



PLAN: Downtown

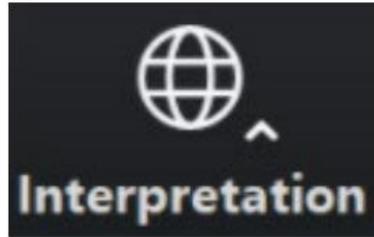
PLAN: Downtown Planning Recap and Scenarios Workshop

December 14, 2022

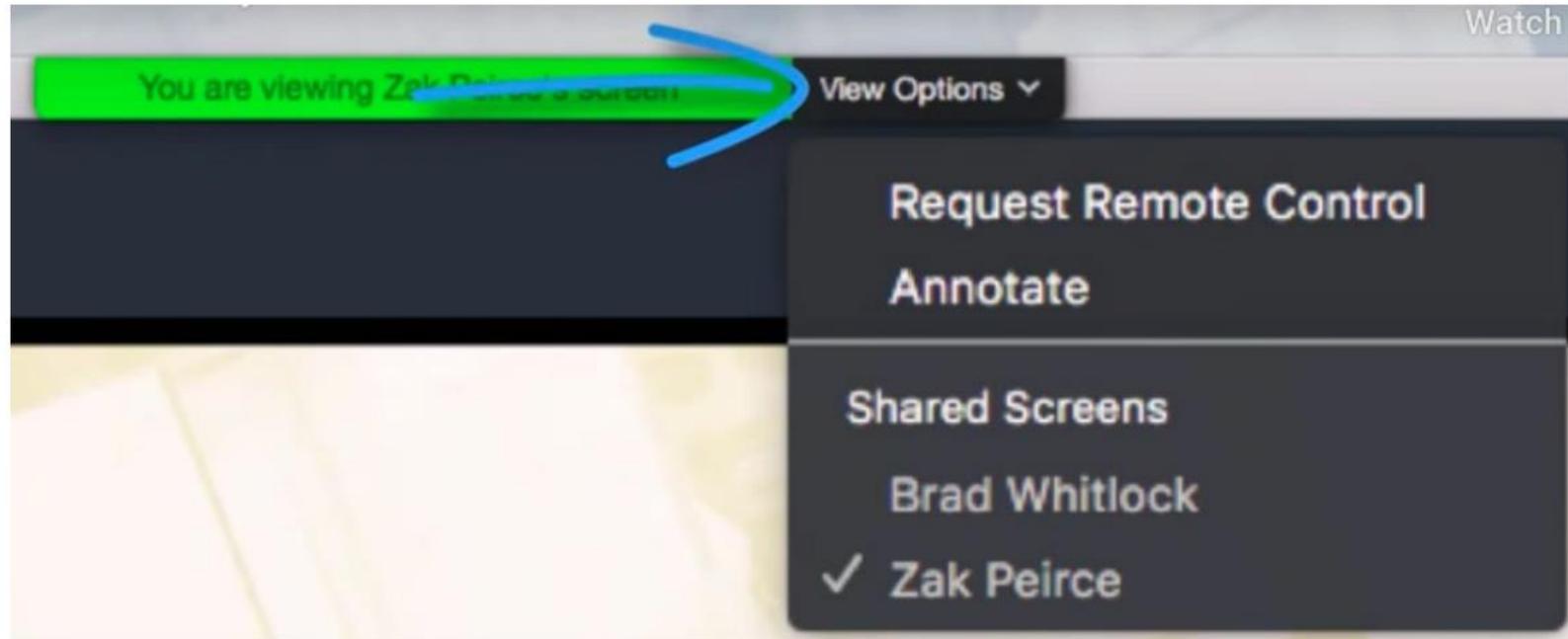


**boston planning &
development agency**

How to choose a language interpretation channel



"Mandarin"
"Cantonese"
"English"



Meeting Recording

At the request of community members, this event will be recorded and posted on the PLAN: Downtown project webpage at <http://bostonplans.org/PlanDowntown> for those who are unable to attend the zoom event live.

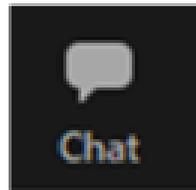
It is possible that participants may be recording the meeting with their phone cameras or other devices. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.

If your camera and microphone are off, you can still participate through the text chat feature at the end of the presentation.

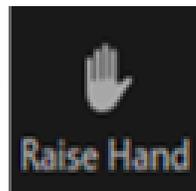
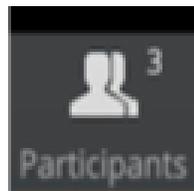


Zoom Tips

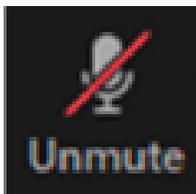
Welcome! Here are some tips for first-time Zoom users.
Your controls are at the bottom of the screen:



Use the **chat** to type a comment or ask a question at any time – Members of the PLAN: Downtown team will enable the chat at the end.



To **raise your hand**, click on “Participants” at the bottom of your screen, and then choose the “Raise Hand” option in the participant box, or press *9 on your phone



Mute/unmute – Participants will be muted during the presentation – the host will unmute you during discussion if you raise your hand and it is your turn to talk. To mute/unmute on your phone press *6.



Turns your **video on/off**



Zoom Etiquette

- We want to ensure that this conversation is a pleasant experience for all attendees.
- Please remain muted until called on. If you'd like to speak during this time please use the "Raise Hand" function in Zoom so a BPDA moderator can unmute attendees.
- Please be respectful of each other's time.
- We ask that participants limit their questions so that others may participate in the discussion. If you have more questions, please wait until all others attending have an opportunity to ask questions.
- If we are unable to get to your question at this meeting please put them in the Chat at the end or email andrew.nahmias@botston.gov



Agenda

PLAN: Downtown Overview

6:10–6:20 pm

Planning Recap

Public Realm Recommendations

6:20-6:40 pm

Growth and Development Scenarios

6:40-7:00 pm

Next Steps

7:00-7:05 pm

Discussion

7:05-7:30 pm



PLAN: Downtown

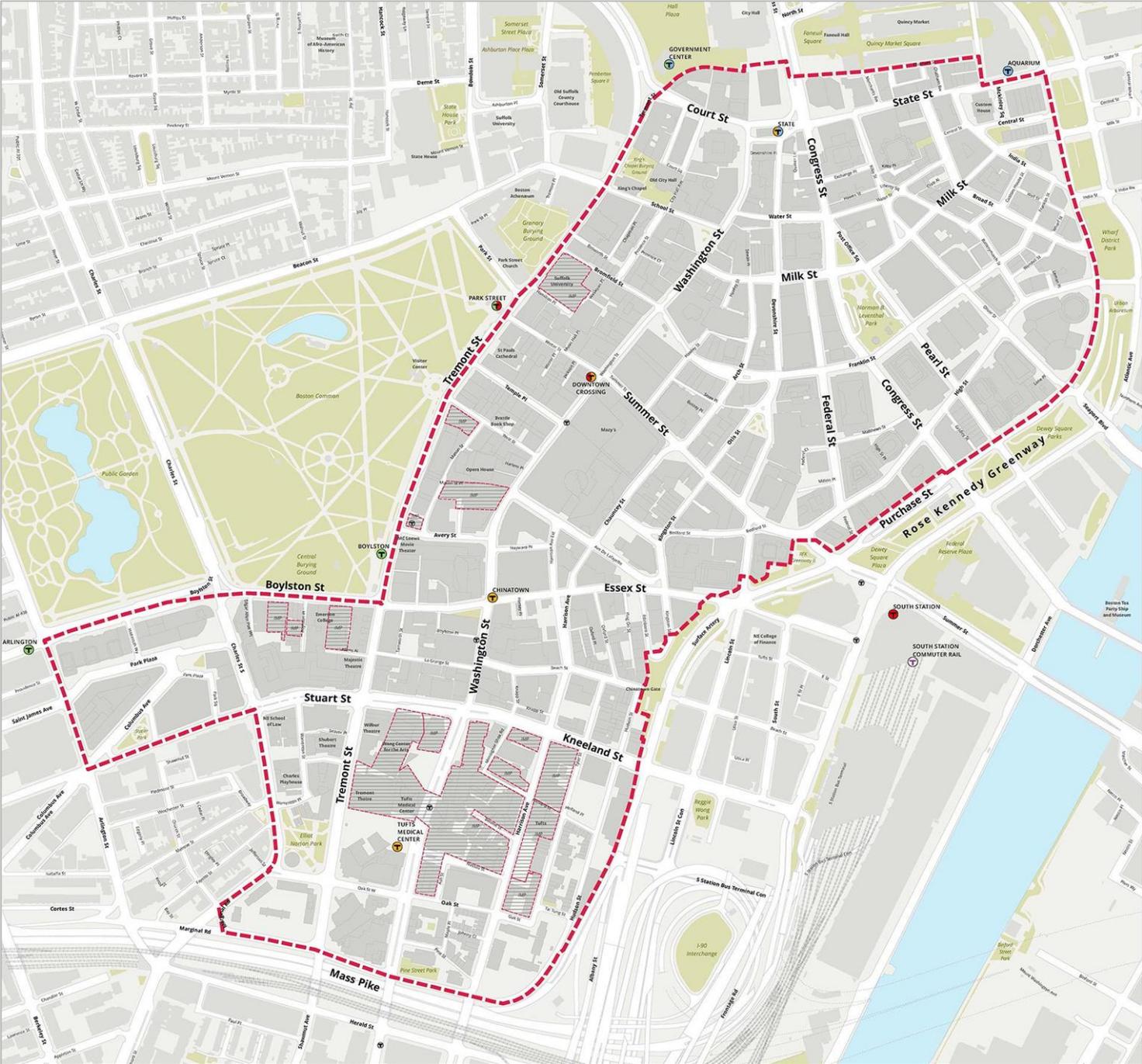
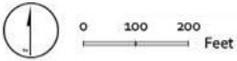
Study Area



Study Area Boundary



Institutional Master Plan
(IMP) Not included in this study



Vision Statement

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.



Community Engagement Recap

2018-2020

- 4 Public Meetings
- 7 Chat with a Planner / Soft Engagement Events
- 8 Advisory Group Meetings
- 20 Meetings with Community Stakeholder Groups
- 1 Storefront design advertising the ongoing planning initiative



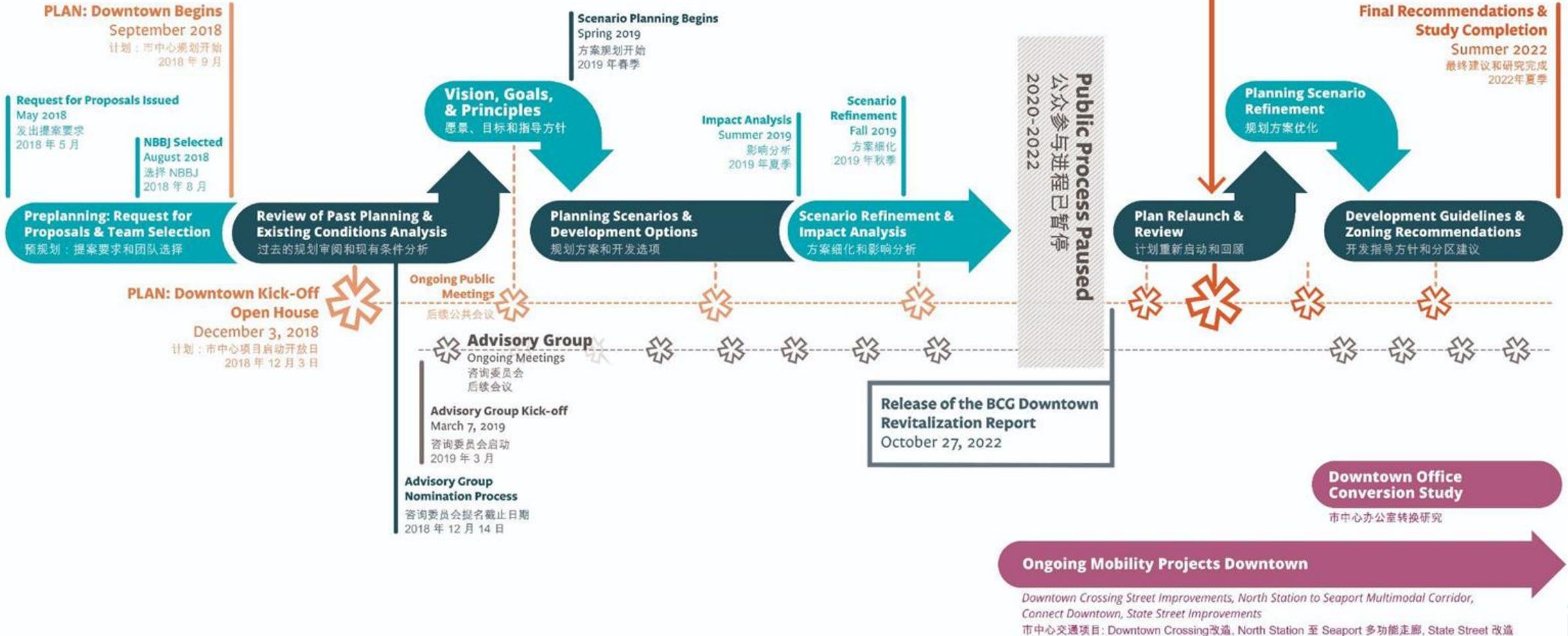
Defined PLAN: Downtown Goals & Strategies

