



# PLAN: Downtown

Advisory Group Meeting #5  
Mobility & Public Realm

July 17, 2019



**boston planning &  
development agency**

# Agenda

## *Advisory Group Meeting #5 Agenda – Mobility & Public Realm*

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| 1. Advisory Group Update                            | 2 minutes  |
| 2. Recap of Carbon Free Boston                      | 5 minutes  |
| 3. Draft Mobility and Public Realm Goals            | 2 minute   |
| 4. Past & Upcoming Transportation Planning Projects | 5 minutes  |
| 5. Public Realm Overview                            | 15 minutes |
| 6. Mobility Overview                                | 15 minutes |
| 7. AG Discussion & Public Comment                   | 45 minutes |
| 8. Next Steps                                       | 5 minutes  |

# Advisory Group Overview

*Preliminary Advisory Group Schedule—Subject to Change*

1	March 7, 2019	<b>Introduction &amp; Project Overview</b>
2	April 24, 2019	<b>Existing Conditions &amp; Character Areas</b>
3	May 22, 2019	<b>Preservation &amp; Growth</b>
4	June 20, 2019	<b>Climate &amp; Resiliency</b>
5	<b>July 17, 2019</b>	<b>Mobility &amp; Public Realm</b>
6	September 2019	<b>Development Scenarios</b>
7	October 2019	<b>Preferred Development Scenario</b>

8	November 2019	<b>Preferred Development Scenario</b> Impact Assessment
9	December 2019 / January 2020	<b>Urban Design Guidelines &amp; Zoning Recommendations</b>
10	February 2020	<b>Urban Design Guidelines &amp; Zoning Recommendations</b>
11	March/April 2020	<b>Draft PLAN: Downtown</b>
	May—July 2020	Meet as needed. PLAN: Downtown must be substantially complete by July 2020.

*Meeting dates and subjects are tentative and subject to change. Extra meetings may be scheduled and will be discussed in advance with the Advisory Group. Advisory Group members will be provided with schedule updates as the project progresses.*

# Advisory Group Meeting #4 Follow Up

## *What We Heard*

- Climate & Resiliency Policy – Equity in requiring improvements & climate mitigation strategies. Availability of financial support for retrofits
- Life safety should come first
- Discovered opportunities for district energy coordination with community partners in Chinatown
- Incentivizing walking and biking to minimize vehicular use Downtown

# Recap of Carbon Free Boston

*Reducing transportation emissions*

## What's driving transportation emissions?

- 65% of transportation emissions come from personal vehicles (cars, SUVs)
- $\frac{3}{4}$  are due to travel to and from the metro area

## What are the key strategies to get to carbon neutrality?

### 1. Shift travelers out of single occupancy vehicles

- Public transit, bike and pedestrian network expansion: Go Boston 2030 urban rail and bus projects, reducing cost of public transit, expanding DTX pedestrian zone
- Private vehicle pricing (e.g., parking fees, smart mobility pricing, etc.)

### 2. Convert remaining vehicles to run on electricity (and provide necessary infrastructure)



# Benefits of Carbon-Neutral Transportation

*Quality of life and public health benefits*

**Measures to reduce carbon pollution and improve climate resiliency also result in better air quality and improved quality of life**

- **Reducing vehicle trips (by increasing other modes):** \$52 million in healthcare cost savings thanks to more physical activity and a healthier population, \$259 million in avoided motor vehicle crash costs
- **Adding more trees and green infrastructure:** air quality, mental health benefits, noise abatement
- **Electrification of vehicles:** \$414 million in savings on vehicle operations, no more tailpipe emissions (-29% PM2.5, -55% NOx)



# Mobility & Public Realm

## *Draft Goals*

- 1. Develop a new framework for the preservation, enhancement, and growth of Downtown Boston as a place for all, balancing livability, daylight, walkability, climate change preparedness, access to open space, affordability, and a dynamic mix of uses.**
2. Embrace the distinctive histories present in public spaces as essential to creating a unique and cohesive Downtown.
- 3. Promote dense, mixed-use development to support job growth, housing opportunities, and an expanded public realm.**
4. Improve access to housing, cultural assets, and amenities for a diverse range of Boston residents across all neighborhoods, levels of affordability, stages of life, and backgrounds.

# Mobility & Public Realm

## *Draft Goals*

5. Preserve the cultural heritage, arts and performance venues, and historic building fabric while advancing climate preparedness and resiliency measures.

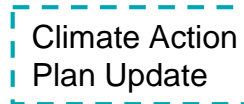
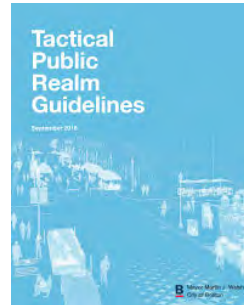
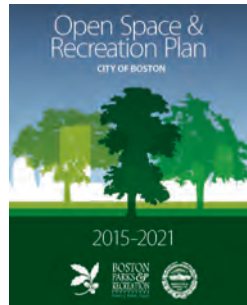
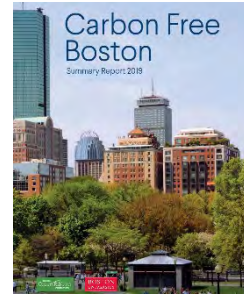
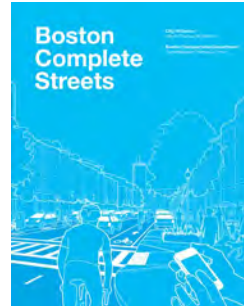
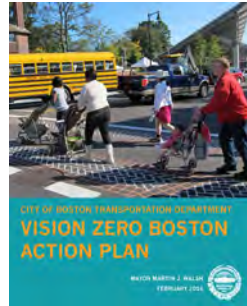
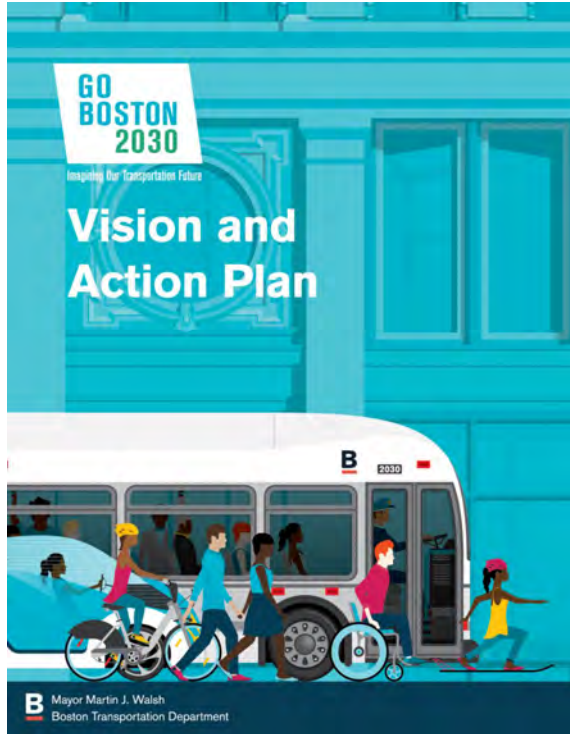
**6. Encourage consistent, safe, healthy, and high-quality improvements to the public realm to support 18 hour/7 days/week activity for residents, workers, and visitors.**

7. Encourage business development that maintains Downtown as a regional economic center and support the retention, growth, and diversity of ground-floor retail businesses, especially legacy and small businesses.

**8. Focus on active transportation, transit, and non-vehicular modes of transportation Downtown to improve non-vehicular connections through, within, and to Downtown.**



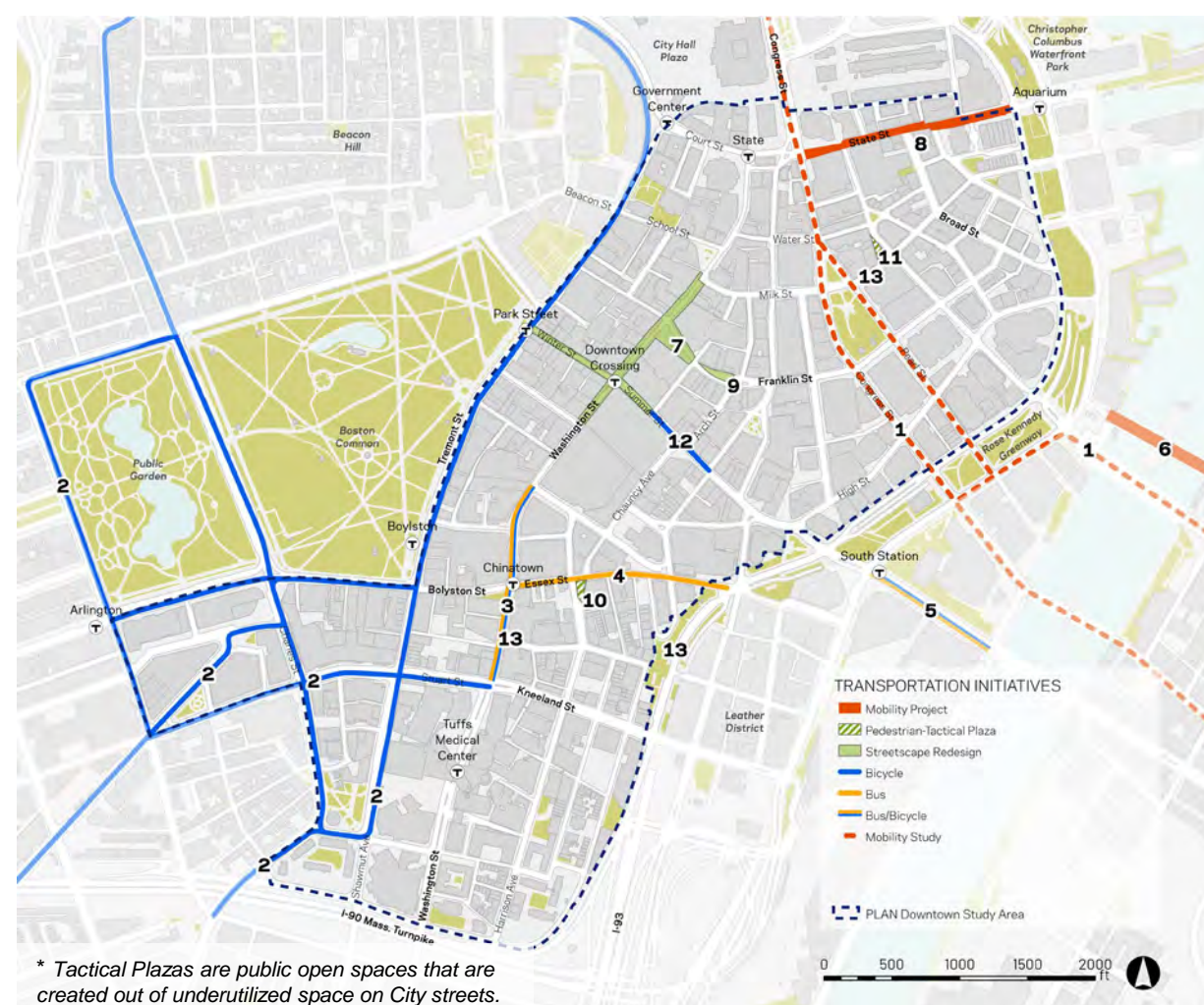
# City of Boston's Mobility & Public Realm Planning Efforts To Date



# Upcoming City of Boston Projects

This list does not include private contributions to the public realm.

