



PLAN: Downtown

PLAN: Downtown Scenarios Workshop
Scenarios Progress & Urban Design

January 30, 2020



**boston planning &
development agency**

Agenda

- 6:10–6:15 pm** **PLAN: Downtown Overview**
- 6:15–6:25 pm** **Scenario Planning Process**
- 6:25–6:35 pm** **Public Benefit Overview**
- 6:35–6:55 pm** **Discussion 1—Scenario Planning Progress**
You will have a 20-minute conversation with the people seated at your table. Planning team representatives at each table will record your conversation.
- 6:55–7:15 pm** **Urban Design Guidelines**
- 7:15–7:20 pm** **Next Steps & Wrap-up**
- 7:20–7:50 pm** **Discussion 2—Urban Design Guidelines** (*& scenarios continued*)
You will have a 30-minute conversation with the people seated at your table. Planning team representatives at each table will record your conversation.
- 7:50–8:00 pm** **Discussion Report Back**
The moderator or one volunteer at each table will share a summary of the conversations with the entire group.

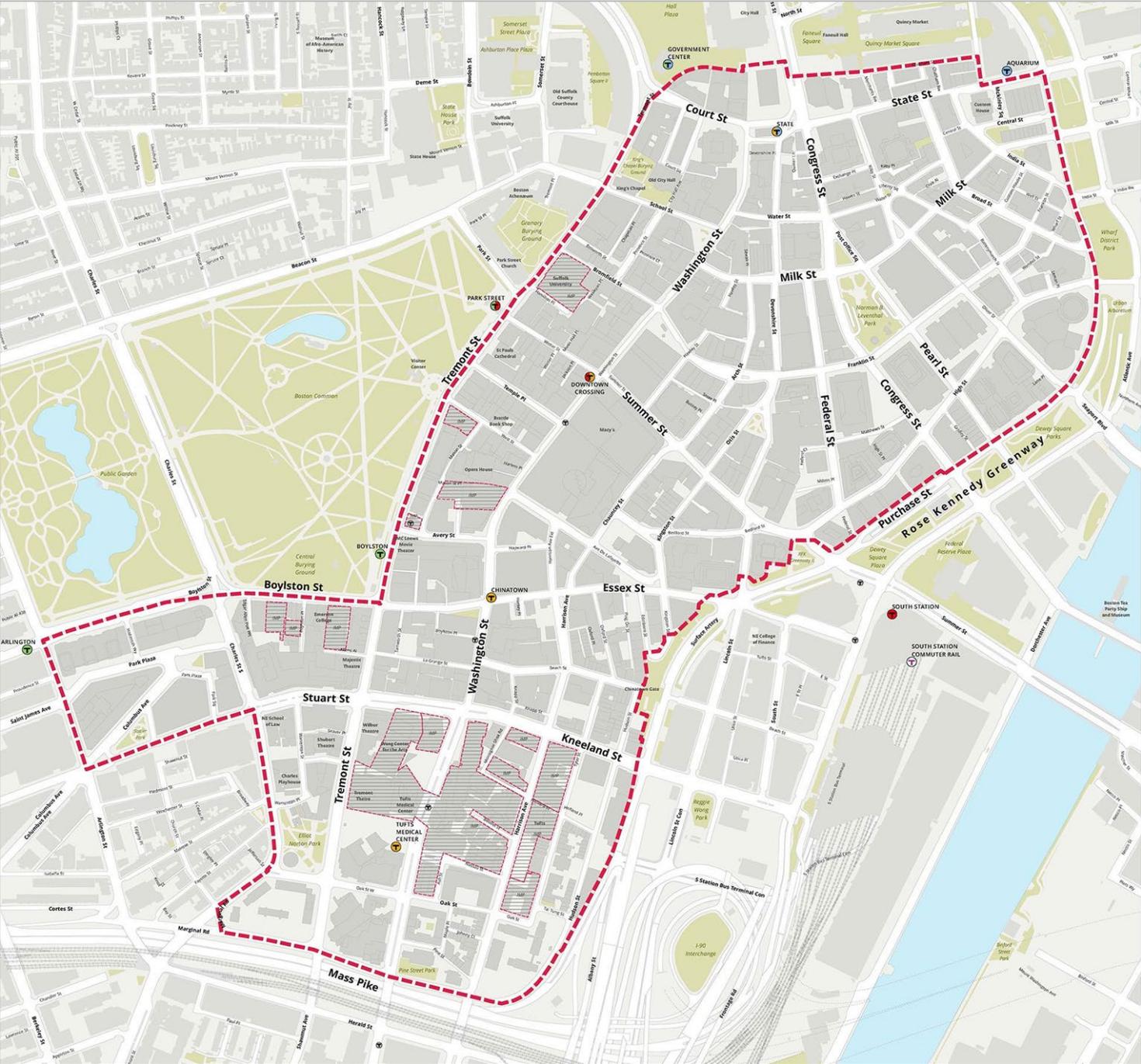
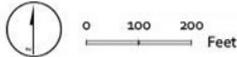


PLAN: DOWNTOWN

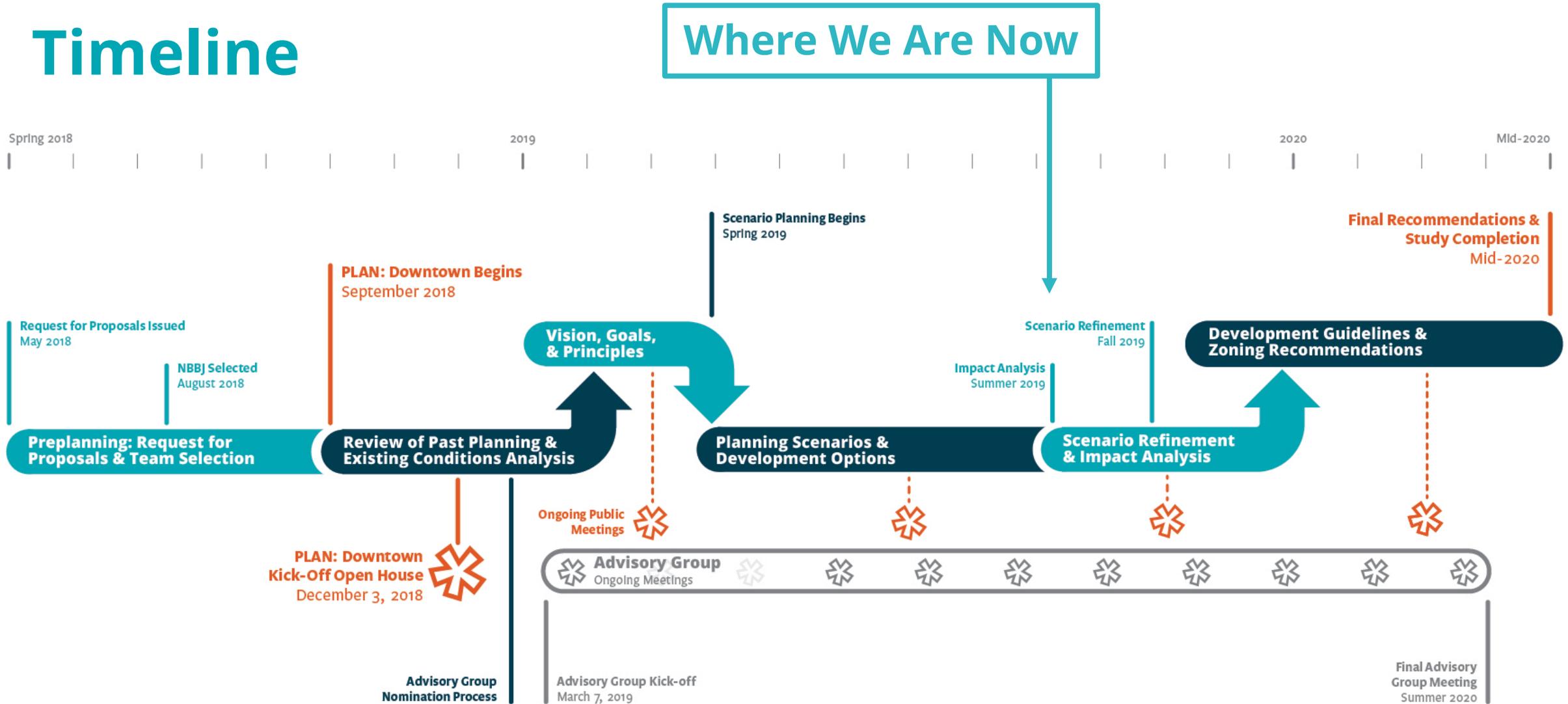
Study Area

 Study Area Boundary

 Institutional Master Plan
(IMP) Not included in this study



Timeline



Defined PLAN: Downtown Goals & Strategies

1. **Preserve cultural heritage** and embrace distinctive histories to create a unique and cohesive Downtown.
2. **Promote dense, mixed-use development** to support living, working, and leisure activities in an 18 hour/day, 7 day/week district.
3. **Encourage economic development** that maintains Downtown as a diverse, equitable, regional job center.
4. **Promote the retention, growth, and diversity of active ground-floor uses**, especially legacy and small businesses.
5. **Enhance access to housing** for Boston residents across all levels of affordability, stages of life, and backgrounds.
6. **Improve connections through, within, and to Downtown**, with a focus on active transportation, transit, and other non-vehicular modes of transportation.
7. **Encourage consistent, safe, healthy, and high-quality improvements to the public realm** that welcome everyone year-round.
8. **Preserve historic building fabric and cultural institutions while advancing climate preparedness and resiliency measures.**
9. **Ensure future development and public realm projects are resilient, and mitigate climate change impacts** related to sea level rise, coastal storms, increased stormwater, and rising temperatures
10. **Reduce the carbon impacts** of new and existing buildings, transportation, and waste and consumption in Downtown



Identified Public Benefits



Affordable Housing



Climate + Resilience



**Local Transit +
Mobility**



**Small Business Support
+ Retail Activation**



Historic Preservation



Open Space & Public Realm



Development Scenarios

Development Scenarios Identify...

- 1. Development Capacity:** How much additional development downtown Boston might (or should) accommodate.
- 2. Value Creation:** The value created for land owners or developers via the creation of a density bonus / incentive zoning process
- 3. Public Benefit Value:** The value to be captured for additional public benefits from the density bonus / incentive zoning process.

The Development Scenarios are based on physical design, financial feasibility, and market considerations.



Incentive Zoning-Based Development Scenarios

Incentive Zoning based on the Shadow Regulations would **allow increased height and additional growth.**

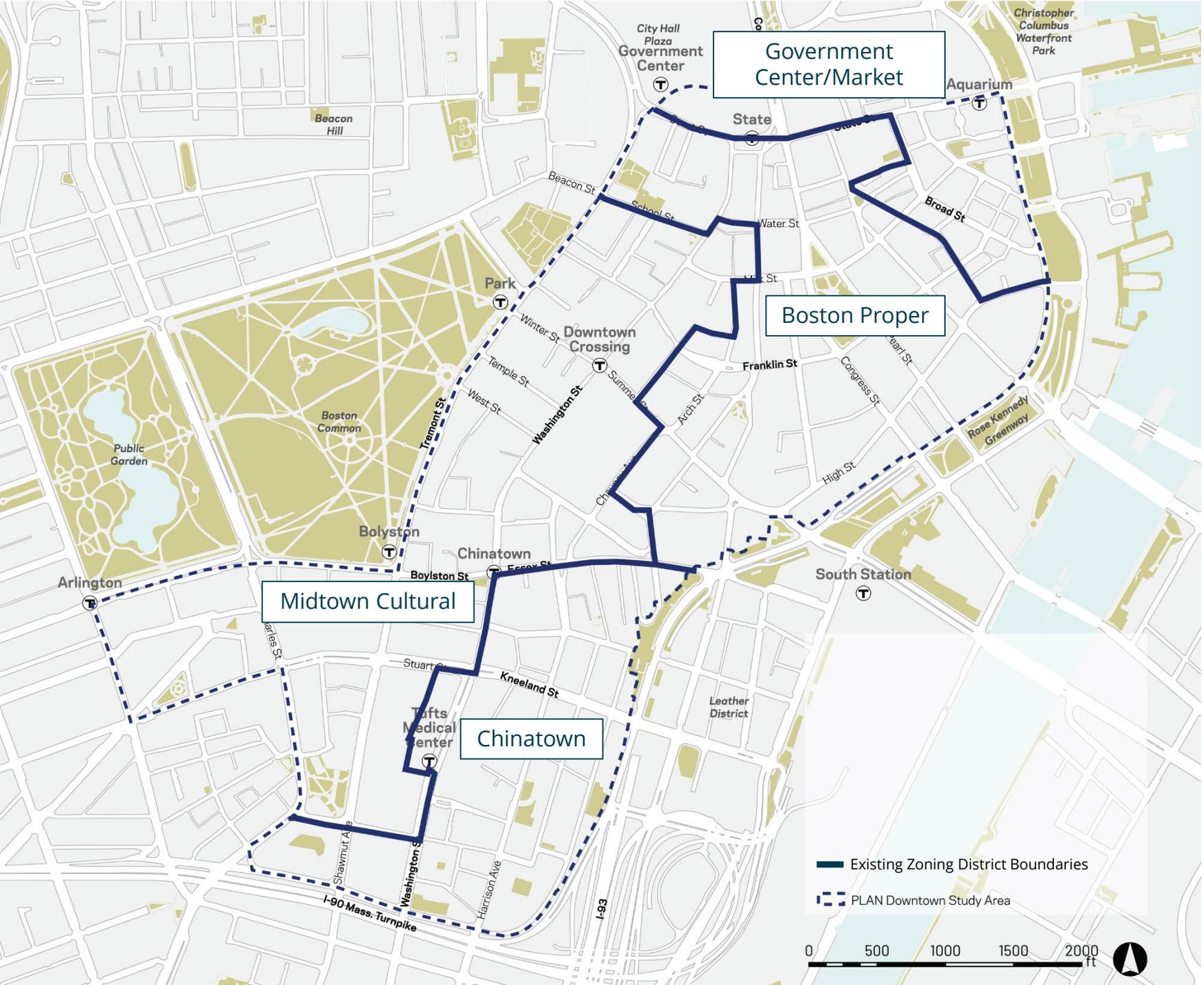
This growth can be captured to generate new public benefits.