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



Timeline

Where we are now
我们现在进度如何



Impact of the pandemic on Downtown

Key takeaways from the Downtown Revitalization Report

- **Foot traffic:** Currently, downtown foot traffic remains ~40-55% below pre-pandemic levels, but there is evidence of strong weekend recovery
- **Economic activity:** Demand for office and retail space remains to be seen and economic activity downtown remains ~20-40% below pre-pandemic levels in hard hit industries like accommodation, retail, and restaurants
- **Residential demand:** Residential real estate is one potential bright spot, as residential vacancies have returned to pre-pandemic levels and rents are increasing
- **BIPOC businesses:** BIPOC owners and workers have been particularly hard-hit and were already under-represented downtown
- **Remote work:** An estimated 50% of downtown's workers hold jobs that could be done remotely, based on their industry



PLAN: Downtown Relaunch in Downtown Crossing

November 9, 2022

Over 100 attendees shared their vision for Downtown post-pandemic and gave feedback on PLAN: Downtown's principles.



Feedback then and now...

Priorities remain the same with an emphasis on the revitalization of streets and storefronts

2018 - 2020 Feedback

- “**Increase pedestrianization** and ensure pedestrian safety”
- “Celebrate local Boston artists by creating signature works in public spaces that attract tourism, & **enhance the streetscape**”
- “Boston has beautiful buildings, streetscapes & unique neighborhoods. We need to manage growth to preserve what we love & **counter displacement**”
- “**Prioritize preservation** so our downtown maintains its human scale, historic character, and walkability”
- “Housing and retail targeted to residents/consumers at various income levels. Commercial leases **affordable for small businesses**. Well-maintained public transit. Sidewalks that are smooth and accessible for people with disabilities”

2022 Feedback

- “**Car free, more affordable housing, 24 hours, more and better public spaces**”
- “More opportunity for '**programming**' of public spaces in Downtown crossing to activate the larger open plazas”
- “**Anything that promotes street life** - particularly around Downtown Crossing- it hasn't really come back post-pandemic. Music, storytelling, vendors etc.”
- “A historic **retail destination** with lots of street entertainment and art along Washington Street. No cars and all pedestrian”
- “A safe, welcoming center of gravity for downtown that offers a variety of experiences and an **increase in housing** that strengthens the historic neighborhood feel of DTX and the Ladder Blocks”



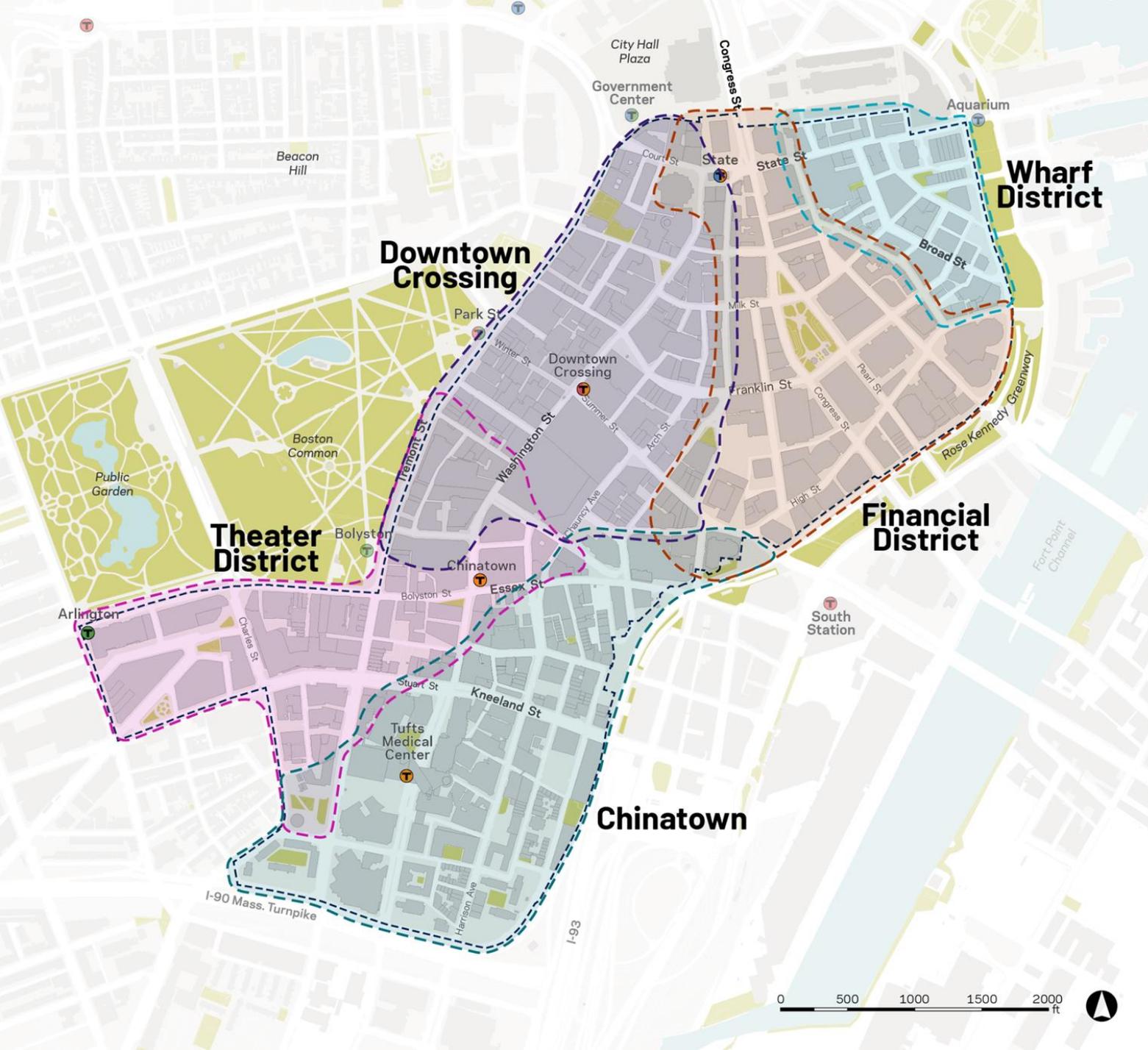
Planning Recap

Recommendations for Public Realm

Character Areas

Character Areas are distinct areas within Downtown. There is no clear boundary between them when it comes to experience, but character areas can influence policy and design guidance.

The five districts were determined by public feedback and the presence of similar uses, local cultural heritage, existing green spaces, the building and block scale, and historic landmarks.

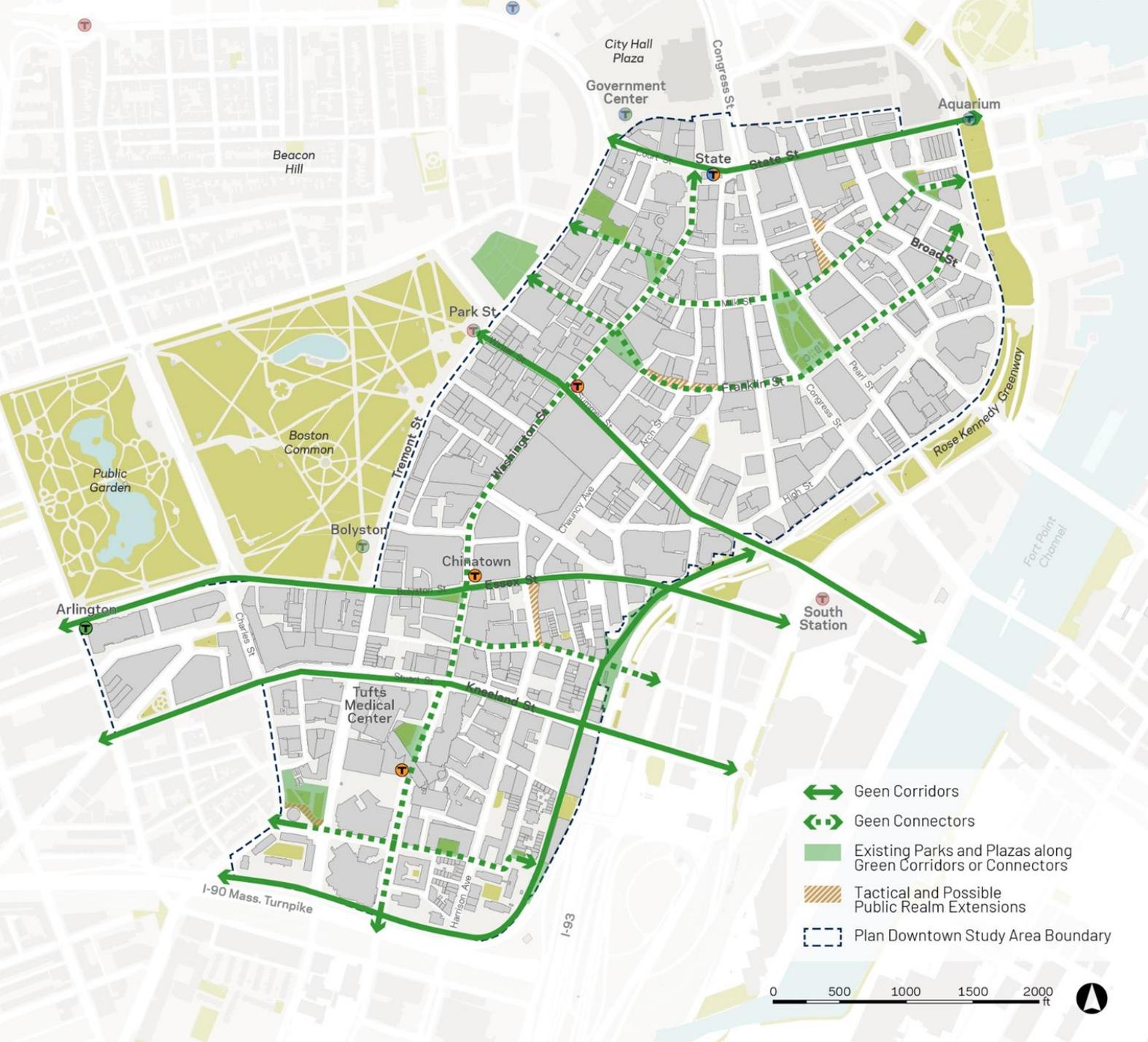


Street Character

There are opportunities for streets to increase vegetation and provide more dedicated pedestrian space.

