A significant portion of the funds needed to build the new facilities will be required from developers of some projects in the district. Funds from the sale of BRA-owned property in the Midtown Cultural District will be set aside to help fund the construction and renovation of cultural facilities. Federal funds and the Massachusetts Civic/Convention Center Program could also help fund the new facilities. Low interest loans may be available from state entities such as the Health and Education Financing Authority (HEFA) and the Massachusetts Industrial Finance Agency (MIFA).

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*Presently, funds from corporations make up 1.8 percent of the combined operating budgets of Boston's arts groups. By contrast, corporate contributions make up 4 percent of the arts groups' budgets in San Francisco, 10 percent in Houston, and 14.6 percent in Minneapolis.*

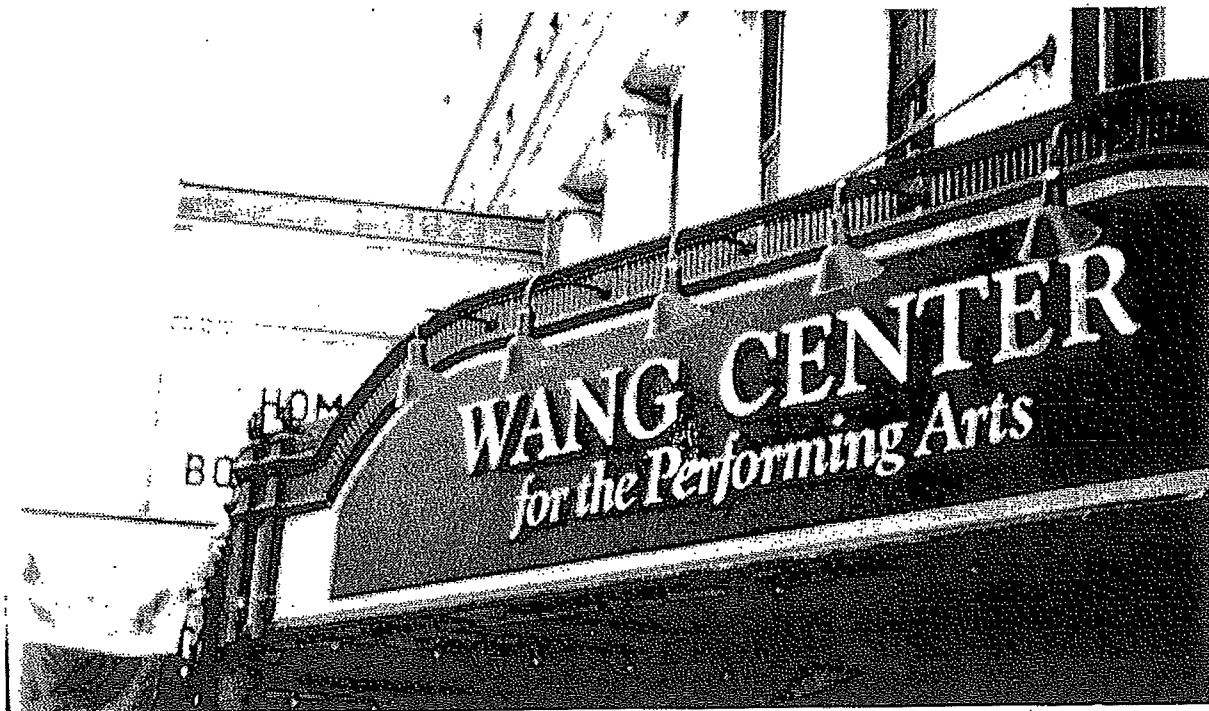
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Funds to manage, operate, and maintain the non-profit cultural facilities, to promote the Cultural District, and to program public art and performances will be generated by a Cultural District endowment that will be managed by the Midtown Cultural District Trust, a new non-profit public/private partnership. In addition to modest rents from arts groups, funds for the endowment could be raised through other sources of earned income, developer contributions, foundation grants, corporate giving and fund raising events for the district. The Trust may also invest in its own real estate activities.