1. **North Station-South Boston Waterfront Transportation Study** (*Future study*)
2. **Southwest Corridor Extension/Bike Network Acceleration Projects** (*Planning underway*)
3. **Washington St. Bus/Bike Lanes** (*Planning underway*)
4. **Essex St. Bus Lane Repainting** (*Planning complete*)
5. **Summer St Bike/Bus Lane** (*Future study*)
6. **Northern Ave. Bridge Project** (*Planning underway*)
7. **Washington St. Reconstruction** (*Future study*)
8. **State St. Reconstruction** (*Planning underway*)
9. **Tontine Crescent: Replace Tactical Plaza with Permanent Open Space** (*Planning underway*)
10. **Phillips Square Tactical Plaza** (*Plan complete*)
11. **Kilby St. Tactical Plaza** (*Future study*)
12. **Summer Street Resurfacing** (*In design*)
13. **Drive Boston Expansion** (*Planning complete*)



\* Tactical Plazas are public open spaces that are created out of underutilized space on City streets.

# Mobility & Public Realm: What's the difference?



**boston planning &  
development agency**

# Definitions

**Public Realm:** Publicly accessible spaces between and within buildings that support public life and social interaction such as streets, plazas, parks and open spaces, and publicly accessible interior spaces. Public Realm is the WHERE the public is welcome.

**Mobility:** The ability to move easily between destinations, whether on foot or by some type of vehicle. Mobility choices should provide equitable access to economic opportunity between jobs, to residences, and to amenities and services.

# Questions to Consider

## *Public & Open Spaces*

- What areas of the streets, sidewalks, and open spaces are working particularly well? Which are in need of improvement?
- Where are new spaces needed, of what character and for whom?
- Are there more places beyond Downtown Crossing that should prioritize pedestrians? Where are major pedestrian desire lines?

# Questions to Consider

## *Mobility*

- What would encourage people to walk, cycle or utilize transit more? What would disincentivize driving Downtown?
- How do we improve legibility of, and access to, the bus system?
- What priority should be given on the streets to each of these curbside uses: expanded pedestrian space, bikes, buses, taxis, rideshare, parking, passenger loading, freight, and mobile vending?
  - Which of these should be encouraged or prioritized? Where and when should they be prioritized?





# Outdoor Spaces and Plazas

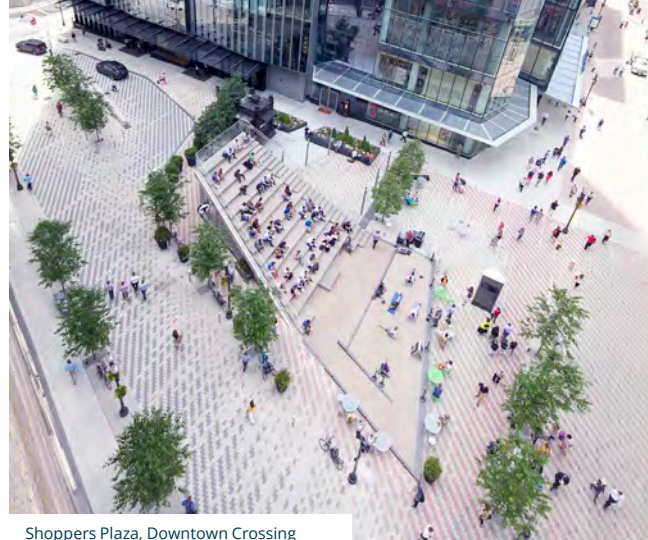
- Large pedestrianized spaces are in Downtown Crossing and Chinatown (Chin Park & Mary Soo Hoo Park)
- Essex, Franklin, Summer, and State connect to the greatest number of pedestrian hardscape/plazas and temporary interventions
- There are few local outdoor green spaces







Eliot Norton Park, Theater District



Shoppers Plaza, Downtown Crossing



Boston Common



Tontine Crescent Tactical Plaza, Downtown Crossing



Mary Soo Hoo Park, Chinatown



Rose Kennedy Greenway





## Planning

What is Planning?

Planning Initiatives

Climate Change & Environmental Planning

Downtown & Neighborhood Planning

**Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)**

Transportation & Infrastructure Planning

Institutional Planning

Urban Design

Urban Renewal

## Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)

The web map below displays areas in Boston that are confirmed Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces or "POPS".

In the Development review process, the City often negotiates with private developers to include these spaces as part of the application process. POPS are privately owned spaces that the public is encouraged and invited to use but remain privately owned and maintained. These spaces can be interior or exterior, plazas, green spaces, courtyards, pedestrian connections or areas on the Harborwalk.

[Click to view in ArcGIS Online](#)

### Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)

This web map displays a portion of Boston's Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS). POPS are privately owned and maintained spaces created through the Boston Planning & Development Agency's development review process that the public is encouraged and

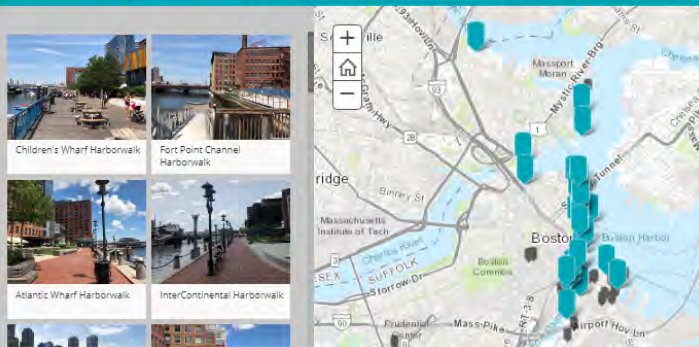


Harborwalk

Green Space

Interior Space

Plaza



# POPS: Privately-Owned Public Spaces

## Draft Web Application







125 Summer Street Plaza, Downtown Crossing



100 Summer Street Plaza, Downtown Crossing



One Greenway Park, Chinatown



133 Federal Street Plaza, Financial District



Post Office Square, Financial District



# Publicly Accessible Interior Spaces

- There are increasing interior spaces being made accessible to the public, especially in the Financial District.
- Legibility and wayfinding to interior spaces could be improved.
- There are opportunities to think creatively about an expanded public realm when considering future publicly accessible interior spaces.





100 Federal Street, Financial District



Massachusetts Transportation Building, Park Plaza



One International Place, Financial District



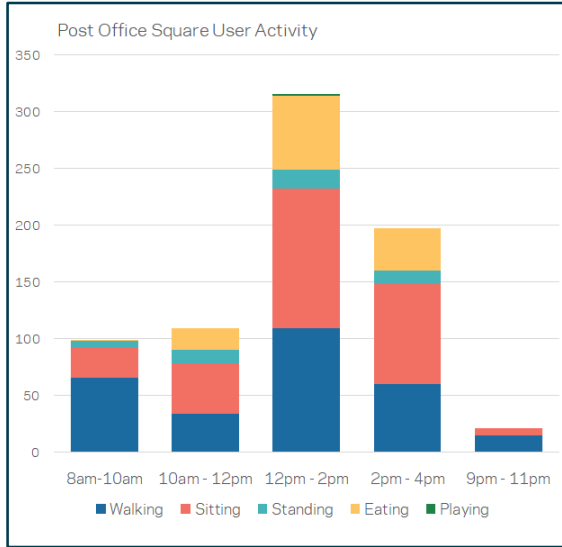
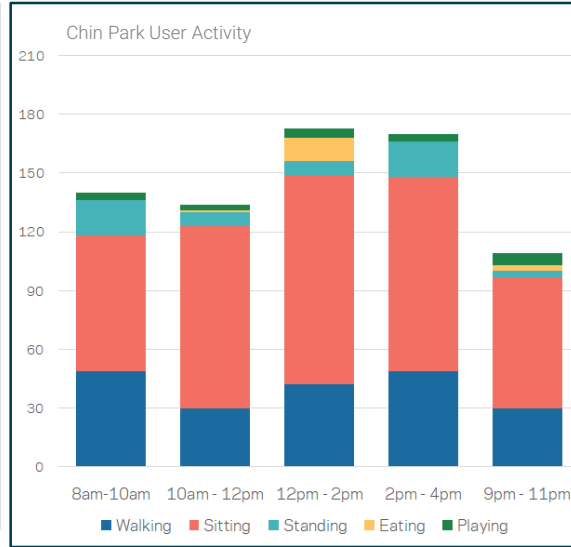
75 State Street, Financial District



# Public Space Activity

- Understanding what sorts of activities are happening in public spaces, and when, helps to identify gaps in the public realm offer
- Ultimately spaces should feel safe around-the-clock and welcoming throughout the year
- Programming, as well as, the provision of streetscape elements - i.e. seating, lighting, shade/shelter - is important to ensure a space is activated