Two strategies for improving streetscape include:

- Green Corridors: routes that connect major green spaces and where consistent planting is proposed
- ⋯ Green Connectors: routes that provide opportunities for green “stepping stones” traversing Downtown



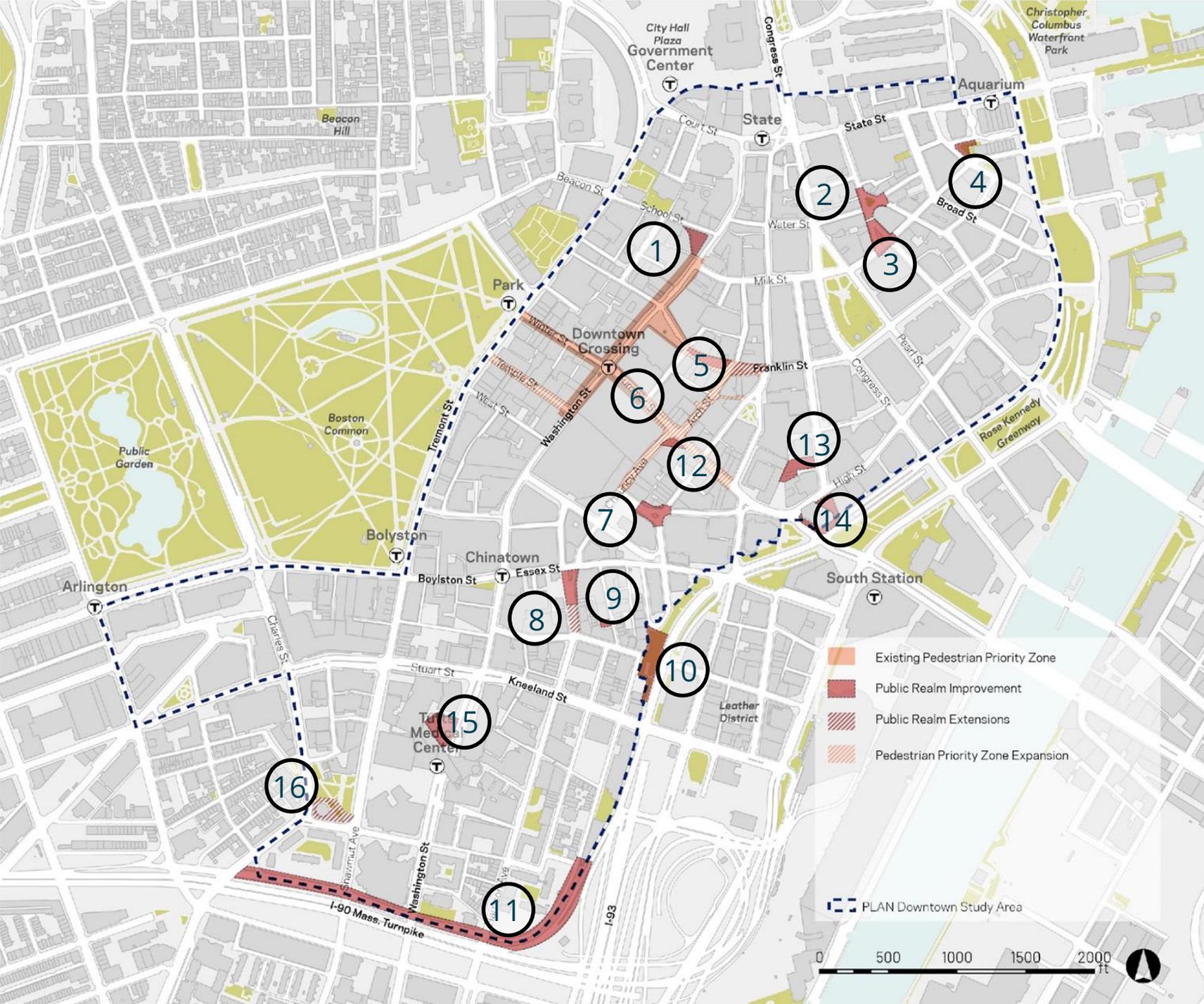
Public Spaces

Public Ownership

1. Readers' Park
2. Liberty Square
3. Kilby Street / Milk Street
4. Jenney Plaza
5. Franklin Street / Tontine East
6. Extended Pedestrian-Priority Zone
7. Bedford Street / Kingston Street
8. Philips Square Extension & Permanent Design
9. Oxford Place Playground
10. Chin Park
11. Hudson Street /Marginal Street

Private Ownership

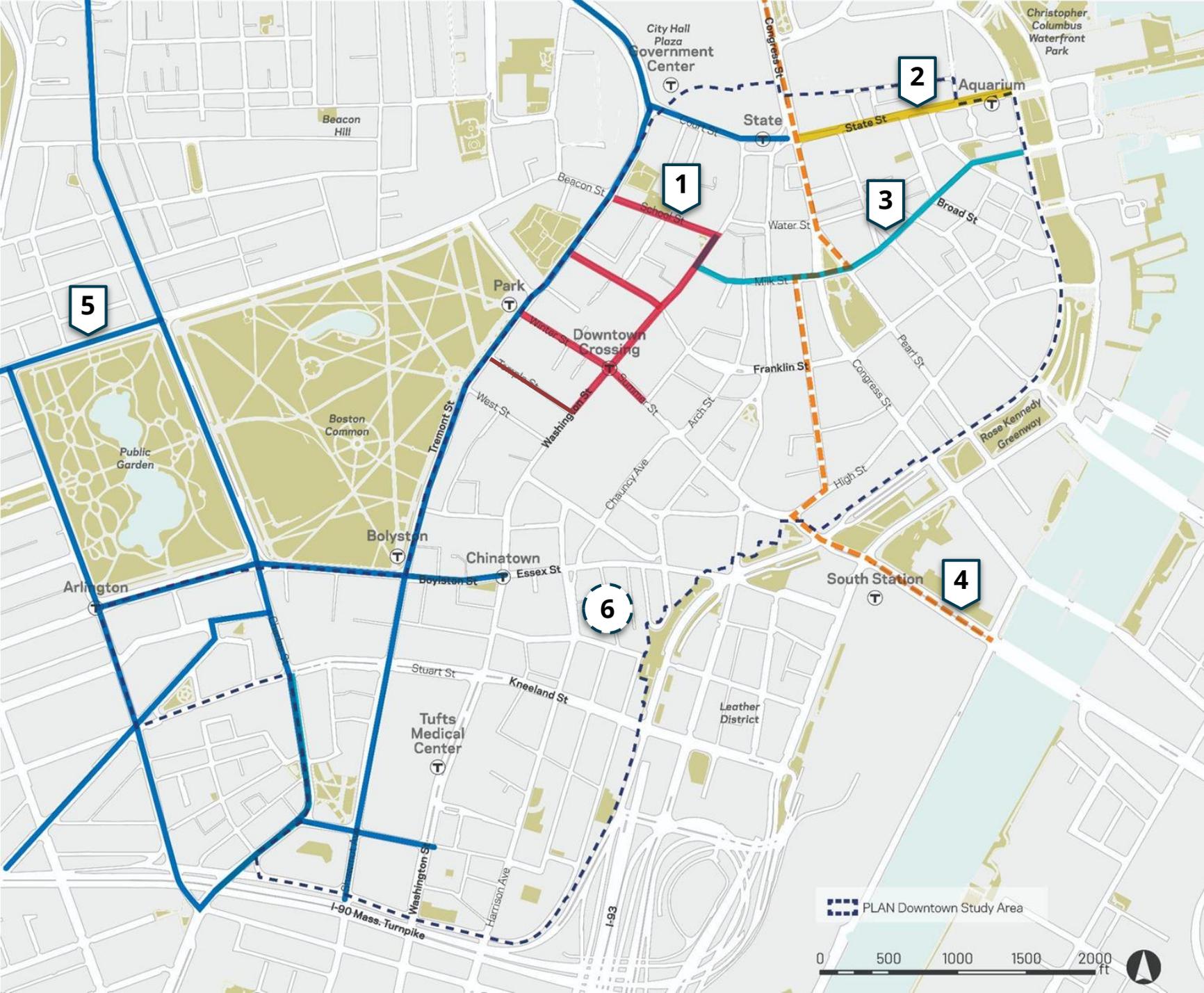
12. Chauncy Street / Summer Street
13. Milton Place
14. Fiduciary Trust Building
15. Tufts Medical Center
16. Eliot Norton Park Extension



City Projects

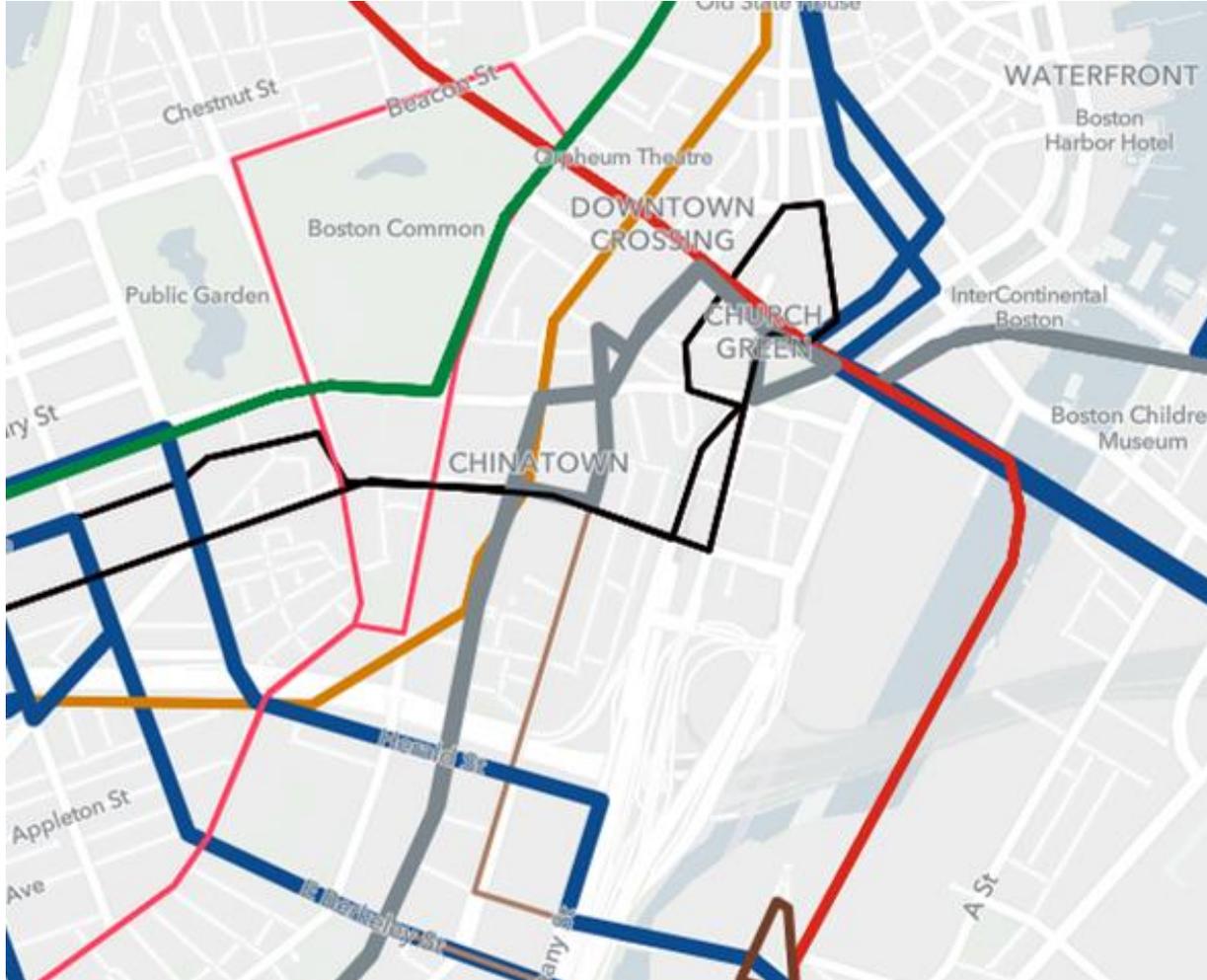
Ongoing BPDA / BTD / PWD jointly managed transportation projects.

- 1. Downtown Crossing Street Improvements**
 Redesign key streets in the heart of Boston, prioritizing pedestrians, accessibility, and placemaking
- 2. State Street Reconstruction**
 Safety improvements for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers
- 3. Milk Street (Safe Streets Projects)** Add separated bike lanes in 2023
- 4. North Station to Seaport Multimodal Corridor** *(one possible route)*
 Direct bus service & other multimodal enhancements between North Station, South Station, and the Seaport
- 5. Connect Downtown Focus Corridors**
 Center people walking and biking in redesigning iconic streets
- 6. Areaways Study** Citywide study into privately-owned basement spaces that impede public realm improvements



MBTA Bus Network Redesign

Fall 2022 Proposed Bus Routing Changes



Transit Network Improvements

- 1. MBTA Bus Network Redesign**
 Increases service levels network wide as well as in off-peak times. PLAN Downtown highlights include improved Silver Line routing and high frequency service in the Congress Street corridor connecting to Charlestown and Seaport
- 2. MBTA Station Accessibility Improvements**
 New and improved access points to both State and Chinatown Stations
- 3. Ongoing Subway Improvements**
 Accessibility and rail improvements to allow faster and more reliable service are being made through the MBTA's Red, Orange Green and Blue Lines "Transformation Programs"



Planning Recap
**Growth and Preservation
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 by creating a density bonus / incentive zoning process.
- 3. Public Benefit Value:** The value for additional public benefits that can be captured from the density bonus / incentive zoning process.