In addition to developer contributions, non-profit foundations, corporations and private individuals would also provide a significant portion of both the capital funds needed to build the facilities and the operating expenses of those facilities. The new Trust will solicit corporate and private funding sources for the development and operation of Cultural District facilities. Presently, funds from corporations make up 1.8 percent of the combined operating budgets of Boston's arts groups. By contrast, corporate contributions make up 4 percent of the arts groups' budgets in San Francisco, 10 percent in Houston, and 14.6 percent in Minneapolis. Private and corporate donors might also be approached to "adopt a theater." This would be comparable to An Wang's sponsorship of the Wang Center, but on a smaller scale.

### Management

The district's new cultural facilities and public spaces need to be managed, programmed, publicized and maintained. In addition, one organization needs to coordinate fund-raising efforts, to manage capital development programs, and be responsible for the Cultural District endowment. All of these activities will be the responsibility of a new Midtown Cultural District Trust, a non-profit public/private partnership. The Trust must also approve all plans to build and manage cultural facilities in buildings receiving city approval in the district, as well as construction and management plans for historic facilities under City review. Similar organizations exist in a number of cities including Pittsburgh, Dallas, Cleveland, and New York City. The responsibilities of the Cultural District Trust will include the following:



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- **Cultural Facilities:** Manage, lease, develop, acquire and program cultural facilities in the district.
  - **Programming:** Ensure a mix of programming that accurately reflects the cultural vitality of the district and the region.
  - **Public Funds:** Administer funds set aside from the sale of public land and special assessments to help renovate historic theaters and buildings, develop new facilities, and fund a maintenance endowment. The Trust will also solicit and administer federal and state grants.
  - **Private Fund-raising:** Solicit, accept, and administer grants and contributions; generate public and private support for the Cultural District's capital development program and operations endowment.
  - **Public Space:** Program entertainment, events, and outdoor art in the district's public spaces and maintain those spaces.
  - **Promotion:** Publicize and promote the Cultural District as a whole.
  - **Planning and Development:** Participate in the long-range planning and development of the district's future.
  - **Education:** Coordinate Cultural District activities with public school curriculum.
  - **Community Participation:** Ensure wide-spread public involvement in, and access to, Cultural District activities.

#### **The Cultural Community and the Cultural District Task Force**

The development and management plans for the new Cultural District performing and visual arts facilities have been specifically designed to meet the needs of Boston's unique arts community, which includes over 150 arts organizations and 14,000 performing and visual artists. These groups include many nationally-known companies and performers in theater, dance, and music as well as many well-known visual artists and well-known galleries.

But rising real estate prices and a lack of adequate facilities have made it increasingly difficult for these groups to find affordable performance, rehearsal, gallery, and studio space.

As a result of this displacement, in 1984 the city's arts community joined forces to develop a program to meet its needs for affordable space. The result of these meetings was the creation of the Performing Arts Development Task Force, chaired by the heads of two of the city's major arts agencies and by Bruce Rossley, then the city's arts administrator.

The group's first priority was to quantify the extent of the problem and to recommend solutions. A survey of non-profit performing groups was conducted and published the following year as the "1984 Space Survey." This document indicated a need for a minimum of nine new performing arts facilities with between 99 and 499 seats. It was indicated that these facilities should be used and administered collaboratively. Discussions about how to meet the demand for the facilities focussed on the mismatch between the many large vacant theaters in Boston's historic entertainment district and the performing arts groups' need for affordable small- and medium-sized performance facilities.

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The survey, and subsequent surveys revealed a wide range of activity in the Boston arts community. Music groups in the city ranged from major, international organizations, such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra through smaller, well-known groups such as the Handel and Haydn Society, the Greater Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Camerata, and the John Oliver Chorale, to small, emerging groups such as New Voices and the Boston Village Gamelan. As a whole, noted Boston Globe music critic Richard Dyer in January 1987, "Many of Boston's resident musicians and musical institutions are the equal to any in the world."

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*As a whole, "the professional little theater movement in Boston is uncommonly vital," Boston Herald theater critic emeritus Elliot Norton, noted in January 1987. "It is essential to the city's cultural well-being that resident theater be allowed to develop and expand."*

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The city's theater activity is similarly vital, ranging from major productions in historic theaters such as the Colonial, the Wilbur, and the Shubert Theaters to smaller theater groups such as Theaterworks and the New African Company. As a whole, "the professional little theater movement in Boston is uncommonly vital," Boston Herald theater critic emeritus Elliot Norton, noted in January 1987. "It is essential to the city's cultural well-being that resident theater be allowed to develop and expand."