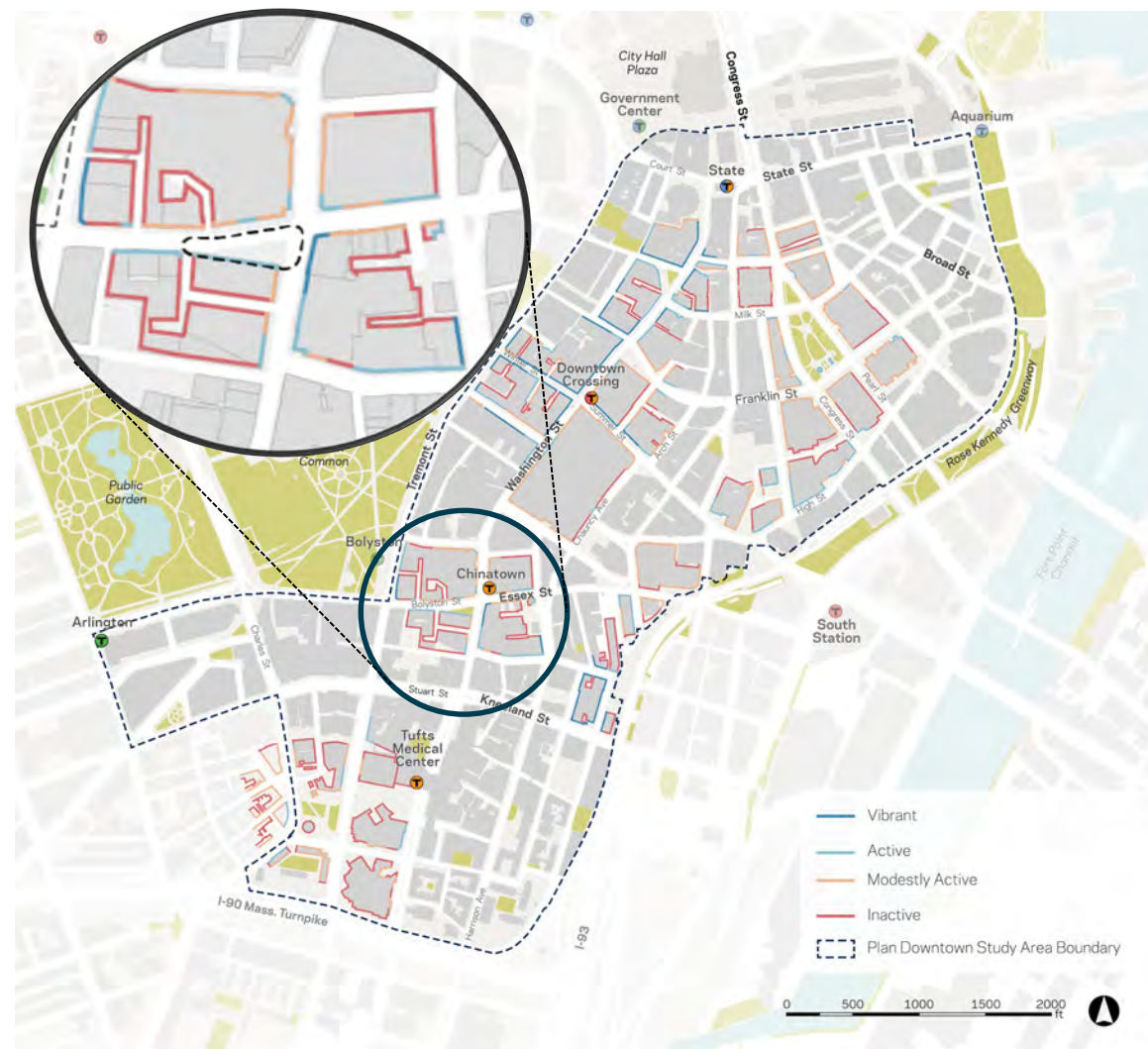
Source: NBJ Observational data



# Public Space Activity:

## Adjacent Ground Floor Uses

- Land uses framing open spaces can provide activation and sense of safety



# Outdoor Spaces and Plazas

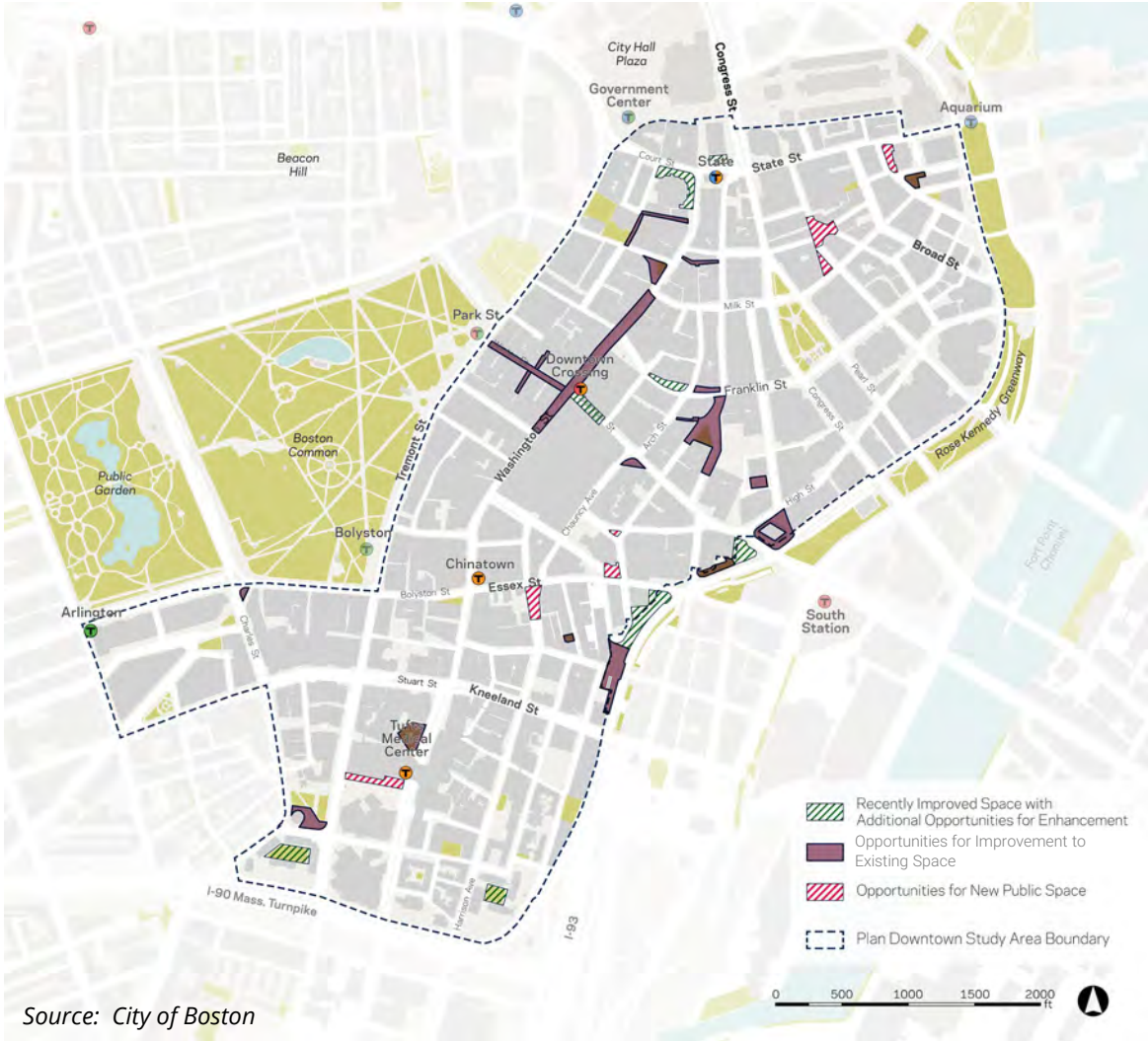


Source: City of Boston



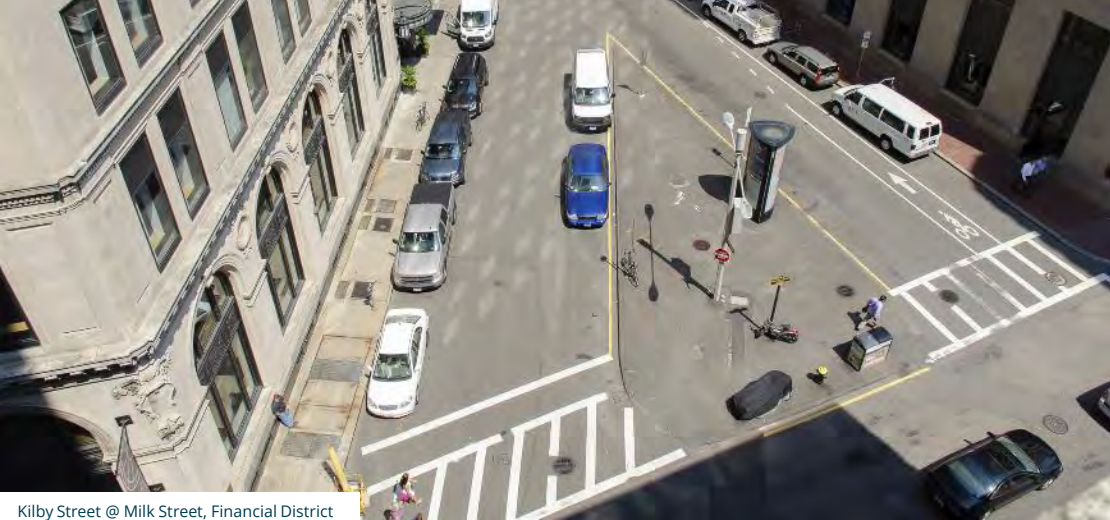
# Outdoor Spaces and Plazas: Assessment

- There are a number of recently improved or new spaces that could perform even better
- There are opportunities, through road diets and reconfigurations, for new public spaces
- Improvements could include elements such as shade and shelter, increased seating, playable landscapes, integrated public art and lighting



Source: City of Boston





Kilby Street @ Milk Street, Financial District



Edinboro and Kingston Streets, Chinatown



Edgar Allan Poe, Boylston and Park Plaza, Theater District



Chinatown Gate Plaza, Chinatown



175 Federal Street, Financial District



# Public & Open Spaces

*Ideas*





# Public & Open Spaces

*Ideas*



Rue St Denis, Montreal



Luminothérapie - Place Des Festivals, Montreal

# Public & Open Spaces

*Ideas*



Somerset House, London, Dixon Jones





# Public & Open Spaces

*Ideas*



# Public & Open Spaces

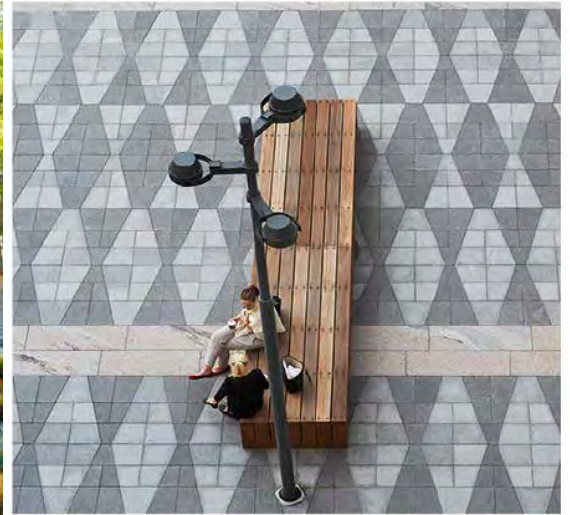
*Ideas*





# Public & Open Spaces

*Ideas*



# Public & Open Spaces

Ideas



*NOTE: Map highlights all streets in the Downtown study area for discussion purposes only*