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



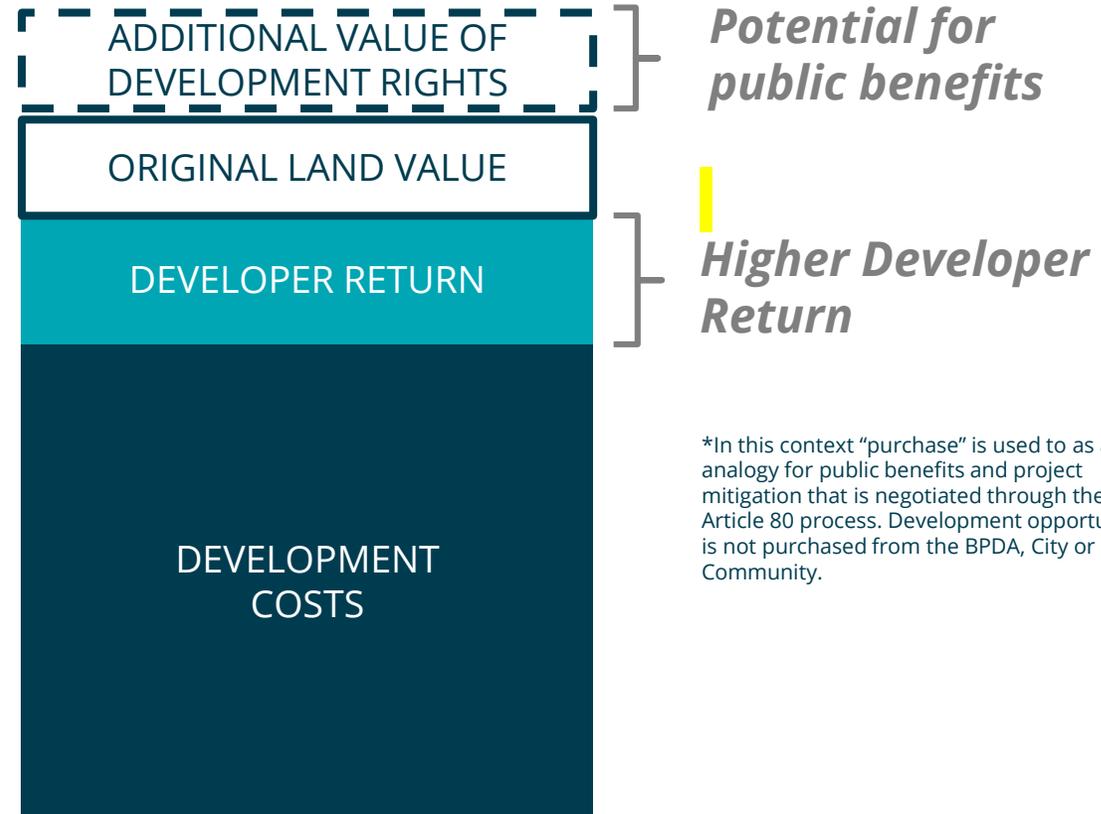
Current Zoning vs. Density Bonus System

As developers acquire land for a building, they are incentivized to “purchase” bonus density to achieve more space and a larger return, while contributing to public benefits

Current Zoning



New Baseline + Density Bonus



**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.*



Incentive Zoning-Based Development Scenarios

Incentive Zoning based on the Shadow Regulations would allow **increased height** and **additional growth** that can generate **new public benefits**:



**Affordable
Housing**



**Climate &
Resilience**



**Local
Transit &
Mobility**



**Small Business
Support + Retail
Activation**



**Historic
Preservation**



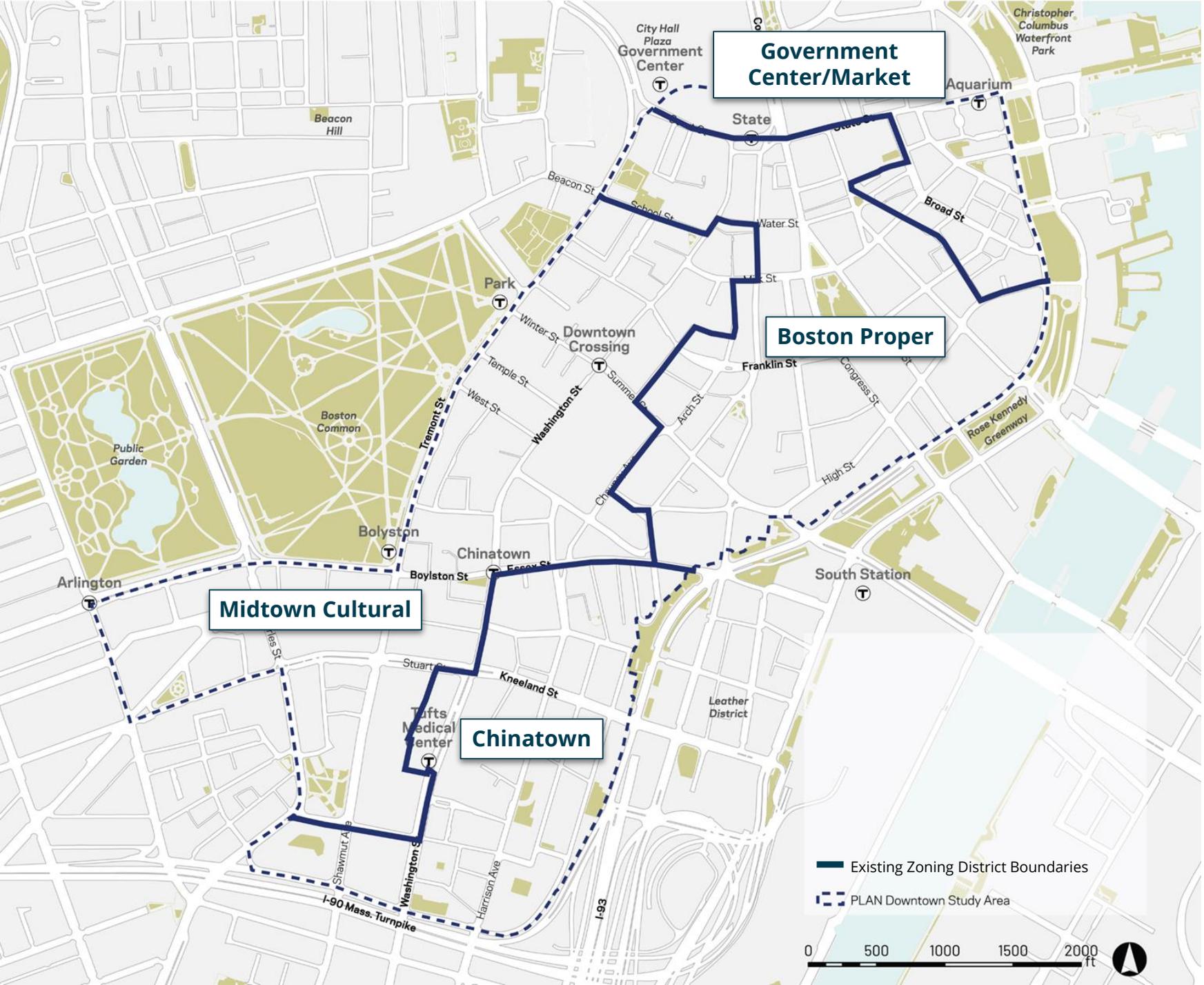
**Open Space &
Public Realm**



Current Zoning



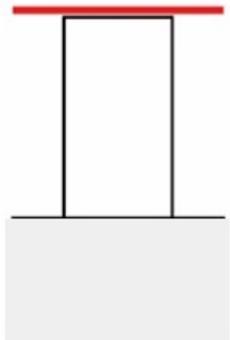
Existing Zoning Districts



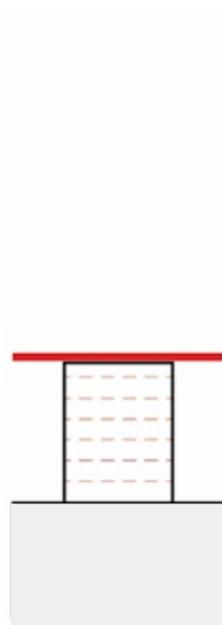
Current Building Envelope Controls

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

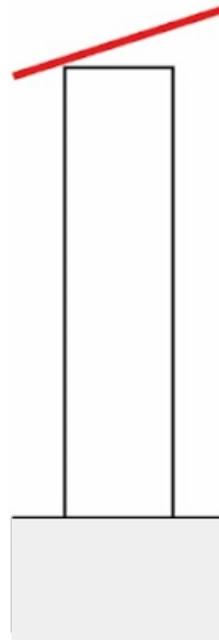
Zoning Height



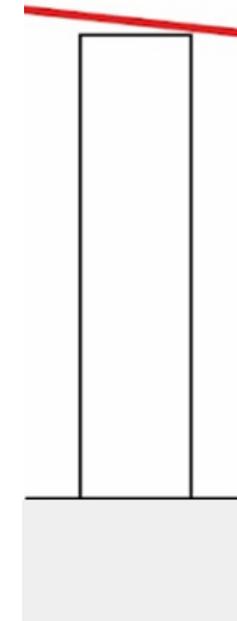
Zoning FAR
Floor Area Ratio



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)

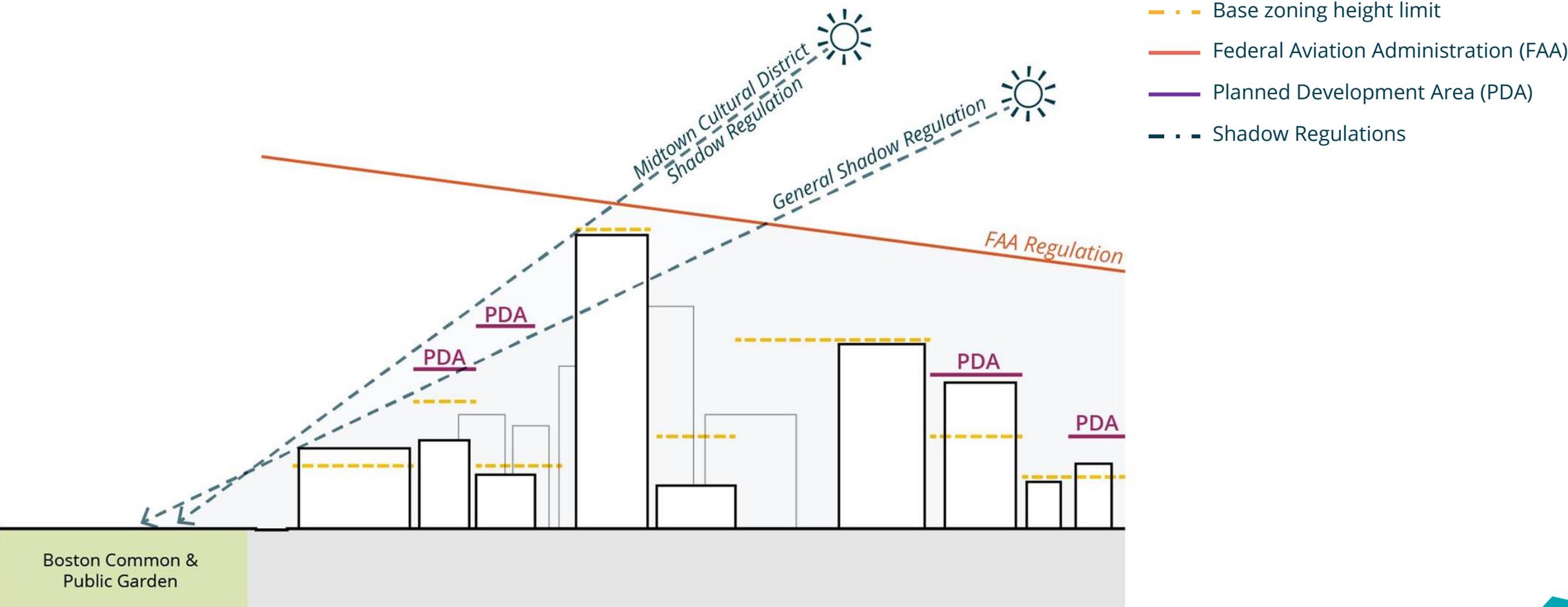
- This law restricts new shadows on the **Public Garden** to the first hour after sunrise or 7:00 a.m. (whichever is later) or the last hour before sunset.