The city also has a vibrant dance community which ranges from the Boston Ballet to the Concert Dance Company, the Danny Sloan Dance Company, and the

Ramon de los Reyes Spanish Dance Theater. Noted Sali Ann Kriegsman, director of the National Endowment for the Arts' Dance Program: "Dance in Boston is in a period of unprecedented growth. As other cities experience similar expansion they are looking to Boston as a model of innovation."

In addition to performing arts groups, the city has an extensive network of visual arts facilities, many of which support Boston's many resident visual artists. These facilities include two major art museums, the Museum of Fine Arts and the Institute of Contemporary Art; 30 commercial art galleries; and four, non-profit membership galleries, the Boston Visual Artists Union, the Kingston Gallery, the Bromfield Gallery, and Gallery NAGA. According to Boston Globe art critic Christine Temin: "Boston now has a group of extremely fine young artists working on a level of any group in the country. And we have aggressive galleries here to support them."

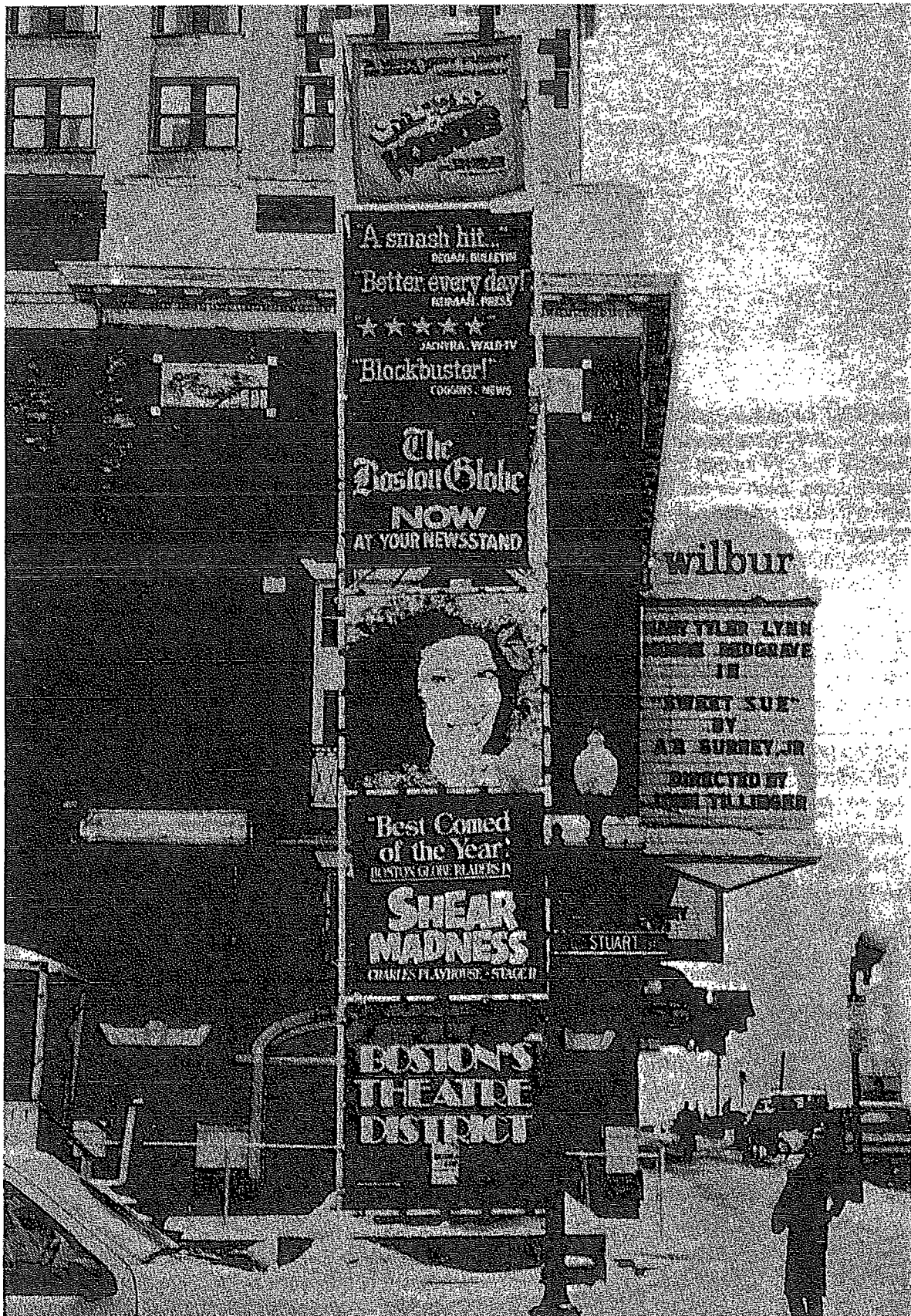
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*Noted Sali Ann Kriegsman, director of the National Endowment for the Arts' Dance Program: "Dance in Boston is in a period of unprecedented growth. As other cities experience similar expansion they are looking to Boston as a model of innovation."*

