

Downtown Waterfront Public Realm and Watersheet Activation Plan



CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh
Mayor



**Boston
Redevelopment
Authority**
Brian Golden, Acting Director

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City of Boston

Mayor Martin J. Walsh

Boston Redevelopment Authority

One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201
(617) 722-4300
bostonredevelopmentauthority.org

Brian P. Golden, Acting Director
Kairos Shen, Chief Planner
Richard McGuinness, Deputy Director for
Waterfront Planning
Chris Busch, Senior Waterfront Planner
Lauren Shurtleff, Senior Planner

Consultants

Utile, Inc.

50 Summer Street
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 423-7200
utiledesign.com

**Durand & Anastas Environmental
Strategies**

250 Northern Avenue, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02210
(617) 973-5080
durandanastas.com

Noble & Wickersham

1280 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 491-9800
noblewickersham.com

Norris & Norris Associates

446 Huron Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 354-5801

Hubert Murray

Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates

Seaplan

Stantec

Stoss Landscape Urbanism

Urban Harbors Institute

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A Vision for the Downtown Waterfront

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The Downtown Waterfront is Boston's front door to the world. It should host a rich mix of uses that complement and support two of Boston's greatest open space resources, the Rose F. Kennedy Greenway and the Harbor, and that build on the decades of planning and design work in the area.



For the Downtown Waterfront, we envision:

A waterfront district accessible to all by bike, transit, foot, and boat.

- A walkable, well-organized pedestrian district, with beautiful, high-quality sidewalks.
- Water transit to a variety of destinations, arriving and departing every few minutes to neighboring waterfront communities, cultural institutions, and seasonal destinations, such as the Boston Harbor Islands.
- Accessible, well-marked HARBOWALK and other paths, building on the beautiful design of the Walk to the Sea.

Clearly defined connections to the Greenway, the harbor, Quincy Market, the North End, the Financial District, and the Innovation District.

- Pedestrian links from the harbor, the Rose F. Kennedy Greenway, and the surrounding neighborhoods, from Chinatown to Town Cove to the West End.
- Visual corridors that allow views from key downtown streets to the harbor, and views from the water to landmarks such as Custom House Tower.
- Preserve and enhance the significant historical connections.
- Key gateway moments that are defined visually and spatially.

A district and watershed that are resilient to climate change, designed and built to withstand inundation and storm surges.

- Protection for the public realm, waterfront assets, cultural resources, and private properties.
- Showcase the latest thinking on climate change and resilient landscapes and technologies.

Four-season destinations and programming that are welcoming to Bostonians and visitors of all ages and support the growing residential community.

- Creative programming, from public art installations to seasonal festivals, building off of the successful Fort Point Channel arts initiatives, the educational programming at the NEAq, the interpretative signage along the Walk to Sea, and the year-round public programs at Rows Wharf.
- Destinations that attract families, residents of all ages and abilities, and visitors.
- A careful balance of uses and programming, with active and passive recreation areas, quiet contemplative zones and family-friendly zones.

A district and watershed that is flexible and can accommodate innovative uses in the future, and supports equally the residential, business, and visitor communities.

- A place with a strong identity, so it is a destination in and of itself.
- A vibrant twenty-first-century community that will draw generations of future Bostonians to live, work, and visit.



Purpose of Study

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With the Central Artery dismantled and the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway complete, downtown Boston is now reconnected to the harbor. The Fort Point Channel area and South Boston Innovation District are coming into their own as lively mixed-use neighborhoods. Now it is time to turn attention to what lies between these centers of activity: the Downtown Waterfront.

The City embarked on this planning process for three primary reasons:

- ❶ **The center of the city has shifted.**
The Downtown Waterfront is now a key gateway to the historic center of the city, the new Innovation District, and the newly revitalized harbor.
- ❷ **The Downtown Waterfront should be a premier waterfront destination in North America,** where people of all walks of life come. It has a lot of the right ingredients but has not reached its full potential.
- ❸ **This section of the city must be guided by the Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act** (also known as Chapter 91), which provides public access to the waterfront.

The public realm and watersheet activation plan incorporates the best ideas from plans for the study area over the past twenty years, and takes into consideration the ongoing efforts by the various property owners, operators, and stakeholders. It builds upon the significant improvements made along Boston's waterfront. The Central Artery/Tunnel Project cleared an intrusive highway cutting through downtown, and the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway restitches the scar left by the elevated highway. The Boston Harbor cleanup, water transportation investments in Long and Central Wharves, the Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan, the HARBORWALK, and other enhancements have knit the public realm closer together on both the land and water sides of the shoreline.

Many parts of the district are already mature—both from a development standpoint as well as in terms of programming—and other sections will benefit from more strongly defining their character and physical form.

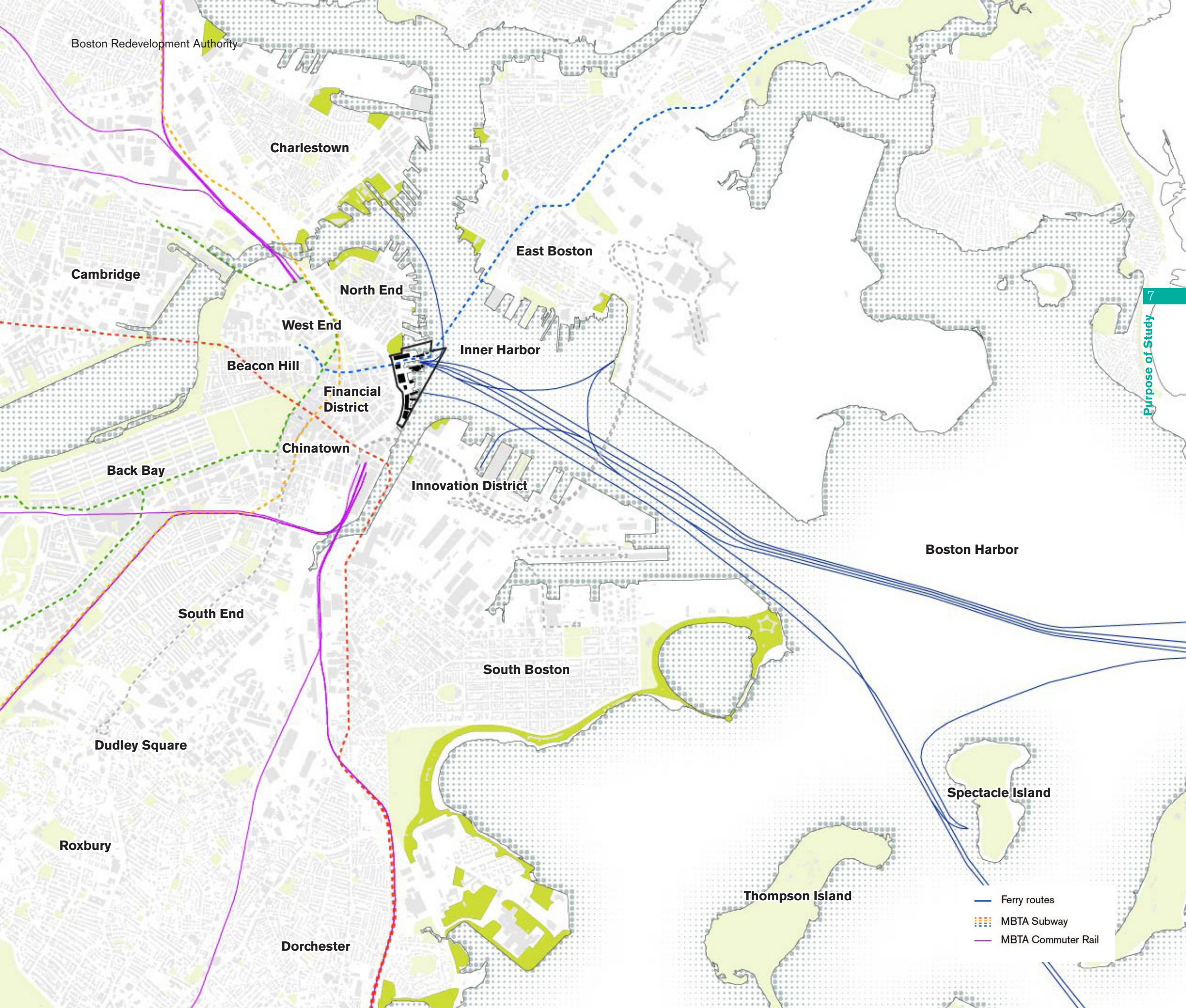
Because of these factors, a one-size-fits-all planning approach is not appropriate. This is a strategic and tactical planning project, rather than an abstract visioning exercise. The public realm and watersheet activation plan identifies priority areas and objectives, situates the waterfront as a neighborhood within the broader context of the city, and focuses on both finetuning the Downtown Waterfront through strategic interventions and reimagining certain areas as destinations and places where people live and work.

Regulatory Context

This section of the city, at the water's edge, is subject to the Commonwealth's General Law Chapter 91, the Massachusetts Public Waterfront Act. Chapter 91 protects the public's interest in waterways of the Commonwealth, and provides public access to the waterfront. A state-approved Municipal Harbor Plan (MHP) establishes a community's objectives, standards, and policies for guiding public and private use of land and water within the jurisdiction of Ch. 91, and allows deviation from strict compliance with Ch. 91 standards.

Concurrent to this public realm plan, the City has started the process for a municipal harbor plan for the Downtown Waterfront. The public realm and watersheet activation plan will inform the MHP by identifying appropriate public uses and goals for the Downtown Waterfront, including the watersheet. Along with the MHP, the City will propose new zoning for this area, which will enforce the development guidelines established with the MHP. Together, these three components—❶ **the public realm and watersheet activation plan**, ❷ **the MHP**, and ❸ **zoning**—will serve to protect the public interest in the waterfront and enrich the public realm.

In addition to these three planning mechanisms, any proposed projects will go through the **Article 80** process, which will further protect the public interest by analyzing the project's impacts on transportation, the public realm, the environment, and historic and cultural resources.



Boston Redevelopment Authority

Charlestown

Cambridge

East Boston

North End

West End

Beacon Hill

Inner Harbor

Financial District

Chinatown

Back Bay

Innovation District

Boston Harbor

South End

South Boston

Dudley Square

Spectacle Island

Roxbury

Thompson Island

Dorchester

- Ferry routes
- MBTA Subway
- MBTA Commuter Rail

Planning Context

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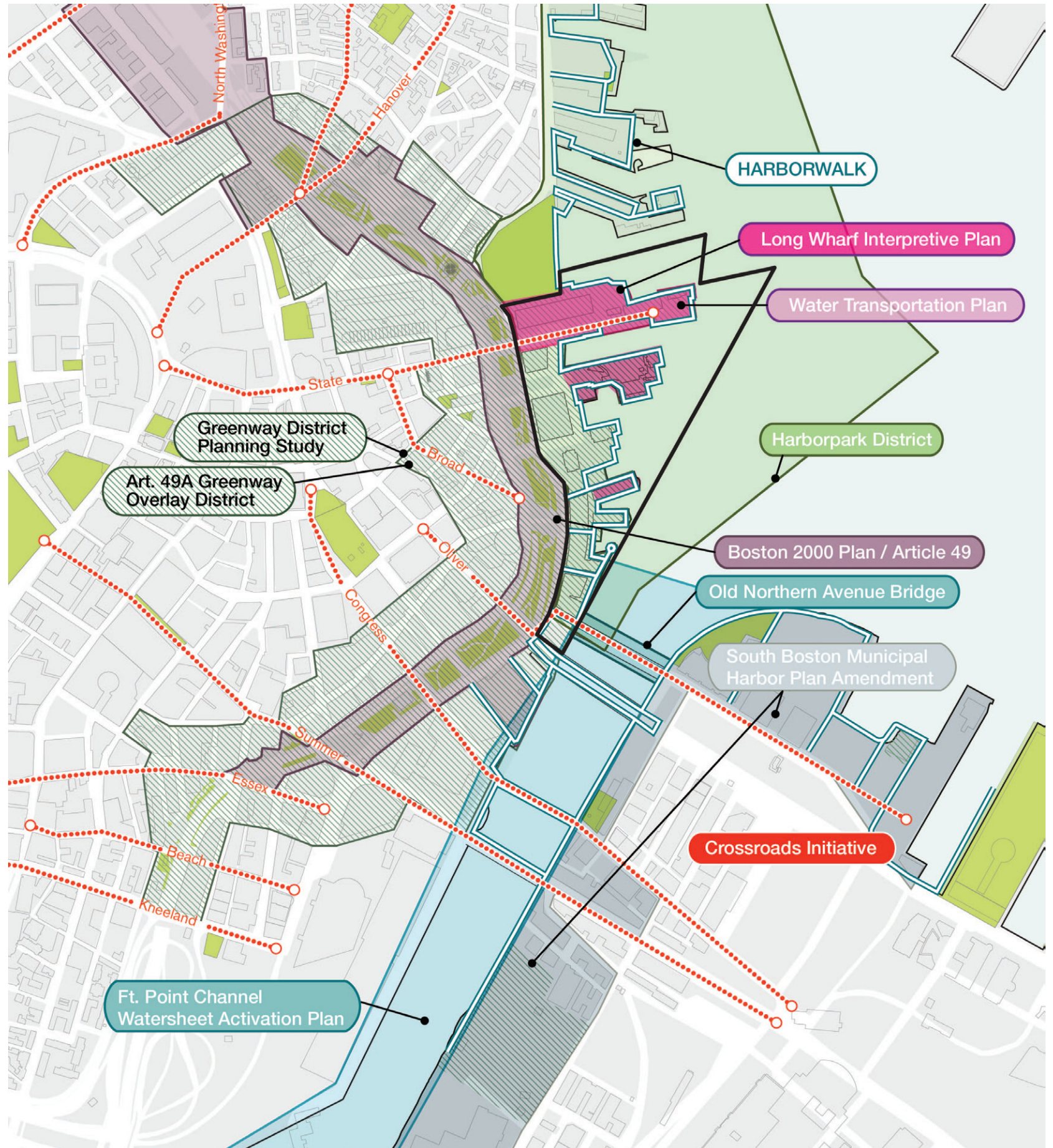
The public realm and watersheet plan builds on the decades of planning and advocacy for this district and its environs. It incorporates ideas from multiple stakeholders, City officials, and consultants, such as the continuous HARBORWALK, the importance of certain cross streets—termed Crossroads—in linking neighborhoods, and the role of water transportation for Greater Boston. The plan seeks to advance these objectives through specific improvements within the study area.

This area has been the subject of numerous planning studies since the 1960s, including:

- **Greenway District Planning Study (2010):** The Greenway District study focused on the edges of the Greenway and healing the scarred edges left by the interstate and decades of construction.
- **Crossroads Initiative (2004):** The Crossroads Initiative identified several key streets that, combined with the creation of the Greenway, have the potential to strengthen connections between neighborhoods. Planned improvements to these streets will extend the public realm benefits of the Greenway into these abutting neighborhoods and create vital links between districts. Several Crossroads go through or near the Downtown Waterfront, including State, Broad, and Oliver/Northern.
- **Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan (2002):** This plan established a robust framework or activities on the Channel and along its edges. Much of the plan has been realized in the intervening years.
- **Boston Inner Harbor Passenger Water Transportation Plan (2000):** This plan recognizes the importance of water transportation for Boston.
- **Harborpark Plan (1991):** City of Boston Municipal Harbor Plan
- **Wharf District | Financial District Edges Study (2004):** This was one of the early studies that focused on healing the edges of the interstate and developed a vision and implementation strategies for the Wharf and Financial districts.
- **The Old Northern Avenue Bridge Rehabilitation (Ongoing):** The City has been working on the rehabilitation of the Northern Avenue Bridge for a number of years and the project is proceeding into design. The current scenario proposes two travel lanes and one lane for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **HARBORWALK (Ongoing):** The HARBORWALK is a long-term collaborative project that involves the City, the State, and a myriad of private property owners. The section within the study area varies in quality and legibility. This plan recognizes the importance of the HARBORWALK as the primary pedestrian access to the waterfront, and seeks to enhance and strengthen the HARBORWALK.
- **Central Artery/Tunnel Project (CA/T):** The CA/T reconnected Boston to the harbor and accelerated the rehabilitation and development of the Downtown Waterfront. It also created the Greenway, a 1.5-mile-long corridor park that runs from Chinatown to the North End.