- 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

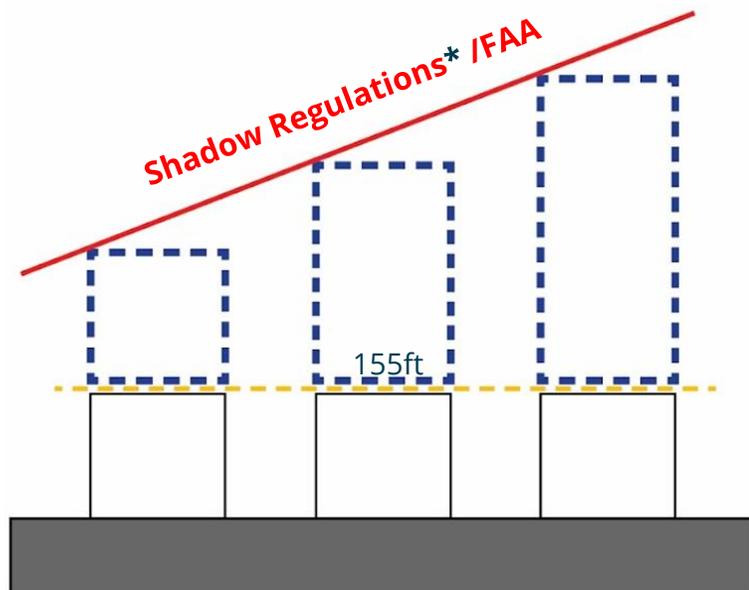


Where we paused

Two zoning scenarios illustrate the impact of different height restrictions and regulations

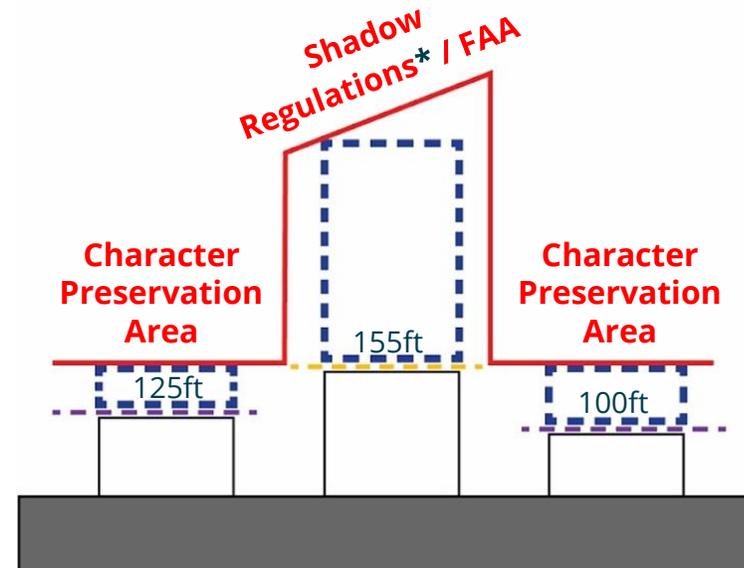
Scenario 1: Growth-Based

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



 Development potential with public benefit capture

* 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 (*Proposed in 2020*)

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



Scenario 1

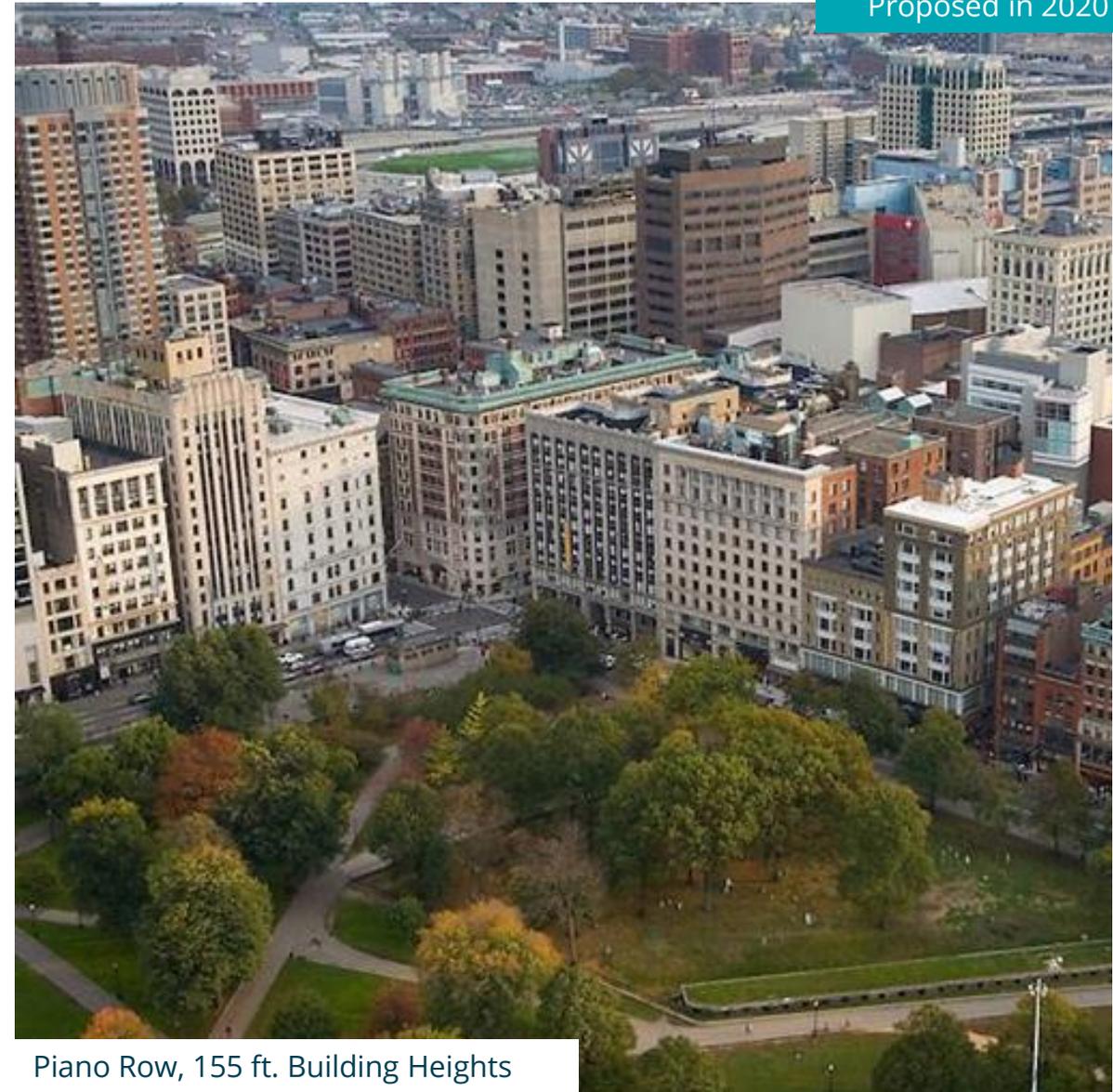
Growth-Based Density Bonus System

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

All Character Areas

- Baseline height: 155-ft
- Maximum height (with density bonus): 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.