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Subsequent surveys found that the non-profit arts community has also become an important part of the Boston economy. According to a 1987 survey sponsored by ARTS/Boston and the City's Office of Arts and Humanities, called "The Economic Impact of the Arts on the City of Boston," in 1986, approximately 7.6 million people attended non-profit cultural events in the city, more than double the number of people who attended professional and college sporting events. The survey also found that non-profit cultural or-







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ganizations generated more than \$500 million for the Boston economy and that non-profit organizations are one of the city's largest employers, with 4,100 full- and part-time personnel. In addition, another 7,000 visual artists, 2,500 writers and poets, and 2,000 other self-employed artists live and work in the city.

But a 1986 needs assessment undertaken by OAH and by ARTS/Boston, found that more than 50 of the city's performing arts groups do not have reliable access to small- and medium-sized performance spaces.

*More than 50 of the city's performing arts groups do not have reliable access to small- and medium-sized performance spaces (see chart).*

These groups vary in size, with annual budgets ranging from \$8,000 to \$250,000 with an average of \$100,000. The oldest group is the Actor's Workshop which has been in existence since 1954 while the youngest, the Black Folks Theater, has been operating for only a year. The average age of the groups is more than 14 years old. Their annual audiences range from 1,200 to 20,000 people, with an average of 6,000 people per group.

The survey also found that these groups' demand for space could be met by sharing ten small- and medium-sized theaters. Working with Brannigan-Lorelli Associates of New York, the cultural community and OAH developed a facilities plan to meet existing needs for affordable space. The plan calls for the creation of:

- A 799 -seat Proscenium Theater: to be used by larger dance and theater productions and as a transfer house for productions out-drawing smaller facilities.

- A 499-seat Dance Theater: to be used by the over one dozen established local dance groups and the City's one major dance presenter.
- A 499-seat Flex-Space Theater to be used by the more than 20 local drama groups.
- A 499-seat Asian Arts Theater: to be part of an Asian Arts Center for use by both local and visiting companies.
- A 400-seat Concert Hall: to be used by mid-sized music groups and medium range productions.
- A 200-seat Concert Hall: to be used by local folk and jazz groups, and over a dozen small classical and world music groups.
- A 250-seat experimental Performance Art Theater: To be used for performance art.
- A 199-seat Dance Theater: to be used by small or emerging dance groups.
- Two 199-seat "Black Box" Theaters: to be used by local drama and dance groups for new and experimental work.

The Task Force also proposed the establishment of a non-profit trust to control, manage, program, and maintain the new facilities. The Trust, which was first suggested as part of the 1984 report, would also bear responsibility for raising the funds to support itself.

While the Task Force and OAH were honing their plans in 1985 and 1986, the Boston Redevelopment Authority decided to reconsider the city's downtown plan and zoning. Thus, while the BRA was proposing new zoning and district planning, the Task Force was proposing new specific planning concepts and

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guidelines for a part of the city that has historically been the region's theater district. Out of this work came the proposal for a Cultural District at the center of the Midtown IPOD study area. The 1987, Downtown Interim Zoning Plan created the opportunity to make this vision a reality.