In addition, the Downtown Waterfront is subject to existing zoning code and the Commonwealth's Chapter 91 Waterways License Regulations:

- **Chapter 91**
- **Boston Zoning Code Article 49 –** Central Artery Special District (1991)
- **Boston Zoning Code Article 49A –** Greenway Overlay District (2013)
- **Boston Zoning Code Article 42A –** Harborpark District, North End/ Downtown Waterfront (1990)



The Study Area

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The Downtown Waterfront is one of the most historically significant and active waterfronts in New England. This neighborhood—one of the oldest in Boston—has had many lives.

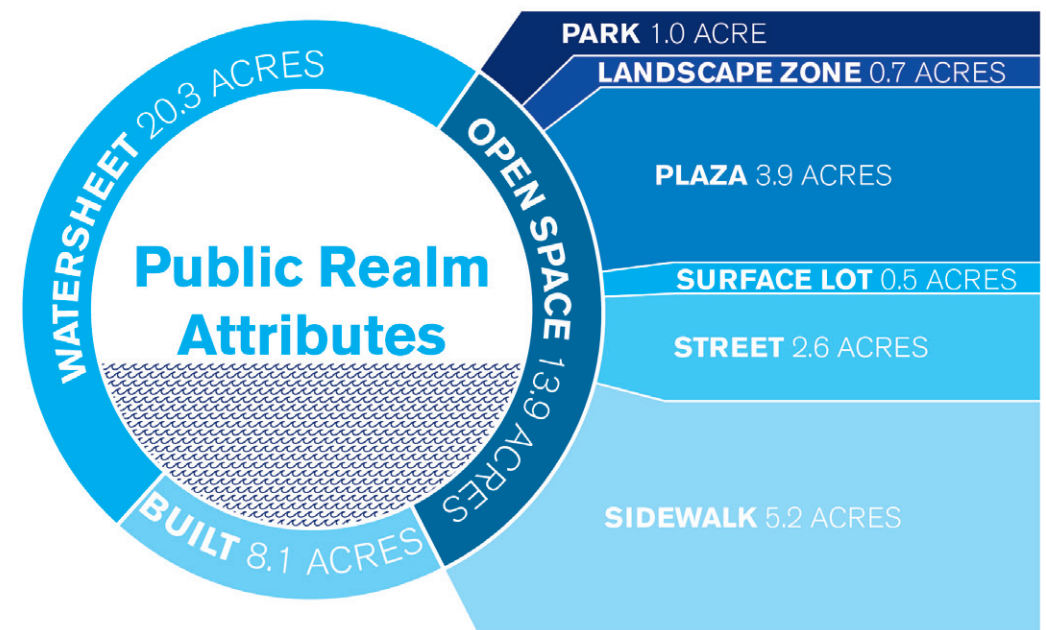
It started as the shore of Town Cove and Fort Hill and became the site of the first land-filling project in Boston. It then developed as a center of international trade. Its current incarnation is as a home of hotels, residences, restaurants, offices, marinas, water transportation hubs, and the New England Aquarium. It is one of the most complex and historically significant urban environments in North America, and one of the most activated waterfronts in New England.

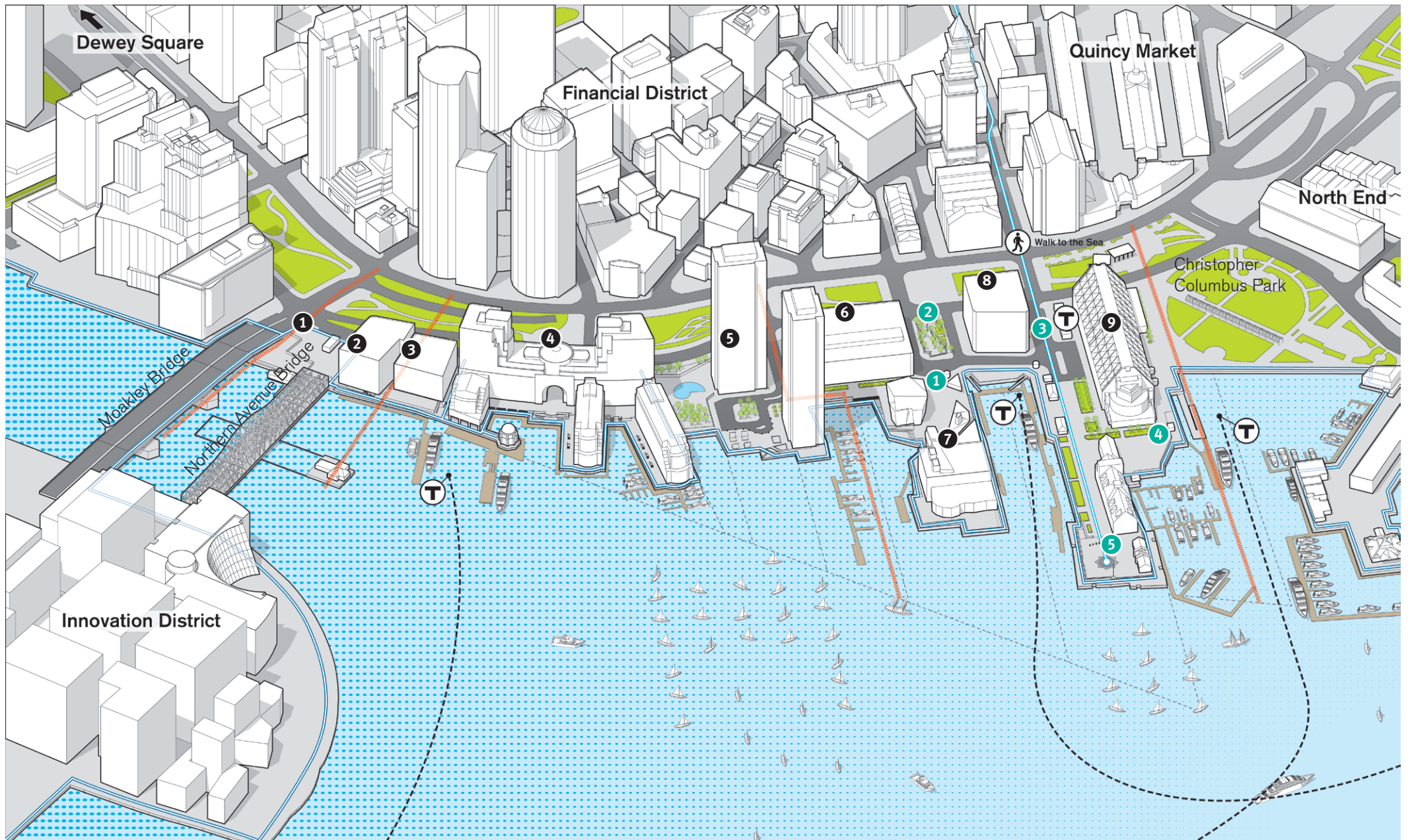
The study area is bounded by the Evelyn Moakley Bridge on the south, Christopher Columbus Park on the north, the Greenway on the west, and Boston Harbor on the east. It is surrounded by several of the most vibrant areas of the city, including the North End, the burgeoning Market District, Government Center, the Financial District, and the Fort Point Channel neighborhood. The Moakley Bridge and Northern Avenue Bridge are important gateways to the South Boston Innovation District and the Fort

Point Channel neighborhood. The study area is approximately 42 acres—20 acres of watersheet and 22 acres landside area—and includes more than 26 individual parcels. The parcels include ❶ Hook Lobster, ❷ the United States General Service Administration's Captain John F. Williams Coast Guard Building, ❸ 400 Atlantic Avenue, ❹ the Rowes Wharf Condominium and Boston Harbor Hotel, ❺ the Harbor Towers Condominium, ❻ the Boston Harbor Garage, ❼ the New England Aquarium (NEAq), ❽ 255 State Street, and ❾ the Marriott Long Wharf Hotel, and significant open space parcels.

The study area is an active mixed-use district with residential and commercial uses, as well as a variety of destinations and amenities including ❶ the NEAq and Simons IMAX Theatre, ❷ Central Wharf Park, ❸ the Walk to the Sea, ❹ the HARBORWALK, ❺ Long Wharf, and water transportation hubs at Rowes Wharf and Long Wharf.

It includes a diverse range of building types and styles (from early 19th-century granite warehouses to 20th-century skyscrapers), streets (in terms of character, width, length, and orientation), view corridors, micro-climates (due to wind and shadow conditions caused by orientation, adjacent building forms, and other environmental factors), and open spaces. Freestanding pier-like structures, which contrast with the continuous urban blocks on the east side of the Greenway, are one of the defining features of the study area.





Activating the Downtown Waterfront

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To achieve the shared vision for the Downtown Waterfront, this plan identifies opportunities to clarify, better utilize, or further activate the public realm and the watersheet. The plan suggests ways to make the existing cultural and open space assets of the district more accessible. The intent is to draw more people—Boston residents, workers, and visitors—to the water’s edge and support the growing residential and commercial community in the area.



The recommendations that follow fall into three broad categories, which are interrelated and mutually reinforcing:

- **Strengthened connections** from Downtown to the Harbor, Downtown to the Innovation District, from the Greenway to the waterfront, and from north to south.
- **Improved legibility** of the public space and public passages through wayfinding (signage, materials), gateway elements, and public art.
- **Increased ground-level and streetscape activation** that reinforces the diverse uses in the study area.

In addition to the above, increased coordination and management among the different property owners, operators, and stakeholders will ensure that the Downtown Waterfront becomes a beautiful, well-organized, and welcoming district for all Bostonians.

Connectivity

Boston has an incredible wealth of linear park systems and paths, from the Freedom Trail to the Walk to the Sea to the Rose Kennedy Greenway. This plan is an opportunity to enhance these connections and their relationship to the waterfront, and strengthen the HARBORWALK and the Greenway—to draw people along the water’s edge and along one of the great park systems of the city. The key priorities are:

- north-south connections, along both the HARBORWALK and the Greenway.
- east-west links between the Greenway and the waterfront, building on the Crossroads Initiative.
- connections from Northern Avenue to the South Boston Innovation District.
- increasing water transit opportunities and connections, both within the Inner Harbor and beyond to neighboring communities.
- increasing accessibility by all modes, with a special emphasis on pedestrian.

Legibility

The Downtown Waterfront, as an area that has organically developed over the years, lacks legibility both as coherent place and for its constituent parts. Indeed, this is a shared concern among residents, workers, and visitors that was voiced during numerous public meetings. For example, how does a pedestrian going from a day at the Aquarium to dinner at Rowes Wharf traverse the Harbor Towers property? Where does a ferry passenger coming from Charlestown connect to a ferry to the Harbor Islands or Hingham? What is the pedestrian zone on Long Wharf, and what is the taxi or vehicular zone? Improved wayfinding and legibility can address many of these issues.

Wayfinding is not only signs, maps, and graphics but also perceptual gateways such as how buildings and trees frame a space, tactile cues such as changes in paving, and landmarks. Wayfinding should be inherent in the spatial and visual grammar of a place. The Downtown Waterfront has many of the right elements to give the area the legibility it needs. With finetuning, what is public, semi-public, or private as well as its rich wealth of amenities could be more clear.

Key to clarifying the public realm and circulation are:

- Improving the Long and Central wharves area, including the plaza in front of the Aquarium, its relationships to Central Wharf Park and the Greenway, and managing the bus/trolley parking and vendors.
- Creating landmarks and other visual clues or design elements, especially along key cross-paths to the harbor.
- Defining a unified wayfinding system for the various paths, transportation options (including water transit), and destinations.

Activation and Programming

This is one of the most activated waterfronts in New England. Since the opening of the Greenway, many property owners have introduced ground-level retail or restaurants, and others plan to do so. The new Greenway Overlay District (Article 49A) will further encourage the ground-floor activation.

It is important to balance passive and active uses. Some areas within the district could be further activated, such as certain sections of the HARBORWALK or the Northern Avenue area, and others, notably Central and Long wharves, need to better organize to manage the crowds.

Ground-level activation and streetscape design should:

- Draw people, whether pedestrians or bicyclists, to the water’s edge through programming/ground-level activity and maintaining view corridors.
- Encourage diverse uses, which includes a broad range of restaurants and retail, from casual to fancy, and amenities to support the residential community.
- Activate the waterfront year-round through four-season public programming and uses.



Subdistricts

The Downtown Waterfront can broadly be understood as four areas, each with its own character and potential:

- **Northern Avenue**, spanning from the Moakley Bridge to the Coast Guard Building
- **Rowes Wharf and India Row** goes from 400 Atlantic Avenue to the Harbor Towers (which was the former India Wharf)
- **Long and Central Wharves**, which includes the Harbor Garage, Aquarium, and the Long Wharf Marriott
- In addition, the **watersheet** is a highly active place, and this plan considers it as a distinct zone in itself that needs its own spatial clarity and organization, with consideration to the adjacent uses.

Each of the Downtown Waterfront's subdistricts has its own distinct features, uses, and building styles. Moreover, each of the subdistricts connects to vastly different parts of the city, from the Innovation District to the North End. The goals for each subdistrict are driven by a desire to reinforce the specific character of each subdistrict and maximize the connections between neighborhoods. For example, the Northern Avenue section presents the opportunity to connect to the Innovation District; the India Row / Rowes Wharf area is mature and well-established and could benefit from clearer north-south connections and visual connections from the Greenway; Long and Central wharves are where the city meets the harbor; and the watersheet offers the opportunity to experience the city and the harbor in a whole new way.

Northern Avenue

The Northern Avenue section is a key gateway between the historic center of the city and the city's newest destination neighborhood, the burgeoning Innovation District. This area, bounded by the Northern Avenue Bridge and the Moakley Bridge, is the gateway between these destinations.

The challenges—and opportunities—here lie with how to facilitate passage between these neighborhoods, and create a sense of entrance or arrival. The planned renovation of the Old Northern Avenue Bridge offers the chance to strengthen pedestrian and bike links to the Innovation District and South Boston and create a model Complete Street. Creating an accessible HARBORWALK path along the waterfront at both the Moakley Bridge and the Northern Avenue Bridge will allow more people to enjoy the waterfront. In addition, these accessible connections might present an opportunity to expand the public space along the waterfront, which is very narrow in this area.

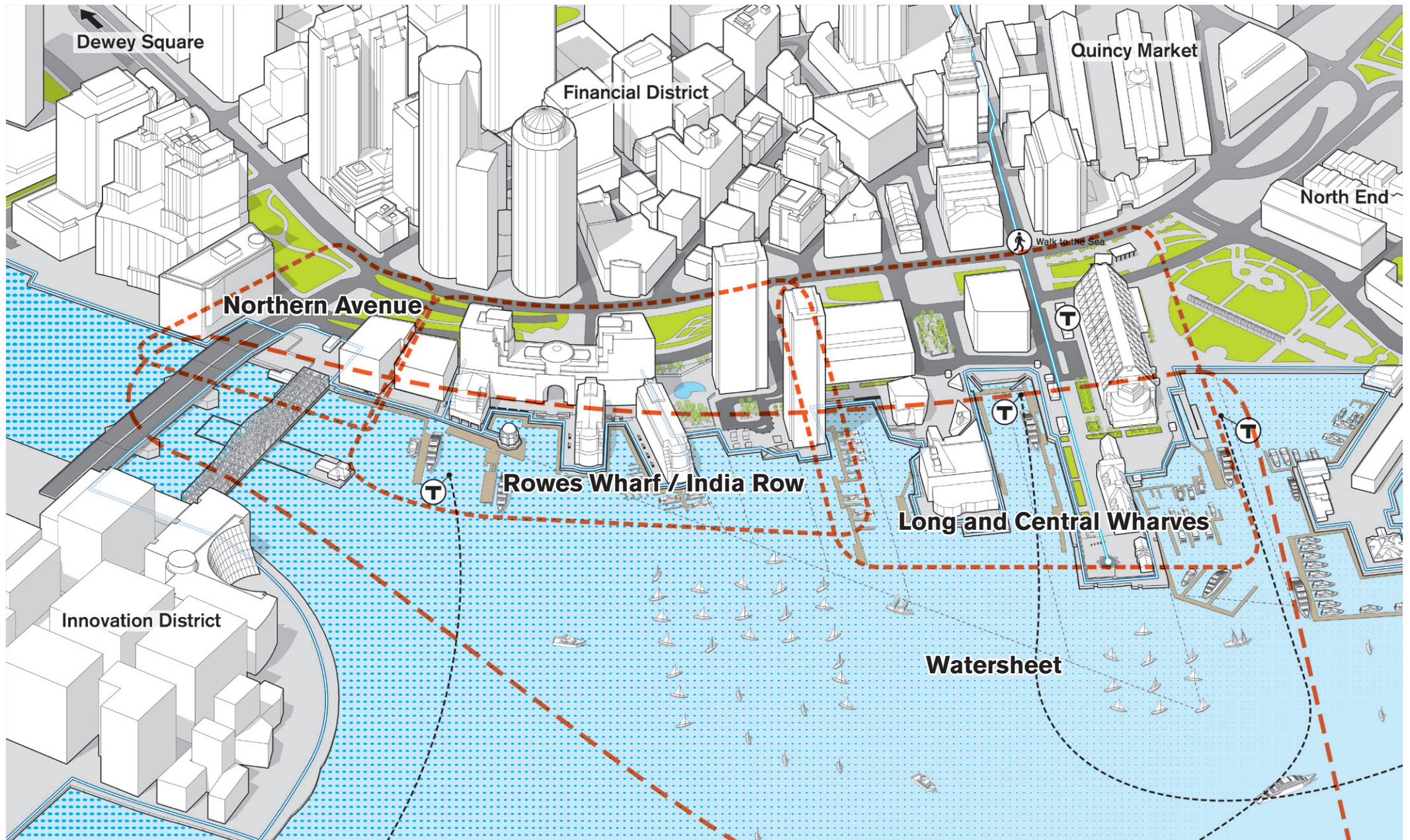
Gateway to
the Innovation
District

Rowes Wharf and India Row

The Rowes Wharf and India Row area is a thin sliver of land between the Greenway and the water. It is home to a robust residential community and a range of restaurants and events venues at Rowes Wharf. Here, the focus is on facilitating passage from north to south, and connections from the Greenway to the water. Clear pedestrian and visual connections will facilitate north-south connectivity. Drawing people from the Greenway and Downtown to the water might require improving the lateral links by adding programming, retail or restaurant uses, signage, and lighting.