Current Zoning



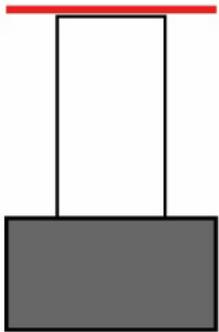
Existing Zoning Districts



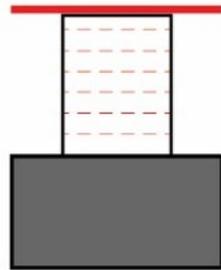
Current Building Envelope Controls

Currently, building envelopes are primarily determined by four factors (which are at times at odds with one another)

Zoning Height

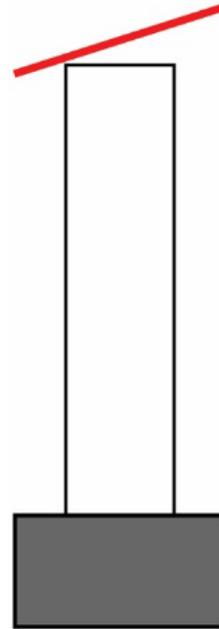


Zoning FAR Floor Area Ratio



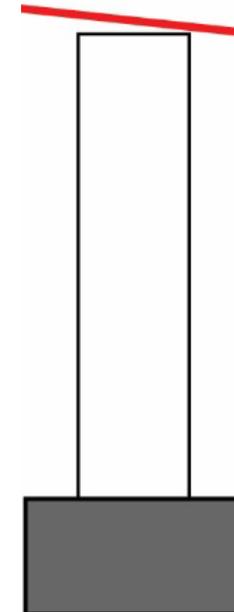
Shadow Regulations

No new shadows on
Common or Public Garden*



FAA

Federal Aviation
Administration



* Boston Common Shadow Law (Ch. 362, 1990 & Ch. 57, Acts of 2017) & Public Garden Shadow Law (Ch. 384, 1993 & Ch. 57, Acts of 2017)



Current Shadow Regulations

PLAN: Downtown Vision: *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...*

...without exceeding the shadow limits set by existing shadow legislation and zoning.

Boston Common Shadow Law (Ch. 362, Acts of 1990; Ch. 384, Acts of 1993; Ch. 57, Acts of 2017)

- This State law restricts new shadows on the **Common** to the first hour after sunrise or 7:00 a.m. (whichever is later) or the last hour before sunset, with different exemptions for buildings in the Midtown Cultural District, which lies east and south of the Common and Garden.

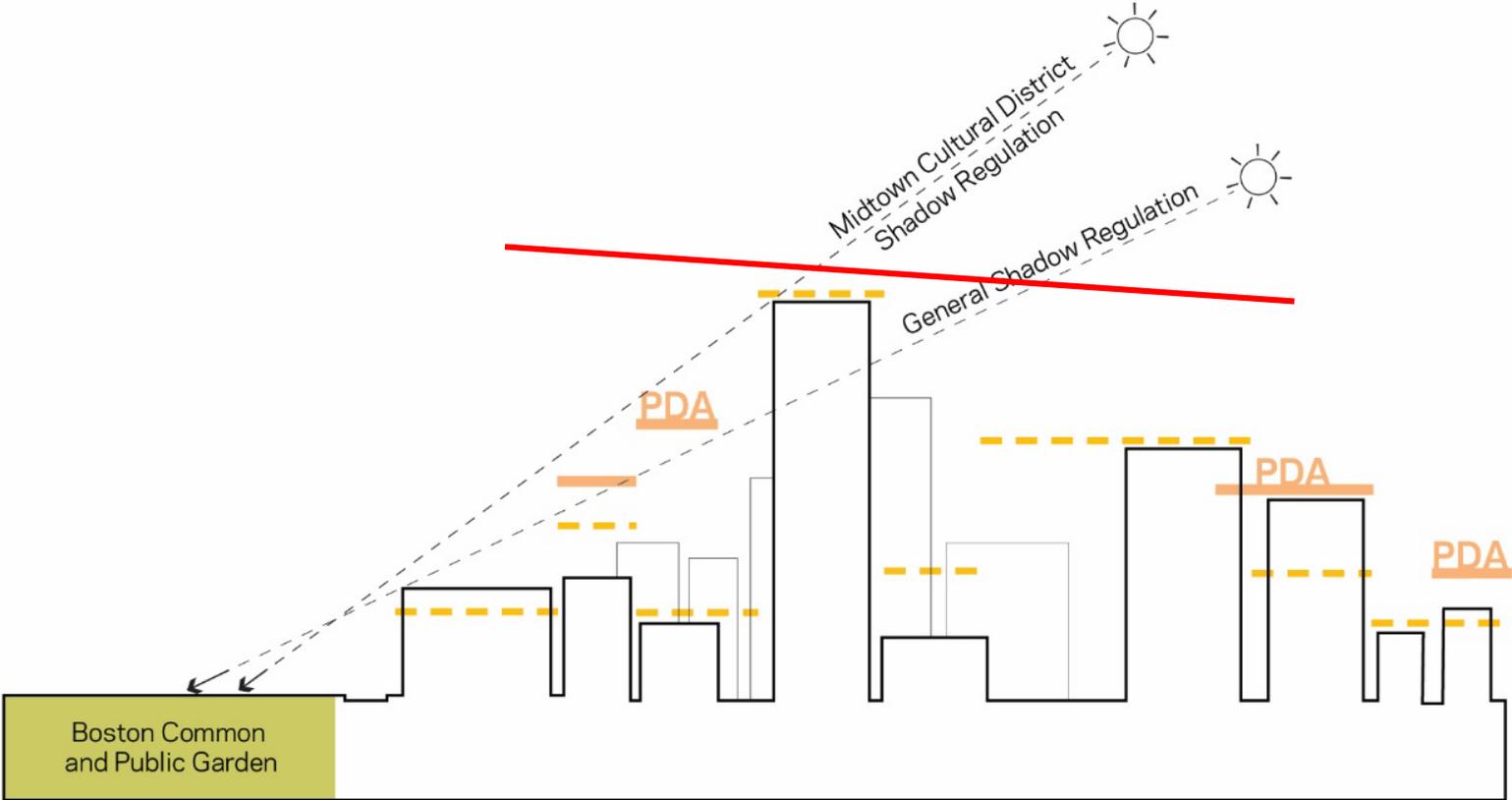
Public Garden Shadow Law (Ch. 384, Acts of 1993; CH. 57, Acts of 2017)

- This law restricts new shadows on the **Public Garden** to the first hour after sunrise or 7:00 a.m. (whichever is later) or the last hour before sunset.

- For buildings in the **Midtown Cultural District**, new shadows are allowed for no more than two hours between the hours of 8:00 am and 2:30 pm from March 21 to October 21. Any new shadow lasting two hours or more during these times is not allowed.
- For buildings in the **Midtown Cultural District**, new shadows are allowed before 10:00 a.m. during the period between March 21 and October 21.

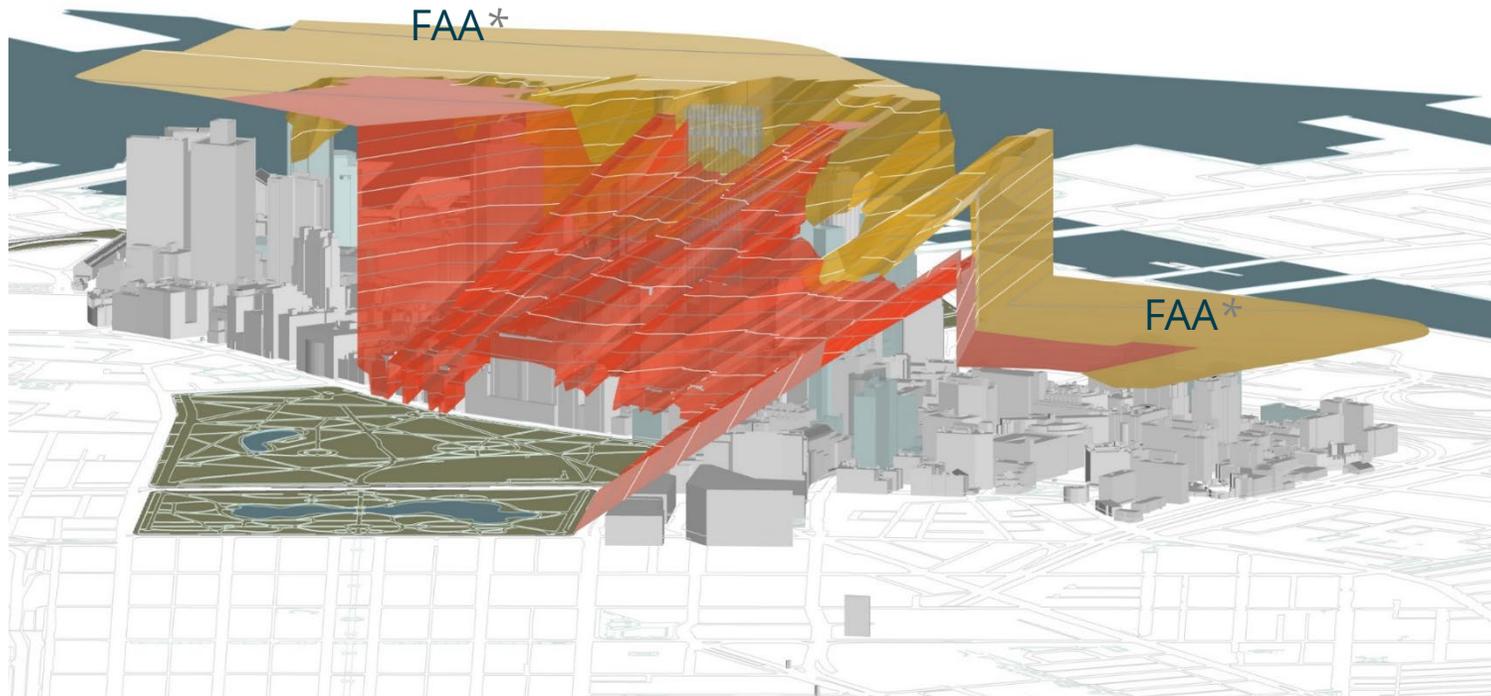


Current Maximum Height Limitations



- Base zoning height limit
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
- Planned Development Area (PDA)

Current Shadow Regulations



* The FAA flight path to Logan Airport impose height restrictions in the Financial District, Wharf District, and Chinatown.

■ Midtown Cultural District Shadow Regulation

■ General Shadow Regulation



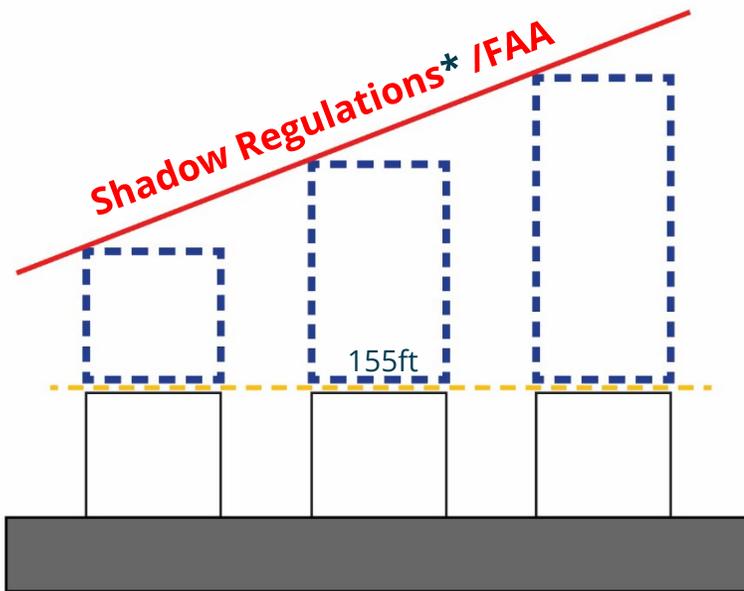
Two Proposed Development Scenarios

Two Development Scenarios

The scenarios illustrate the impact of different height restrictions and regulations