In 1987 to respond to this opportunity, the existing Task Force was augmented with representatives from all constituencies concerned with the creation of a Cultural District in the Midtown area. At that time, the task force changed its name to the Midtown Cultural District Task Force. Since then, the staff of the BRA and the city's Office of Arts and Humanities and the more than 200 citizens who make up the Task Force have worked closely to ensure that the Midtown Cultural District Plan, new Midtown zoning, and the ultimate development of the area, accurately represent the needs, desires, and diverse interests of the people who will live, work, enjoy, and own property in the district.

The first fruit of this joint planning effort came in late 1987 when the BRA and OAH issued an interim report calling for new cultural facilities as part of mixed-use complexes in the district as well as the rehabilitation of some vacant historic theaters for use by non-profit performing groups. The BRA and OAH have also jointly issued some of the Task Force's reports on the city's arts community. The adoption of the Midtown Cultural District Plan and new zoning for the Midtown area will end this four-year planning process and begin the implementation of a badly-needed cultural development program for the city.

### **History/Current Conditions**

Locating the new cultural facilities in the city's historic entertainment district, improving the area's open space network, and strengthening the area through the development of a mixed-use economy continues

the area's at least 200 year history as a regional center for the arts, recreation, and city life. In the late 1600s and early 1700s, the sparsely-settled area around what is now the intersection of Washington, Boylston, and Essex Streets was the last outpost of homes that travellers passed before they crossed the narrow, soggy causeway that connected the Shawmut peninsula with the mainland in Roxbury. In 1634, the nearly 45-acre Boston Common was purchased by the town. By the early 1700s the Common had become a community resource used for leisurely walks, pasturing cattle, training the military, and punishing criminals and religious heretics.

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*The rejuvenation of the area will also recall the area's almost 200-year history as the region's center for arts and entertainment.*

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The district began to grow as a residential and commercial neighborhood in the mid 1700s, when new docks were built on South Cove and a new church was built on Hollis Street where Tufts/New England Medical Center garage now stands. The Central Burying Ground at the southeastern corner of the Common on Boylston Street was purchased by the town in 1756 when existing burying grounds on Tremont Street were filled up. In the years before the Revolutionary War, American patriots often gathered to protest British rule at the Liberty Tree, which stood at the corner of what is now Boylston and Washington Streets.

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*The district began to grow as a residential and commercial neighborhood in the mid 1700s.*

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Boston's founders, as well as many 19th century religious leaders, frowned on the theater as a wicked institution. Despite their concerns, by the late 1700s

many Bostonians became interested in theatrical performances, which were often presented under the guise of "moral lectures." The city's first theater, the New Exhibition Room, operated from 1792 until 1793 in a converted stable at the corner of what is now Franklin and Hawley Streets. The closing of the New Exhibition Room was quickly followed by the construction of the Bulfinch-designed Federal Street Theater in 1794 in what is now the Financial District. Two years later, in 1796, the Haymarket Theater opened near what is now the intersection of Tremont and Boylston Streets. While the Haymarket Theater closed in 1803, Bulfinch's theater, which was also known as the Boston Theater, operated until 1852. However, the Boston Theater name was taken by a new facility on Washington Street. This new Boston Theater was torn down in 1925 and replaced by the B.F. Keith Memorial Theater which was later called the Savoy Theater, and is now known as the Opera House.

During the early 1800s the region grew physically through the landfilling of South Cove. The area also grew in importance through increased commercial activity, becoming a center for entertainment. In the early 1800s the Handel and Haydn Society performed above market stalls at the Boylston Market, which stood at the corner of what are now Boylston and Washington Streets. The Boston Museum, which opened in 1846 on Tremont Street at Bromfield Street and later moved to Tremont Street near the King's Chapel Burying Ground, featured exhibits, concerts, and performances until 1903. Many important political and artistic figures, including Abraham Lincoln, Charles Dickens, Daniel Webster and Jenny Lind spoke or performed on the stage of The Tremont Theater built on the site now occupied by the Tremont Temple Baptist church. The 136-year old Music Hall, now known as the Orpheum Theater, was the first

home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and is still used for popular concerts.

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*All told, there were more than 50 theaters in the city after the turn of the century.*

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In the mid and late 1800s, the area continued to grow as a center of commerce, and as a center of entertainment for the city's growing middle class. New theaters tended to be located in the growing retail district along lower Washington Street, an area which grew in importance with the rise of ready-made clothing. Some of these theaters were grand facilities, such as the 3,200 seat Boston Theater which stood on the site of what is now the Opera House. Other new theaters were created through the conversion of ground-floor space in office buildings on Tremont and Washington Streets. The Bijou Building, on lower Washington Street, housed the theater where Benjamin F. Keith perfected what became known as vaudeville, a concept he parlayed into a nationwide chain of more than 400 theaters.