In addition to facilitating connections, supporting the residential community and better integrating it into the city is a priority. Rowes Wharf is a premier gateway to the water and presents a wide range of public programs, which are supported by many of the residents. Harbor Towers allows public passage along the HARBORWALK, but is otherwise physically isolated from its surroundings. Greater visual porosity through the property will help integrate the Harbor Towers into the city, and will visually connect Town Cove to the water. The challenge is balancing privacy for the residents with greater links with the public realm. More neighborhood services (e.g., pharmacies and grocery stores) should also be encouraged downtown to support the growing residential community, and will help to further integrate the Wharf District residential community with the city.

Connect
the North
and South, the
Greenway and
the water



Long and Central Wharves

This is the most active and often-times chaotic area of the waterfront. With the Walk to Sea, the Rings Fountain on the Greenway, and the Harbor Islands Pavilion, this is where Boston touches the water. The goal for Long and Central Wharves is to lead more people to the waterfront and fully utilize the space available, through programming, better wayfinding, and improved coordination.

Throng of pedestrians, cyclists, residents, and tourists visit Long and Central wharves during peak season. The challenge during peak season is to manage the crowds and disperse the people throughout the area. During the fall, winter, and spring, the challenge lies in how to draw more people here and encourage four-season use of the waterfront.

A range of strategies should be considered, such as a management group for this area, unified signage, and shared streets. In addition the end of Long Wharf can be better utilized and other areas offer the opportunity to create new open spaces (i.e., the Chart House parking lot) or higher-quality open spaces (i.e., the BRA-owned land in front of the Harbor Garage and the Aquarium plaza).

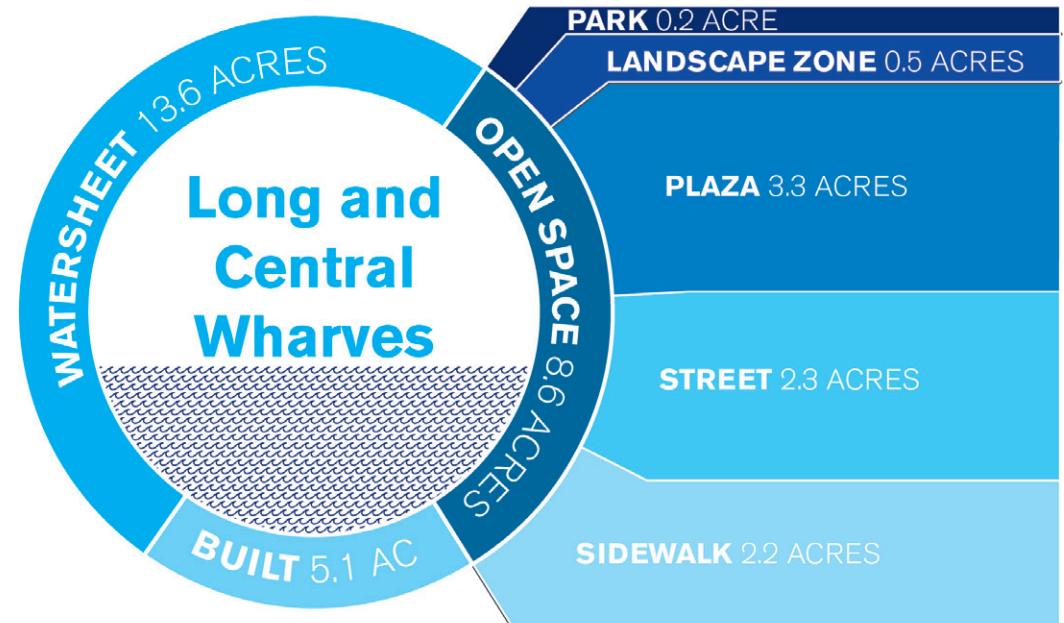
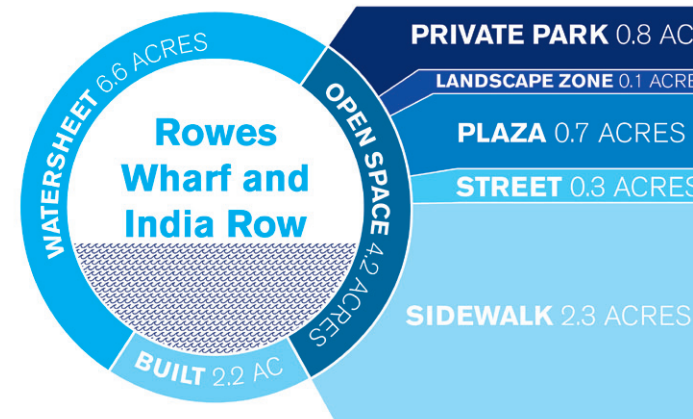
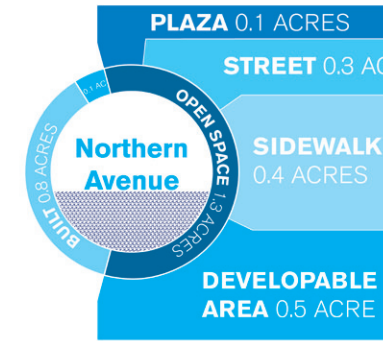


The Watersheet

Building on decades of work and the clean-up of the Boston Harbor, the goal for the watersheet is to facilitate experiencing the harbor. This requires a careful balance of different types of marinas and vessels, and a strong management plan to make the harbor friendly and inviting to all.

Enhanced and coordinated water transit will bring more people to the waterfront and should be expanded as a transit option. Landside facilities, such as heated waiting areas, are critical to making water transit a four-season option for commuters.

Perhaps most importantly, protecting the water's edge must be prioritized by both public agencies and private property owners. Climate change resilience and protection from storm surges is critical for both the public realm and the private properties in the area. Storm surge barriers should be considered, and new public spaces and buildings should be designed to withstand inundation and flooding. Retrofitting existing buildings and landscapes poses challenges, but should be encouraged. Significant research and analysis has been conducted on best practices—including reports by The Boston Harbor Association and the City's Environment Department, and ongoing work by the Green Ribbon Commission—and these form a strong foundation for creating a resilient waterfront.



An analysis of the spatial attributes of the subdistricts, from open space to streets and sidewalks to built land, reveals vast differences among the subdistricts.



Rows Wharf



Rows Wharf and Harbor Towers



Long Wharf



Long and Central Wharves



Long and Central Wharves



Northern Avenue Bridge



Central Wharf Park



Long Wharf

Public Benefits

Within this plan, several types of public benefits are identified. These public realm improvements came out of robust discussions with stakeholders, property owners, MHPAC members, and the City. The Implementation section provides a more detailed list of the benefits and priorities, which might be considered as improvements or mitigation during the MHP, Article 80, or other public approvals processes.

This public realm plan does not specify the improvements to be made (i.e., it does not propose a new design for the Aquarium plaza and Central Wharf). Rather, it provides guidelines for the types of improvements, finetuning, and programming that should be considered for this area. More importantly, it seeks to identify **how various ideas and initiatives can be creatively combined to create a richer, more vibrant public realm for all.**

Key Development Sites

Two key development parcels are in this area: the Hook site (see page 20) and the Harbor Garage (see page 24). These parcels are catalytic sites with the potential to significantly impact their surrounding context. This plan identifies potential synergies and allied goals between stakeholders, the City, and the various property owners. The redevelopment of either of these parcels offers the opportunity to achieve a number of the public realm goals identified in this report.

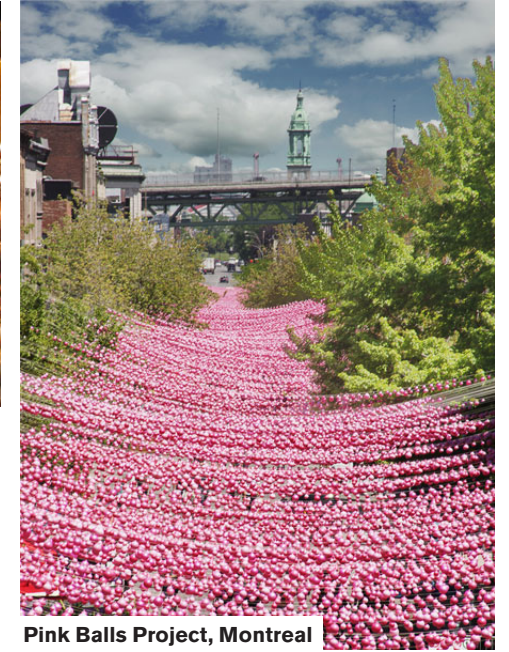




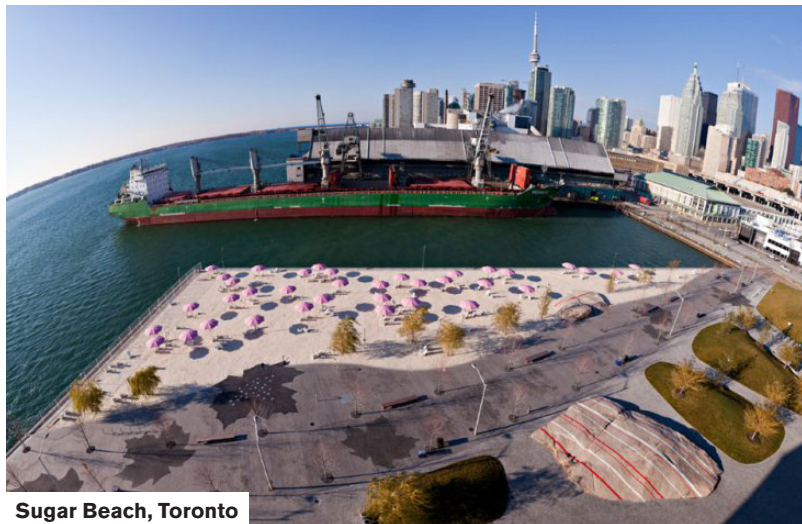
The Rubber Duck Public Art Project, Pittsburgh



Food Truck Festival, Long Beach



Pink Balls Project, Montreal



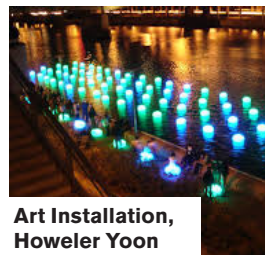
Sugar Beach, Toronto



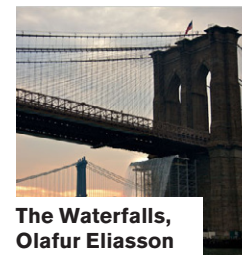
Winter Festival, Quebec City



Wayfinding, New York



Art Installation, Howeler Yoon



The Waterfalls, Olafur Eliasson



Water Taxi Beach, Governor's Island

Creative four-season programming, public art, festivals, and comprehensive wayfinding systems are some of the many public benefits identified in this plan. This page offers examples from other cities.

Northern Avenue

Gateway to the Innovation District

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The Northern Avenue area of the Downtown Waterfront is geographically small but has immense potential for change with development and investment in the area. It includes the Hook development site, the Coast Guard Building, and the terminus of Northern Avenue and the Northern Avenue Bridge. Recent nearby developments such as Independence Wharf, Atlantic Wharf, the Intercontinental, and the Fan Pier developments have increased pedestrian connectivity to the area, improved the HARBORWALK, and brought new residents and workers to the area. Because of the aforementioned developments, as well as the completion of the Greenway, the area is full of new activity and street life. And because of these recent developments, this part of the Downtown Waterfront is a **key hinge between the burgeoning Innovation District and the Downtown and Financial Districts**.

Priorities for this area include improving Northern Avenue between the Coast Guard Building and Hook, as a multimodal street with appropriate greenscape; creating a fully accessible HARBORWALK on both sides of the Northern Avenue Bridge (whether this means going below the renovated bridge or on it); and creating an accessible HARBORWALK path across the Moakley Bridge (again, this may mean going below the bridge). Combined these improvements will increase pedestrian use of the HARBORWALK and pedestrian and bicyclist connections from Downtown to the Innovation District. With the Barking Crab across the Channel and water taxi stands nearby, this site—if it continues to house a water-dependent use—can add to Boston's long and rich history as a city connected to its harbor.

The plan for this area has the following goals:

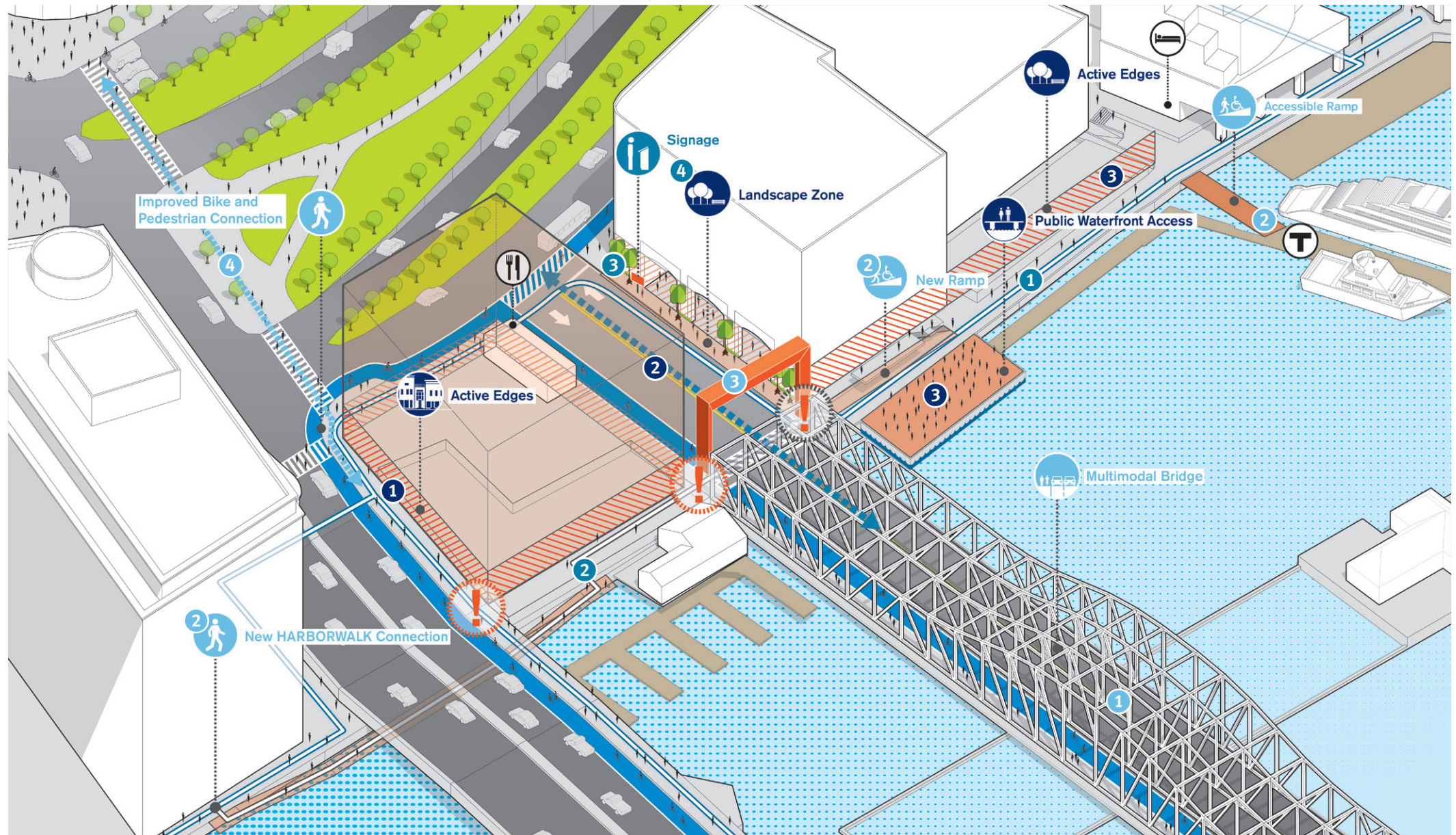
- **Strengthen the connection to the Innovation District** across both the Northern Avenue Bridge, which will soon be renovated, and the Moakley Bridge.
- **Create a gateway** to the City and to the Innovation District at Northern Avenue. This may be through the design of the Hook site, as well as the streetscape design of Northern Avenue.
- **Redesign the Northern Avenue terminus as a gateway and as Complete Street**. This may include robust public horticulture on the street edges.
- **Create accessible HARBORWALK connections** at both the Northern Avenue Bridge and across the Moakley Bridge.
- **Expand the public zone** along the waterfront (this can be coordinated with the accessible HARBORWALK connections, the Hook redevelopment, and the Northern Avenue Bridge renovation).
- **Activate the edges** around the Hook development parcel and the Coast Guard Building. The Northern Avenue edges of these buildings faces special challenges because of its narrow width and the location of loading docks.