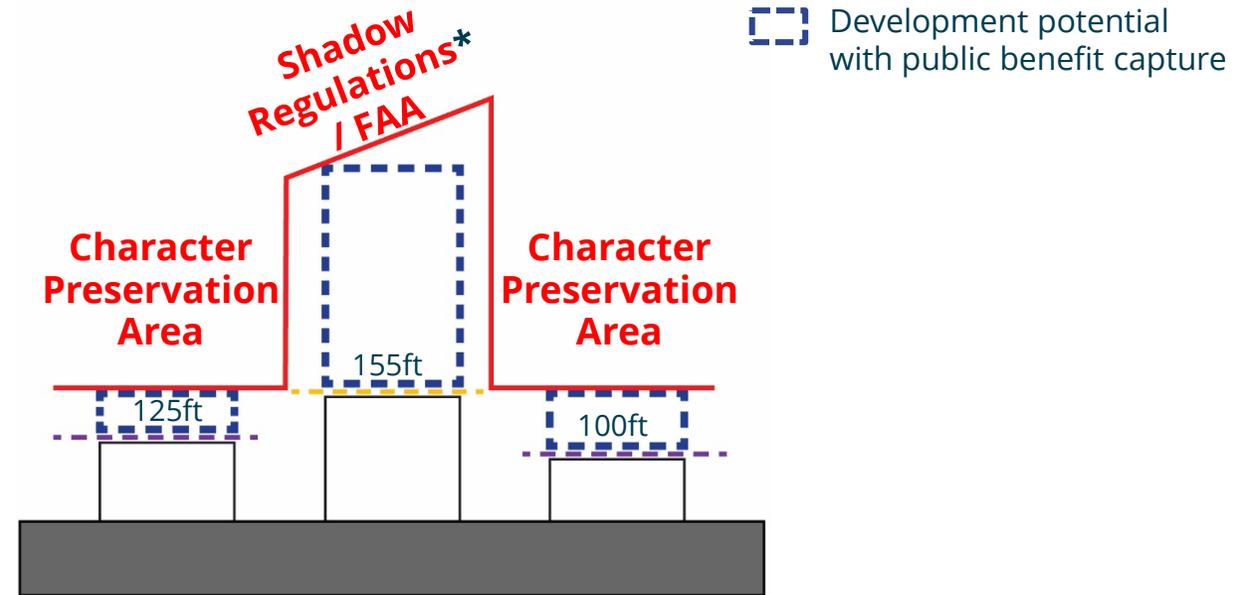
Scenario 1: Growth-Based

Density Bonuses based on a common baseline height established across the Downtown



Scenario 2: Preservation & Growth-Balanced

Density Bonuses based on varied baseline heights established by Character Area



* Boston Common Shadow Law (Ch. 362, 1990 & Ch. 57, Acts of 2017) & Public Garden Shadow Law (Ch. 384, 1993 & Ch. 57, Acts of 2017)



Scenario 1

Density Bonuses based on a common baseline height established across the Downtown



Scenario 1

Growth-Based Density Bonus System

Developer can contribute to a public benefit fund to add capacity through density bonus system

All Character Areas

- Baseline: 155-ft
- Maximum: Up to Midtown Cultural District Shadow Regulation, Shadow Regulation, and FAA height limit

*In this context “contribute” is used to as an analogy for public benefits and project mitigation that is negotiated through the Article 80 process. Development opportunity is not purchased from the BPDA, City or Community.



Piano Row, 155 ft. Building Heights



Scenario 1

Growth-Based Density Bonus System

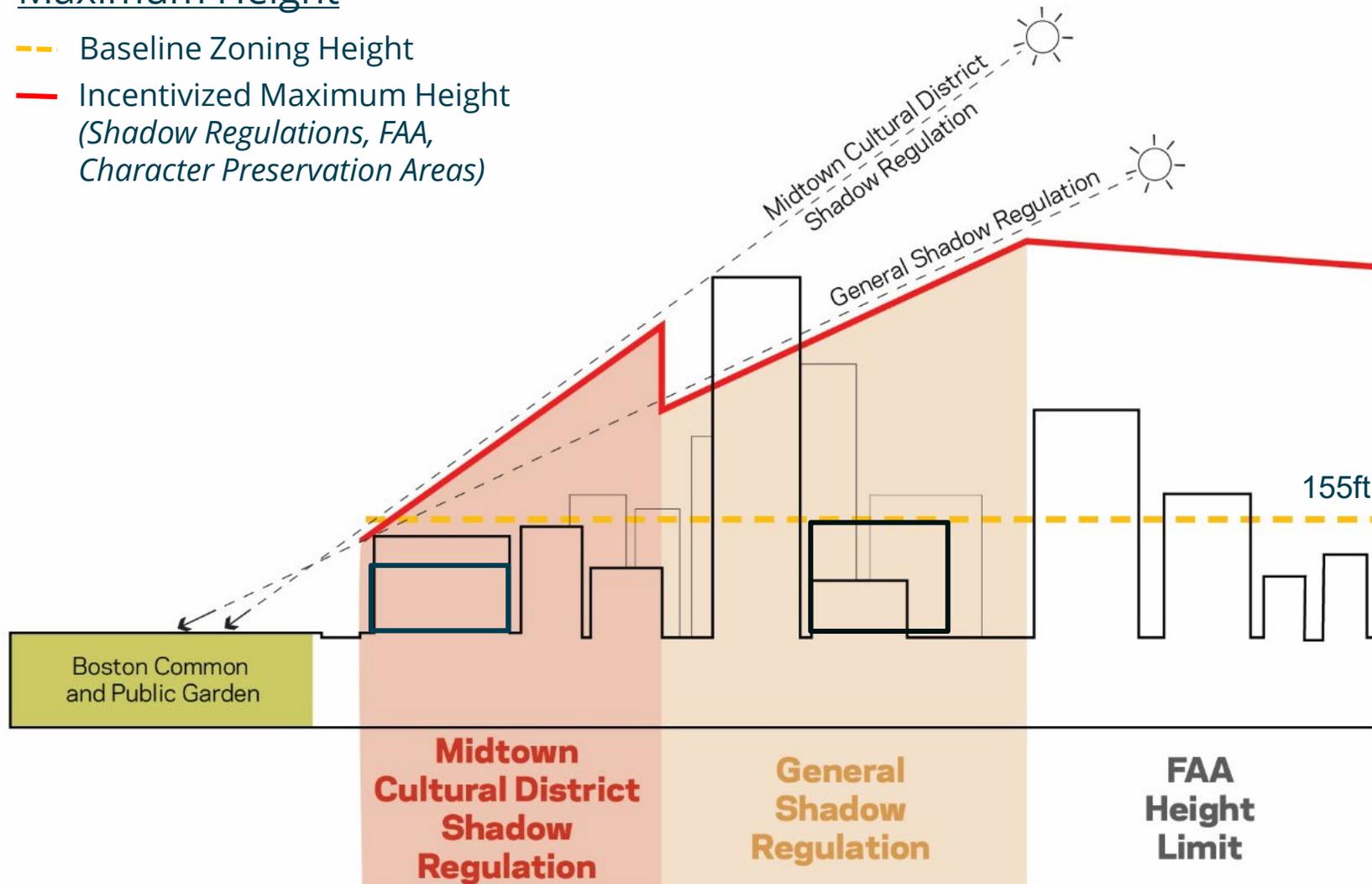
Developer can contribute to a public-benefit fund to add capacity through density bonus system

All Character Areas

- Baseline: 155-ft
- Maximum: Up to Midtown Cultural District Shadow Regulation, Shadow Regulation, and FAA height limit

Maximum Height

- Baseline Zoning Height
- Incentivized Maximum Height (Shadow Regulations, FAA, Character Preservation Areas)



*In this context “contribute” is used as an analogy for public benefits and project mitigation that is negotiated through the Article 80 process. Development opportunity is not purchased from the BPDA, City or Community.



Scenario 1

Growth-Based Density Bonus System

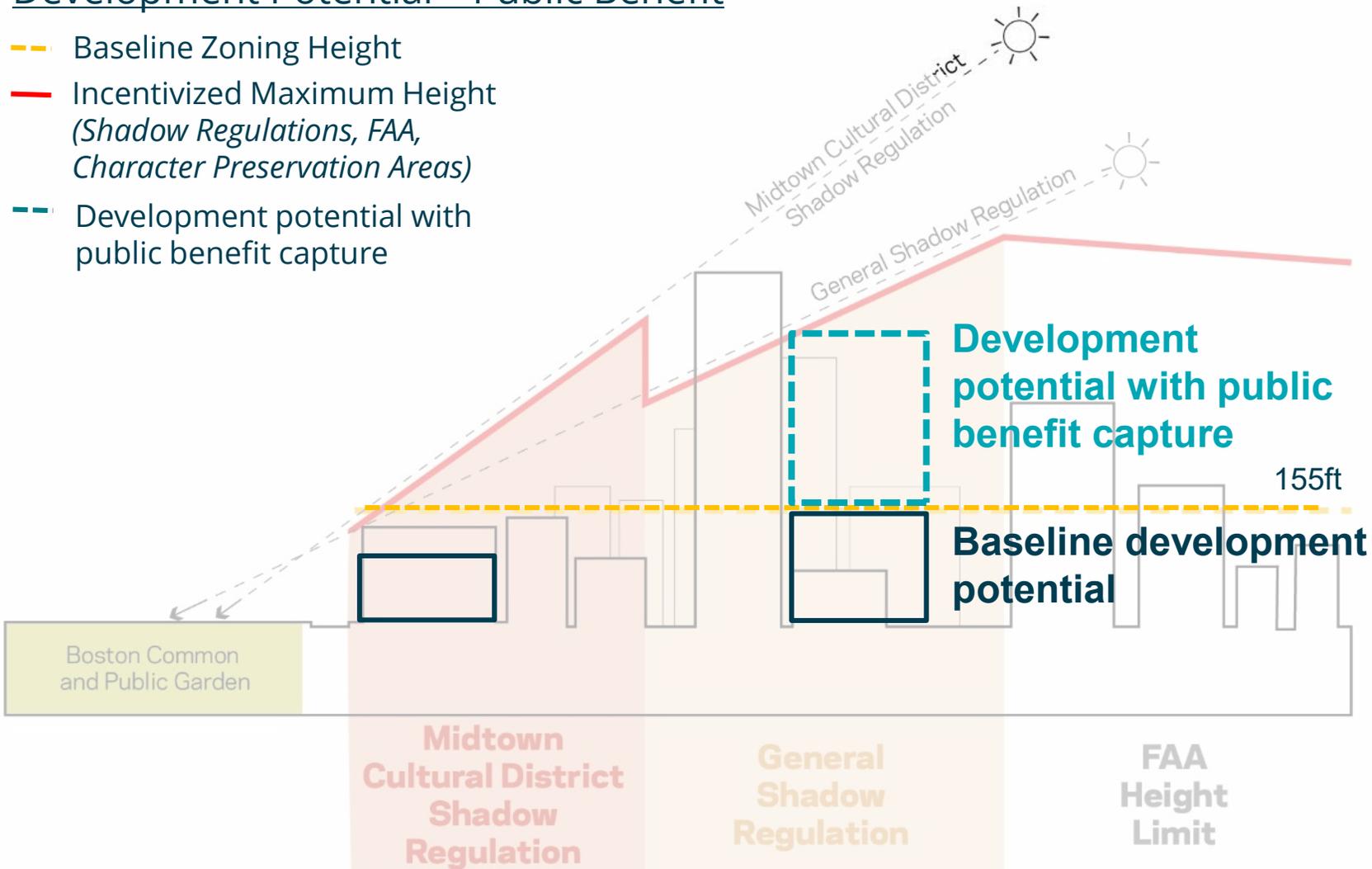
Developer can contribute to a public-benefit fund to add capacity through density bonus system

All Character Areas

- Baseline: 155-ft
- Maximum: Up to Midtown Cultural District Shadow Regulation, Shadow Regulation, and FAA height limit

Development Potential—Public Benefit

- Baseline Zoning Height
- Incentivized Maximum Height (*Shadow Regulations, FAA, Character Preservation Areas*)
- Development potential with public benefit capture



*In this context “contribute” is used as an analogy for public benefits and project mitigation that is negotiated through the Article 80 process. Development opportunity is not purchased from the BPDA, City or Community.



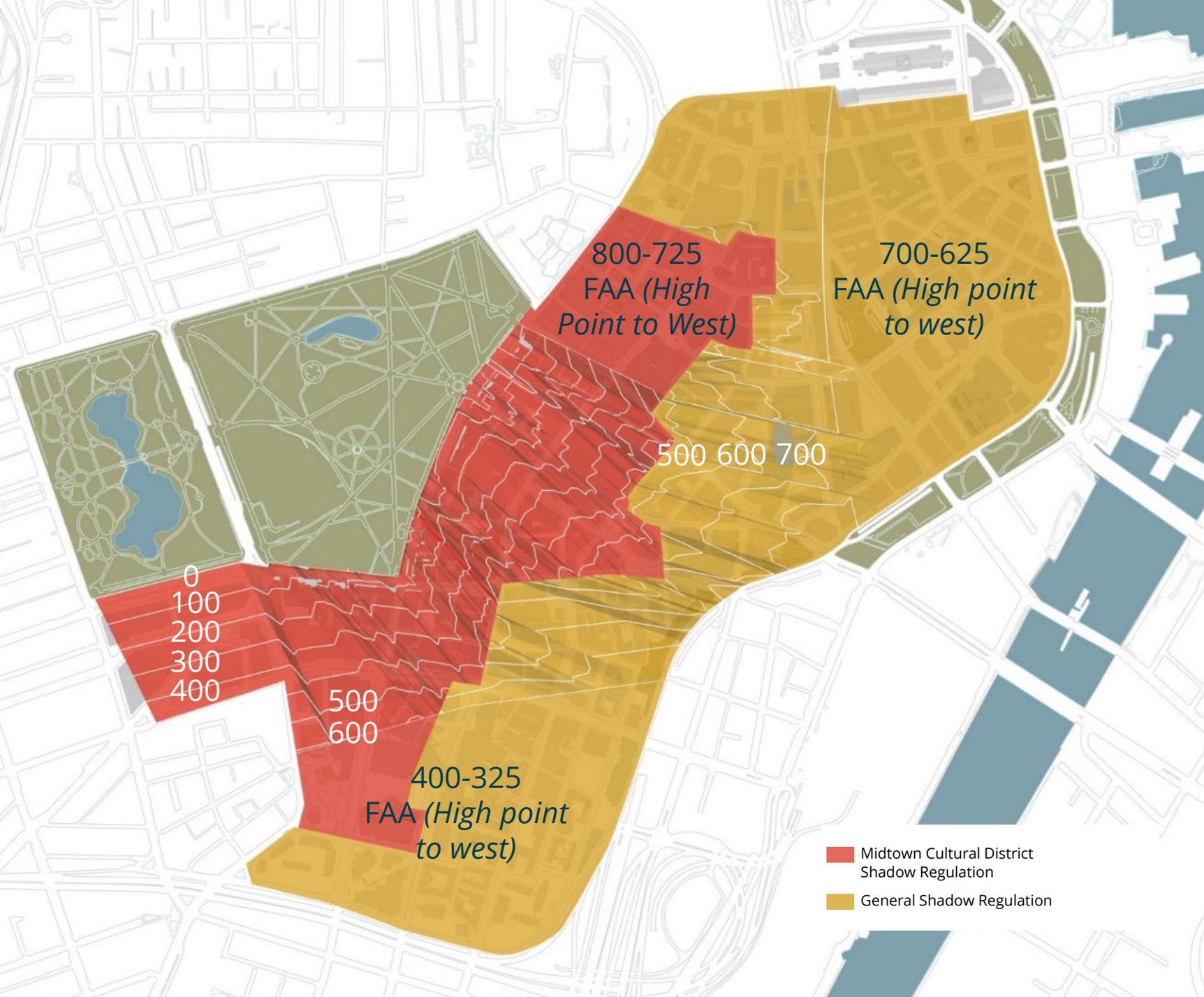
Scenario 1

Growth-Based Density Bonus System

Developer can contribute to a public-benefit fund to add capacity through density bonus system