By the early twentieth century performing arts spaces became the main function of new buildings such as the Shubert, the Majestic, and the Wilbur Theaters. Theaters such as the Colonial, the Essex and the Publix/Gaiety were built as part of new commercial buildings. These stages were the sites of a number of theatrical milestones, including the world premieres of A Streetcar Named Desire and Our Town. All told, there were more than 50 theaters in the city after the turn of the century. During this era the Parkman Bandstand was also built on the Common. Residents of the city not only gathered to hear concerts at the bandstand, they also used its stage for political rallies.

Midtown Boston's growth as a cultural center was bolstered by the advent of movies. The first talking

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film, The Jazz Singer, had its Boston premier at the Modern Theater on Washington Street in 1920. Both the Paramount Theater and the Metropolitan Theater (now the Wang Center) were built as movie palaces in the 1920s and 1930s.

The decline of the New England economy after the Great Depression, the exodus of the middle class from the city after World War II, and the changing nature of the theater industry all combined to create problems in the district and the city. While some theaters -- such as the Shubert, the Colonial, the Wilbur, the Orpheum, and the Charles -- continued to operate as mainstream theaters many other historic theaters closed during the post-war era. Vacant historic theaters in the district include Steinert Hall, the Saxon/Majestic, the Paramount, the Modern, the Essex, the Publix/Gaiety, and the State.

During the 1960s adult-oriented bars and theaters began to flourish on lower Washington Street, in the "Combat Zone." In 1974, in an attempt to confine the area's activities, the city, through zoning regulations, made the area a designated Adult Entertainment District. Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s about 25 to 30 adult-oriented establishments flourished in the Combat Zone. The area's reputation was tarnished by a high incidence of major crimes and illicit drug trafficking.

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*The decline of the New England economy after the Great Depression, the exodus of the middle class from the city after World War II, and the changing nature of the theater industry all combined to create problems in the district and the city.*

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The few public spaces in the area also fell into disrepair. The little-used southeastern corner of Boston Common became uninviting and often unsafe. The Parkman Bandstand was no longer used for concerts.

In addition, the new Liberty Tree Park, built in the Combat Zone during the 1970s, and Elliot Norton Park, built in the 1970s between the Theater District, South Cove, and Bay Village, became havens for a host of undesirable activities, including prostitution. Shrinking city budgets and declining political support for open space contributed to problems in the parks. Due to Proposition 2 1/2-induced budget cuts in the early 1980s, the Parks Department budget was, in real dollars, cut almost in half. At this time, on a per capita basis, Boston was spending less on parks than any other major American city. The city was also devoting a lower percentage of its total budget to parks than any other major city in the country.

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In recent years many forces have started to transform the area. Boston's growing downtown economy and the rapid growth of Chinatown have created a demand for office, retail, and residential space in the district. Some of the new retail and office activities occupy space once used for adult-oriented clubs and stores in the Combat Zone. The increased availability of sexually-explicit materials at local newsstands and video rental stores has also cut into the business of Combat Zone establishments. In addition, city licensing authorities and federal investigators increased

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their scrutiny of Combat Zone facilities. The combination of these factors has created major changes in the once-thriving Combat Zone. Since March 1986, about two-thirds of the adult-oriented establishments in the district have gone out of business or had their licenses revoked. None of the facilities has reopened in other parts of the city. By contrast, non-adult entertainment uses now outnumber the adult bookstores, movie theaters, peep shows and bars on lower Washington Street between Essex and Kneeland Streets, the block which was once the heart of the Combat Zone. Despite the changes, the Combat Zone area still has more major crimes per square foot than any nearby residential or commercial area.

Some new cultural facilities have also opened in the district. Boylston Place and Warrenton Street have begun to house a string of smaller theaters and nightclubs. CityPlace, in the State Transportation Building, has been developed as a meeting place and focal point for free performances and public art.