Key Development Site

Hook Site

The Hook site, coupled with the planned renovation of Northern Avenue Bridge, will serve as a critical link between the Innovation District and Downtown. The design of the Hook redevelopment will frame views to and from downtown along both the Moakley Bridge and the Northern Avenue Bridge. In addition, the facades along the waterfront and the Rose Kennedy Greenway face two of the city's most important open space resources. These facades should be designed with consideration to these factors. Principal building entrances should be considered along both Seaport Boulevard and the Greenway to strengthen connections along Seaport Boulevard to Oliver Street and along the Greenway. Careful placement and design of loading docks and service entrances is critical on such a tight site, and should be designed with consideration to both the future Northern Avenue and the Greenway.





Connectivity

- 1 The Northern Avenue Bridge has the potential to become a model Complete Street. The renovation of this bridge could alleviate traffic congestion in South Boston and increase pedestrian and bicyclist connections to the Innovation District.
- 2 Accessible paths and continuous waterfront access are critical to making the public realm and waterfront a place for all people. Currently, the HARBORWALK jogs around the Moakley Bridge, and has an inaccessible area near the Northern Avenue Bridge. Creating ramps in both locations would add to HARBORWALK continuity and legibility.
- 3 Preserving and enhancing view corridors from the city to the harbor and along the HARBORWALK are key elements.
- 4 Connections to the Financial District through Oliver Street should be strengthened.

Legibility

- 1 The HARBORWALK in this area is poorly marked, narrow, and inaccessible. New lighting and paving materials should be considered in this area. These would increase the sense of safety and the understanding of this as a public path.
- 2 The redevelopment of the Hook site should include a HARBORWALK connection along the waterfront.
- 3 Signage could direct pedestrians to the nearby attractions, such as the Aquarium, the Children's Museum, and the BSA Space, and offer interpretive information about the history of the area.
- 4 The renovation of the Northern Avenue Bridge will turn what now seems like an alley into a public thoroughfare. The renovation of the streetscape will contribute to the legibility of this as a street for all modes of transportation. Robust street trees should be considered.

Activation and Programming

- 1 New developments should activate the public realm with retail and restaurant uses along the ground level. The Hook site in particular presents the opportunity to activate all four sides of the parcel. The Coast Guard Building contains a cafeteria that is open to the public but little known. Encouraging awareness of this amenity can add to the activity along Northern Avenue.
- 2 Designing Northern Avenue as a welcoming thoroughfare poses a challenge because it is faced with loading docks and service areas. Design of this street should focus on making it welcoming to pedestrians with visible entrances to these buildings on Northern Avenue.
- 3 Unwelcoming edges facing the HARBORWALK should be redesigned to open up to the waterfront, and an expanded public realm should be considered in "bottleneck" areas.

India Row and Rowes Wharf

Connect the North and South, the Greenway and the Water

22

The India Row and Rowes Wharf area includes a vibrant residential community and one of the most actively programmed places along the waterfront, Rowes Wharf. Improvements in this area need simultaneously to respect and enhance the residential community and leverage the programming and activity at Rowes Wharf.

Rowes Wharf is a very successful example of a waterfront development that was guided by Chapter 91 principles. Rowes Wharf is thoroughly integrated into its context, with an active waterfront edge, a wide range of water transit options, public programs, and a welcoming gateway from the Greenway.

The Harbor Towers, on the other hand, remain aloof from its surroundings. When the towers were constructed, the neighborhood consisted of an elevated highway, a dirty harbor, surface parking lots, and a rundown warehouse district. As a result, the towers were designed as a towers in the landscape, walled off from the city. Now that the Downtown Waterfront and Wharf District are thriving neighborhoods, it is time to better integrate the Harbor Towers property into the urban fabric. The fences, paving, and landscaping create a great deal of ambiguity about what is private vs. public on this site, block views from the Greenway and Town Cove to the water, and appear unwelcoming. Smart design, landscape improvements, and clear wayfinding for public paths can ameliorate this situation and help make the Harbor Towers the center of the emerging downtown waterfront residential community.

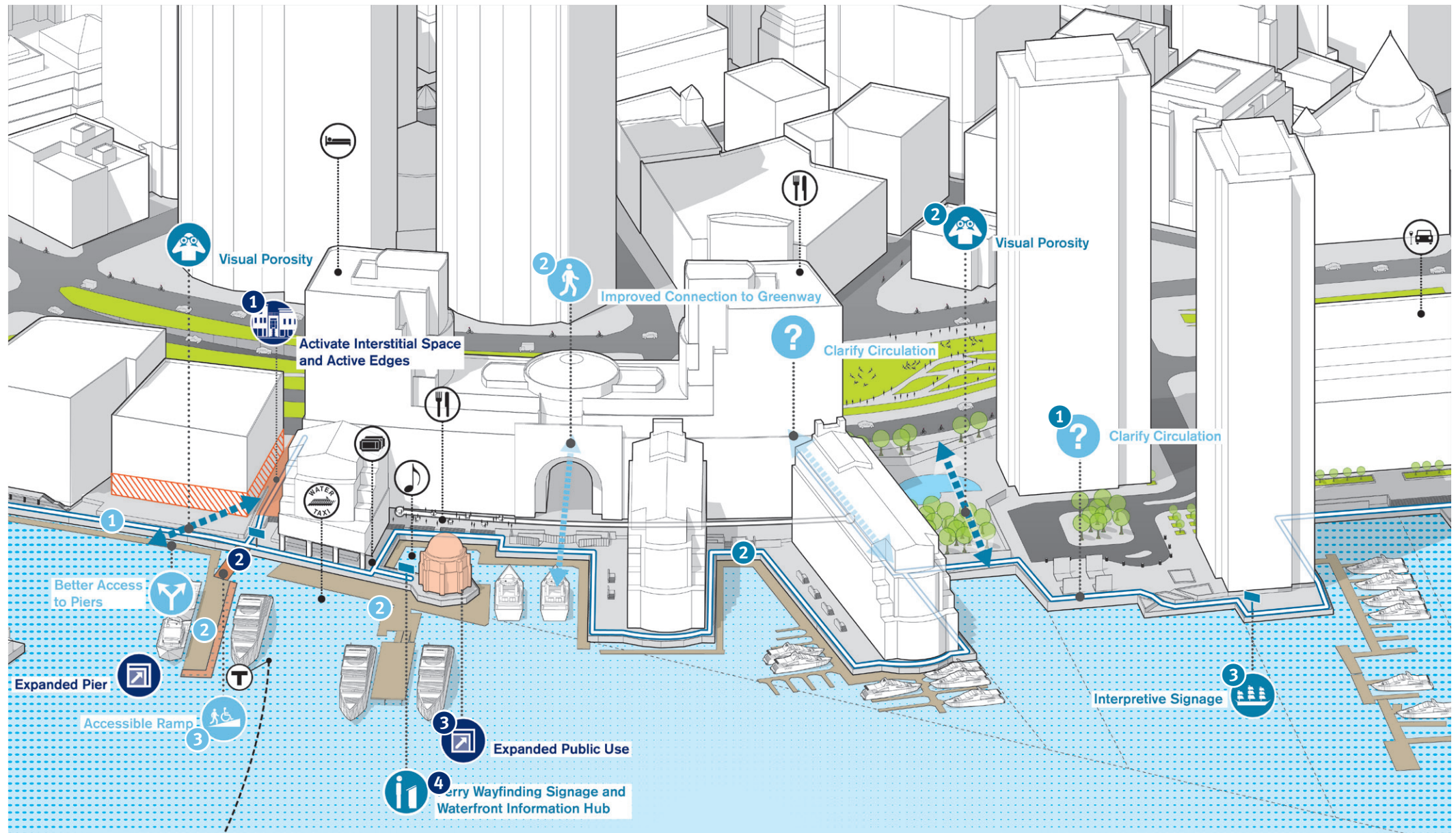
This area is also one of the narrowest sections between the waterfront and the Greenway and should offer visual and physical connections from the Greenway to

the harbor. It should **facilitate north-south pedestrian and bicycle movement, and encourage east-west movement and visual connections from the Greenway to the waterfront.**

The goals for India Row and Rowes Wharf are:

- **Strengthen north-south connections** across this area, both along the waterfront and along Atlantic Avenue.
- **Clarify circulation** in key areas, such as across the Harbor Towers parcel, and lateral connections between the Greenway and the harbor. This should include both the HARBORWALK itself and HARBORWALK “shortcuts.”
- **Strengthen lateral connections from the Greenway**, which may require programming or restaurant and retail uses in the interstitial spaces, or signage and wayfinding.
- **Integrate the Harbor Towers into the urban fabric.** This includes visual connections through the property to the waterfront, clearly marked public paths, and careful design of the landscape around the edges.
- **Protect and promote water-dependent uses**, including facilitating access, visibility, signage, and rents for ferry operators. A waterfront information hub should be considered as a ground-level use.
- **Increase awareness of the many activities and programs** at Rowes Wharf, and coordinate these activities with other activities along the waterfront and on the Greenway. In addition, increase access to the public facilities within Rowes Wharf, such as the rotunda and the pavilion.





Connectivity

- 1 Strengthen the north-south connections along the HARBORWALK and Atlantic Avenue. Improving pedestrian connections between the south and the north of the downtown will relieve congestion on the roads and on public transportation, and relieve pedestrian bottlenecks.
- 2 Enhanced access to piers and water transit would enable more commuters and visitors to visit the area. This includes accessible ramps, better access to side piers, expanded transit piers, and better signage.
- 3 Accessibility to water transit is a priority. All docks and piers should be ADA compliant. In addition, better access to piers and docks should be considered.

Legibility

- 1 Clarifying the pedestrian path through the Harbor Towers property is a priority for this area. The HARBORWALK is confusing and poorly marked. Proper signage will help, as will upgrades to the paving materials. If the Harbor Towers rethinks East India Row and the entryway to the Harbor Towers, it should consider how the landscape and streetscape can make clear the public path through this parcel.
- 2 Signage should make clear both the HARBORWALK as well as HARBORWALK “shortcuts,” such as through Rows Wharf. Overall maps of the HARBORWALK and the general district should be considered.
- 3 Visual connections from the Greenway to the waterfront should be enhanced and preserved wherever possible.
- 4 Interpretive signage or symbols (e.g., public art) about the history of the waterfront would add to the experience of visitors or passersby.

Activation and Programming

- 1 The interstitial spaces in this area could benefit from programming, such as restaurant seating or benches. Adding programming to these areas could increase pedestrian activity between the water’s edge and the Greenway.
- 2 Improving access to the water transportation centers, with accessible ramps and better access to piers will greatly increase activity at the water’s edge.
- 3 Underutilized spaces, such as the pavilion at Rows Wharf, should be programmed or made available for public use.
- 4 A waterfront information hub should be prioritized. Possible locations include inside the ground-level of Rows Wharf, or outdoors near the piers. It should include a comprehensive map of all the water transit options in the Central Waterfront.

Long and Central Wharves

Touch the Water

24

Long and Central wharves are where the city has historically met the harbor. Throngs of tourists, families, residents, and workers pass through here on a daily basis, drawn by the rich historical significance of the area, the Aquarium and IMAX theater, the nearby Rings Fountain and Greenway Carousel, and the water transportation options. This is the most activated waterfront in Boston.

The primary objective is to **create an exemplary twenty-first-century waterfront, so generations to come can experience the water's edge**. This requires concerted efforts by the many operators and property owners to come together around common goals, such as managing the pedestrian, bicyclist, and ferry traffic; coordinated wayfinding; and preserving and enhancing key view corridors. Both incremental physical improvements as well as management strategies can help organize and clarify the public realm and movement through this area.

The goals for this area are to:

- **Improve signage and wayfinding and develop coordinated signage system.** This includes a unified water transit system and consistent wayfinding for the transit options. This may include new landmarks, such as public art or flagpoles, along the waterfront.
- **Diversify the uses within the area,** such as include a broader range of retail and food venues, ranging from casual (e.g., food trucks) to fine dining. Consider uses that support the residential community and local workers.
- **Improve the Aquarium plaza / Central Wharf Park area** through consistent paving, improved wayfinding, and enhancing key view corridors to

the Aquarium and the harbor from the Greenway.

- **Increase appreciation of the Harbor Islands and establish a permanent Harbor Islands ferry gateway** on Long Wharf North. In addition, more activities and seasonal programming should be considered for the Harbor Islands (e.g., Hubway or fall and winter nature walks).
- **Activate ground-levels** facing the waterfront, key public spaces (e.g., the Greenway and Christopher Columbus Park), and the waterfront.
- **Strengthen lateral connections to waterfront** through programming and ground-level activity and maintaining view corridors from the Greenway to the harbor.
- **Invest in ferries and water transportation,** including subsidies for infrastructure improvements and ongoing maintenance.
- **Strengthen management of the public realm,** such as the bus/trolley parking in the area and vendors. Develop management plan for vendors, trolley operators, seasonal services, etc.
- **Increase appreciation of the Downtown Waterfront** through interpretive signage (both historical and environmental). Physical improvements such as storm surge barriers or public spaces designed to withstand inundation are educational opportunities.
- **Create a range of open spaces,** from quiet and contemplative zones to active hardscaped areas to shared streets. For example, the Chart House parking lot might be redeveloped as a pocket park with seating, which could complement the restaurant in the Marriott Long Wharf and offer an outdoor waiting area for

ferry passengers. The end of Long Wharf should be a destination, with programming, such as food trucks or casual dining.








- **An innovative rotating public art program,** such as those organized by the Public Art Fund in New York and Friends of Fort Point Channel locally, might also be considered at the underutilized public spaces. This program could focus on art about climate change and sea level rise or the history of the harbor.
- **Improve connections to the North End** and Christopher Columbus Park. This may be through signage or increasing the visual porosity through the Marriott.