All Character Areas

- Baseline: 155-ft
- Maximum: Up to Midtown Cultural District Shadow Regulation, Shadow Regulation, and FAA height limit

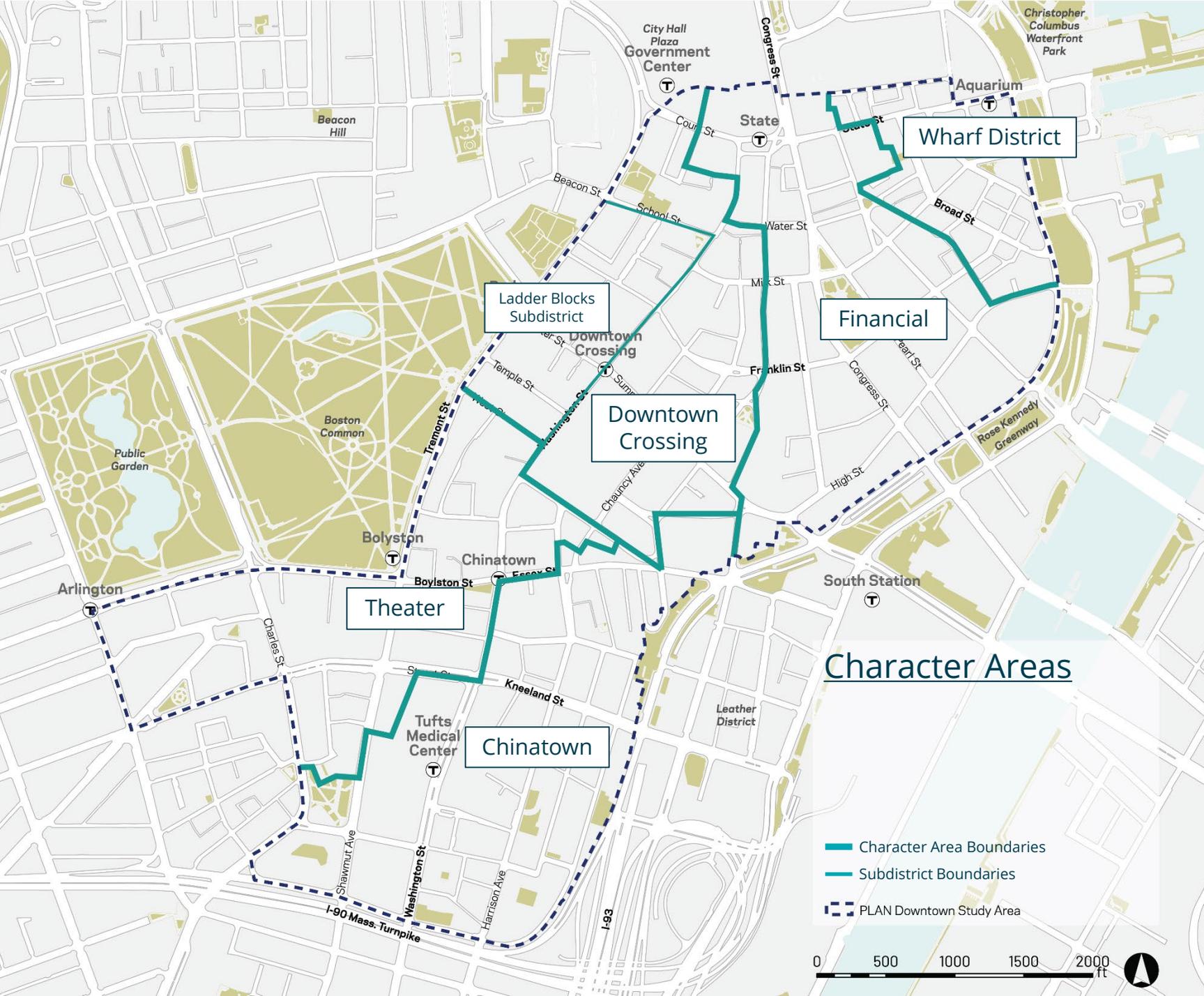


Scenario 2

Density Bonuses based on varied baseline height established by Character Area



Character Areas



Scenario 2

Preservation & Growth-Balanced Density Bonus System

Baseline zoning starting points and maximum heights are based on Character Area baseline and Developer can contribute to a public-benefit fund to add capacity through density bonus system.

Downtown Crossing General Area, Theater District, Financial District

- Baseline: 155-ft
- Maximum: Up to Midtown Cultural District Shadow Regulation, Shadow Regulation, and FAA height limit

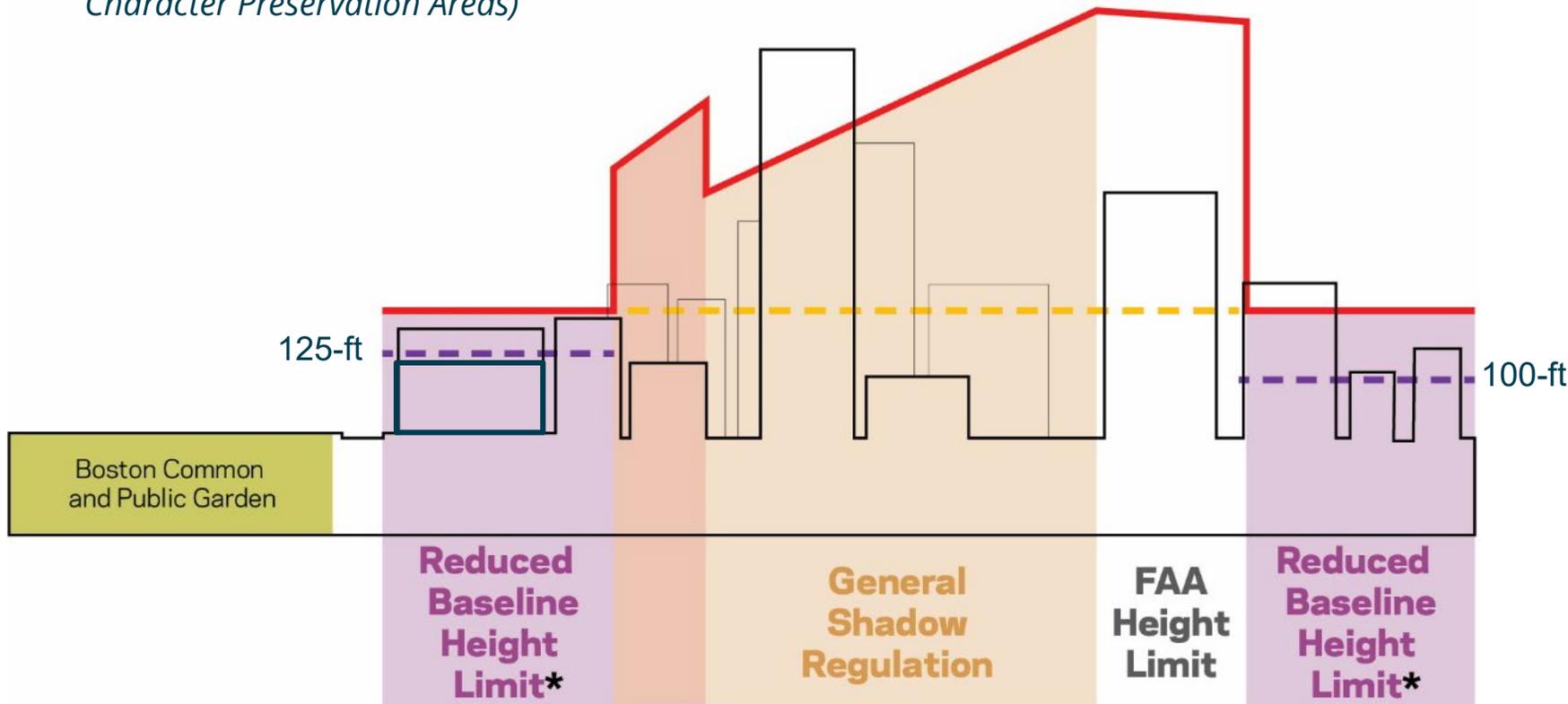
Three Character Preservation Areas

- Chinatown Baseline: 100-ft
- Wharf District Baseline: 100-ft
- Ladder Blocks Baseline: 125-ft
- Maximum: Lower Height Area

*In this context “contribute” is used as an analogy for public benefits and project mitigation that is negotiated through the Article 80 process. Development opportunity is not purchased from the BPDA, City or Community.

Maximum Heights

- Baseline Zoning Height
- Reduced Baseline Zoning Height
- Incentivized Maximum Height
(Shadow Regulations, FAA, Character Preservation Areas)



Scenario 2

Preservation & Growth-Balanced Density Bonus System

Baseline zoning starting points and maximum heights are based on Character Area baseline and Developer can contribute to a public-benefit fund to add capacity through density bonus system.

Downtown Crossing General Area, Theater District, Financial District

- Baseline: 155-ft
- Maximum: Up to Midtown Cultural District Shadow Regulation, Shadow Regulation, and FAA height limit

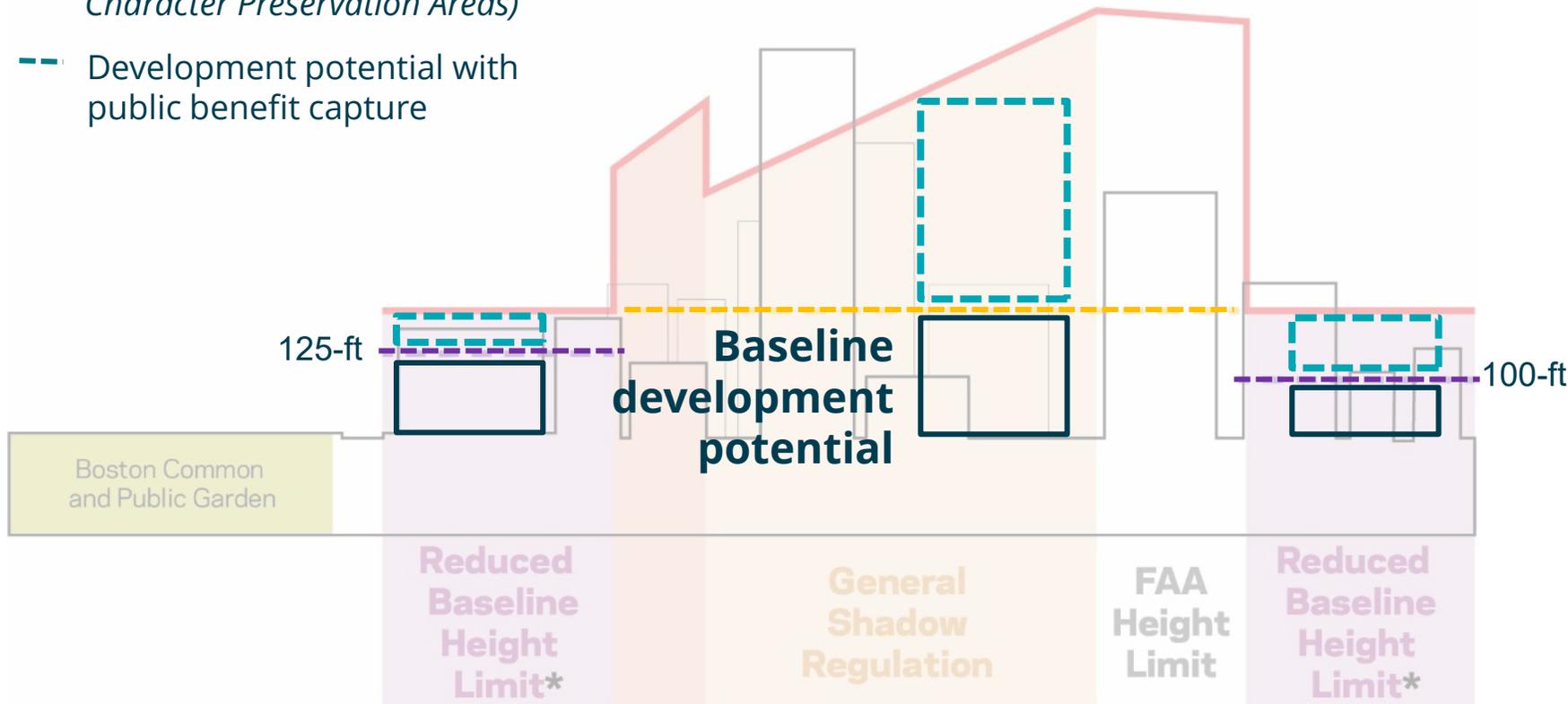
Three Character Preservation Areas

- Chinatown Baseline: 100-ft
- Wharf District Baseline: 100-ft
- Ladder Blocks Baseline: 125-ft
- Maximum: Lower Height Area

*In this context “contribute” is used as an analogy for public benefits and project mitigation that is negotiated through the Article 80 process. Development opportunity is not purchased from the BPDA, City or Community.