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The growth in the city's economy is generating revenues to make badly-needed improvements to local infrastructure. The Flynn Administration's 1985 capital budget provided significant funds to renovate both Boston Common and Elliot Norton Park. A \$1 million lighting system, funded by the city and the state, was installed on the Common in November 1987. This summer the Parks Department will renovate Brewer Fountain near the Park Street MBTA Station. The Parks Department has increased programming on the Common and has installed new trash receptacles, fencing, signs, and interpretative

history panels. In addition, all of the Common's benches and structures have been painted, planters and play equipment have been repaired, old signs have been removed, and trees have been trimmed. On July 7, 1988, the City announced a design competition to build a new information booth on the Common. As part of the development of future plans and facilities, the department has completed a user survey for the Common and has established an inter-departmental task force to study administrative and management issues on the Common.

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*According to a 1986 needs assessment, more than 50 of the city's performing groups do not have reliable access to small- and medium-sized performance space.*

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### **A Vision for the Public Realm by Benjamin Thompson Associates**

In order to develop a comprehensive public space program for the Cultural District, the city hired Benjamin Thompson Associates, the designers of Faneuil Hall and many similar projects across the country, to develop a comprehensive public space program for the district. The suggestions made by Thompson will be used to guide the development of public spaces in the district. About \$19 to \$20 million will be required to fund the proposed streetscape improvements in the district. According to Thompson: "Revitalization of the Boston Midtown area, and in particular the Cultural District, focuses on realizing the vision of a fresh identifiable character for this important part of downtown. The initial concept concentrates on an image of a place that is safe as well as festive and fun, a place to go in the evening for theater, cinema, music, dance, opera, and many other activities allied with the arts, as well as for dining, dancing, and late

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evening entertainment. It must also become a daytime place that has a stable mixture of activities, and the other commercial components of a central business district that complements a vital urban area."

The conceptual approach has been, first, to identify the components that contribute to and animate the overall identity of a "city cultural district" -- beginning with the areas many theaters and cinemas -- to arrive at loosely-defined boundaries of Boston's semi-coherent and semi-integrated "district". This has included the identification of major points of entry and recognizable places that bring activity in and out, which energize as well as blend the district with the surrounding city; locating the important places and focal points within the district, including squares, corners, crossings, buildings, alleys, arcades, and other unique physical assets where special and varied activities reinforce or construct circulation links between places and among the major destination points in and around Boston's Cultural District.

Working with a loosely-defined district, an important task is to animate and make visually appealing the total environment of the district through physical improvements to buildings and streets, through addition of planting, amenities, and new environmental features; regulating signs and graphics and designing dramatic festive uses of lighting. And above all, it has been important to find imaginative regenerative uses for both unoccupied buildings and development sites.

The Cultural District has no single center. It is an area within an old section of the city. The concept plan develops several potentially important identifiable places that give the district character and a sense of orientation within Boston.

A promenade through Boston's Cultural District, conceptually defining its boundaries, begins at the south corner of the Boston Common, continues up Tremont Street to Stuart and Tremont and the adjacent Hinge Block, the functional center of the District. Proceeding through and around the Hinge Block to Washington, one traverses the edge of Chinatown, and proceeds through historic Liberty Square to the Opera House and on toward Downtown Crossing. Although the District encompasses a small corner of Boston, it is an area with unlimited potential. It is a melting pot of varied populations and users, and a fascinating labyrinth of interesting and important buildings, corners, alleys and spaces. A somewhat forgotten corner of our city, the Cultural District has the potential for becoming intense, diverse, creative, and alive, for embodying everything that is exciting, alluring, and magical about urban life, and for setting the stage for Boston's artistic and cultural renaissance."

## **Cultural District Planning Projects**

### **Cultural District Redevelopment Projects**

Planning for the Cultural District has focussed on several key parcels in the district, including: the Hinge Block, the vacant parking lot next to the Shubert Theater (Parcel C-4), the vacant lot next to the Wilbur Theater (P-7), the vacant parking lot on Hayward Place and the adjacent Lafayette Place mall, and the parcel on Washington Street between Boylston and Avery Streets. In addition, planning for the district has focussed on ways to revitalize two of the historic districts located within the Cultural District: the Liberty Tree National Historic District and the Washington Street Historic Theater District.

As part of the public review process, the city will ensure that these projects have a favorable impact upon the quality of the pedestrian environment, are in