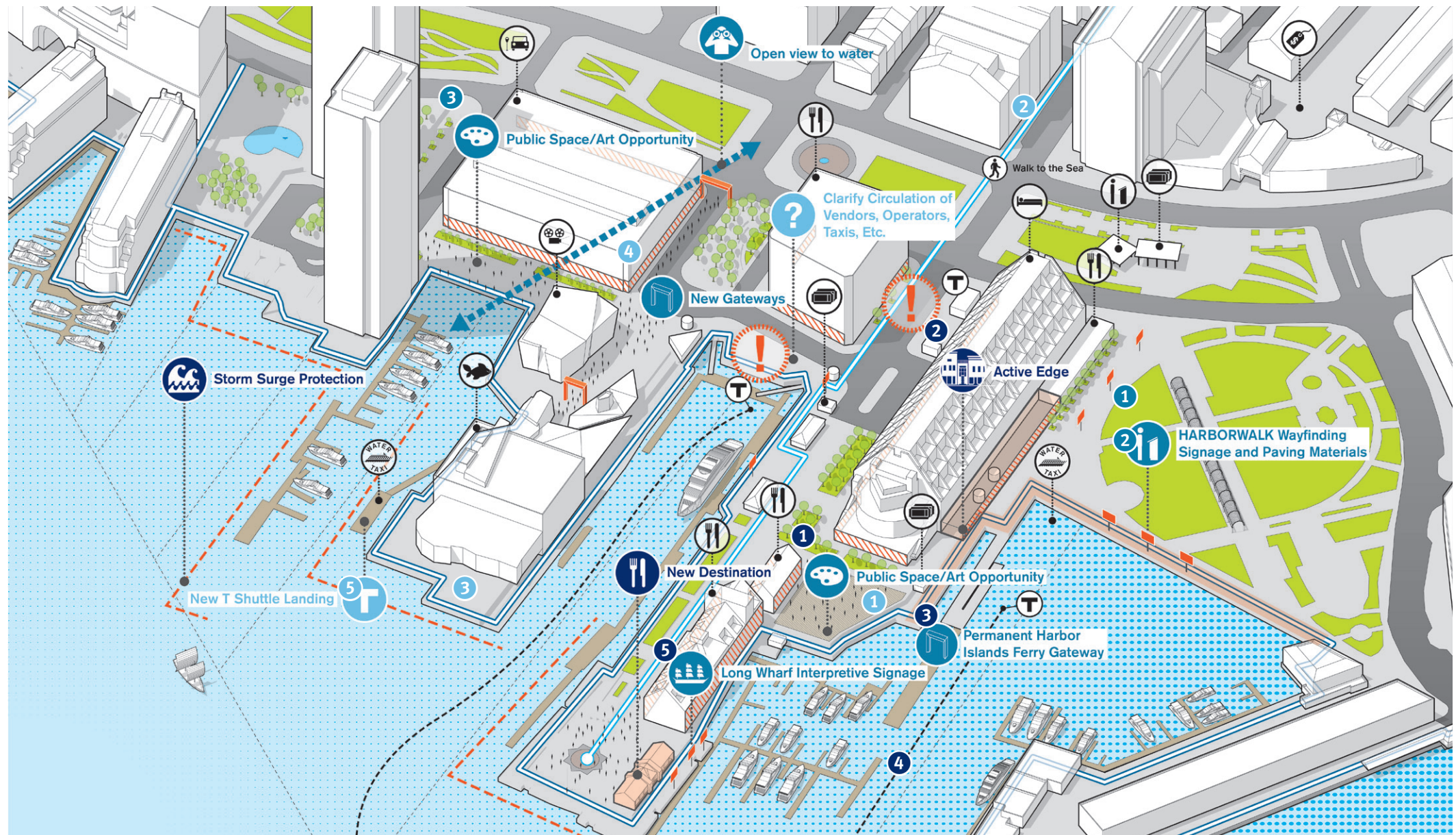


Key Development Site

Harbor Garage

Redevelopment of the Harbor Garage site should respect both the residential uses of Harbor Towers and the activity of Central Wharf. It will form a key edge and gateway, linking the Town Cove neighborhood and the Rose Kennedy Greenway to the Aquarium and the waterfront. The edge along Milk Street, facing Central Wharf Park, needs to be designed with consideration to the streams of visitors heading to the Aquarium, the IMAX Theater, and the ferries on the wharves. This side of the parcel, as well as the edge facing the waterfront, are the most appropriate locations for new public open spaces on this parcel.

-  Targeted Area for Improvements
-  Area of Proposed Active Edge
-  Important Node
-  Significant Connections
-  Pedestrian Connections
-  Wayfinding Location
-  Existing Amenity
-  Harborwalk



Connectivity

- 1 Strengthening the connection to the North End is critical. This can happen through encouraging walking through the Marriott lobby, and improving the space around the Marriott.
- 2 The Walk to the Sea should be strengthened and promoted. Encouraging more travel to the end of the wharf could relieve some of the pedestrian congestion and lead to a greater appreciation of the harbor.
- 3 The HARBORWALK should be strengthened to encourage north-south movement through the study area and to draw visitors to the ends of the wharves.
- 4 Gateway moments should be designed, such as along the approach to the NEAq.
- 5 Expanding the water transit options, both in terms of destinations and regularity of service, is a key priority. Water transit can connect the Downtown Waterfront to other Boston neighborhoods, such as East Boston and neighboring waterfront communities.

Legibility

- 1 Signage should make clear both the HARBORWALK as well as HARBORWALK "shortcuts," such as through the Marriott lobby. Overall maps of the HARBORWALK and the general district should be considered.
- 2 Coordinated signage can also make clear the ferry locations and schedules. This will alleviate confusion in the area. The overall area can be improved through coordinating paving materials, signage, etc. This will help clarify the public realm and direct people to the key amenities and open spaces.
- 3 Key landmarks, such as public art, large-scale signs, and digital displays, should be considered as navigation and wayfinding devices.

Activation and Programming

- 1 Improving underutilized spaces, such as the hardscaped plaza between the Harbor Garage and the water, and parking lot and the end of Long Wharf, is a priority. Each should have a different character, ranging from quiet contemplative spots to very active.
- 2 Activating the edges of buildings is key to drawing people to this area and distributing foot traffic.
- 3 The Harbor Islands would benefit from a permanent gateway on the wharf.
- 4 The reconstruction of T Wharf and a reconfiguration of waterside on uses should be considered on the north side of Long Wharf.
- 5 Interpretive signage and exhibitions should be considered. This can focus on the history of the wharves and the waterfront or on climate change resilience.

The Watersheet

Experience the Harbor

26

Experiencing the city from the water's edge and on the watersheet brings an entirely different perspective to the city, and the ability to experience this needs to be preserved and enhanced by encouraging watersheet activity and managing it appropriately. It is the shared home of commuter ferries, recreational ferries, marinas, recreational vessels, an Aquarium, and a rich maritime heritage, as well as serving as a diversified marine habitat. A wide range of stakeholders regularly use the water's edge and watersheet and, in both formal and informal ways, manage its use.

Climate change, sea level rise, and storm surges threaten the waterfront, but they also present the opportunity to **rethink the watersheet and water's edge as a twenty-first century resilient landscape**. This may include physical storm barriers or soft infrastructure and landscape that withstand regular flooding and inundation. Much as Boston's waterfront has evolved and changed dramatically over the centuries, it is time to imagine a new water's edge that incorporates the latest thinking about resilience.

The Central Waterfront needs to be understood as a place in its own right.

Uses within the Downtown Waterfront district must be linked to other waterfront destinations, such as the Children's Museum, the Institute of Contemporary Art, the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area, and other harborfront communities. New transit options, new routes (both within the Inner Harbor and to Greater Boston), higher frequency of water transit, and better coordination of existing ferries will enable water transportation to become regular model of travel for Bostonians. The plan

aims to strengthen and intensify Boston's relationship to the waterfront, and conversely the harbor's relationship to the city.

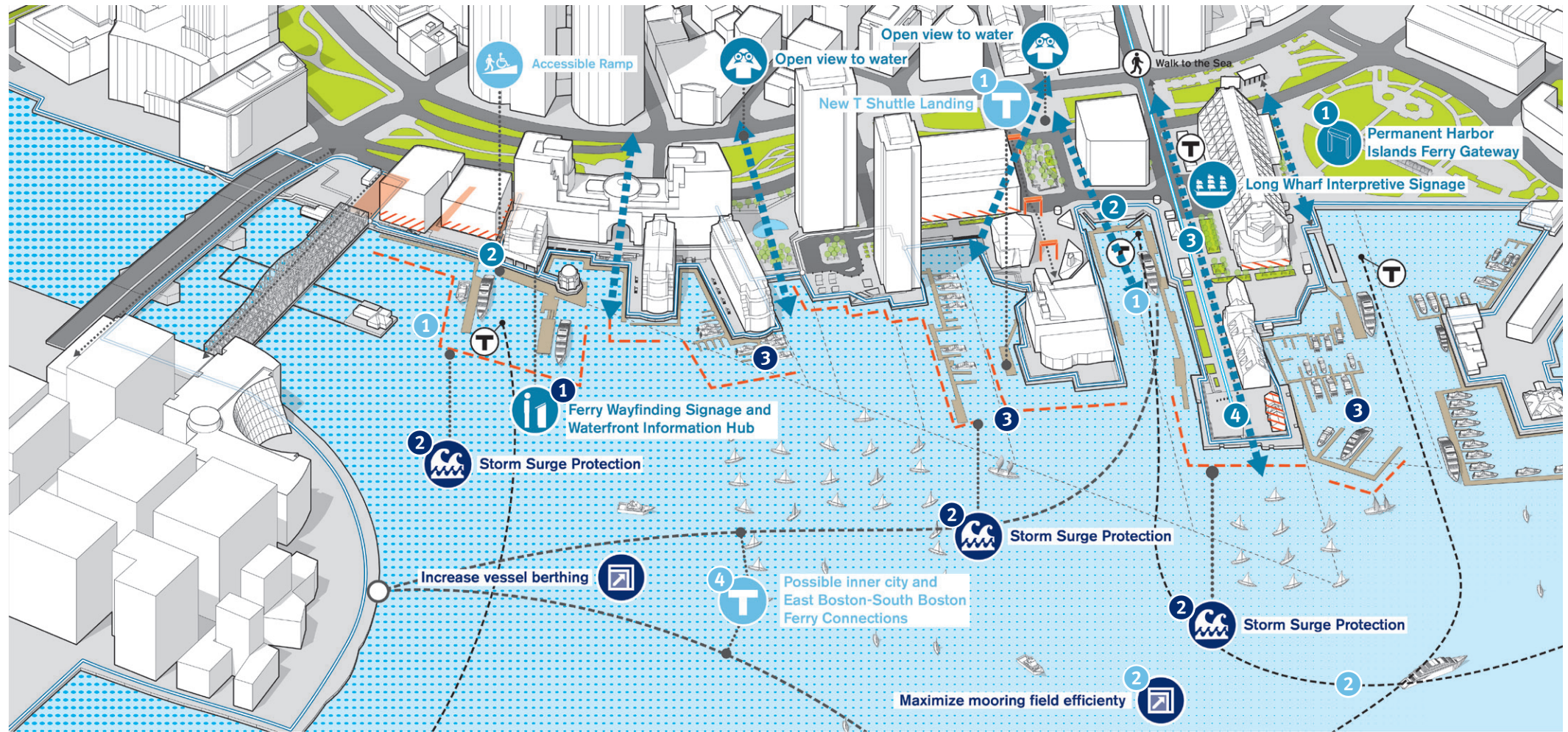
The goals for the watersheet are:

- **Designing a climate-change resilient waterfront for the twenty-first century.** Climate change resiliency for the harbor edge along the central waterfront and throughout Boston should be considered. This includes the design of landscapes and buildings to withstand flooding, and the piers and boardwalks at higher elevations. It requires proactive coordinated efforts by public, private, and nonprofit entities.
- **Improve and expand the role of the Central Waterfront as the primary public water transportation center** for Boston. This requires increasing vessel berthing opportunities both in quantity and quality and improving access through modifications to fairways and mooring fields. Landside improvements include indoor waiting areas and a unified wayfinding system.
- **Establish priorities for watersheet uses and management**, starting with working waterfront uses and then transit.
- **Increase access to and use of the Boston Harbor Islands** by subsidizing fares and creating a permanent gateway on Long Wharf North.
- **Create a clearer public understanding of the watersheet as a multifaceted marine gateway to and from Downtown Boston**, and the historic tradition of Long Wharf, by adding interpretive information about the central waterfront history and uses.

- **Expand recreational boating and fishing opportunities.** Expand berthing areas and overnight berthing opportunities. Fish-cleaning stations should be considered landside.
- **Enhance the public safety standards** to address current and future density of use for the HARBORWALK, bulkheads, docks, and floats, and including such additions as public awareness signage, additional bulkheads, and float ladders. This might include revised standards for water's edge safety equipment and training for abutter business personnel to monitor and offer emergency services for abutting watersheets.



-  Targeted Area for Improvements
-  Area of Proposed Active Edge
-  Important Node
-  Significant Connections
-  Pedestrian Connections
-  Wayfinding Location
-  Existing Amenity
-  Harborwalk



Connectivity

- 1 Water transportation facility improvements should include increased commercial vessel berthing capacity; addition of water taxi and touch-and-go landings; a unified system of ferry gate designations and signage; complete ADA accessibility to all public transit landings; and ticketing and waiting enhancements.
- 2 Circulation on the watersheet would be improved by coordinating needs with operators and Harbor Master; fairways; and mooring field optimization.
- 3 A watersheet use management plan for commercial and recreational vessel uses should be developed. This might limit small hand-powered vessel rental and use in or near commercial vessel fairways. This will require coordination among the operators and nonprofits in the area.
- 4 New transit routes should be considered, both within the Inner Harbor and to Greater Boston

Legibility

- 1 A permanent Harbor Islands gateway on Long Wharf North would enhance the visitor experience to the Harbor Islands, and facilitate growth of the Harbor Islands ferry service.
- 2 A signage or wayfinding system for Harbor Islands gateway and other transit ferry landings would relieve pedestrian confusion and congestion.
- 3 Watersheet wayfinding and public art should be considered. Tall guide poles or banner displays for key view corridors and across harbor could serve as wayfinding devices and as public art infrastructure.
- 4 A revolving program of watersheet art installations could emphasize the rich maritime and environmental history of this area. This should be coordinated with Greenway Conservancy and City visual and performing arts initiatives.
- 5 Any new development or improvements should amplify and preserve key view corridors; including the Walk to the Sea, and from city to harbor and Harbor to city.

Activation and Programming

- 1 Enhanced queuing and waiting areas (including heated waiting areas) near commuter and recreational ferry locations would encourage ferry use and extend the ferry season.
- 2 Climate change resiliency for bulkheads and edge conditions should be prioritized. This should include: elective treatment of wharf ends facing north and east; standards for float and piling construction; options for wave attenuation devices; and both short- and long-term strategies.
- 3 Marina and recreational boating facilities could be enhanced. Options to consider include marina dock expansion; potential increase in moorings with field optimization; increase in transient slips, public drop-off berths, and dinghy docks; support facilities including fueling locations; and optimization of sailing clubs for medium and larger boats.
- 4 Watersheet recreational programming should be enhanced. Year-round recreational events and programs, such as First Night on the Waterfront and Fireworks, will draw more people to the water's edge. Nearby areas, such as Fort Point Channel or Hook Lobster, can provide safe public small boat rental and operations.

Implementation

28

This plan provides a framework for improvements and identifies potential synergies between properties, stakeholder interests, and physical improvements. The goal is to identify improvements that can be creatively combined and result in a whole greater than the sum of its parts. The overall plan will be implemented incrementally, as property owners and the City make improvements to their properties. The exception will be the two key development parcels, the Hook site and the Harbor Garage (see page 18). These offer the opportunity to change significantly the neighborhood and enact many of the public benefits identified in this plan.

Coordination

Key linkages and synergies between properties should be considered. For example, on Long Wharf, adding ground-floor retail and restaurants to the Marriott, combined with the renovation of a parking lot into a public plaza, will greatly enhance the public use of Long Wharf. Furthermore, the end of Long Wharf, which is currently underutilized, presents the opportunity to insert public programming, such as a restaurant or creating a food truck plaza. Together, these projects will expand the public use of Long Wharf and potentially unlock some of the pedestrian bottlenecks that occur near the ferry docks and ticket booths. These projects, each with a different owner, are symbiotic and should be coordinated.