Development Potential—Public Benefit

- Baseline Zoning Height
- Reduced Baseline Zoning Height
- Incentivized Maximum Height (*Shadow Regulations, FAA, Character Preservation Areas*)
- Development potential with public benefit capture



Scenario 2

Preservation & Growth-Balanced Density Bonus System

Baseline zoning starting points and maximum heights are based on Character Area baseline and Developer can contribute to a public-benefit fund to add capacity through density bonus system.

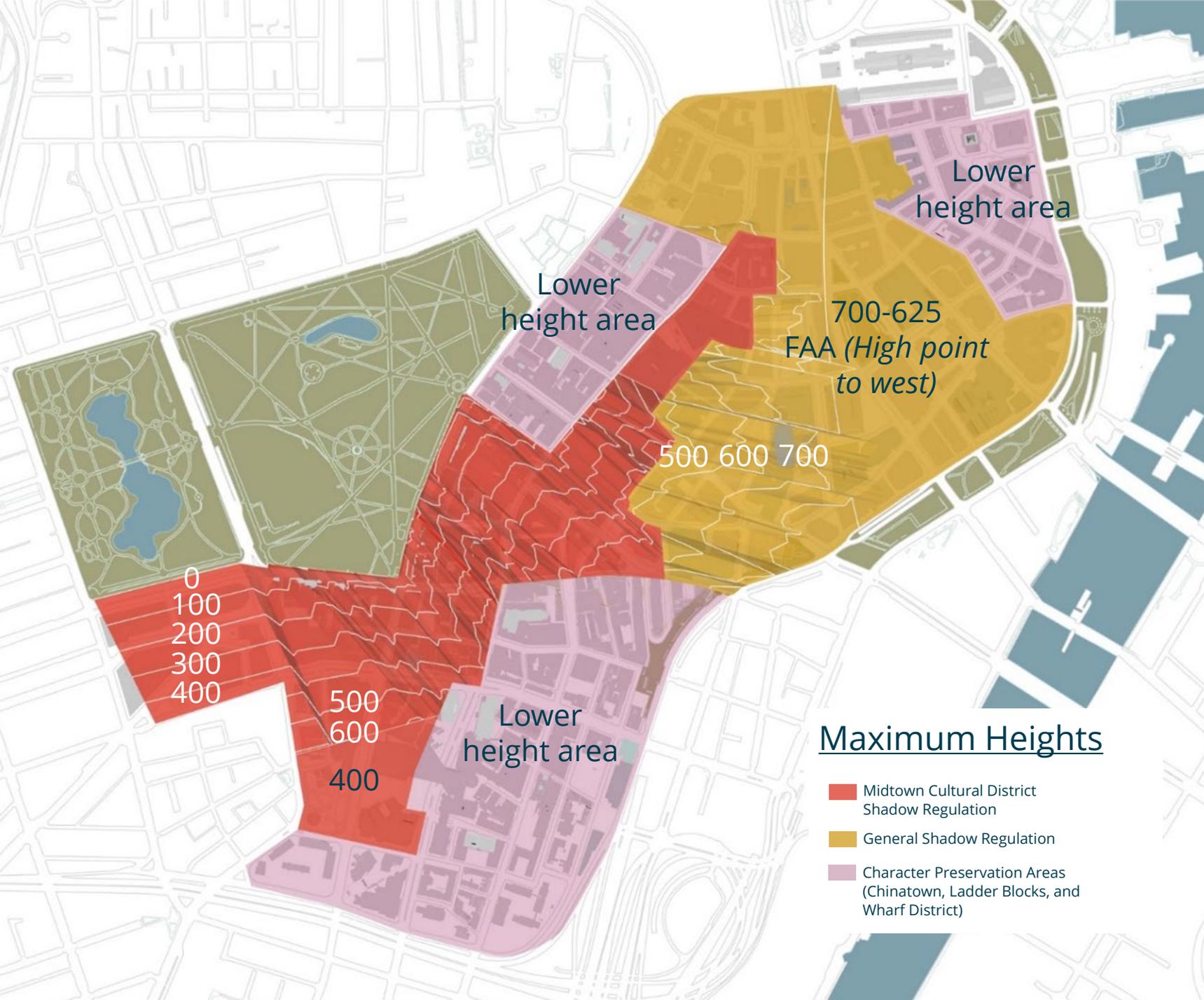
Downtown Crossing General Area, Theater District, Financial District

- Baseline: 155-ft
- Maximum: Up to Midtown Cultural District Shadow Regulation, Shadow Regulation, and FAA height limit

Three Character Preservation Areas

- Chinatown Baseline: 100-ft
- Wharf District Baseline: 100-ft
- Ladder Blocks Baseline: 125-ft
- Maximum: Lower Height Area

*In this context “contribute” is used as an analogy for public benefits and project mitigation that is negotiated through the Article 80 process. Development opportunity is not purchased from the BPDA, City or Community.



Sample Parcel Comparison

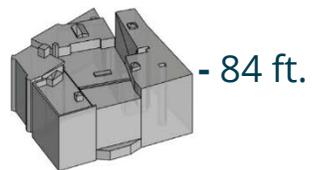
An example parcel within a Character Preservation Area is currently zoned for up to 61K SF (as-of-right) but would have potential for added density under Scenarios 1 and 2.

Existing building

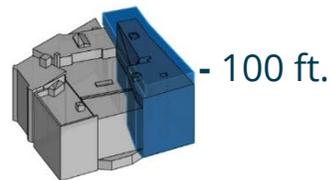
Under Current Zoning

Under Scenario 1

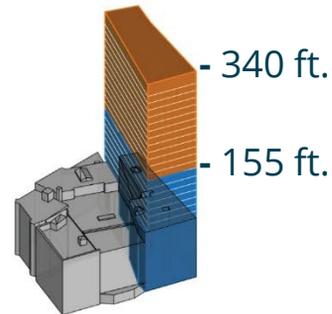
Under Scenario 2



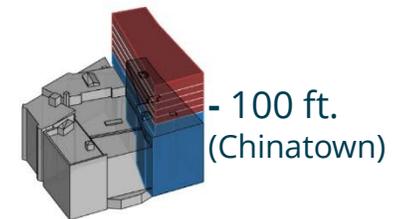
Existing Built Area:
39,000 SF



Maximum Buildable Area:
61,000 SF



Shadow Regulation/
FAA, Max. Buildable:
207,000 SF



Lower Height Limit,
Max. Buildable:
94,000 SF

- Existing buildings
- Base zoning height
(Differs according to the scenarios)
- Maximum height allowed by the
Shadow Regulation/FAA
- Height limit based on Character
Preservation Area



Public Benefit



**boston planning &
development agency**

Additional Public Benefits



Affordable Housing



Climate + Resilience



**Local Transit +
Mobility**



**Small Business Support
+ Retail Activation**



Historic Preservation



Open Space & Public Realm*

* Percentage of funds assigned to management and maintenance



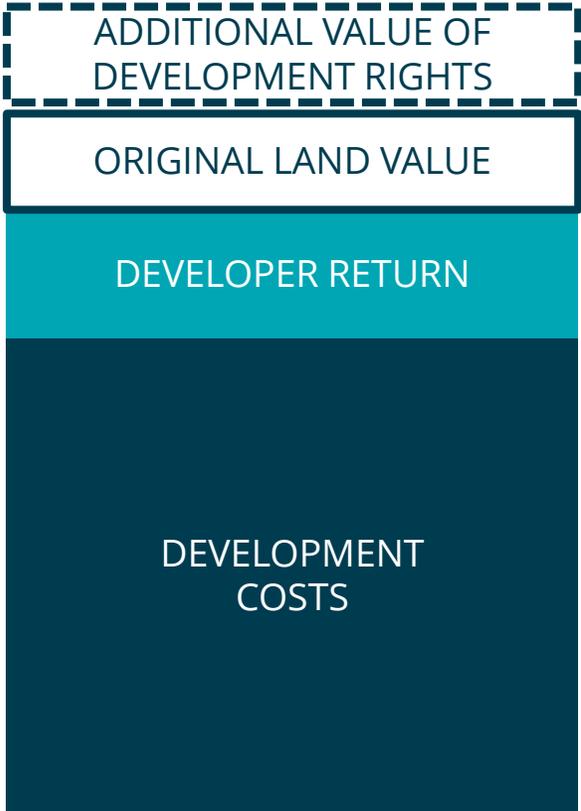
Current Zoning vs. Density Bonus System

As developers acquire land to construct a building, they are incentivized to “purchase” bonus density to deliver more space, and therefore generate a larger return

Current Zoning



Baseline + Density Bonus



Potential for public benefits

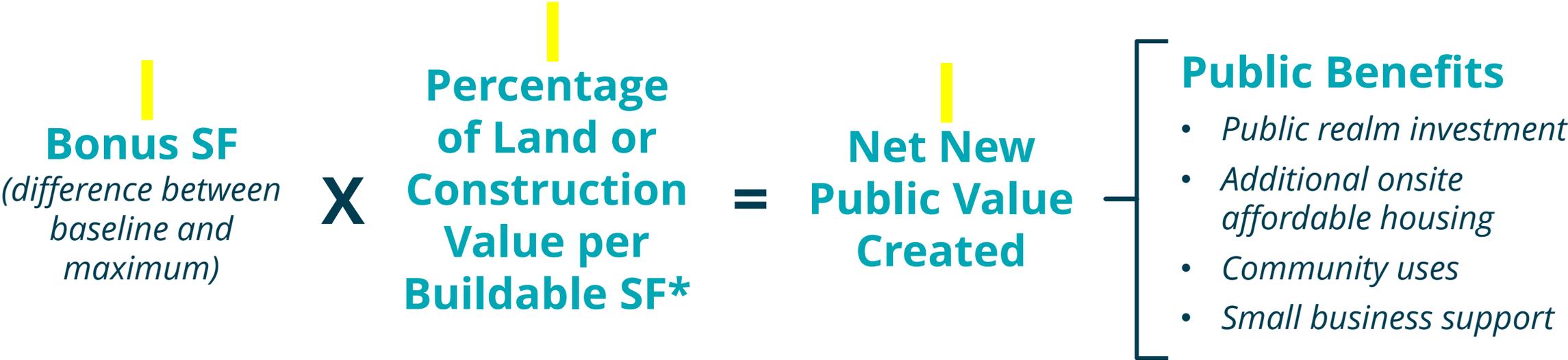
Higher Developer Return

*In this context “purchase” is used to as an analogy for public benefits and project mitigation that is negotiated through the Article 80 process. Development opportunity is not purchased from the BPDA, City or Community.



Public Benefit Calculation

The value of public benefits can be calculated by multiplying the bonus square feet by a proportion of value per buildable square feet, which should be set to encourage participation in the program.

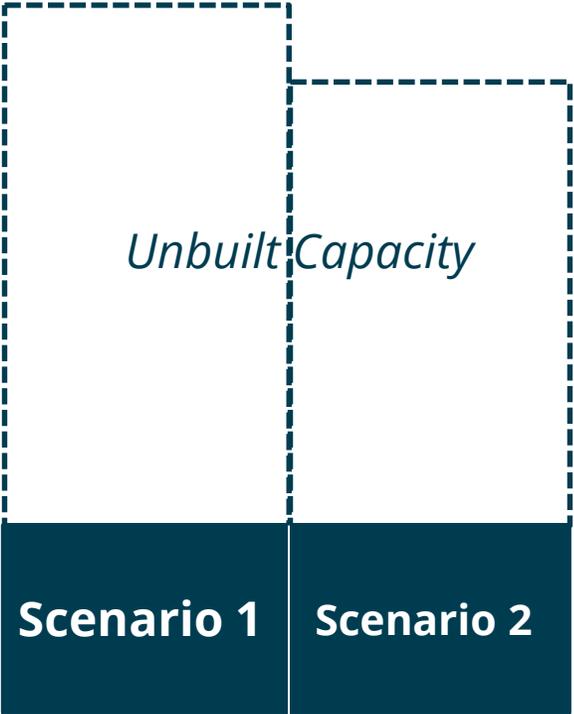


**The remaining % is developers' incentive to utilize the density bonus*

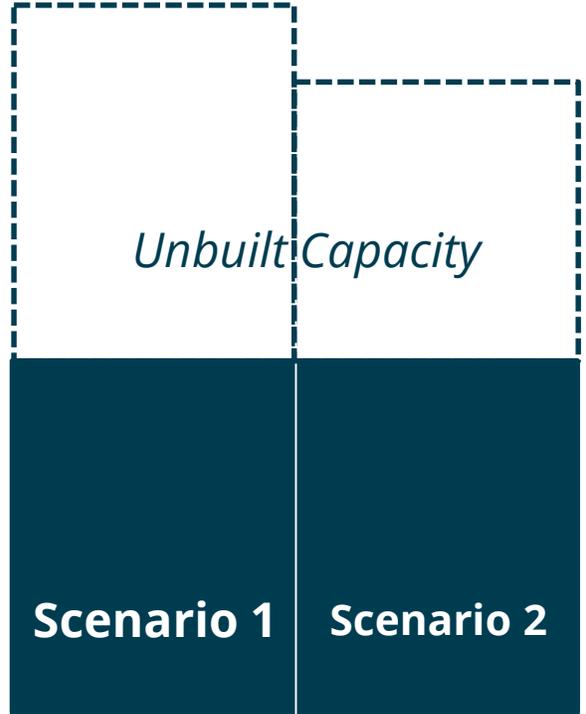


Public Benefit Comparison

New Public Value Generated by 2030



New Public Value Generated by 2040



Discussion

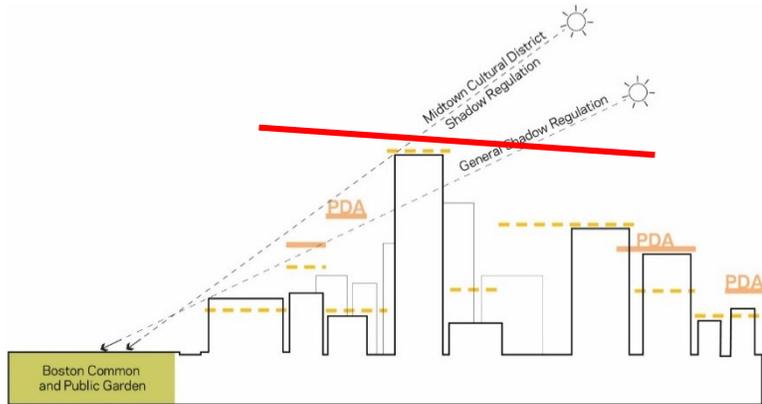


Scenario Comparison

Maximum Heights

- Baseline Zoning Height
- Reduced Baseline Zoning Height
- Incentivized Maximum Height
(Shadow Regulations, FAA, Character Preservation Areas)