Pedestrian-priority Downtown? 32





# Street Typologies

## *Public Realm*

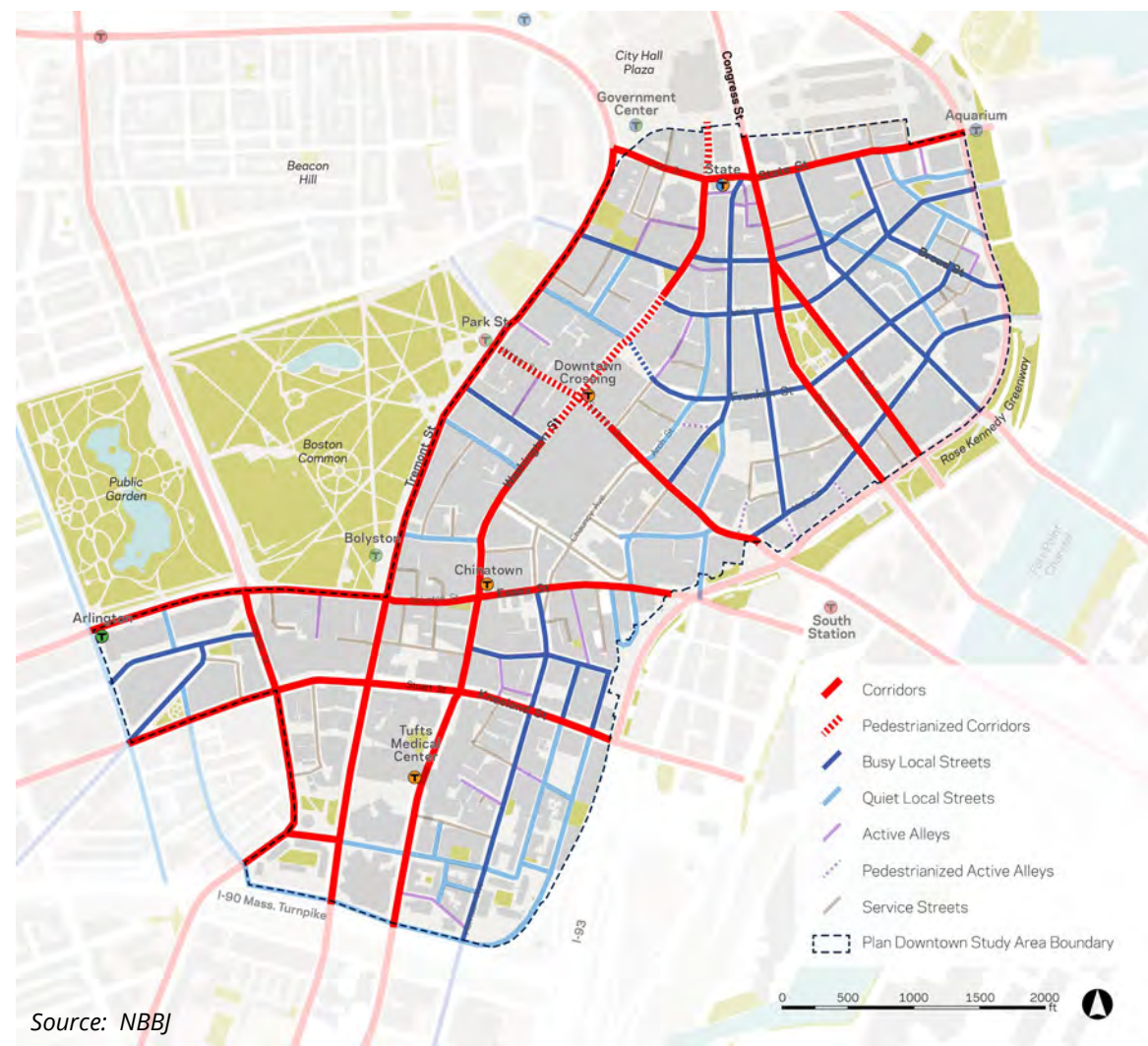
**Corridors:** Major thoroughfares (ped/vehicular) through the study area, high multi-modal activity or potential

**Busy Local Streets:** Significant flows within study area, small-scale retail, high pedestrian comfort

**Quiet Local Streets:** Lower flows, limited retail/activity

**Active Alleys:** Unwelcoming to vehicles, accessible to pedestrians, hyperlocal connections, some retail

**Service Streets:** Building operations, parking, loading





## Pedestrianized Corridor



Summer Street @ Washington Street, Downtown Crossing

## Busy Local Street



Broad Street @ Water Street, Wharf District

## Quiet Local Street



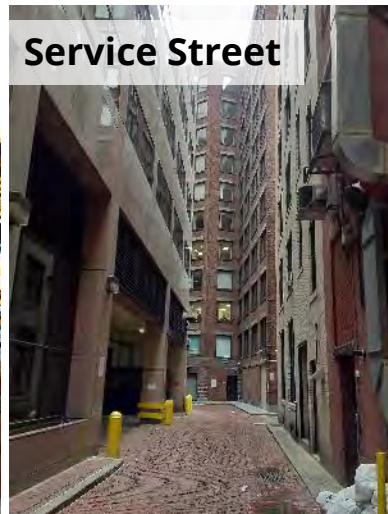
Otis Street, Downtown Crossing

## Corridor



Tremont Street @ Boylston Street, Theater District

## Service Street



Jenton Way, Financial District

## Active Alley

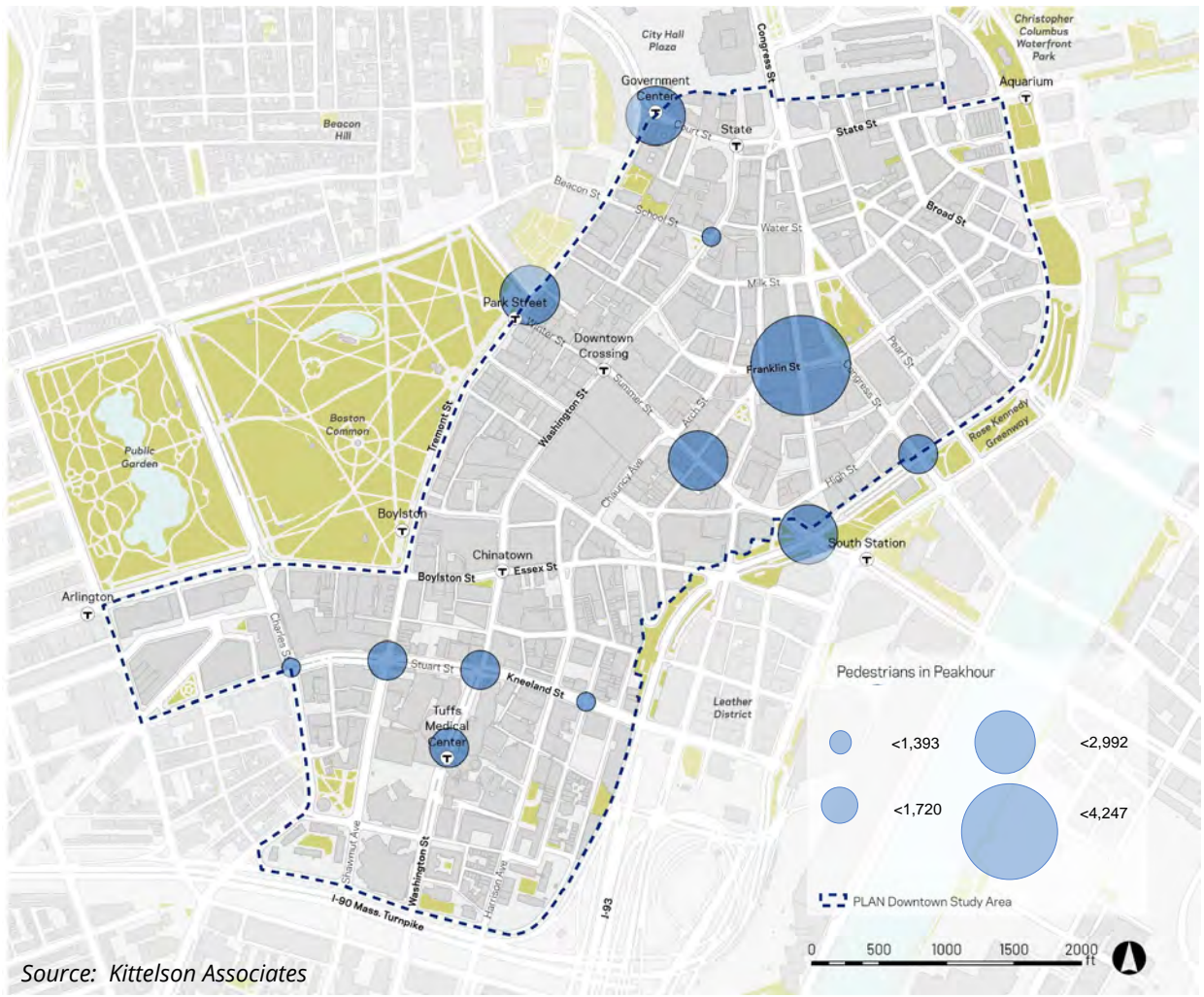


City Hall Avenue, Downtown Crossing



# Pedestrian Counts

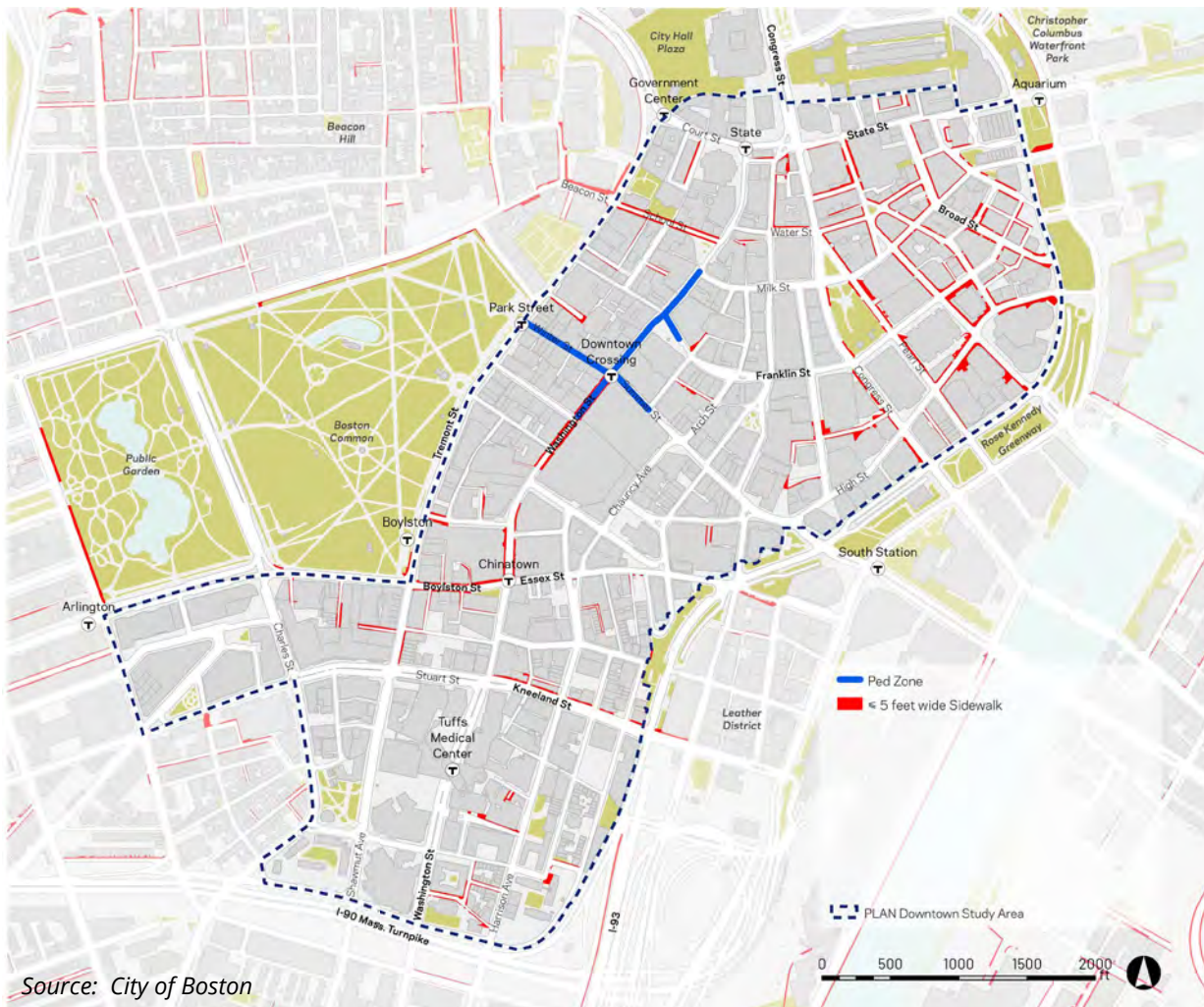
- Most streets and intersections Downtown serve more pedestrians than vehicles
  - More pedestrians use Franklin St in one hour than vehicles all day
- Transit hubs generate the highest pedestrian traffic
- At times, pedestrians dictate intersection operations