Management

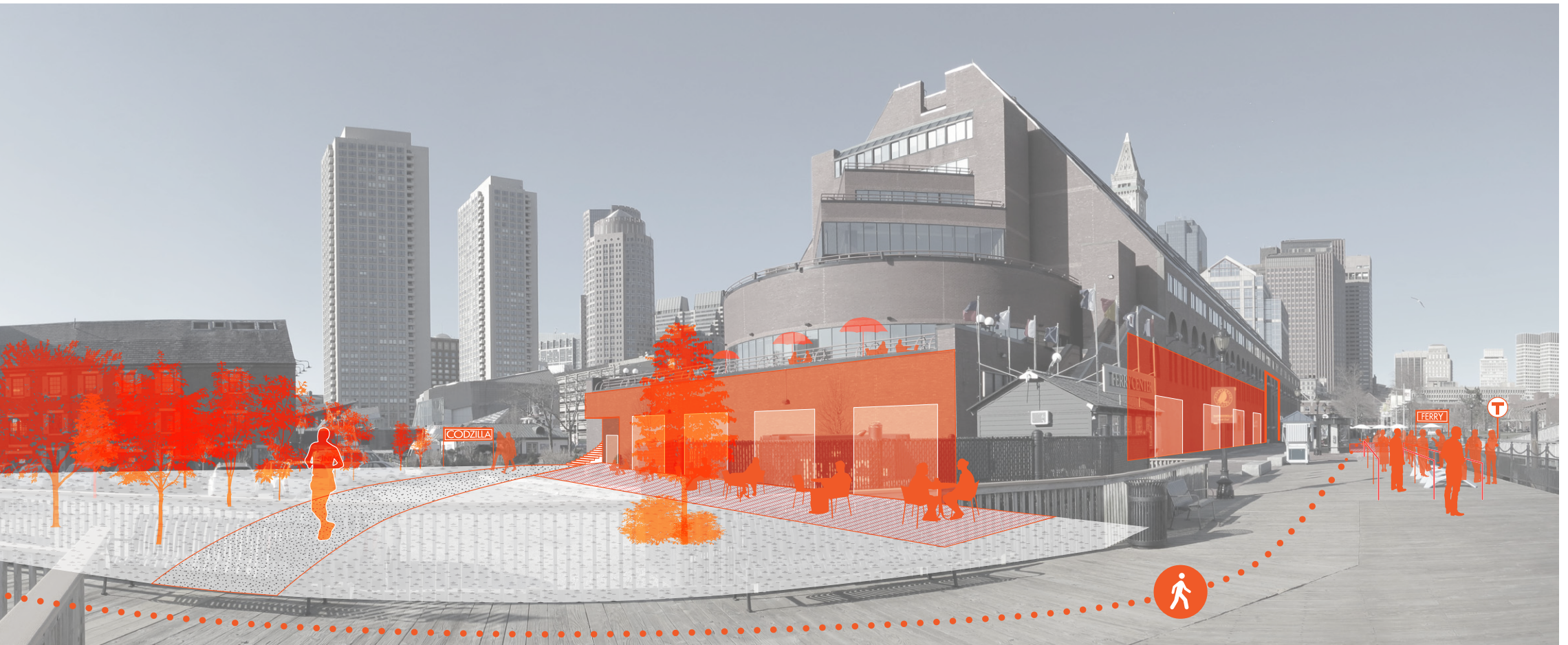
Overall, the district could benefit from a management or stakeholders group that could further the goals identified in this report. Coordination between the different stakeholders happens now in an informal manner. A more formalized system of informing neighbors and stakeholders of activities and plans for the area would enable potential shared interests or synergies to come to light.

Sustainability and Climate Change Resilience

Another key concern in this area is climate change resilience and protecting against storm surges. In recent years, storms such as Hurricane Sandy have highlighted the vulnerability of the waterfront. All public amenities should be constructed to accommodate inundation associated with storm surges and sea level rise. Where possible, it is important to protect the waterfront and waterfront assets from inundation and storm surges. This will require significant public and private investment and should be considered on both a parcel-by-parcel basis as well as for the waterfront as a whole.

A Vision for the Future of Long Wharf





Long Wharf presents an opportunity where coordinated efforts could result in a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Currently, a surface parking lot exists on Long Wharf. This underutilized space could become a new pocket park on Long Wharf. With a range of seating options and robust public horticulture, it could serve as an outdoor waiting area for ferry passengers, or a lunch spot for

workers and residents. It could also be designed as a model landscape that incorporates best practices in climate change resiliency. Combined with added ground-level programs at the Marriott and a new destination at the end of Long Wharf, it could relieve pedestrian bottlenecks and add a new public space with a different character than the others nearby.



How to evaluate and implement public benefits

Key considerations with public benefits include whether it is 1) linked to significant development; 2) requires a partnership between various stakeholders; 3) poses management challenges; 4) is an idea that needs adoption; or 5) requires only money.

The following pages list public benefits that emerged from this planning process, and attempt to list what barriers or challenges there might be to their implementation and link their to the overall vision for the district.









Implementation will require partnerships and creative sources of funding. An excellent example is the Harbor-Links Gardens on the Northern Avenue Bridge. This was funded by a grant from the Boston Committee of the Garden Club of America to The Boston Harbor Association, which envisioned the project and oversaw its development.















































































































- Strongly achieves this goal
- ◐ Medium support of this goal
- Provides little support of this goal
- Strong challenge
- ◐ Medium challenge
- Low link or challenge

District-Wide

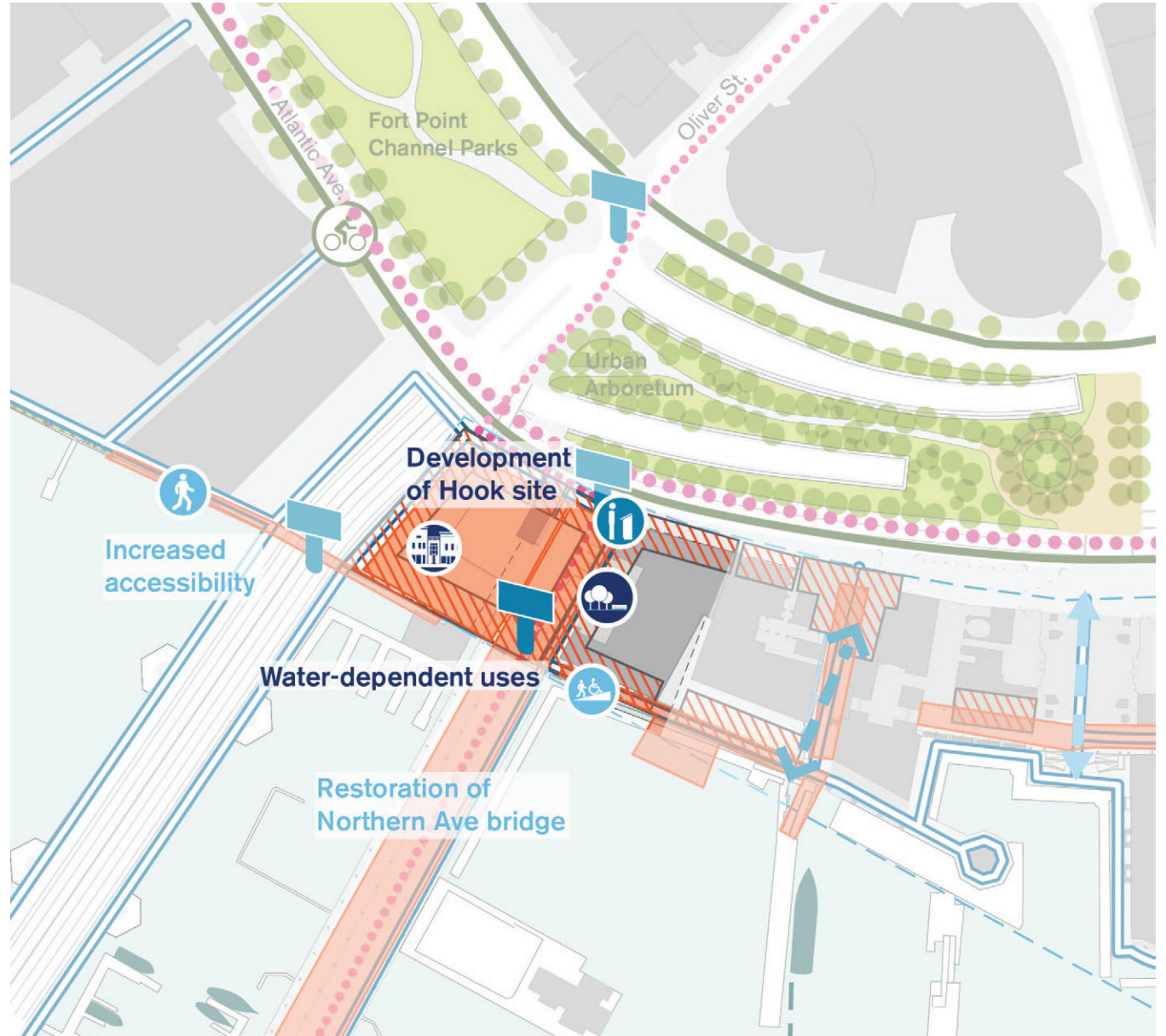
	Goals					Implementation Considerations and Challenges				
	A district accessible to all by foot, transit, water, and bike	Clearly defined connections	Climate change resilience	Four-season destinations and programming	Flexibility to accommodate future uses	Linked to significant development	Requires a partnership between stakeholders	Poses management challenges	Idea that needs adoption	Money
Increase four-season activities (e.g., ice skating rink, winter walking programs, Christmas market, nature walks, fall and winter nature tours of the Harbor Islands, fall cider festival)	◐	◐	◐	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	◐
More and higher-quality places to access the water. For example, the BRA-owned land in front of the Harbor Garage and the end of Long Wharf could both be improved.	◐	●	◐	●	●	●	●	●	○	◐
Develop a clear climate change resilience plan that addresses sea level rise and storm surges. This may include the design of landscapes and buildings to withstand flooding, and the piers and boardwalks at higher elevations. It requires proactive coordinated efforts by public, private, and nonprofit entities.	●	◐	●	●	●	○	●	◐	○	●
Regular north-south transportation links , such as a South Station to North Station shuttle bus or Greenway trolley.	●	●	◐	○	●	◐	●	◐	○	●
Broader range of retail and food venues , ranging from casual (food trucks, etc) to fine dining, dining on the water; increase in neighborhood amenities, such as grocery stores and pharmacies.	○	◐	◐	●	◐	●	●	◐	◐	◐
Unified wayfinding and identity for the district.	◐	●	○	◐	◐	○	●	○	◐	○
Better signage or markings for the HARBORWALK , such as through blue brick path or uniform paving materials	●	●	○	◐	○	○	●	○	◐	○
Unified signage system for ferries. Uniform digital (i.e., ITS) system for ferry/boat operators. This should be coordinated with waterfront information hubs.	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	●	◐	◐
Event venues. For example, a floating barge could be coordinated with Fort Point Channel and serve double purpose as an event barge / art barge.	○	◐	●	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	●
Clear range of pedestrian and bike north-south routes. For example, the "slow" pedestrian route along the water's edge, the "fast" pedestrian and bike route along Atlantic Avenue, and "medium-speed" routes on the Greenway and along the water with shortcuts through Rowes Wharf and Long and Central wharves.	●	●	○	○	○	◐	●	○	◐	◐







-  Strongly achieves this goal
-  Medium support of this goal
-  Provides little support of this goal
-  Strong challenge
-  Medium challenge
-  Low link or challenge

Northern Avenue



























































































	Goals					Implementation Considerations and Challenges				
	A district accessible to all by foot, transit, water, and bike	Clearly defined connections	Climate change resilience	Four-season destinations and programming	Flexibility to accommodate future uses	Linked to significant development	Requires a partnership between stakeholders	Poses management challenges	Idea that needs adoption	Money
Restoration of the Northern Avenue Bridge as a multimodal bridge with a dedicated barrel for pedestrians and cyclists										
Development of Hook site with active edges on all four sides.										
Careful design of the Northern Avenue face of the Hook site and Coast Guard Building , in terms of loading dock placement, street relationship, entrances, lighting, etc.										
Active edges facing the Greenway, the water, and Northern Avenue for the Coast Guard Building. This may include making the public cafeteria inside visible on the exterior through signage or opening up the facade.										
Increased HARBORWALK accessibility at Northern Avenue Bridge , which may require a ramp from the HARBORWALK to meet bridge level.										
Increased HARBORWALK accessibility at Moakley Bridge , which may include ramping under bridge.										
Expanded public realm on this narrow section of the HARBORWALK. Possibilities to explore include decking out over the water, which can also facilitate the HARBORWALK connections and address accessibility issues.										
Short-term improvements to the Northern Avenue Bridge , such as painted lighting, planters, and art installations.										
Design of Northern Avenue as an exemplary Complete Street. This may be an appropriate location for a shared street.										
Water-dependent uses on the Hook site.										
Reestablish public access to the dock and to the exterior stair facing the water on the Coast Guard parcel.										

A selection of the public benefits recommended for Northern Avenue.

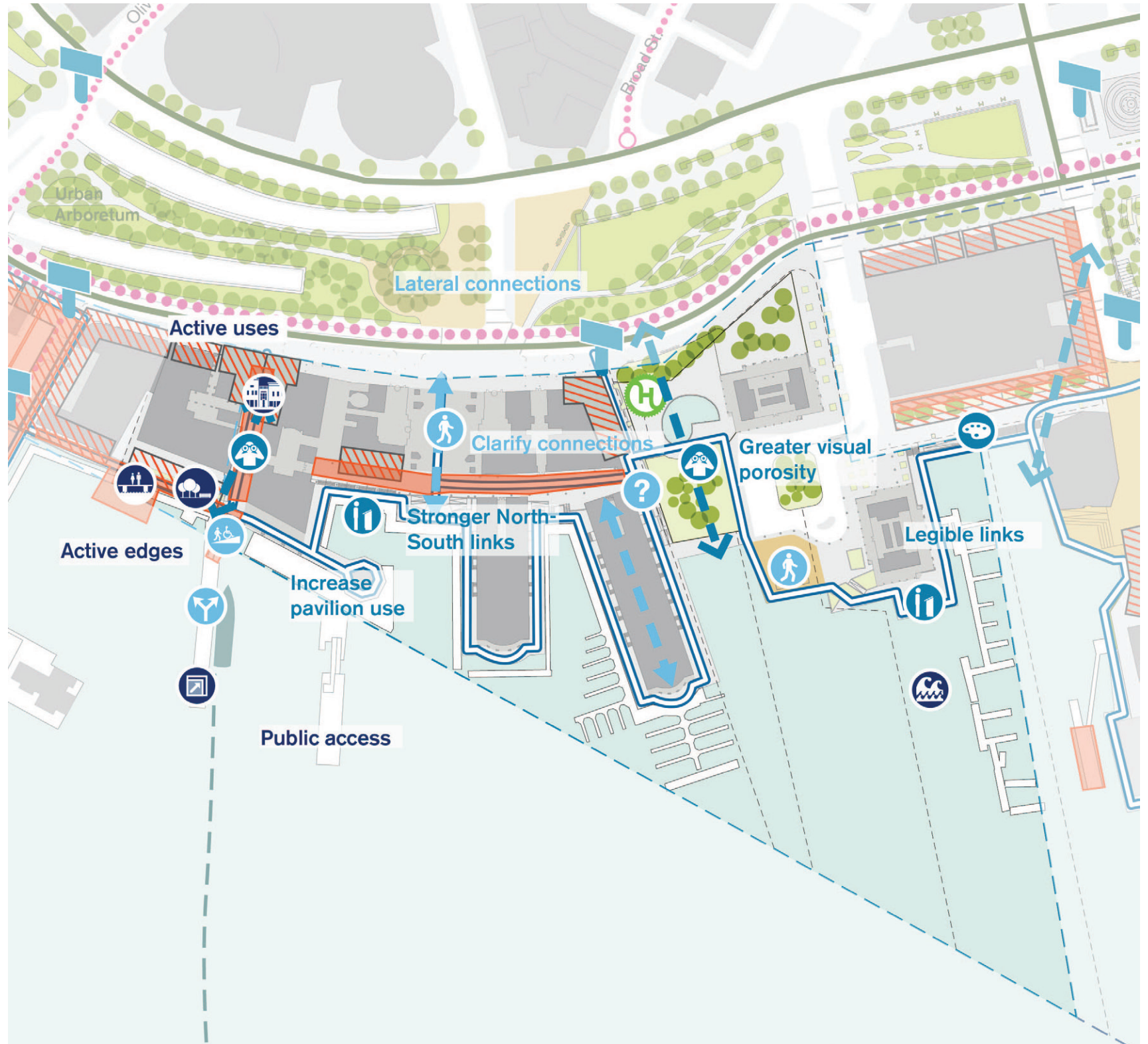


-  Strongly achieves this goal
-  Medium support of this goal
-  Provides little support of this goal
-  Strong challenge
-  Medium challenge
-  Low link or challenge

India Row/Rowes Wharf

	Goals					Implementation Considerations and Challenges				
	A district accessible to all by foot, transit, water, and bike	Clearly defined connections	Climate change resilience	Four-season destinations and programming	Flexibility to accommodate future uses	Linked to significant development	Requires a partnership between stakeholders	Poses management challenges	Idea that needs adoption	Money
Stronger north-south links , both along Atlantic Avenue and along the waterfront. This may include “slow” (HARBORWALK), “medium,” and “fast” (Atlantic Avenue) pedestrian and bike paths, as well as north-south transit, such as a shuttle.										
Stronger lateral connections to waterfront from the Rose F. Kennedy Greenway through programming/ground-level activity and maintaining view corridors. Programming of the interstitial spaces, such as the space between Rowes Wharf and 400 Atlantic Avenue.										
Develop a waterfront information hub that provides up-to-date ferry schedules, maps, and information about waterfront destinations.										
More active uses on Atlantic Avenue and better landscaping (street trees, plants, etc.).										
Legible public way through the Harbor Towers property. More clear distinctions between public and private through landscaping and wayfinding.										
Clarify East India Row and the boundary with the Harbor Towers. This might be done through material changes or landscaping.										
Greater visual porosity through the fences of the Harbor Towers property.										
Active uses and greater visual porosity at 400 Atlantic Avenue, especially the fence that faces the watersheet.										
Increased awareness, use, and public access to the Rowes Wharf rotunda and increased use of Rowes Wharf Pavilion for seasonal events and public programs.										