Current Zoning



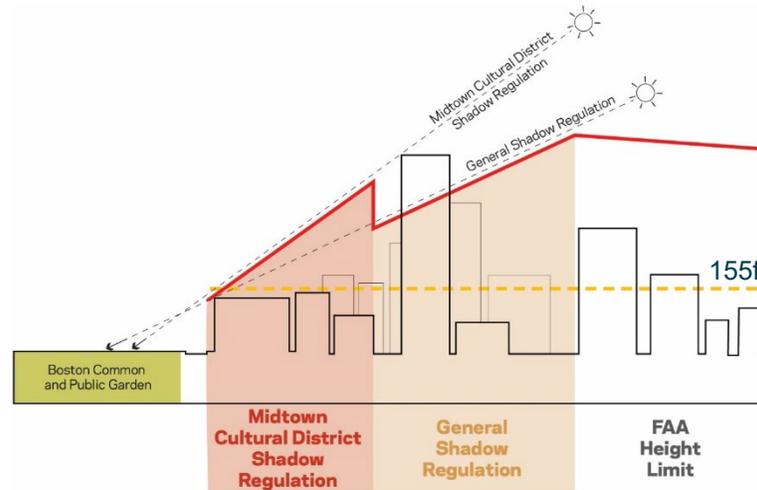
Base zoning heights:

Various (Multiple General, PDA, Preservation, FAA)

Maximum heights:

Various (Multiple General, PDA, Preservation, FAA) & Midtown Cultural District and General Shadow Regulations

Scenario 1



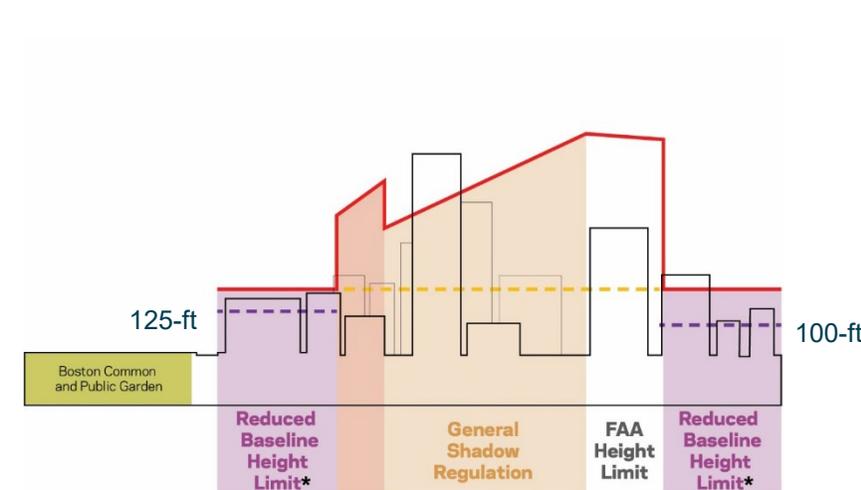
Baseline heights:

155' in General Area

Maximum heights:

Midtown Cultural District and General Shadow Regulations

Scenario 2



Baseline heights:

155' in General Area and 100/125' in Character Preservation Areas

Maximum heights:

Midtown Cultural District and General Shadow Regulations and lower heights in the Character Preservation Areas

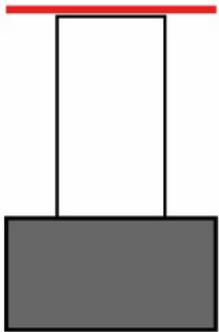


Urban Design Guidelines

Role of the Boston Zoning Code

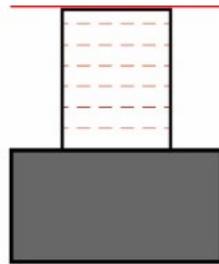
Height

(Max. height or number of floors)



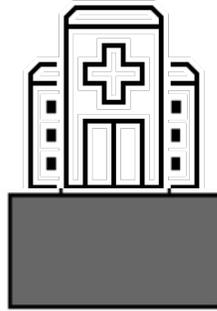
Density

(Floor Area Ratio)



Use

(Allowed, Conditional, or Forbidden)

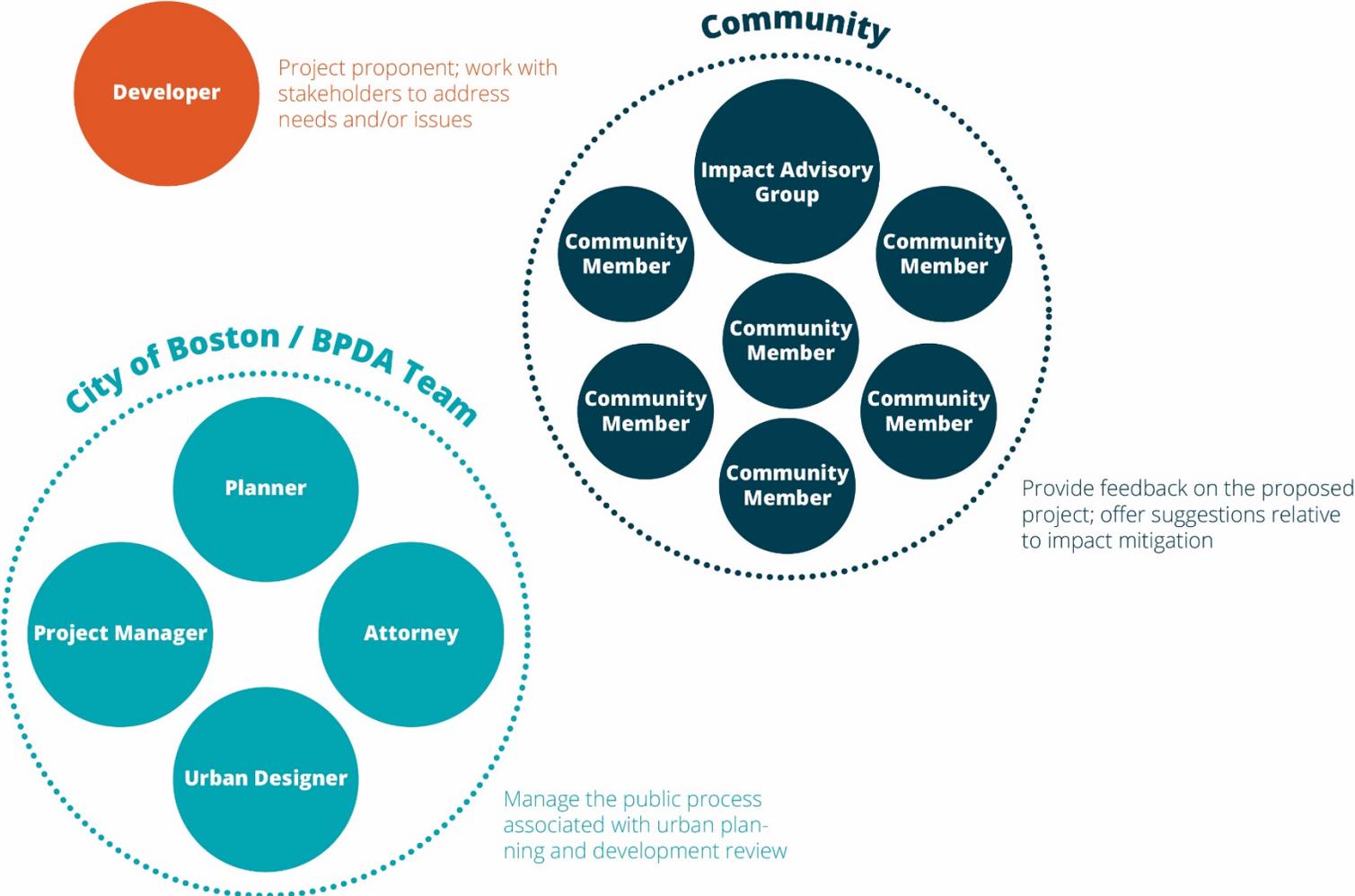


- **Dictates the allowed shape, density, and use of development** in a given area
- Protects Boston's distinct neighborhoods from the development of buildings or uses that do not harmonize with their surrounding context



Role of Article 80

Adopted by the Boston Zoning Commission in 1996



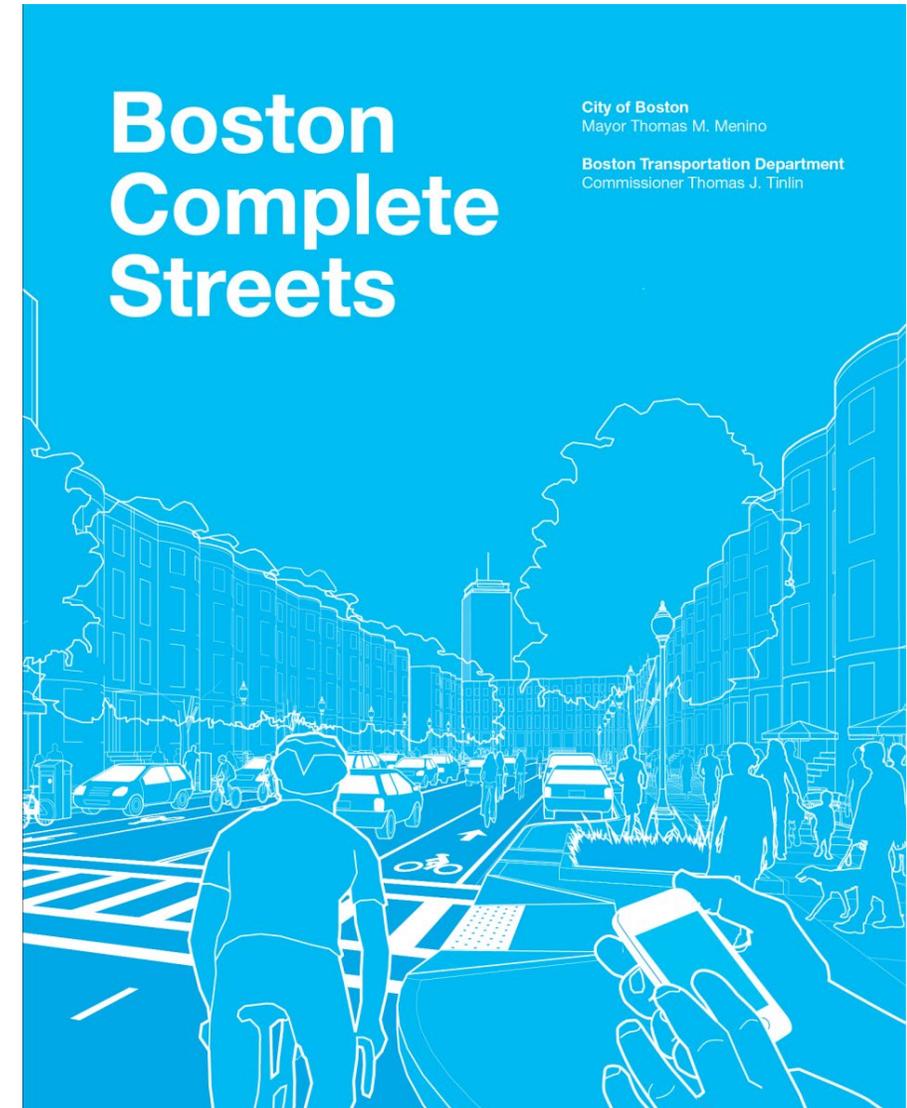
- **Provides specific requirements for the review of certain development projects** in all of the neighborhoods of Boston
- **Provides important opportunities for community involvement and feedback**



Role of Complete Streets

Adopted by the City of Boston in 2013

- **Provides policy and design guidance** to governmental agencies, consultants, private developers, and community groups on the planning, design, and operation of roadways and sidewalks in Boston
- **Ensures that Boston's streets are safe for all users**, and to foster an efficient project development and review process
- **Improves the quality of life in Boston** by creating streets that are both great places to live and sustainable transportation networks



Role of Urban Design Guidelines

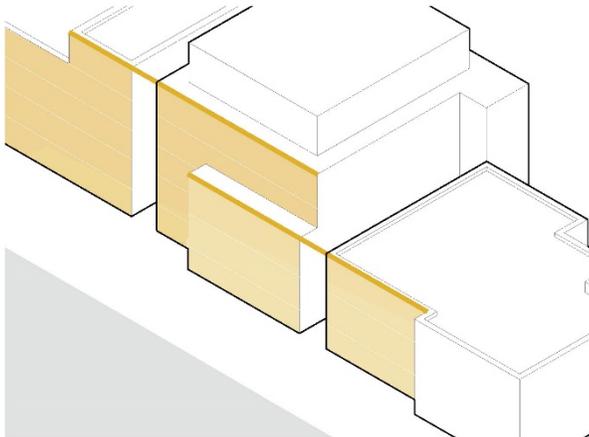
1 | Site Design 1.1 | Scale and Massing

1.1.1

The general expectation is that infill projects will consider the height, massing, and architectural lines of abutting buildings.