Source: Kittelson Associates

# Pedestrian Infrastructure: Sidewalk widths

- Narrow sidewalks create safety and comfort challenges in parts of Downtown
- There are competing demands for walking space, street furniture, trees, and other streetscape amenities



Source: City of Boston



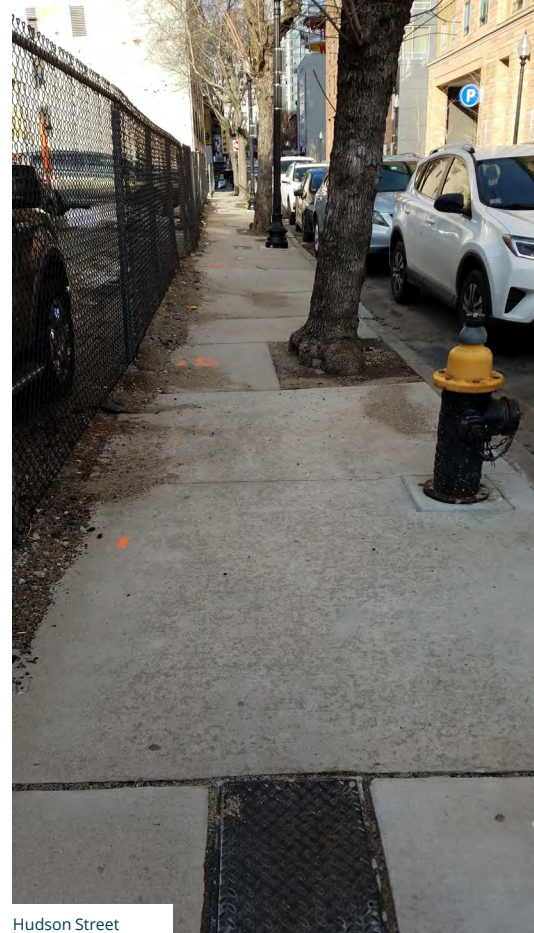




Washington Street



Maple Street



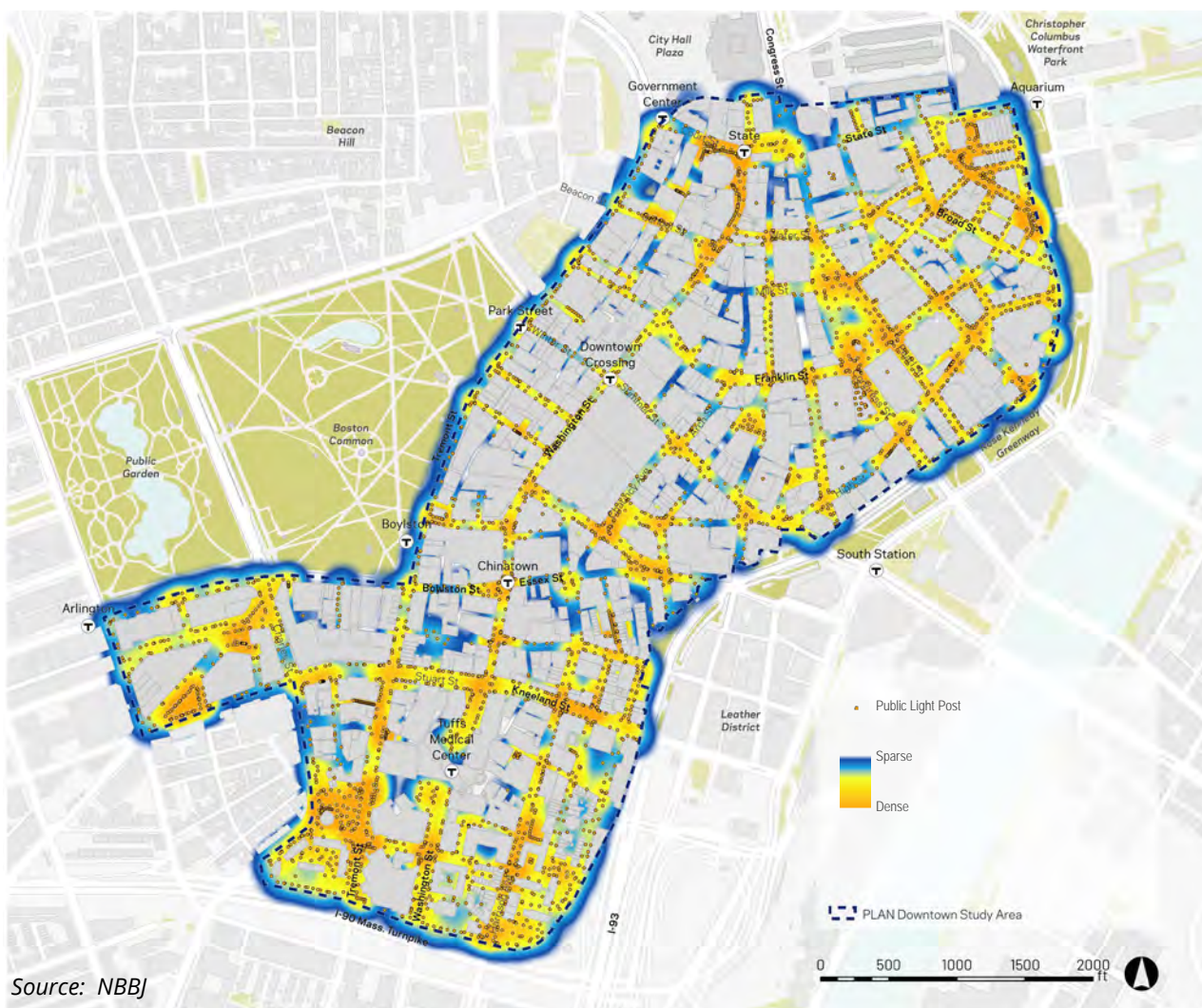
Hudson Street



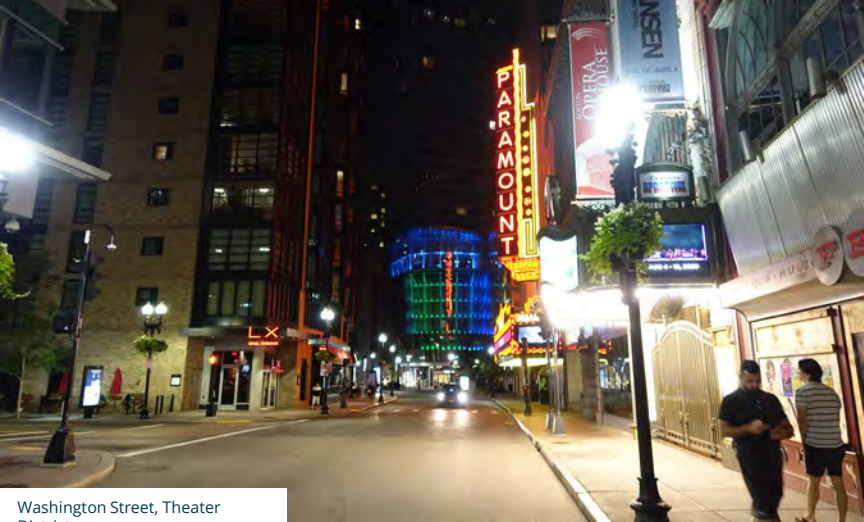


# Public Realm Street Lighting

- There are low light levels along some streets that host key landmarks – e.g. Milk, Hawley, Battery March, Devonshire Streets
- The Financial District has the lowest light levels
- Too much lighting can be as disturbing as not enough lighting – Downtown Crossing and many of the public spaces have high light levels