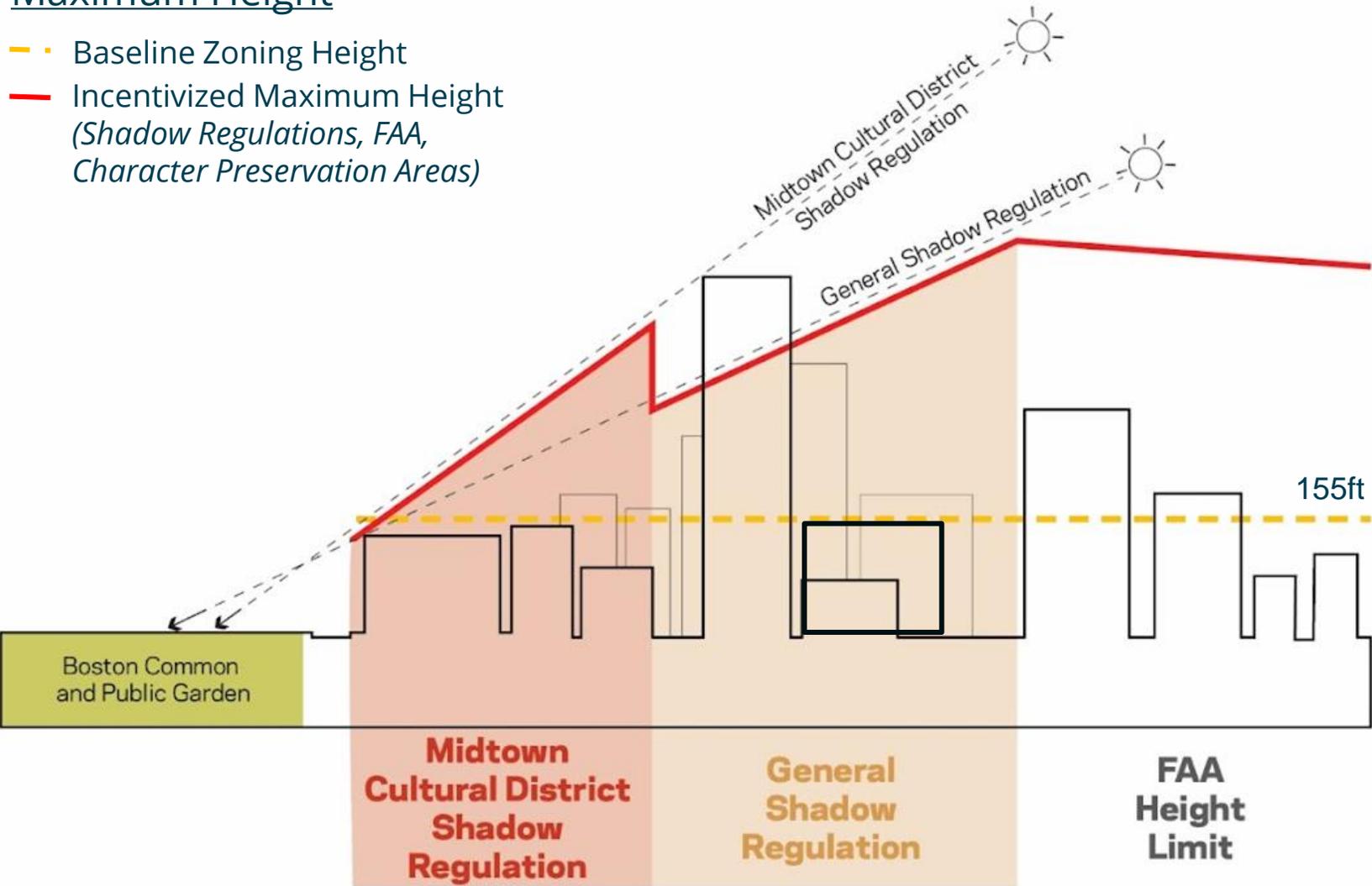


Piano Row, 155 ft. Building Heights



Maximum Height

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



Scenario 1

Growth-Based Density Bonus System

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

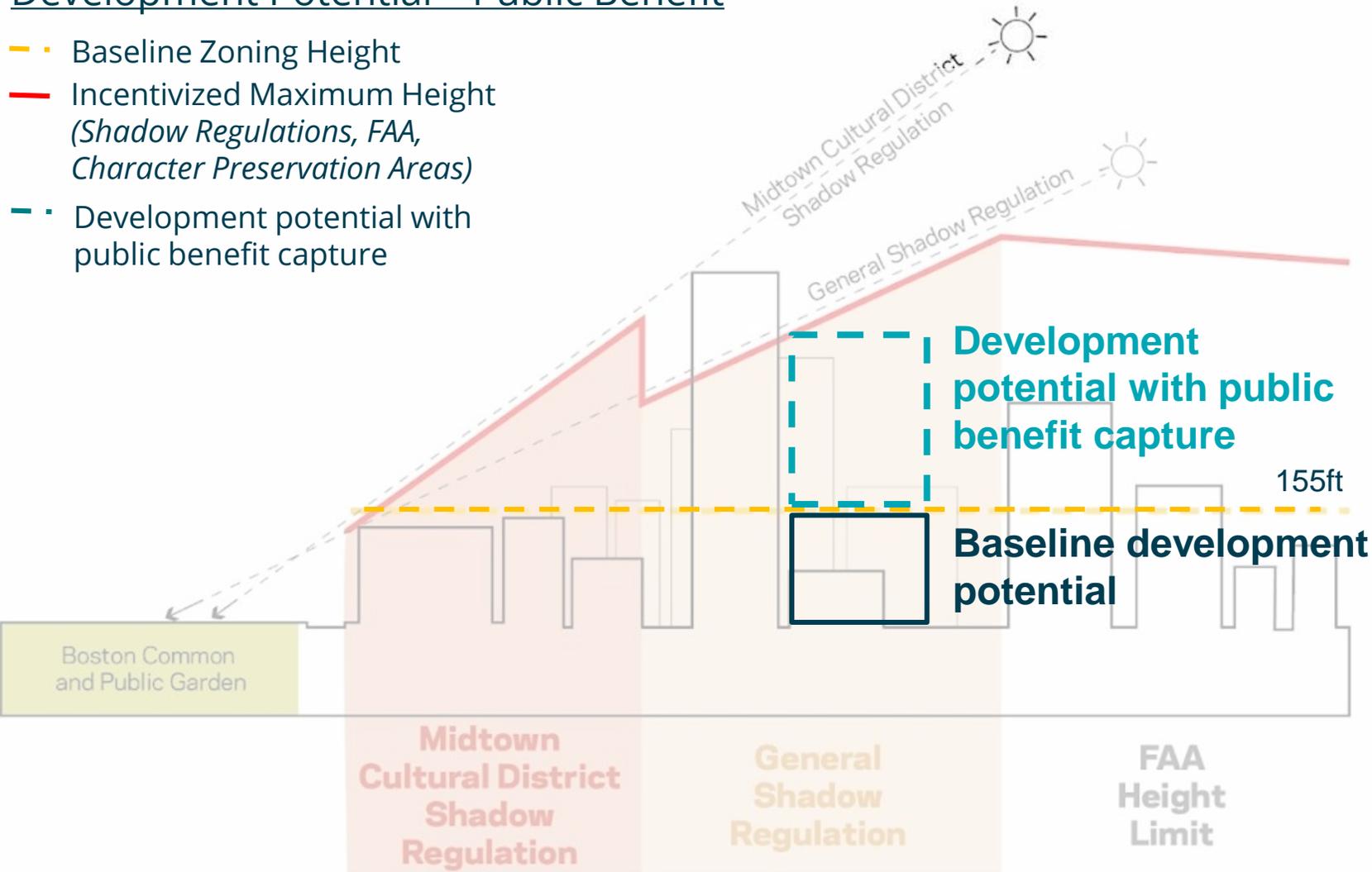
All Character Areas

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

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Development Potential—Public Benefit

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



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Growth-Based Density Bonus System

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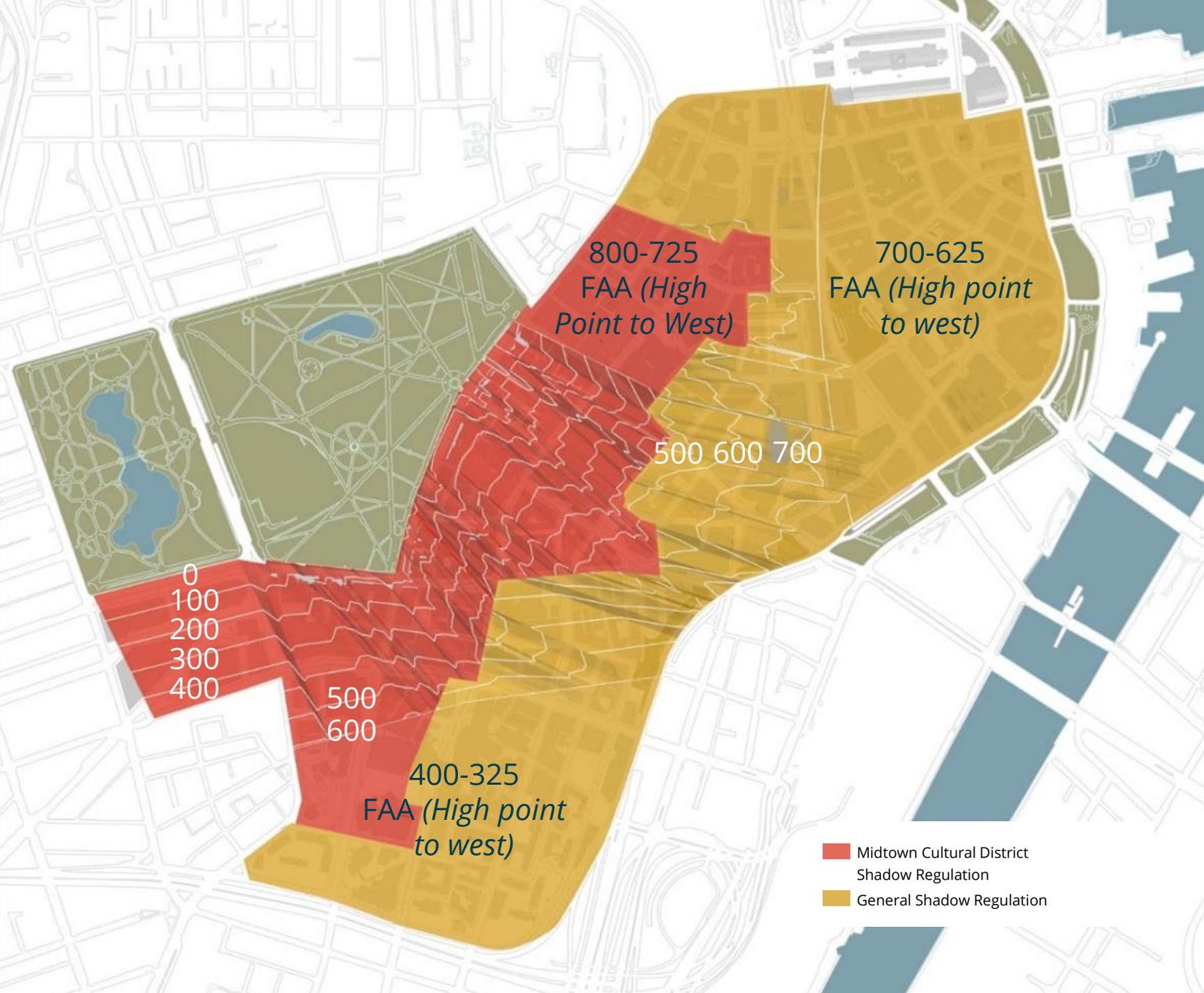
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All Character Areas

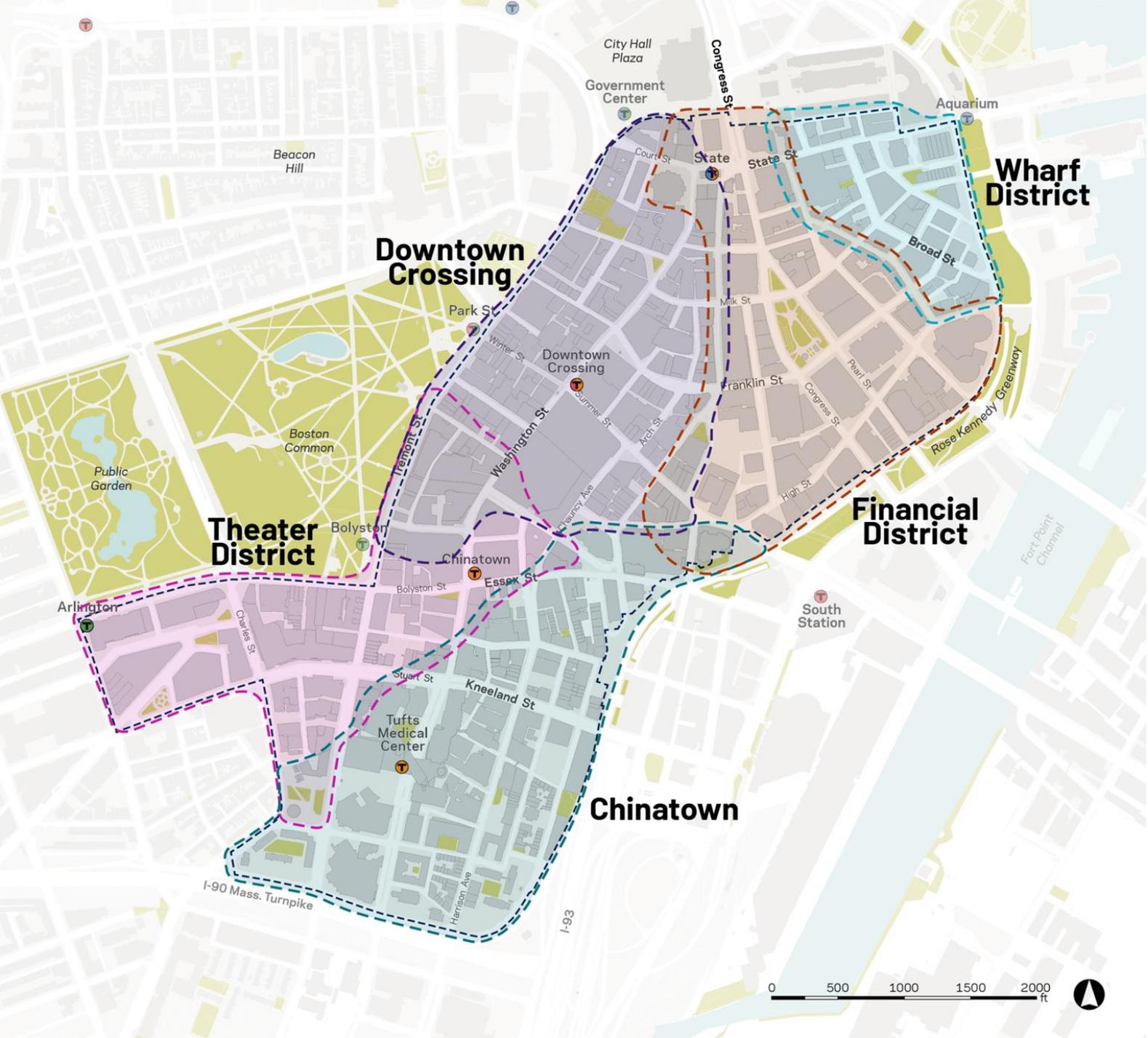
- Baseline: 155-ft
- Maximum: Up to Midtown Cultural District Shadow Regulation, Shadow Regulation, and FAA height limit