Downtown/Wharf District: Particular attention should be paid to the height, massing, and architectural lines of abutting buildings in the Ladder District /Wharf District. The focus should be on the first 5 to 6 stories of the building.

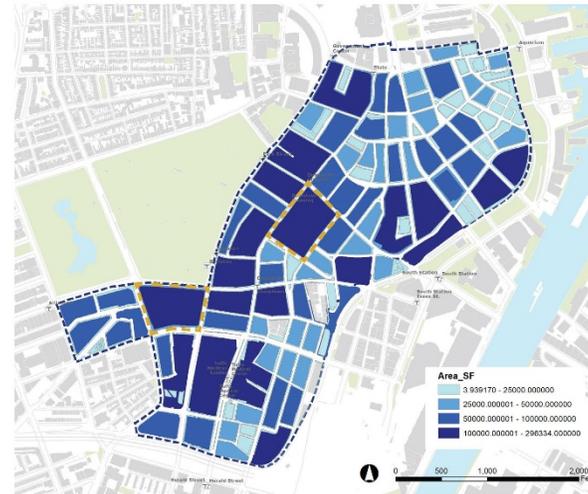
Chinatown: Particular attention should be paid to the height and massing of abutting buildings in Chinatown. The focus should be on the first 5 to 6 stories of the building.



1.1.2

Minimize the scale of blocks wherever possible by providing new streets, mid-block alleys, pedestrian paths, courtyards, and plazas that connect with other streets and public or common open spaces.

Downtown/Theater District: In the case of re-development, find long-term opportunities for new exterior pedestrian routes with respect to Lafayette Place/ Massachusetts Transportation building.



- Establishes the quality and character of architecture and open space
- Provides a framework for design review
- Ensures private development aligns with PLAN: Downtown



Role of Urban Design Guidelines

Guidelines for new construction, additions to existing buildings, and redevelopment/renovation.



Organization of Guidelines

Draft PLAN: Downtown Urban Design Guidelines

Site & Building Design

- Scale & Massing
- Vertical Building Additions
- Frontages, Setbacks, Entrances
- Servicing & Curb Cuts
- Architectural Expression

Public Realm

- Open Space
- Lighting
- Planting & Sustainability
- View Sheds and Corridors

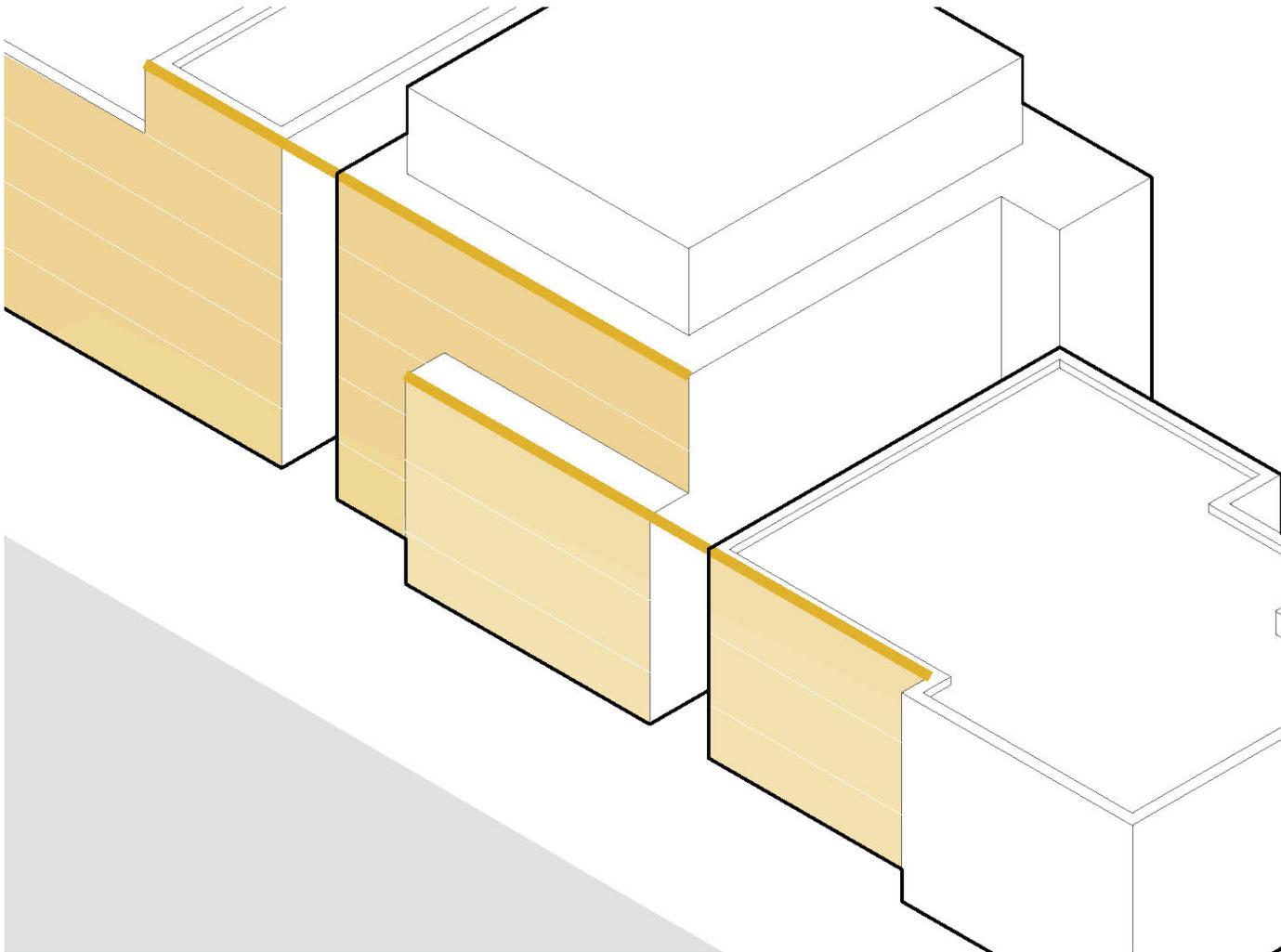


Shoppers' Plaza & Millennium Tower



Scale & Massing

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



1.1.1

The general expectation is that infill projects will consider the height, massing, and architectural lines of abutting buildings.

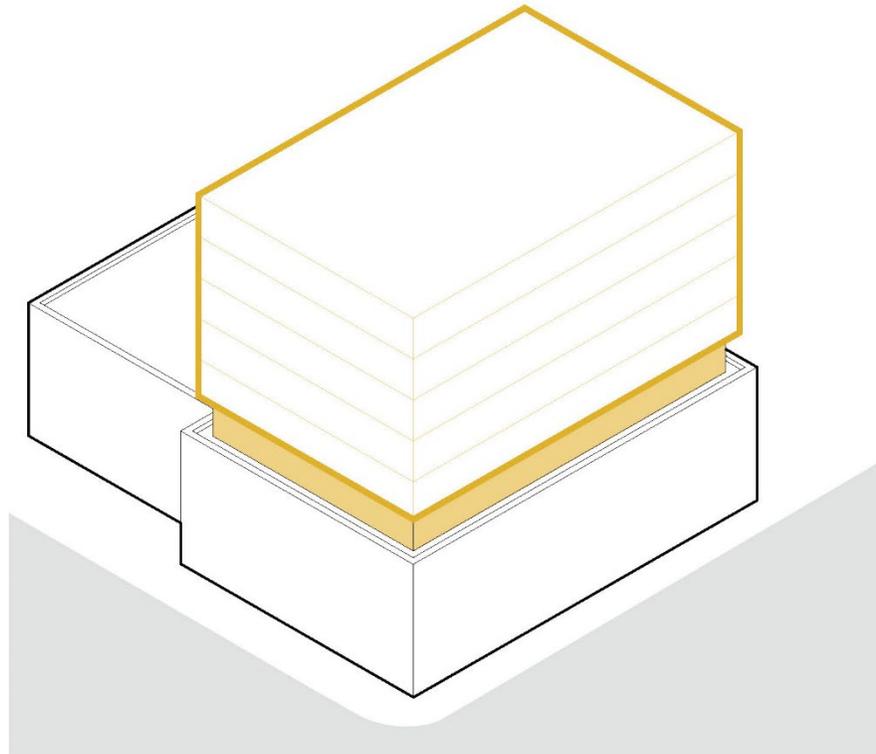
Downtown/Wharf District: Particular attention should be paid to the height, massing, and architectural lines of abutting buildings in the Ladder District /Wharf District. The focus should be on the first 5 to 6 stories of the building.

Chinatown: Particular attention should be paid to the height and massing of abutting buildings in Chinatown. The focus should be on the first 5 to 6 stories of the building.



Vertical Building Additions

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



1.2.1

Create a distinct horizontal or vertical break in the façade between the new and existing portions of the building.

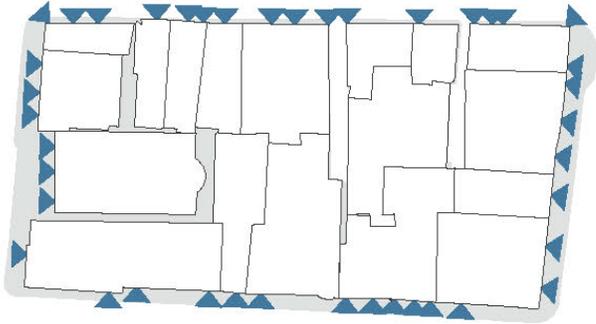


Frontages, Setbacks, Entrances

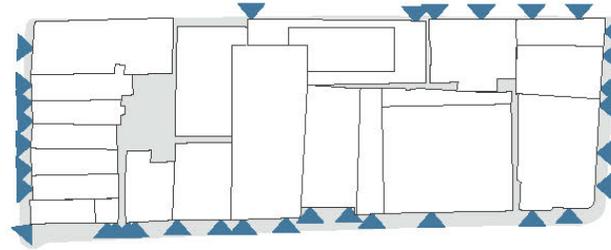
PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines

1.3.15

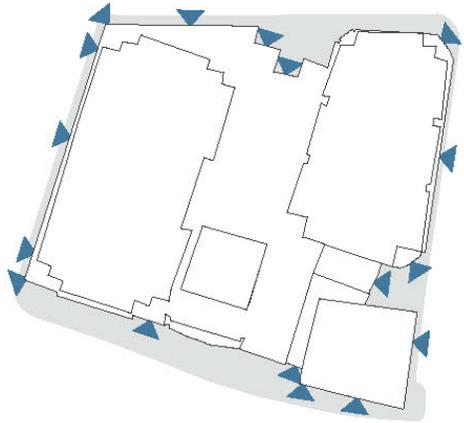
Avoid long frontages without active entries. Distance between entrances should fit a common neighborhood pattern.