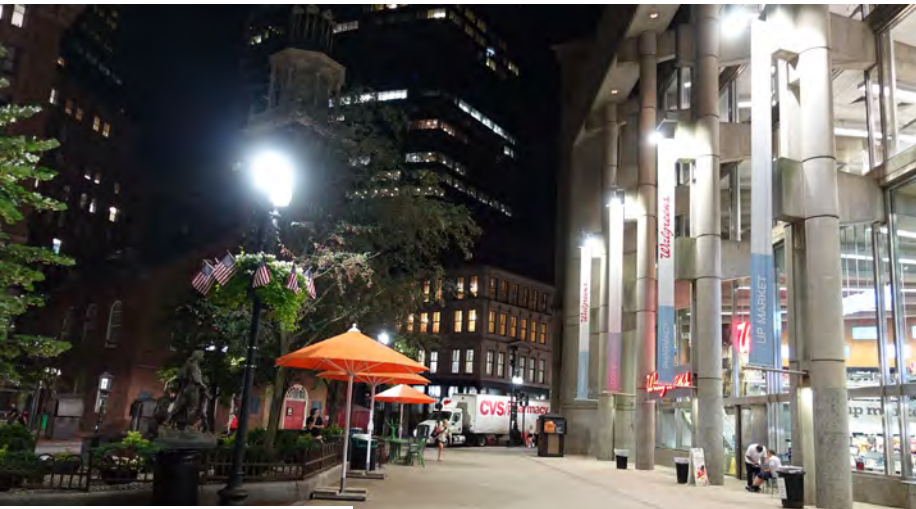
Washington Street, Theater District



Mary Hoo Soo Park, Chinatown



The State House

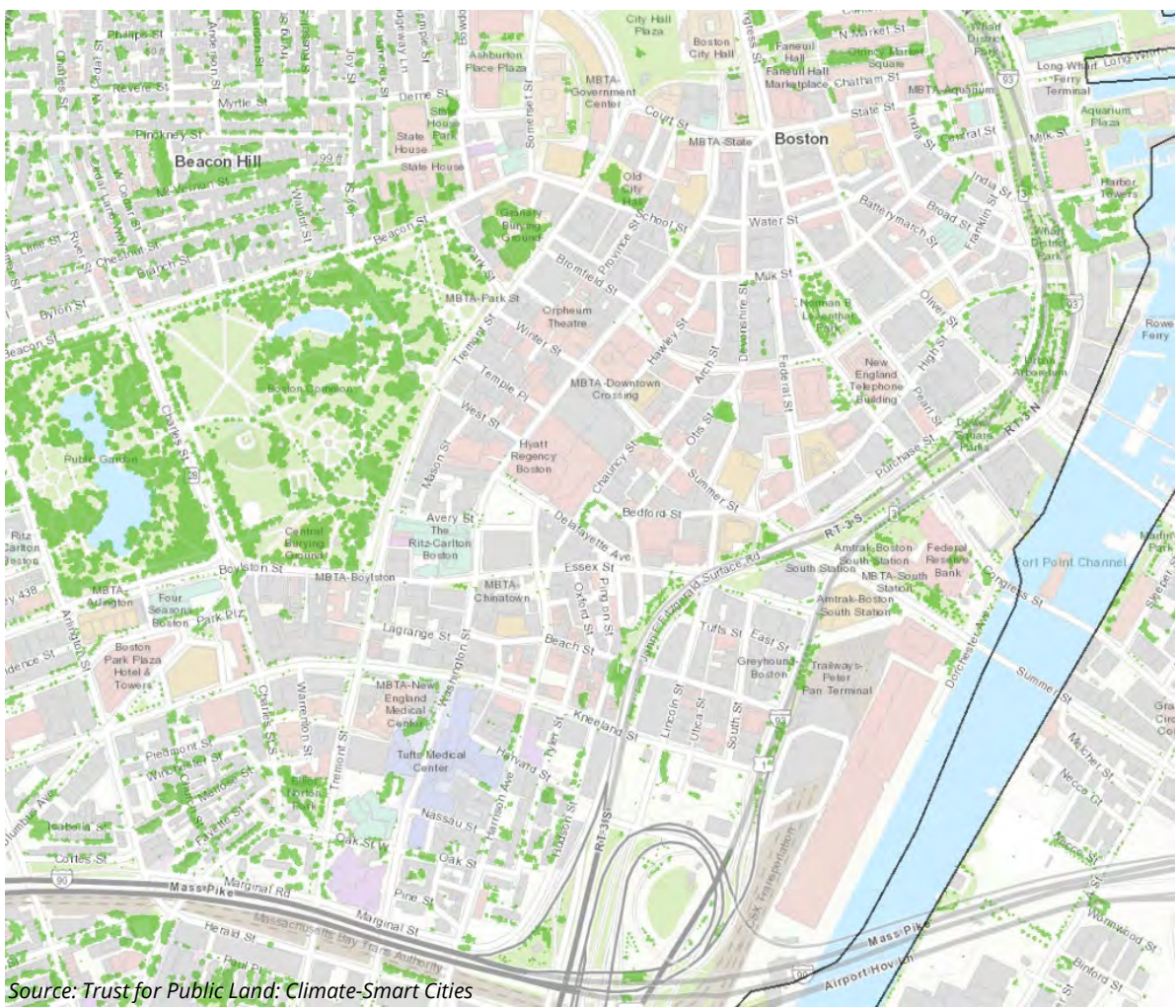


Irish Famine Memorial, Downtown Crossing



Liberty Tree Plaza





# Existing Tree Canopy

- Very few streets have consistent tree planting (some are constrained by areaways)
- Downtown is flanked by generous well-treed green spaces but, other than Post Office Square, green infrastructure and shade are sparse

Source: Trust for Public Land: Climate-Smart Cities



# Raised Planting

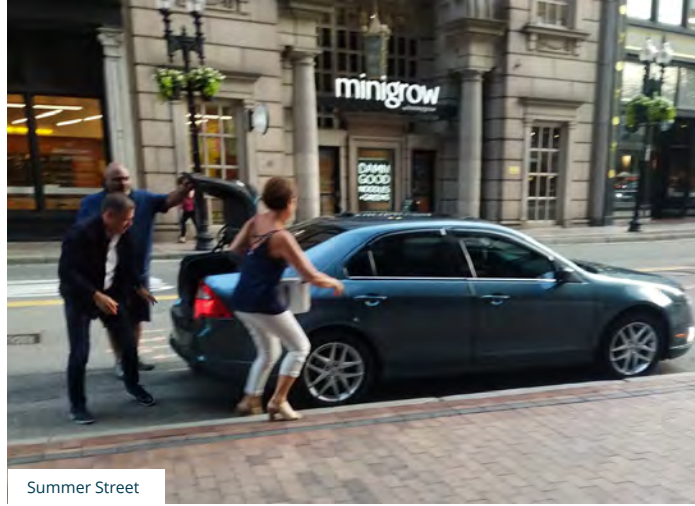
- Vegetation in raised planters makes a positive contribution to Downtown
- Raised planting is not consistently located across the Downtown, but rather, dependent on adjacent property owners, tenants and the Downtown BID







Washington Street



Summer Street

# Curbside Uses

- Curb space in Downtown is not providing maximum value
- Creative curb use adds flexibility
  - Parking pricing, loading/deliveries, ride-hailing
  - Bike parking, scooter parking
- Opportunities for non-parking curb uses
  - Wider sidewalks, bike lanes, bus lanes



Federal Street



Summer Street

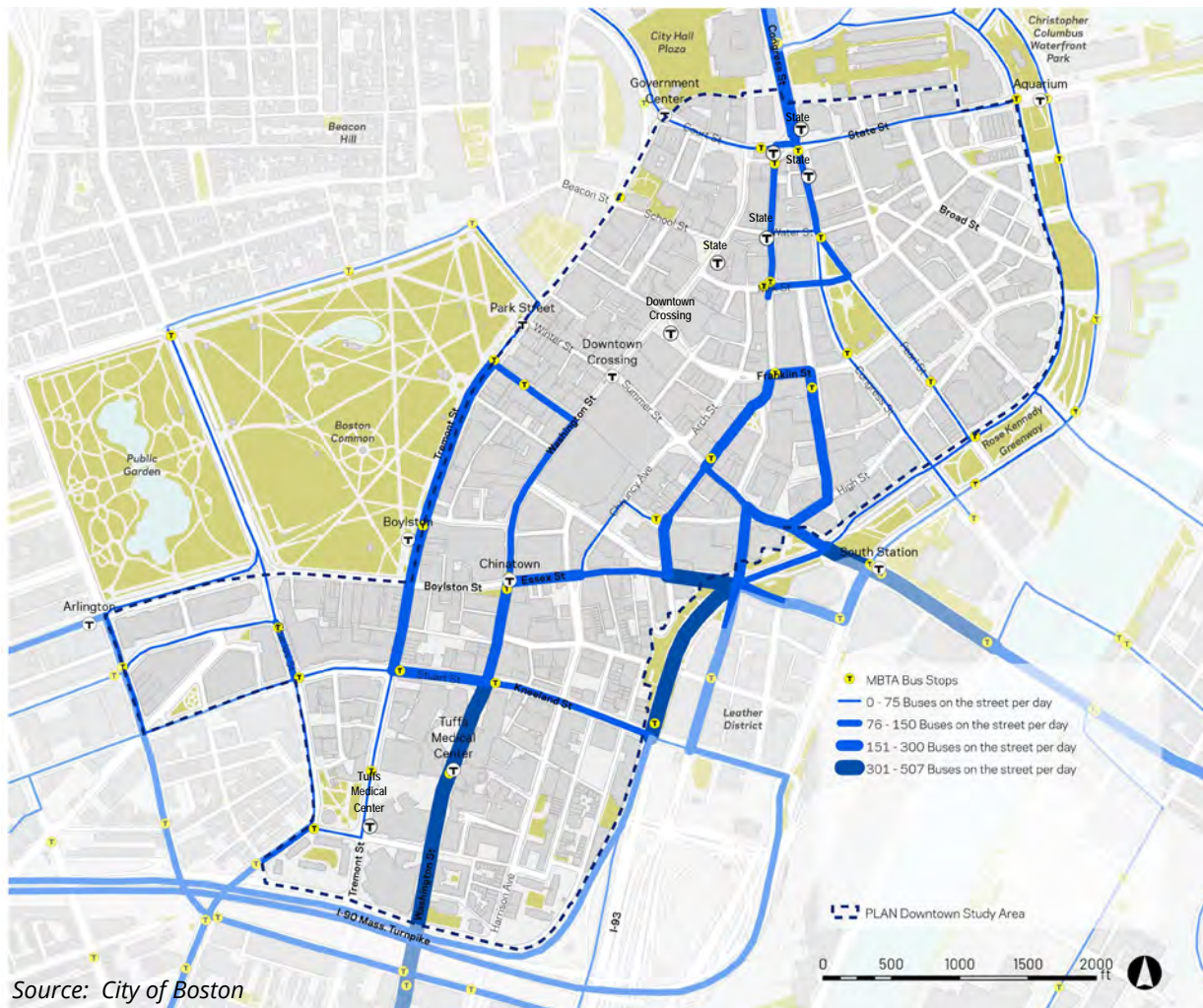






# Buses on Streets

- Very high bus volumes on Silver Line routes: Washington St, Tremont St, Kneeland St and Surface Artery
- Moderate volumes at north and south turn-arounds (Federal-Otis-Franklin and Devonshire-Milk-Congress)
- Low volumes are due to infrequent services (around Boston Common) or routes that change throughout the day (around Greenway)

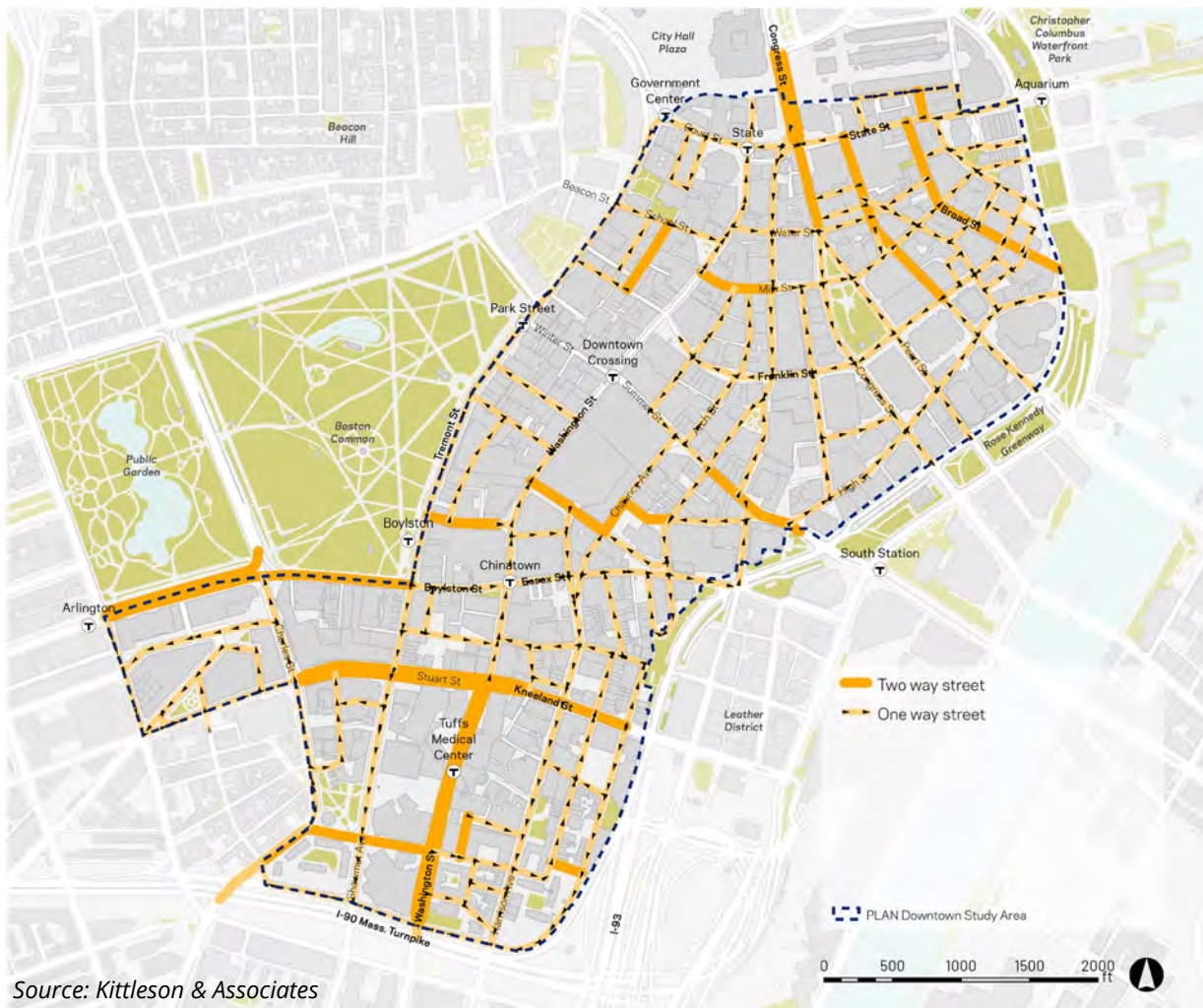


Source: City of Boston



# Street Directionality

- Complex network of one-way streets
- Little redundancy in street network
  - Only one route from Chinatown to Government Center by car
- Opportunities to create more two-way streets and change some street directions