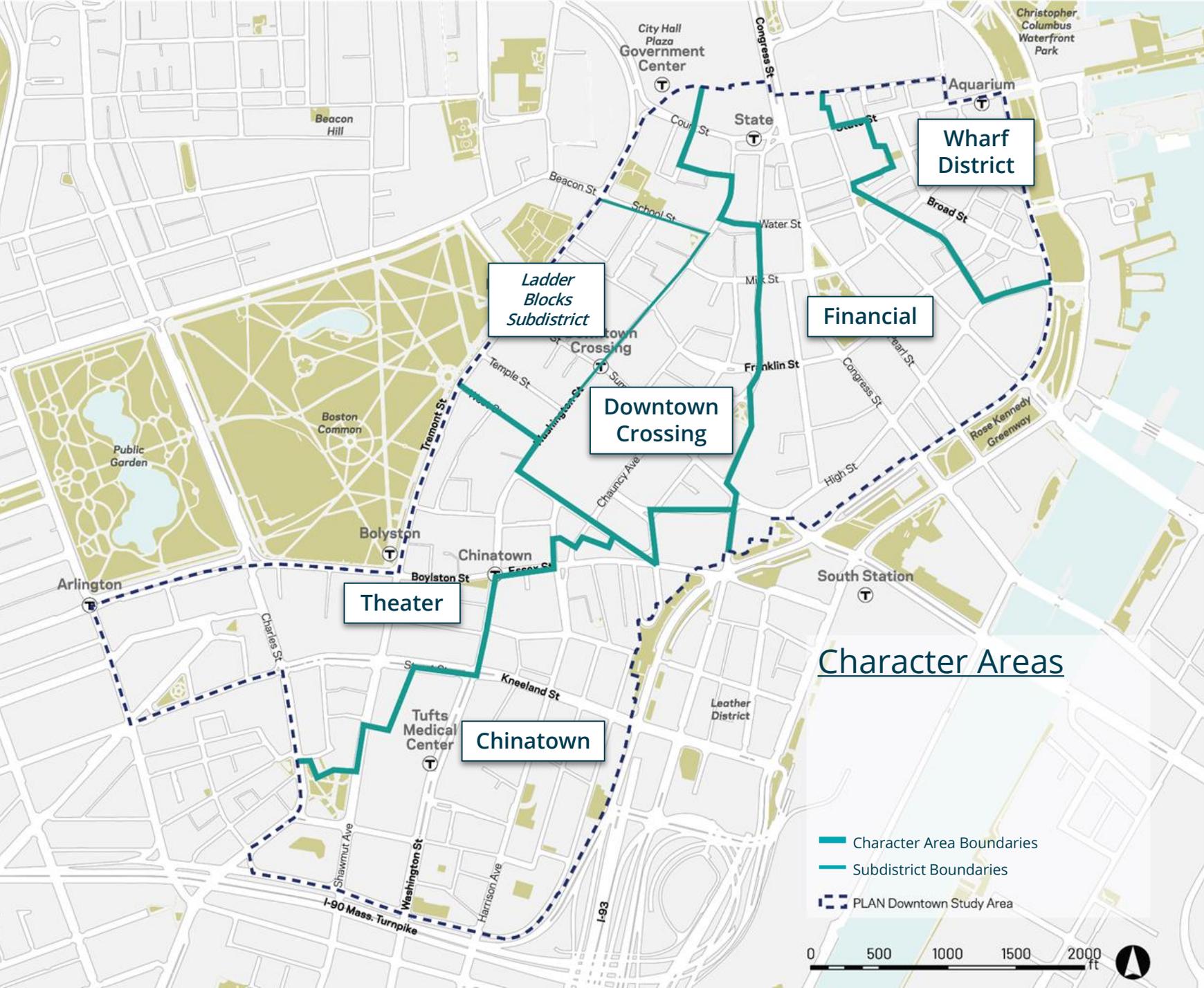
Scenario 2 *(Proposed in 2020)*

Density Bonuses based on varied baseline height established by Character Area

Character Areas

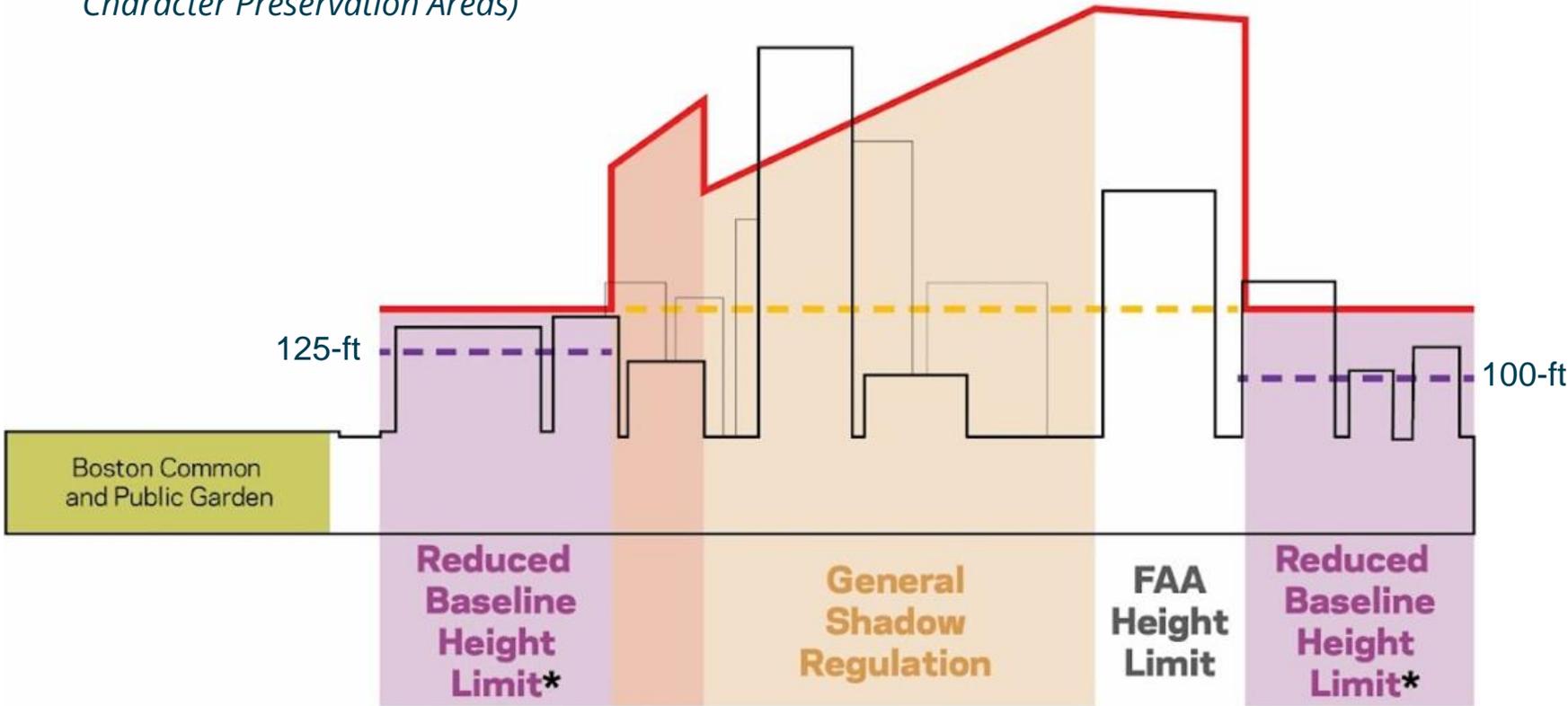


Character Areas



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

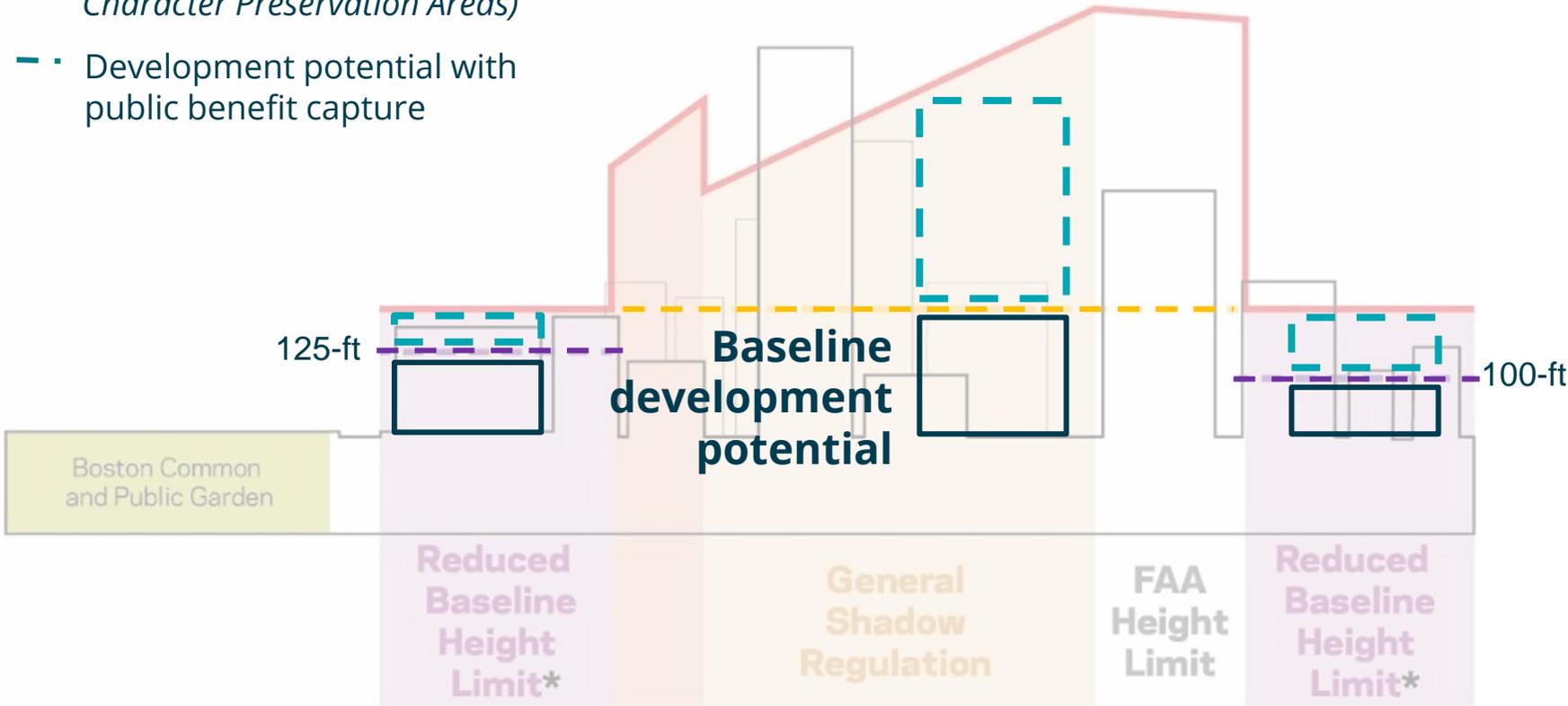
- Chinatown Baseline: 100-ft
- Wharf District Baseline: 100-ft
- Ladder Blocks Baseline: 125-ft
- Maximum: Lower Height Area

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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

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

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Scenario 2

Preservation & Growth-Balanced Density Bonus System

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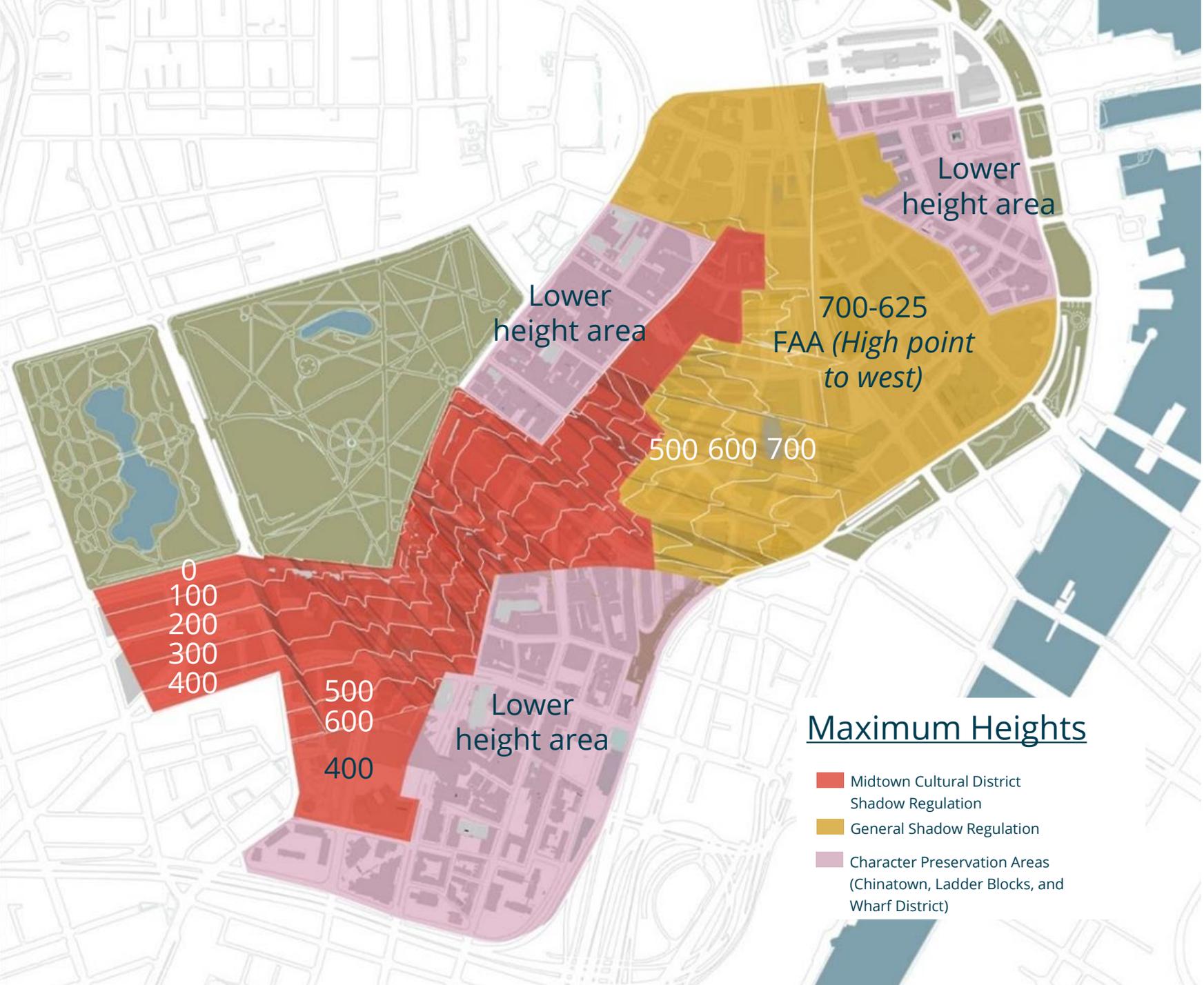
Downtown Crossing General Area, Theater District, Financial District