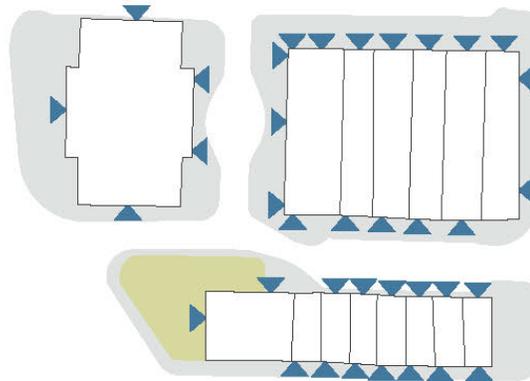
Downtown



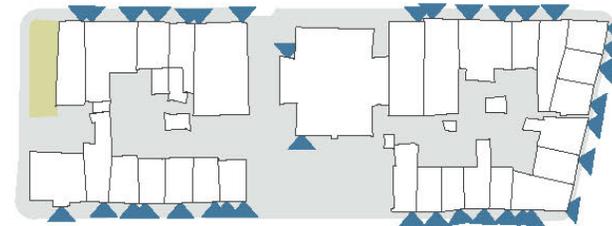
Theater District



Financial District



Wharf District

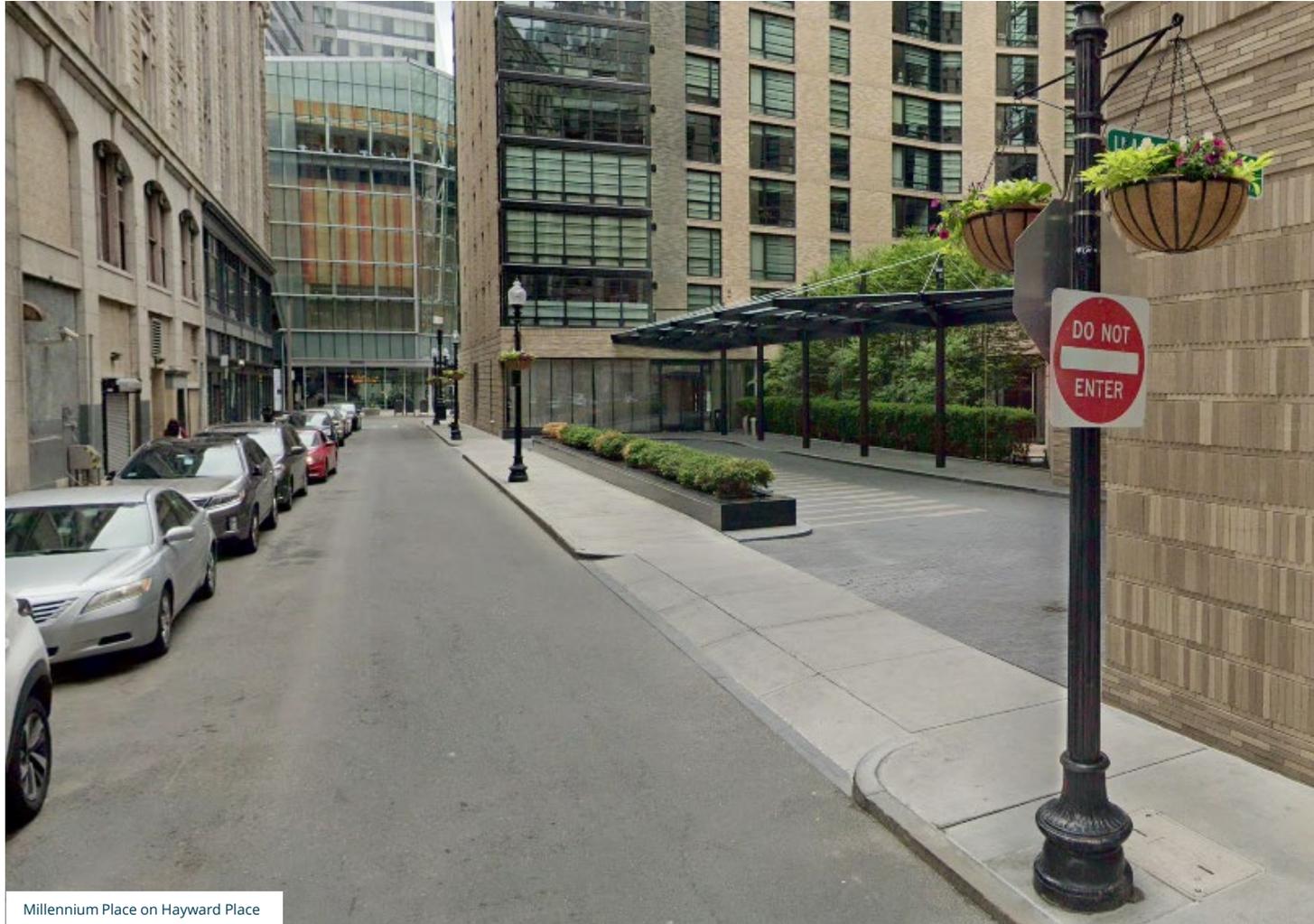


Chinatown



Servicing & Curb Cuts

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



Millennium Place on Hayward Place

1.4.2

Minimize the location, size, and number of curb cuts and locate parking access to minimize impacts on transit, bicycles, and pedestrian circulation. Where possible, loading should be planned for within the parking area and utilize the same curb cut as other vehicles.



Architectural Expression

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



Downtown



Theater District



1.5.14

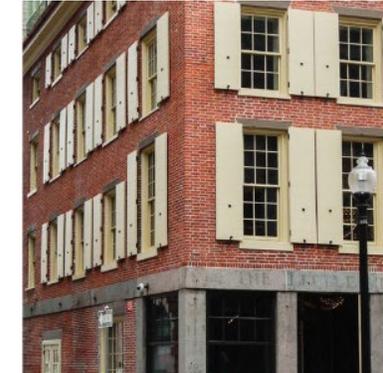
New development should consider the prevailing materiality of the character areas existing buildings.



Financial District



Chinatown

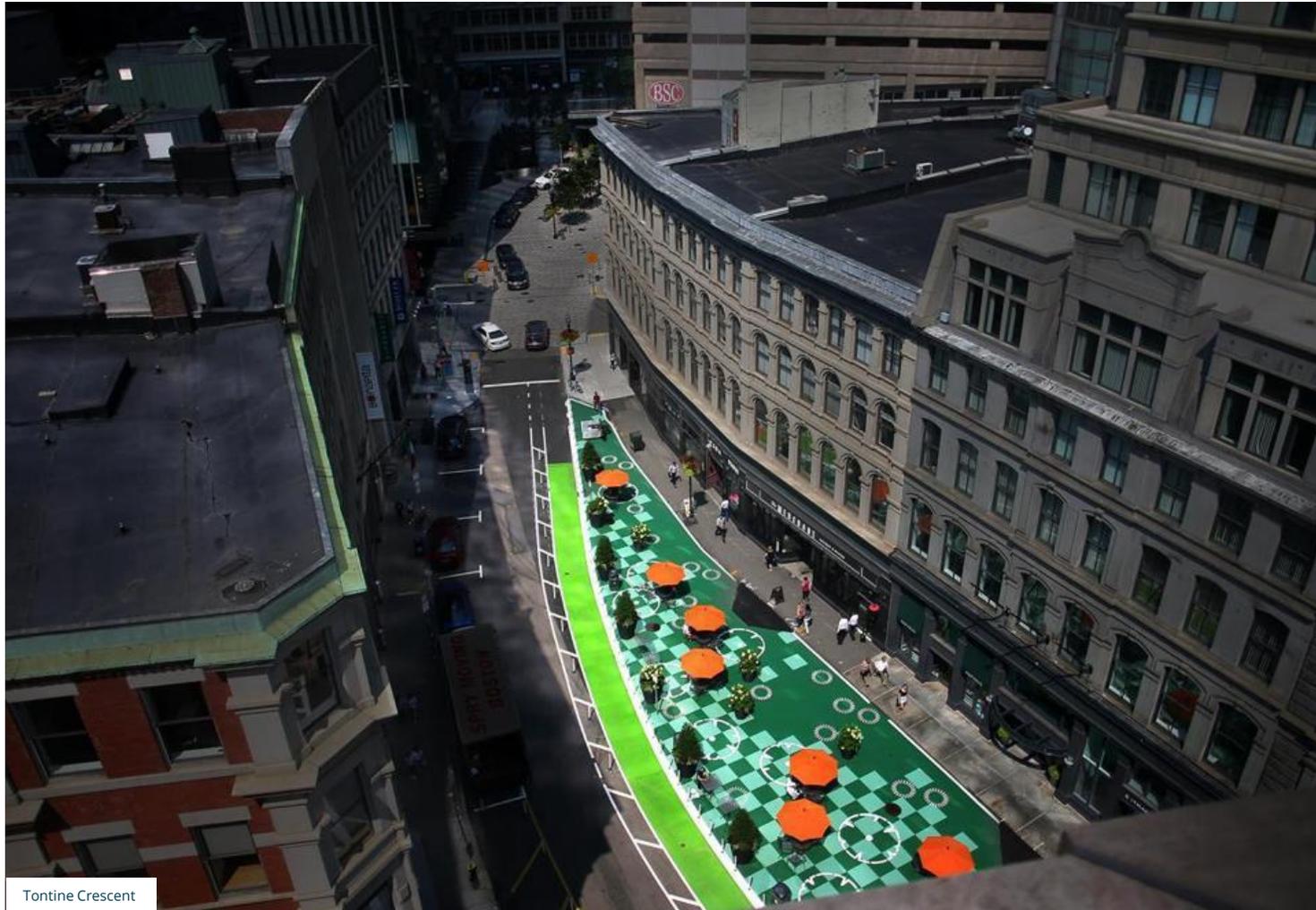


Wharf District



Open Space

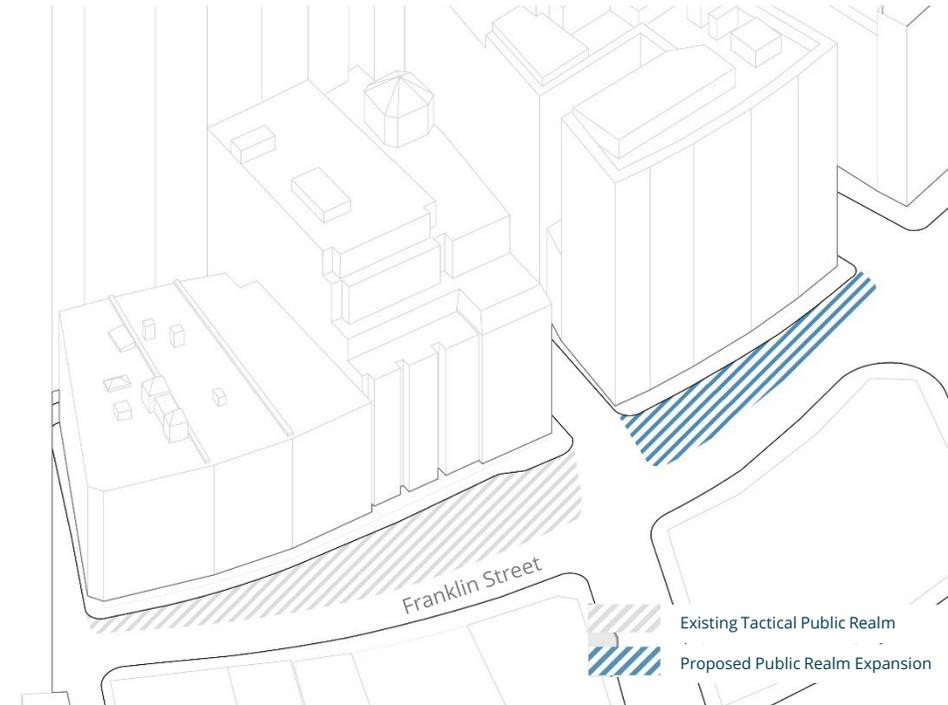
PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



Tontine Crescent

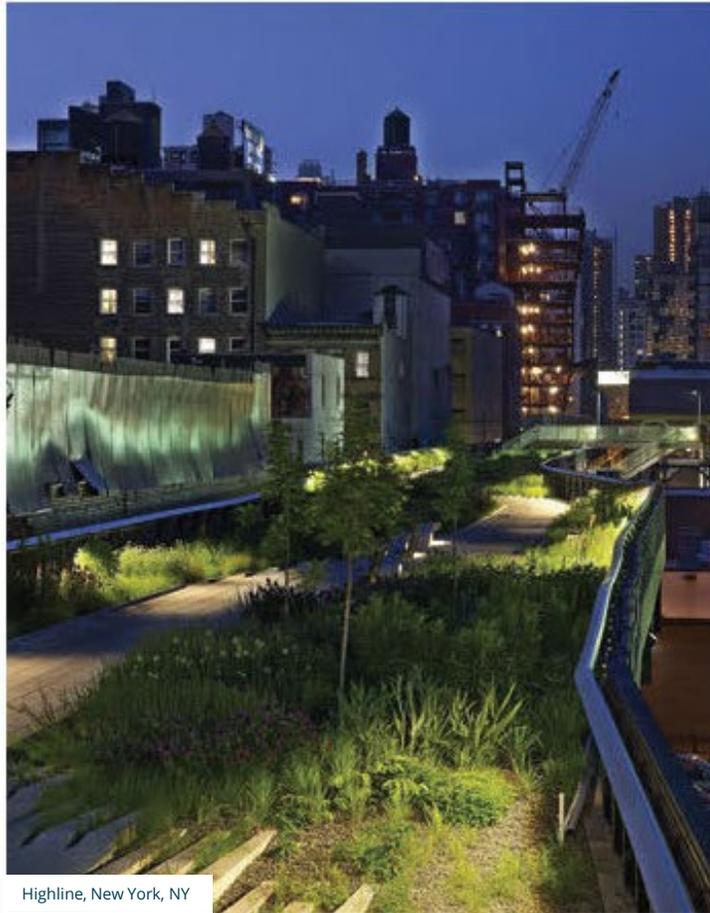
2.1.2

Find opportunities to reconfigure roadways in order to create a new public space.



Lighting

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



2.2.4

Design lighting to reinforce pedestrian comfort at the ground level; avoid high contrasts in light levels; avoid glare.



Planting & Sustainability

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



2.3.2

Consider using recycled permeable and/or concrete paving for curbs or benches to contain new planting. Reuse site or construction materials wherever possible, especially in the case of tactical urbanism.



View Sheds & Corridors

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



2.4.1

Respect existing view corridors towards designated historic assets and create new viewpoints from public streets and spaces where feasible; Step back or shape street walls to organize or frame long-range views.

Downtown: Old South Meeting House, the Granary Cemetery, Old City Hall
Theater District: Columbus Avenue to the Edgar Allan Poe Statue and Boston Common

Chinatown: historical main façade of the Don Bosco Technical High School

Financial District: The State House, Boston Massacre Site; maintain the view towards the United Shoe Machinery Corporation Building, especially from the route to the east of the Fiduciary Trust Building

Wharf District: Custom House Tower, the Grain Exchange; State Street towards Faneuil Hall



Discussion



Next Steps



To Be Explored Further by the Planning Team

Potential Updates Based on Today's Discussion

- **Chinatown:** Locating an “Affordable Housing Growth Area”
- **Character Preservation Areas:** Revisit height limitations & boundary locations

Next Steps

- **Scenario Refinement** (*One Preferred Scenario*)
- **Scenario Impact Assessment**
- **Urban Design Guidelines Update**
- **Zoning & Public Benefits Implementation Tools**
- **Draft Document Expected Late-April/Early-May 2020**
(*Public Meeting To Be Scheduled*)



Upcoming Engagement Events

Advisory Group Meeting #9: Scenario Refinement & Urban Design*

February 26, 2020

Advisory Group Meeting #10: Discussion Session—Bringing together the planning recommendations, urban design guidelines, and scenario framework*

March 18, 2020

Advisory Group Meeting #11: PLAN: Downtown Draft Review*

April 29, 2020

PLAN: Downtown Draft Open House

Late-April/Early May 2020

Get Involved with PLAN: Downtown

<http://bit.ly/plandowntownboston>

#plandowntownboston on Instagram

Questions and Comments

Kennan Rhyne, kennan.rhyne@boston.gov

*All Advisory Group meetings are open to the public.