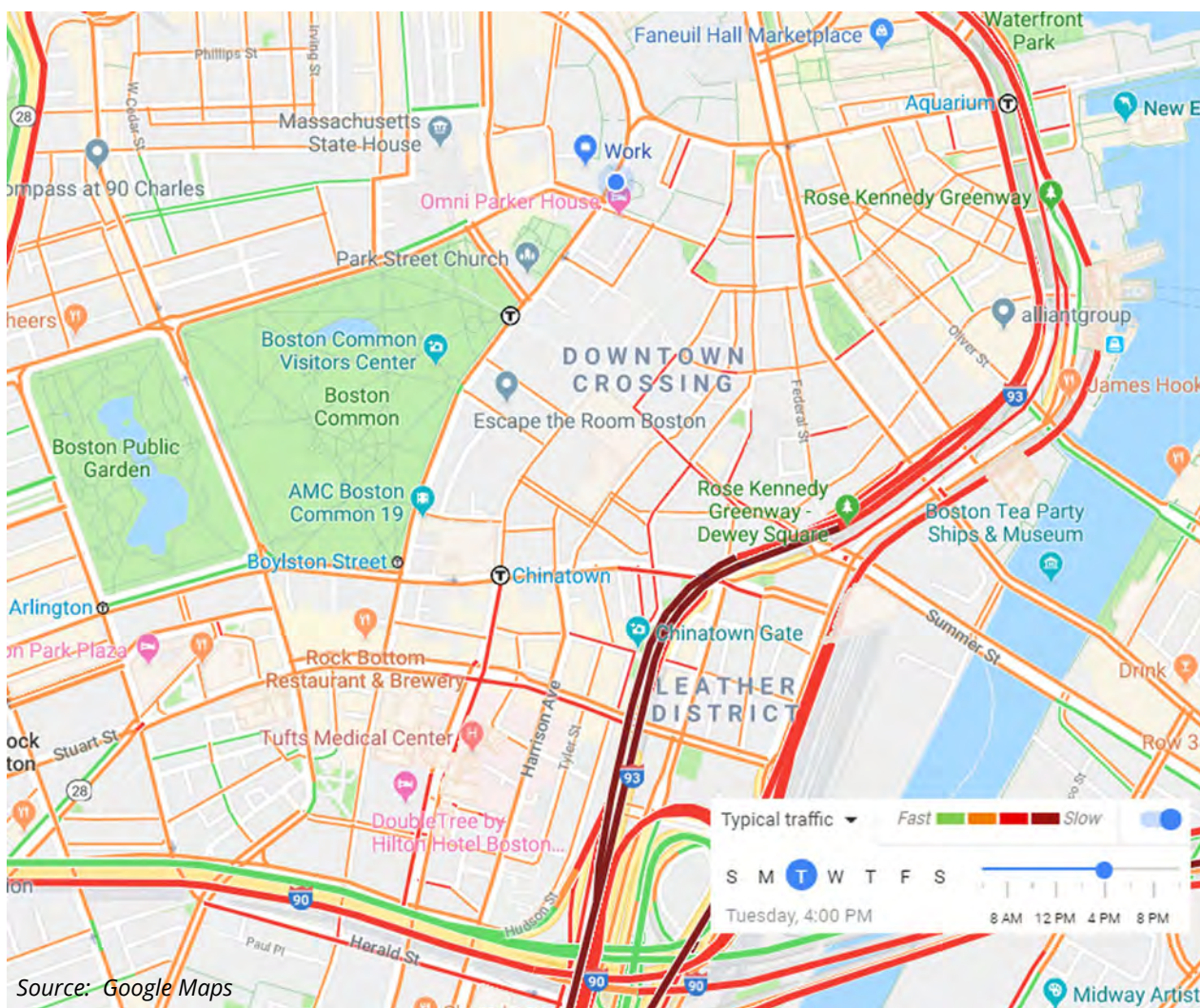


Source: Kittleson & Associates



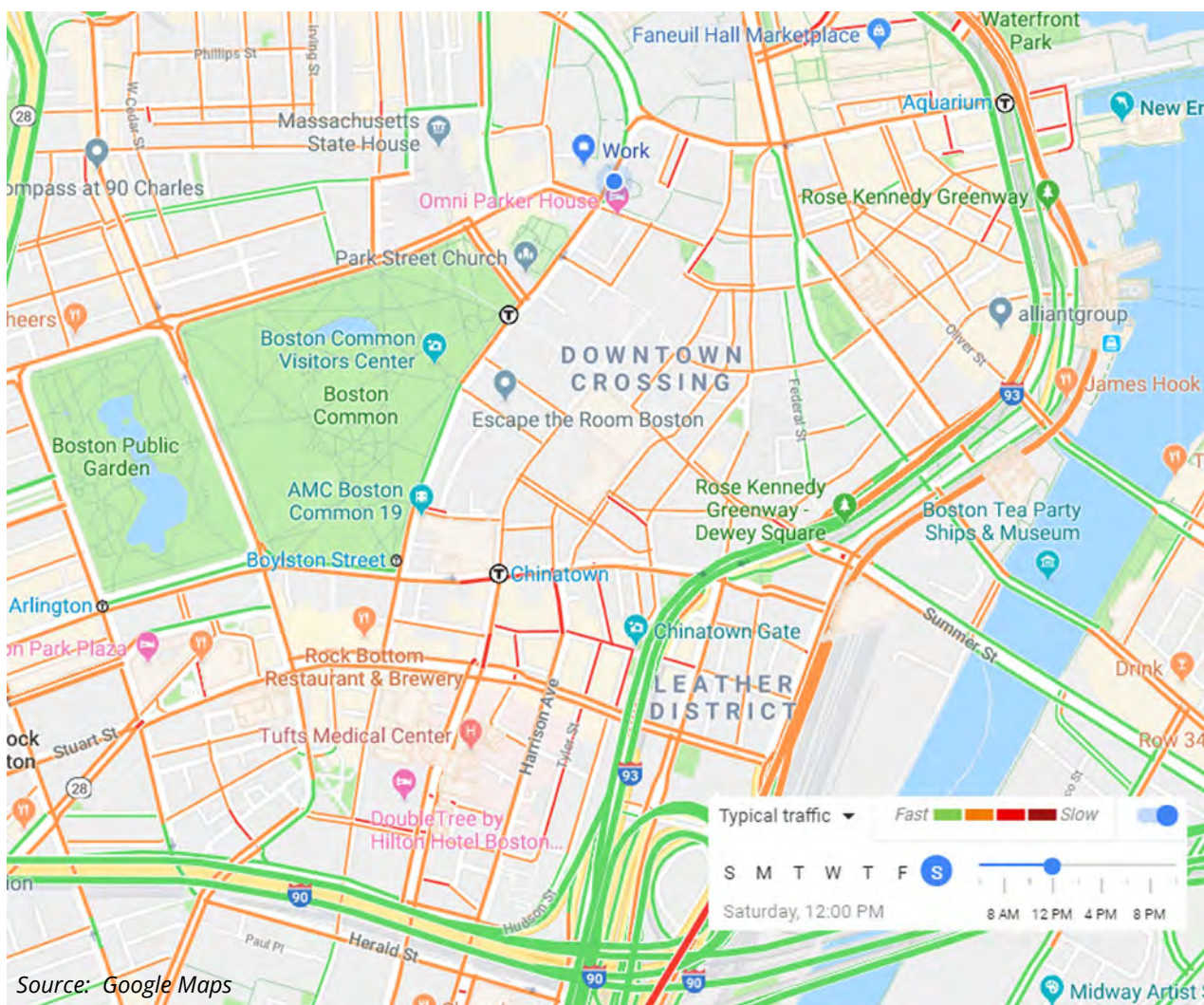
# Afternoon Rush Hour

- Traffic movement is slow on the majority of vehicular streets in the Downtown during rush hour



Source: Google Maps





# Weekend mid-day traffic

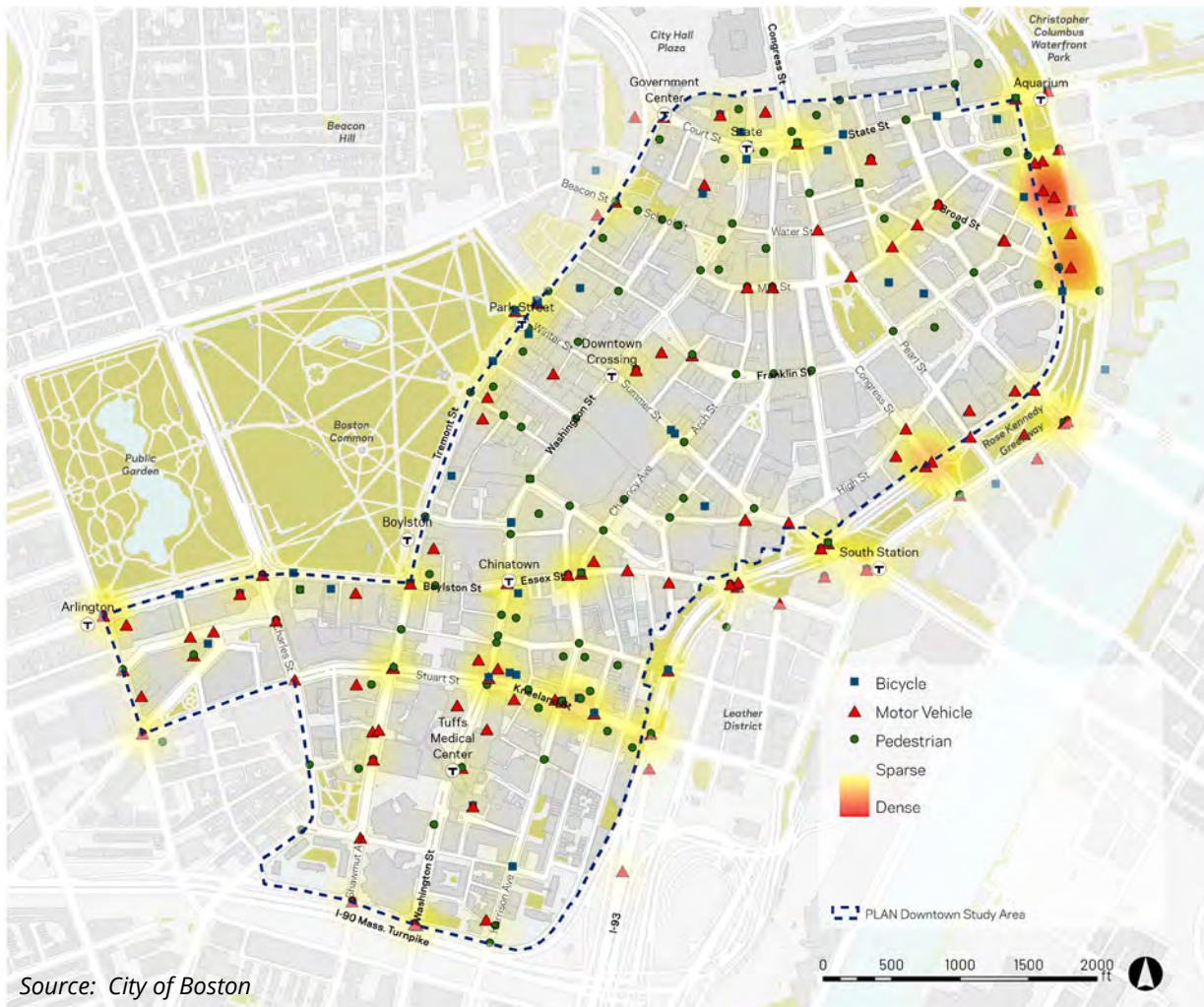
- Traffic movement is slow on the majority of vehicular streets in the Downtown even when it is not rush hour