- 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

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Maximum Heights

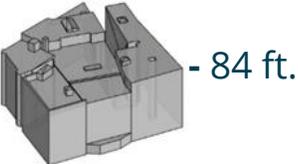
- Midtown Cultural District Shadow Regulation
- General Shadow Regulation
- Character Preservation Areas (Chinatown, Ladder Blocks, and Wharf District)



Sample Parcel Comparison

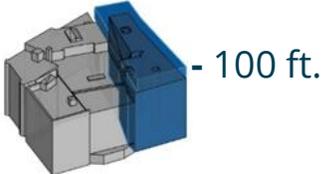
An example parcel within a Character Preservation Area is currently zoned for up to 61K SF (as-of-right) but would have potential for added density under Scenarios 1 & 2.

Existing building



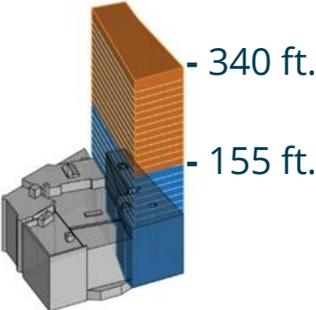
Existing Built Area:
39,000 SF

Under Current Zoning



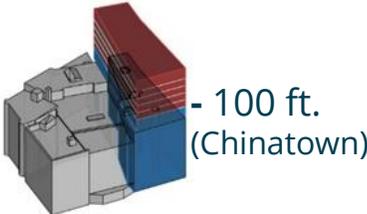
Maximum Buildable Area:
61,000 SF

Under Scenario 1



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

Under Scenario 2



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

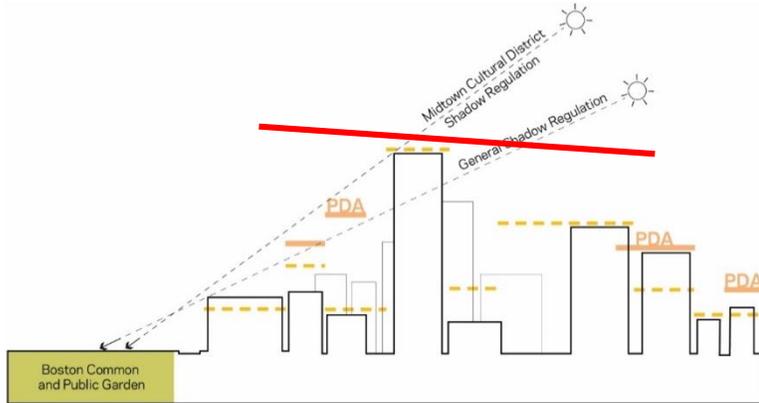
Scenario Comparison

Proposed in 2020

Maximum Heights

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

Current Zoning



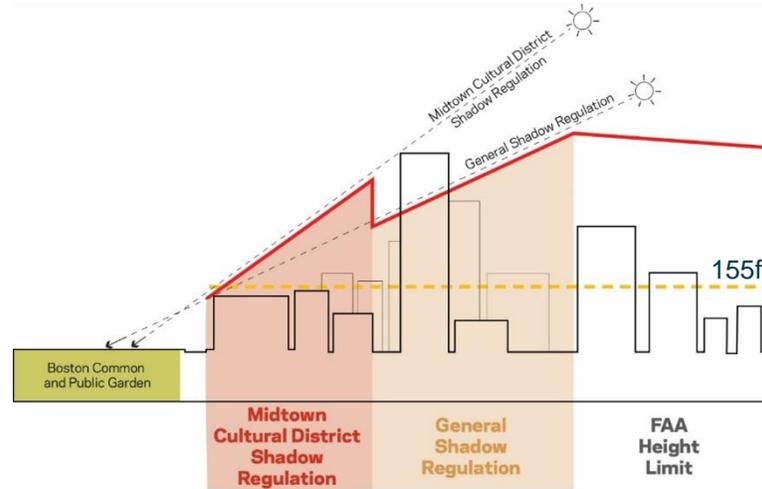
Base zoning heights:

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



Next Steps



Upcoming Engagement Events

Open comment period to respond to the development scenarios due by January 6, 2023

- **Public Meeting: Public Realm and Scenario Refinement**
January 11, 2023
- **Advisory Group Meeting*: Post-Pandemic Goals and Plan Objectives**
Mid-January, 2023
- **Advisory Group Meeting*: Working session**
February, 2023
- **Public Meeting: Urban Design and Zoning Recommendations**
March, 2023
- **Advisory Group Meeting*: Working session- Bring together planning and urban design recommendations and development scenarios**
April, 2023
- **Advisory Group Meeting*: PLAN: Downtown Draft Review**
May, 2023

Get Involved with PLAN: Downtown:
<http://bit.ly/plandowntownboston>

Questions and Comments:
Andrew Nahmias,
andrew.nahmias@boston.gov

Release PLAN: Downtown Draft:
June 2023

Board Downtown Adoption:
August target

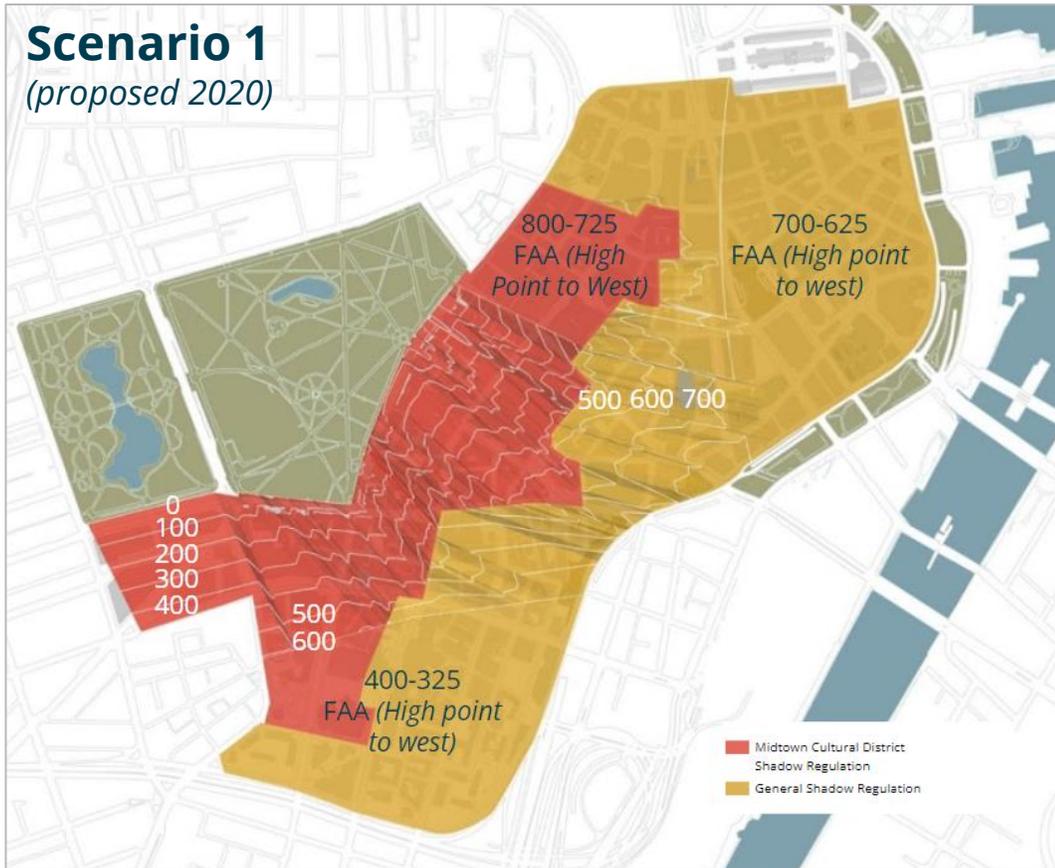
Zoning implementation:
Fall

*All Advisory Group meetings are open to the public.



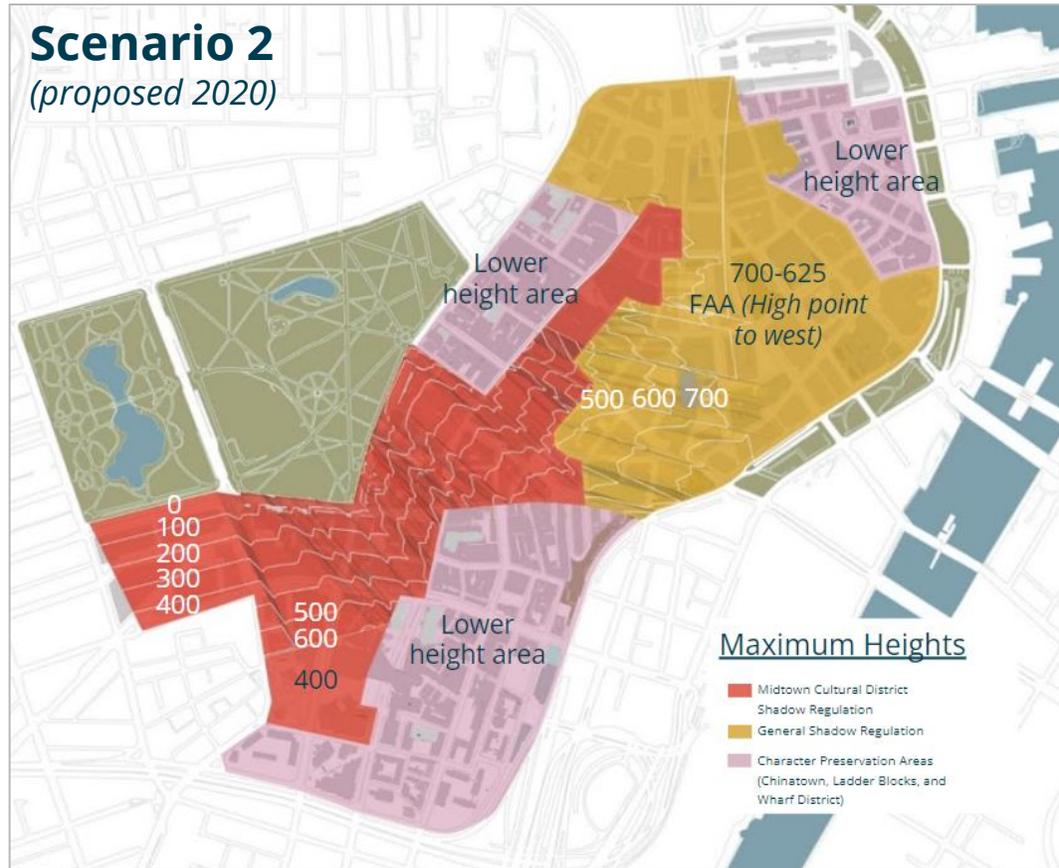
Discussion

Discussion



Baseline heights:
General Area: 155'

Maximum heights:
Shadow Regulations / FAA limit



Baseline heights:
General Area: 155'
Character Preservation Areas: 100'/125'

Maximum heights:
Shadow Regulations / FAA limit
Lower heights in the Character Preservation Areas