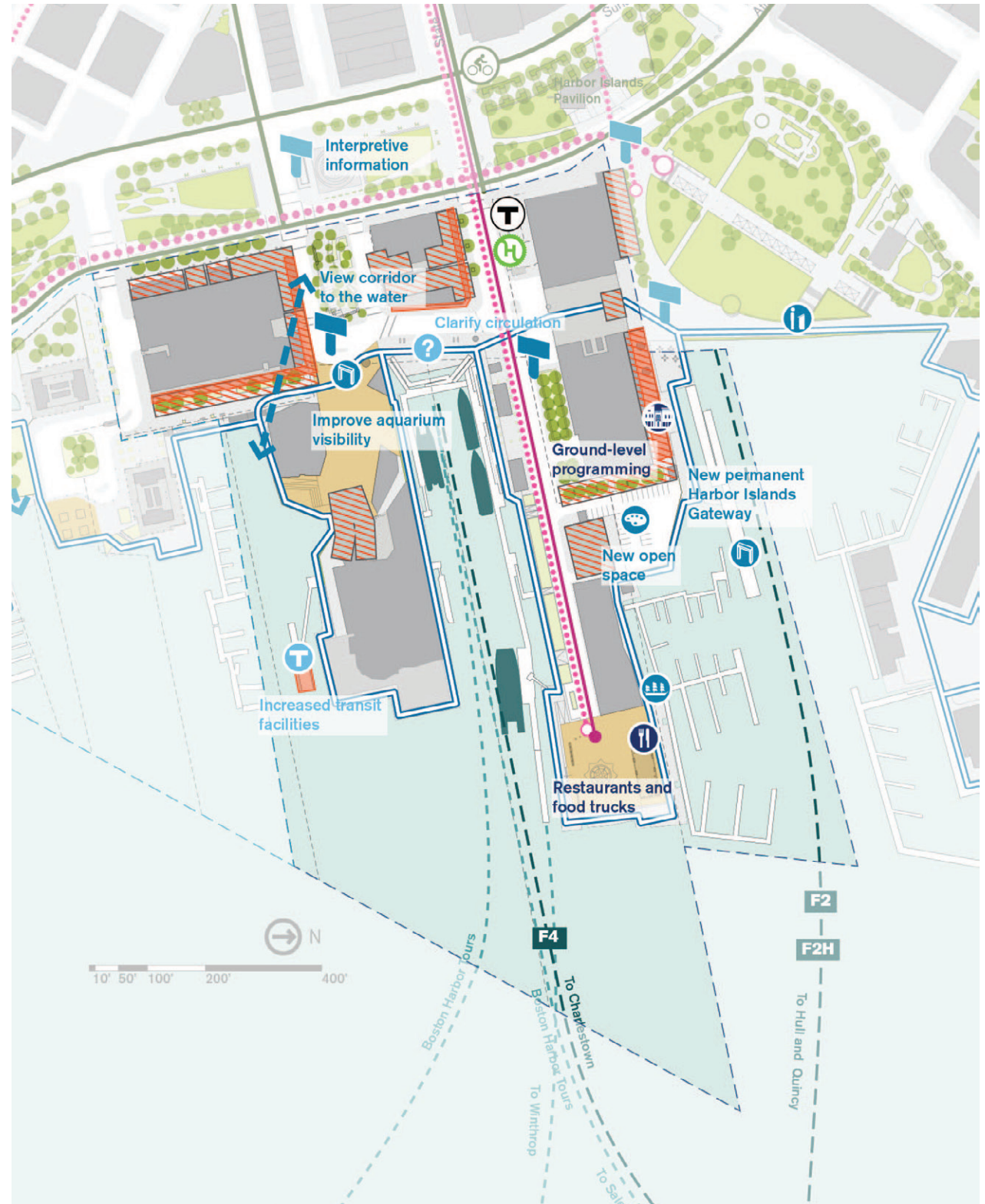
A selection of the public benefits recommended for Rows Wharf and India Row.



Long/Central Wharves

	Goals					Implementation Considerations and Challenges				
	A district accessible to all by foot, transit, water, and bike	Clearly defined connections	Climate change resilience	Four-season destinations and programming	Flexibility to accommodate future uses	Linked to significant development	Requires a partnership between stakeholders	Poses management challenges	Idea that needs adoption	Money
Four-season programming or festivals (e.g., cider festival in fall or ice sculpture festival in winter; see Quebec winter festival as example).	○	○	◐	●	◐	◐	●	◐	◐	●
Increased facilities for commuters and transit passengers , such as an enclosed ferry waiting room, bike storage, and other passenger amenities. This might occur in the Marriot Long Wharf or Harbor Garage redevelopment.	◐	◐	○	○	◐	●	●	◐	●	◐
Improve hardscape and add interpretive information about history of BRA-owned land between the waterfront and the Harbor Garage. Redevelop Chart House parking lot into open space, and connect with the restaurant in Marriott Long Wharf.	◐	◐	◐	●	○	●	◐	◐	○	●
Improve Aquarium plaza through unified materials , wayfinding, and visibility from the Greenway	◐	●	○	◐	◐	●	●	●	○	●
Unified wayfinding and intelligent transportation system (ITS) for ferries.	●	●	●	○	◐	◐	●	●	○	◐
A designated drop-off/pick-up area for school and charter bus users of water transportation and the other amenities and attractions.	●	○	○	○	●	◐	●	◐	○	◐
Introduce restaurant uses or food trucks on Long Wharf and large sculptural element to draw visitors to end	○	○	○	●	●	◐	◐	◐	○	◐
Create a permanent Harbor Islands Gateway on the waterfront.	◐	○	○	●	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	●
Add ground-level programming and porosity to the Marriott Long Wharf, such as retail and restaurant uses	○	●	○	●	◐	●	●	◐	○	◐
Interpretive signage through this area, both environmental and historical. Should build on the Walk to the Sea.	◐	●	●	○	◐	◐	◐	○	○	◐
Improve NEAq visibility from the Greenway through gateway elements, with possible display on IMAX theatre.	○	◐	○	●	○	○	◐	◐	◐	◐
Active uses on the Harbor Garage site facing Central Wharf and Atlantic Ave. Make visible the education programs and public uses inside.	○	◐	○	●	◐	●	◐	●	◐	●
Create view corridor to the water and NEAq in the Harbor Garage development site. Open space should be on the north side.	○	●	○	◐	◐	●	●	◐	●	●
Create visible and legible links from Harbor Islands Pavilion to the ferry locations	○	●	○	◐	◐	○	●	◐	○	●

A selection of the public benefits recommended for Long and Central wharves.



Watersheet

	Goals					Implementation Considerations and Challenges				
	A district accessible to all by foot, transit, water, and bike	Clearly defined connections	Climate change resilience	Four-season destinations and programming	Flexibility to accommodate future uses	Linked to significant development	Requires a partnership between stakeholders	Poses management challenges	Idea that needs adoption	Money
Create ferry hubs and information centers to expand the role of the Central Waterfront the primary water transportation center for Boston. Signage and wayfinding can assist commuters and visitors in finding the correct wharf and help better coordinate landside transfers. Sheltered and heated waiting areas landside will enable four-season use.	●	●	◐	○	◐	◐	●	◐	◐	◐
Designing a twenty-first-century climate-change resilient waterfront. This includes the design of landscapes and buildings to withstand flooding, and the piers and boardwalks at higher elevations. It requires proactive coordinated efforts by public, private, and nonprofit entities.	●	◐	◐	●	●	◐	●	◐	◐	●
Increase transportation and transfer options by adding more bus shuttles and water taxis or local ferries (small on-off vessels). This will attract more riders, especially during winter months. This may require additional water taxi docks.	●	◐	◐	○	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	◐
Subsidize water transit and add new routes, both Inner Harbor and within Greater Boston.	●	●	●	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	●
Subsidize Harbor Island ferries. This will encourage use of one of Boston's great open space resources. In addition, more activities and facilities on the Harbor Islands (e.g., bathrooms and seasonal tours) should be considered.	●	●	●	○	◐	●	◐	◐	◐	●
Develop landside facilities to support fishing and other recreational uses of the watersheet. This may include fish cleaning stations and amenities for fishermen.	◐	○	○	●	○	○	◐	◐	◐	◐
Develop services and facilities for recreational boaters, including transient moorings and slips, dinghy docks, and "touch and go" docks.	○	●	○	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐	◐
Maximize utilization of the watersheet, by developing a management plan and clear fairways. This may include redesigning the moorings to increase density of boat moorings in the harbor and coordination with the Harbor Master.	◐	●	○	◐	◐	◐	●	●	◐	◐
Ensure accessibility (ADA compliance) of docks, piers, and all water transit.	●	○	○	◐	◐	○	◐	○	○	◐
Enhance public safety standards. This might include revised standards for water's edge safety equipment and training for abutter business personnel to monitor and offer emergency services for abutting watersheets.						○	◐	○	◐	◐

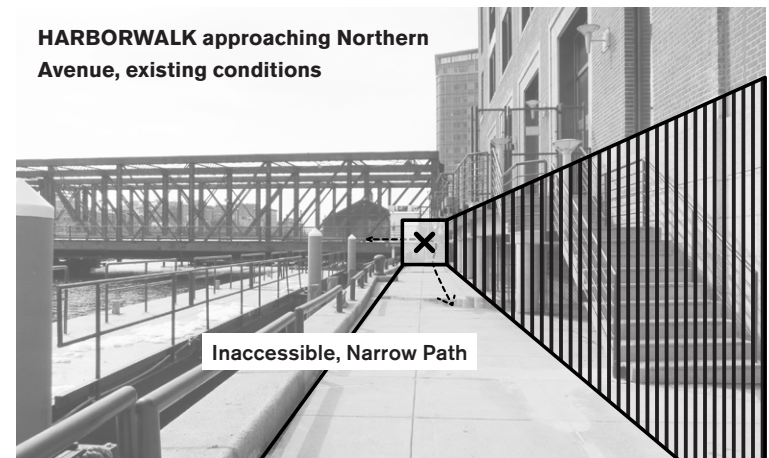
**A Vision for the Future of the
HARBORWALK near the Northern
Avenue Bridge**



The HARBORWALK near the Northern Avenue Bridge is narrow, poor quality, and edged with blank building facades and fences. In addition, the HARBORWALK is inaccessible here, with stairs that lead up the Northern Avenue Bridge level. A number of improvements can be coordinated at this location. The Coast Guard Building might add ground-level programming and open up its ground-level facing the waterfront. When the Hook site is developed

and the Northern Avenue Bridge is renovated, an accessible HARBORWALK along the waterfront and active edges facing the water should be prioritized. A ramp for the HARBORWALK could deck over the water, forming and expanded public realm. Together, these improvements by multiple parties would result a expanded, more active and welcoming public realm and HARBORWALK.

HARBORWALK approaching Northern Avenue, existing conditions



Process

40

The plan evolved through a two-part process that focused equally on stakeholder engagement and analysis of the study area.

This plan recognizes the interests and efforts of stakeholders, property owners, operators, and the general public in the area. To that end, it began with an analysis of the existing conditions, resources, and activities in the district, followed by an extensive public process that included charrettes, comment cards, and a project webpage.

Stakeholder Engagement

Public meetings and charrettes drew business owners, non-profit executives, residents, City officials, and other key stakeholders. A series of public charrettes generated ideas about potential public improvements and helped identify key areas of concern.

Concurrent with this effort, the City started preparing a Municipal Harbor Plan for the Downtown Waterfront—which this public realm and watersheet activation plan will inform. Through monthly meetings with the Municipal Harbor Plan Advisory Committee (MHPAC), property owners presented their plans for their properties, and this plan takes these ongoing efforts into account. The MHPAC included a broad bandwidth of stakeholders, included water transportation operators, residents, business owners, and representatives from the Greenway Conservancy, the Boston Harbor Island Alliance, the City's Environment Department, The Boston Harbor Association, and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. These stakeholders, with their deep knowledge about the history and complexity of the study area, provided insights and suggestions that significantly shaped the plan.



Meetings

- March 13, 2013 - Public Meeting on the Downtown Waterfront Planning Initiative
- March 14, 2013 - Public Walking Tours of the Study Area
- March 15, 2013 - Public Realm and Watersheet Activation Charrette
- April 24, 2013 - Downtown Waterfront MHPAC meeting
- May 17, 2013 - Charrette, in cooperation with the OneIN3 program
- May 22, 2013 - Downtown Waterfront MHPAC meeting
- June 12, 2013 - Downtown Waterfront MHPAC boat tour
- June 26, 2013 - Downtown Waterfront MHPAC meeting
- July 24, 2013 - Downtown Waterfront MHPAC meeting
- September 17, 2013 MHPAC water-dependent use subcommittee mtg
- September 25, 2013 - Downtown Waterfront MHPAC meeting
- October 23, 2013 - Downtown Waterfront MHPAC meeting
- November 1, 2013 - MHPAC Waterfront Activation Subcommittee Meeting
- November 20, 2013 - Downtown Waterfront MHPAC meeting
- December 18, 2013 - Downtown Waterfront MHPAC meeting

Please circle the number that most accurately reflects your connection to the Downtown Waterfront (you may circle more than one)

1 Merchant / Restaurant / Operator
2 Tourist
3 Resident (neighborhood)

4 Worker / Professional
5 Property Owner
6 Other

Please list three things you most like about and/or like to do on the Downtown Waterfront:
Go to ice skating rink. Otherwise I don't come here.

Please list three things you think would make the Downtown Waterfront better:
- feel opportunities will be a new boat dock to move these cranes than what exists - kind of stinky outdoors now.
- Better access to water - cooler tanks + places to be along water, not at a hotel!

Other comments:
Skate line infrastructure + protection combined with public access to water.