Source: Google Maps



# Crash Incidents

- Incidents are higher along streets with higher traffic volumes.
- Motor vehicle incidents are distributed fairly evenly across Downtown
- Seven of the City's High Crash Network streets are in Downtown (Vision Zero): Tremont, State, Summer, Atlantic, Kneeland, Washington, Arlington



Source: City of Boston



# Space Between the Curbs

*Ideas*



16th Street Mall, Denver CO





# Space Between the Curbs

*Ideas*



Roslindale Bus Priority Lane



# Space Between the Curbs

*Ideas*



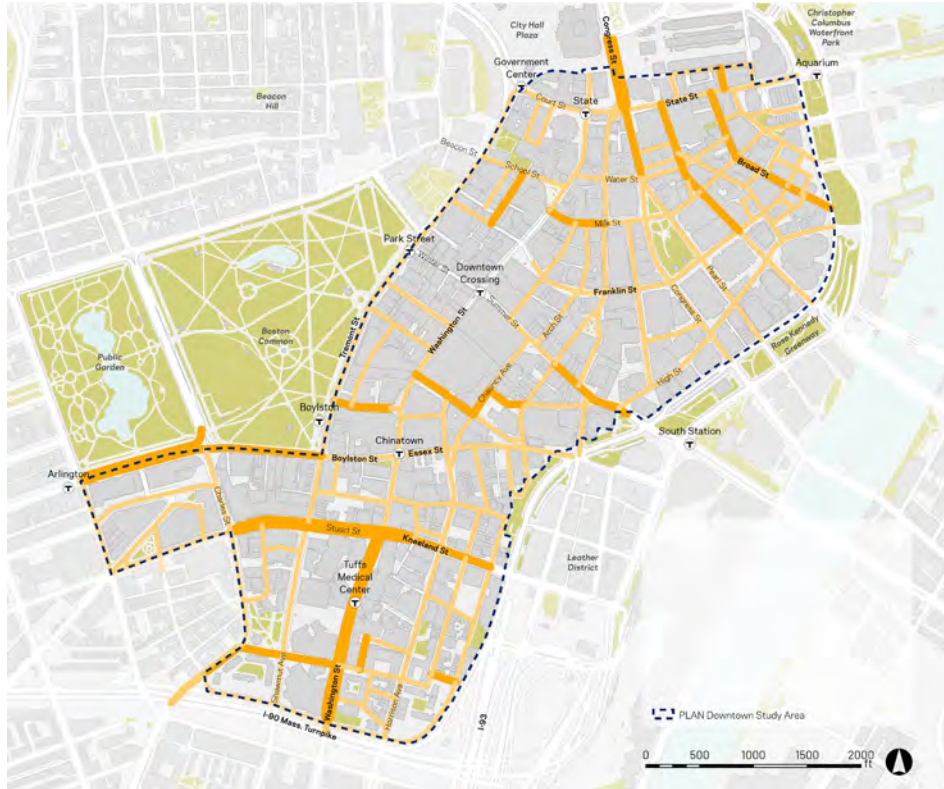
Utrecht *Adriaen van Ostadelaan*:  
BEFORE/AFTER






# Vehicular Infrastructure

*Ideas*




Reconsider the 1-way/2-way system <sup>52</sup> 

# Vehicular Infrastructure

*Ideas*

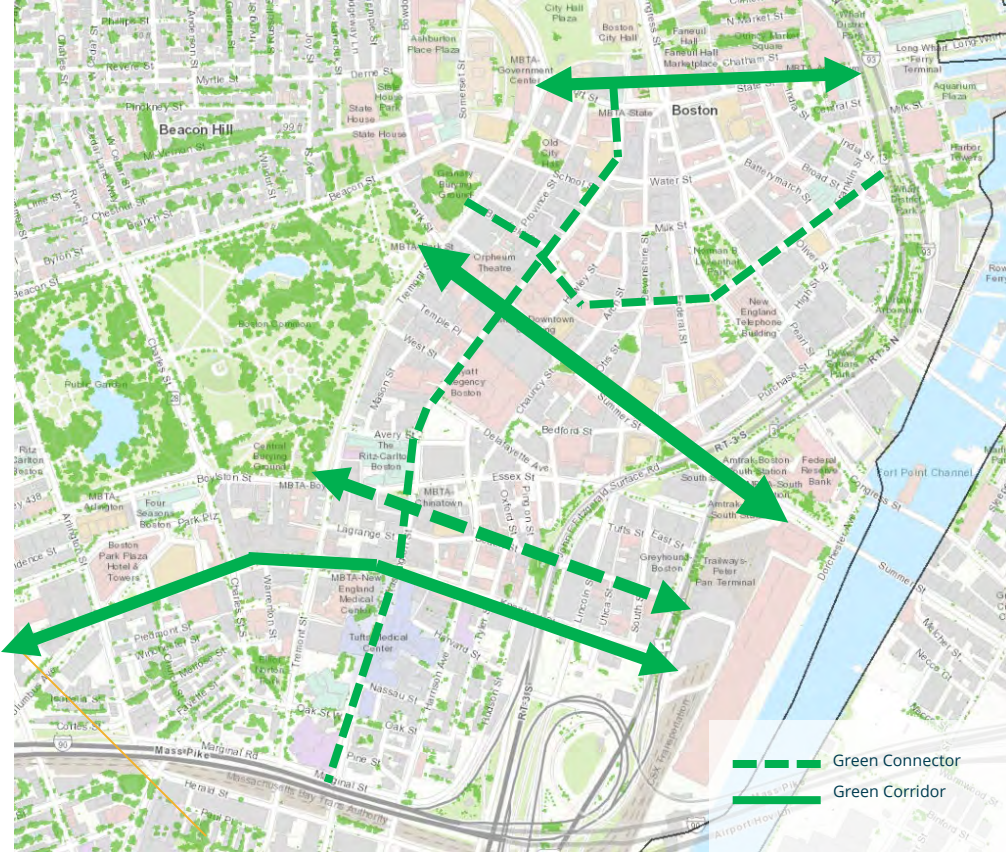


Reconsider the  
1-way/2-way system <sup>53</sup> 



# Pedestrian Infrastructure

*Ideas*



Green Corridor



Green Corridors  
and Corridors <sup>54</sup>





# Pedestrian Infrastructure

*Ideas*



Open Newbury Street, Boston



Earth Day, New York

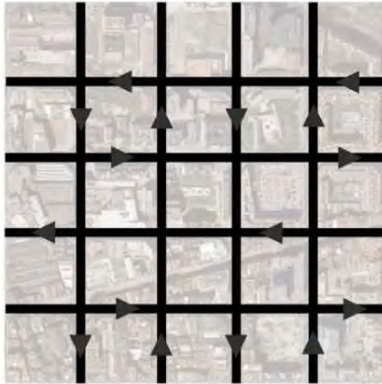




# Pedestrian Infrastructure

*Ideas*

## CURRENT SITUATION



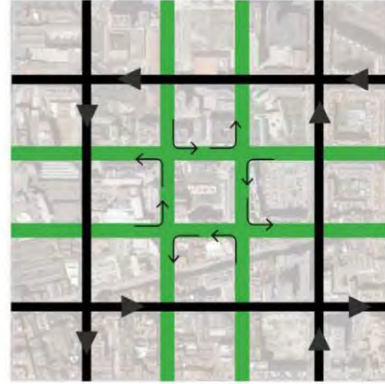
400 meters

Basic network: 50 km/h



SOLE RIGHT: DISPLACEMENT.  
HIGHEST AIM: PEDESTRIAN.

## SUPERBLOCK



400 meters

Local network: 10 km/h



EXERCISE OF ALL THE RIGHTS THAT THE CITY  
OFFERS. HIGHEST AIM: CITIZEN.

PASSING  
VEHICLES  
DO NOT GO  
THROUGH



Barcelona Superblock, Spain



# Discussion & Next Steps





# Questions to Consider

## *Public & Open Spaces*

- What areas of the streets, sidewalks, and open spaces are working particularly well? Which are in need of improvement?
- Where are new spaces needed, of what character and for whom?
- Are there more places beyond Downtown Crossing that should be car-free? How should we be prioritizing pedestrians more than we are? Where are major pedestrian desire lines?



# Questions to Consider

## *Mobility*

- What would encourage people to walk, cycle or utilize transit more? What would disincentivize driving Downtown?
- How do we improve legibility of, and access to, the bus system?
- What priority should be given on the streets to each of these curbside uses: bikes, buses, rideshare, parking, and loading? Which of these should be encouraged or prioritized, and where?





# Next Steps

## *Summer Engagement Pop-ups*

- **Leventhal Park** July 19 12:30-1:30 pm
- **Downtown Arts Market** July 25 12-2 pm  
Alternative dates to be determined
- **Leventhal Park** August 16 12:30-1:30 pm
- **Leventhal Park** August 23 12:30-1:30 pm
- **Chin Park and/or Phillips Square** To be determined

# Next Steps

## *Downtown Walking Tours*

Eventbrite Sign-up Forthcoming

- **Chinatown Walking Tour**, Hosted by ACDC
- **Downtown Alleys Tour**, Hosted by Alice Brown
- **Wharf District Tour**

July 27 1-2:30 pm

Tentatively August 12

To be determine

## *Other Outreach*

**PLAN: Downtown Storefront**  
349 Washington Street

Coming Soon

**Advisory Group Meeting #6**  
Please look out for a follow-up survey

September 2019