Please leave this card on your seat following the charrette so it can be collected by staff



March 15, 2013

Please circle the number that most accurately reflects your connection to the Downtown Waterfront (you may circle more than one)

1 Merchant / Restaurant / Operator
2 Tourist
3 Resident (neighborhood)

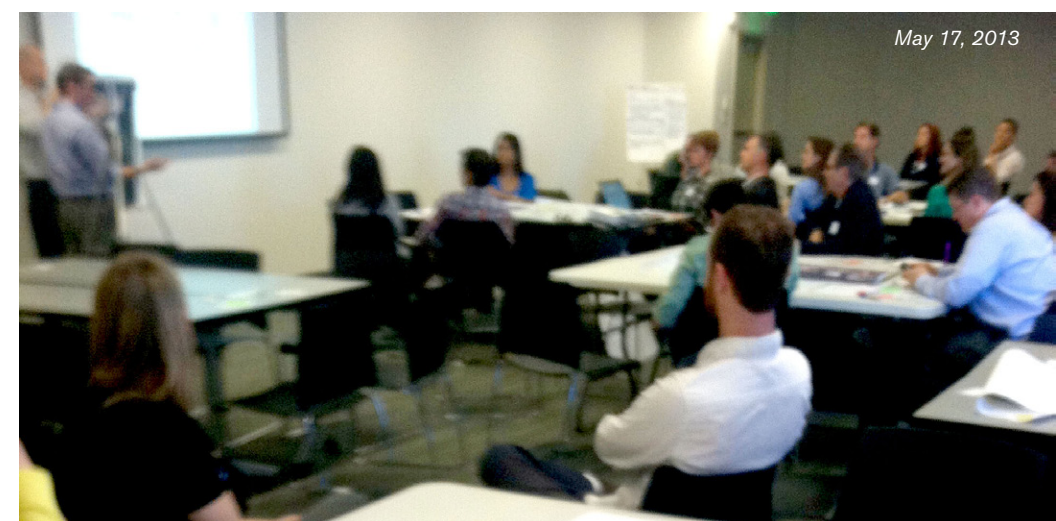
4 Worker / Professional
5 Property Owner
6 Other

Please list three things you most like about and/or like to do on the Downtown Waterfront:
- Aquarium
- open space
- cafes

Please list three things you think would make the Downtown Waterfront better:
- Better, more open connection from Greenway to Harbor
- Programing for kids
- More amenities w/ forward looking design
- festivals, food markets
- outdoor markets

Other comments:
- big vote for water shuttle from children to east Boston
- need winter activities w/ temporary heated spaces

Please leave this card on your seat following the charrette so it can be collected by staff



May 17, 2013

Please circle the number that most accurately reflects your connection to the Downtown Waterfront (you may circle more than one)

1 Merchant / Restaurant / Operator
2 Tourist
3 Resident (neighborhood)

4 Worker / Professional
5 Property Owner
6 Other

Please list three things you most like about and/or like to do on the Downtown Waterfront:
Walk - Harbor Walk
See the Harbor
Watch people enjoy the Harbor, etc.
- eg. Rings Frankie (best part of Greenway) + to Castle Island with stops along Seaport

Please list three things you think would make the Downtown Waterfront better:
Clearer Signs
More boat docks
Better transportation - eg. shuttle bus along Greenway

Other comments:
We also need to make 'connection' between 'downtown' + waterfront clearer + between North End + Freedom Trail
Need to keep noise level down on the 'busy streets' in summer (so they get closer to docks)

Please leave this card on your seat following the charrette so it can be collected by staff

Please circle the number that most accurately reflects your connection to the Downtown Waterfront (you may circle more than one)

1 Merchant / Restaurant / Operator
2 Tourist
3 Resident (neighborhood)

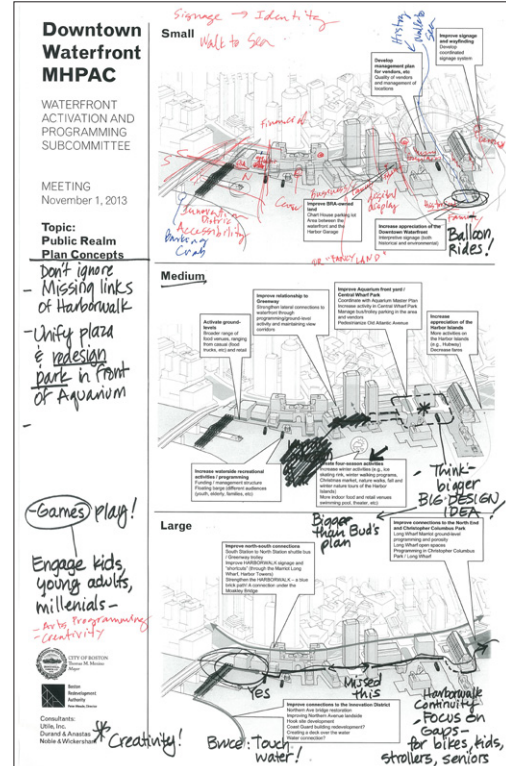
4 Worker / Professional
5 Property Owner
6 Other

Please list three things you most like about and/or like to do on the Downtown Waterfront:
- walk along the harbor
- open to lunch or dinner (without poor sanitation)

Please list three things you think would make the Downtown Waterfront better:
- move casual waterfront or places to park
- no signs hanging
- mostly food, shops or fast service
- more walking
- waterfront restaurant
- grass / landscaping

Other comments:
- location should provide decisions
- all water services
- address blues area of Aquarium area
- address blues area of Aquarium area
- address blues area of Aquarium area

Please leave this card on your seat following the charrette so it can be collected by staff

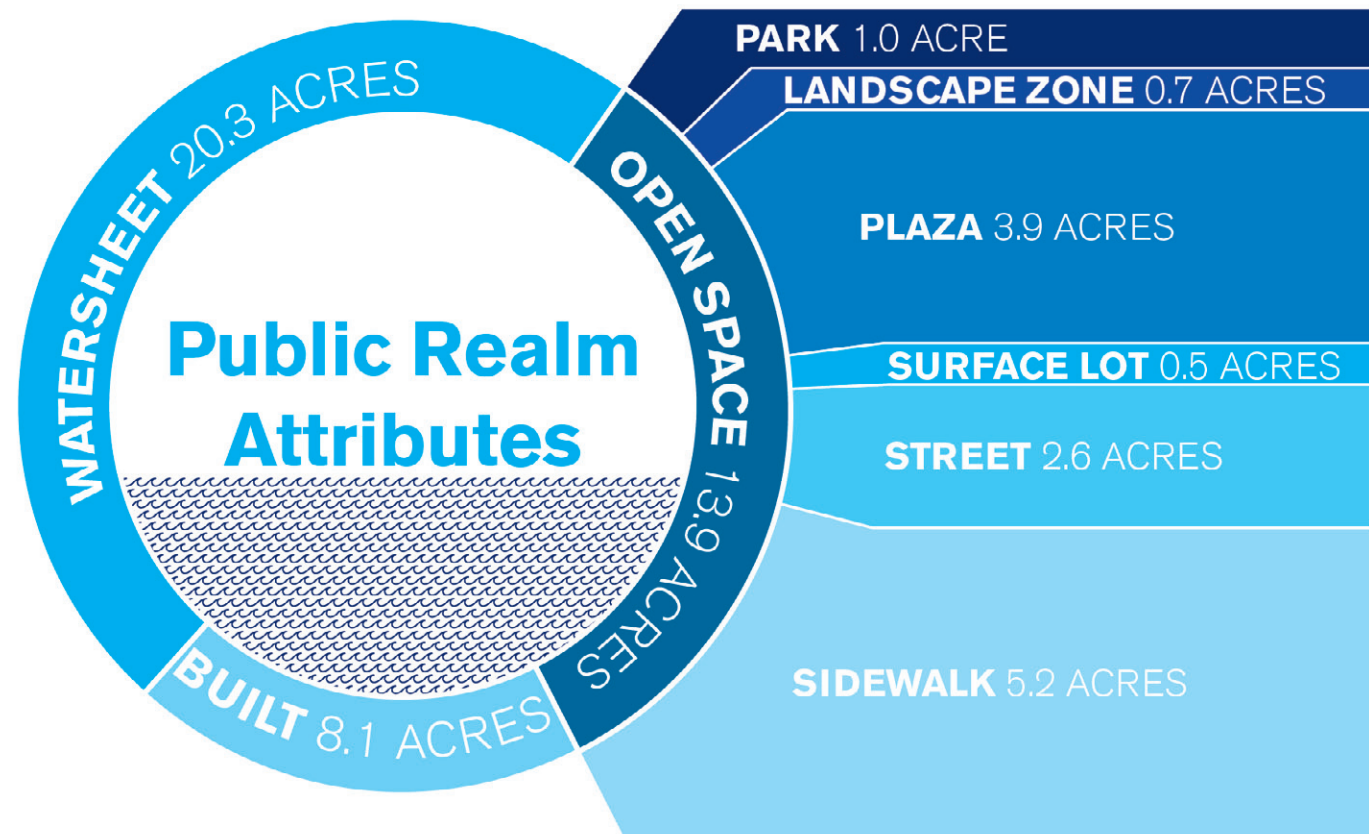


March 15, 2013

Analysis

Concurrent to the stakeholder engagement process, the consultant team and the BRA conducted an in-depth analysis of the study area and its relationship to Greater Boston. This included a survey of the existing assets and how they are used, recent and planned projects, and a pedestrian path study.

This analysis confirmed much of the input from stakeholders, such as the wide range of activity and vibrancy of the district. It also reinforced the notion that the district is composed of various subdistricts, ranging from the lively section of Long and Central Wharves to the quieter residential areas to the office and maritime-related uses closer to Northern Avenue. The district overall has a rich range of open spaces, from Central Wharf Park to the HARBORWALK.





















Existing Resource Inventory



Seasonal Programs








A wide range of seasonal programming further activates the waterfront. Rowes Wharf in particular is a hub of seasonal activity, from the popular Barge Music summer series to the winter Boston Wine Festival and ice skating. Long and Central wharves and Rowes Wharf serve primarily as transit centers in the colder months, with regular MBTA ferry service. In the warmer months, recreational ferries add to the pedestrian traffic in the study area. The number of people coming to the waterfront has increased substantially. Both official visitor numbers as well as anecdotal evidence supports this. Visitorship to the waterfront, as well as water transportation ridership, are expected to continue growing, especially in the summer. Managing and coordinating the seasonal activity is a key concern.

Seasonal Ferries

		Year-Round: Water Taxis
 Summer		Boston Harbor Islands: 38 Ferries per Day
	 Sunset Cruise	 Harbor Tours
	 Moonlight Cruise	 Whale Watching
		Boston Harbor Islands: 25 Ferries per Day
 Fall	 Whale Watching	 Sunset Cruises
	 Harbor Tours	
 Winter		
 Spring		Boston Harbor Islands: 36 Ferries per Day
	 Sunset Cruise	 Moonlight Cruise
	 Whale Watching	

Seasonal Activities

Summer in the City/Summer on the Waterfront

	Live Music Monday through Thursday
	Movies by Moonlight Fridays
	Mini Speed Boats
<hr/>	
	Mini Speed Boats
<hr/>	
	Boston Wine Festival: January to March
	Winter on the Wharf
	First Night Fireworks

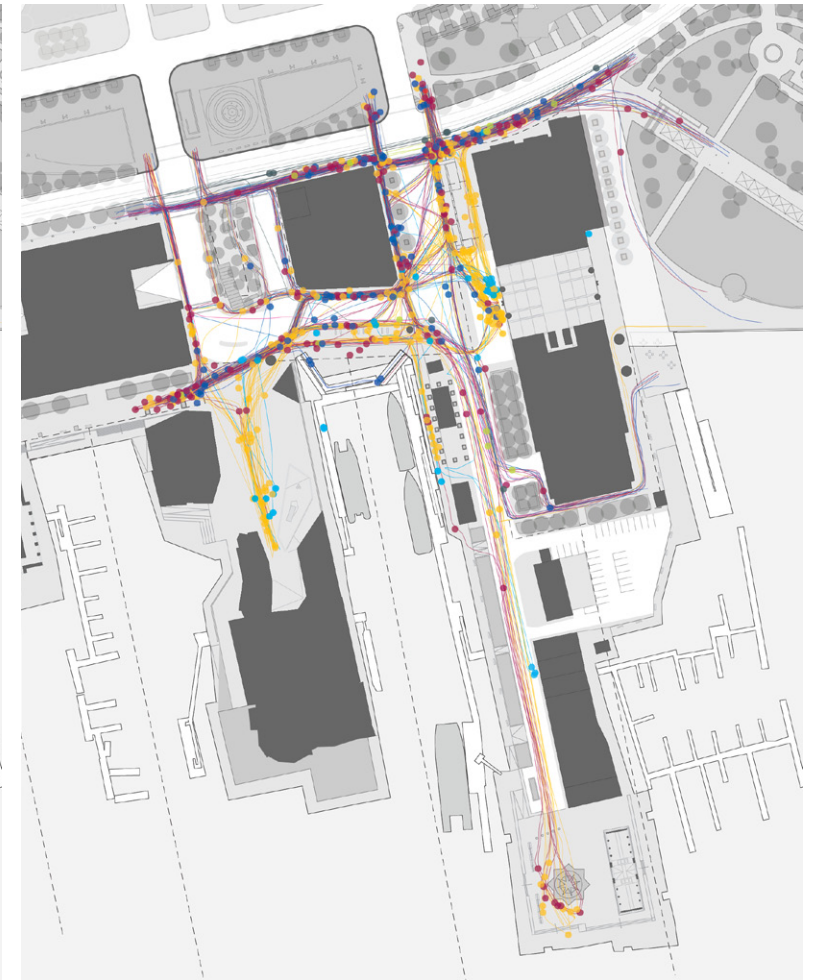
Pedestrian Analysis

An analysis of pedestrian movements on Long and Central wharves reveals that there are pedestrian bottlenecks in certain areas, namely around the Aquarium T stop, along Atlantic Avenue, and around 255 State Street. In both peak summer times and winter rush hour, pedestrians tend to stay on Atlantic Avenue. Very few venture out to the end of Long Wharf, even in peak summer weather. This means that open space is not being fully utilized.

July 2013 Pedestrian Traffic



January 2014 Pedestrian Traffic



- Bikers
- Runners
- Business People
- Residents
- Tourists
- Workers

Multimodal Transportation Network



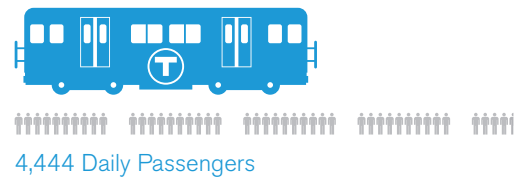
Multimodal Transportation Network

The study area has a wide range of pedestrian paths, bike paths, and water and public transportation options. As the pedestrian study revealed, there are bottlenecks of activity, especially along Atlantic Avenue. The existing paths, such as the Walk to the Sea and the HARBORWALK, lack legibility in certain areas.

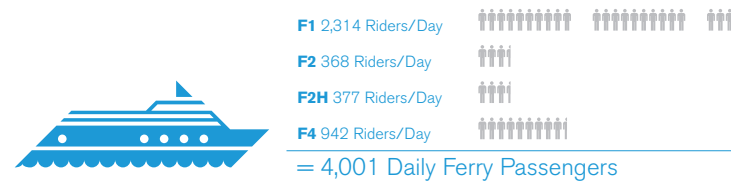
There is one MBTA Blue Line stop in the study area, and Orange and Red Line stops nearby at State Street and South Station, respectively. Streams of people come through these stations on a regular basis. In addition, the two Hubway stations and the bike lanes along Atlantic Avenue generate considerable bicycle traffic. Ferry transit also adds several thousand daily travelers to the area. In addition, two sizeable garages provide parking for residents, businesspeople, and visitors to the area attractions. Parking garages nearby are plentiful as well. This area is well-connected to the rest of the city through a wealth of transportation options.

Daily Passenger Counts

MBTA Subway



Ferry



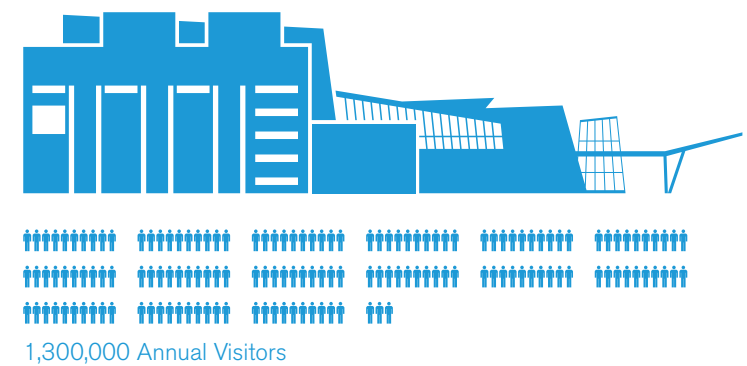
Hubway



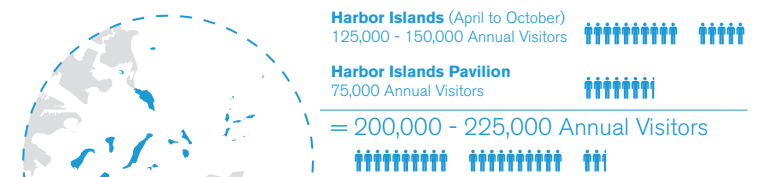
Add citations and dates for these stats.

Area Attractions

New England Aquarium



Boston Harbor Islands




Add NEAq whale watch vessels - 2013 passengers = 120k

Appendix







A Comprehensive Legend

48

Throughout this plan, a wide range of icons have been used. The appendix serves as a reference for the various icons used.

	Targeted Area for Improvements
	Area of Proposed Active Edge
	Important Node
	Significant Connections
	Pedestrian Connections
	Significant Building Entries
	Wayfinding Location
	Existing Amenity
	Harborwalk

Connectivity

-  Increased Accessibility
-  Multimodal
-  Better Access for All
-  Improved Connections
-  Clarify Circulation
-  Transit Connection

Legibility

-  Signage and Wayfinding
-  Visual Porosity
-  Public Art
-  Gateway Opportunity
-  Interpretive Signage

Activation and Programming

-  Robust Public Horticulture
-  Public Waterfront Access
-  Expanded Public Space or Use
-  Storm Surge Protection
-  Restaurants or Retail
-  Active Edges



DRAFT – April 9, 2014