

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



1. ENHANCE OPEN SPACE

**2. IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY**

**3. IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR
UNDERUTILIZED REAL ESTATE**

Public Participation Process

As a member of the community, the Church is working with its neighbors, public officials, and other interested parties to determine how to achieve its goals while also responding to potential community impacts.

As part of the planning process, Mayor Thomas M. Menino appointed a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) in January 2009. The CAC is responsible for assisting the City, through the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), for the duration of the project, ensuring that community priorities

are addressed at all stages of project planning. The BRA's role involved staffing the CAC, creating a project website, advertising meetings, and providing notes and presentation materials to the CAC and community.

The CAC has met approximately once a month since February 2009—seventeen times in total through July 2010. All meetings have been open to the public. At these meetings, the Church outlined its objectives, ideas, and plans. The CAC reviewed potential sites for development, considered various massing concepts and open space issues, and reviewed wind, shadow, and traffic impacts.



1. Location of the Christian Science Plaza.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

The Christian Science Plaza (the “Plaza”) is home to the world headquarters of The First Church of Christ, Scientist.

The Plaza is a favorite Boston destination for thousands of visitors, neighbors, tourists, and church members – attending worship services, visiting the exhibits and the world-famous Mapparium® in The Mary Baker Eddy Library, splashing in the much-loved Children’s Fountain, resting by the Reflecting Pool, or playing on the lawn.

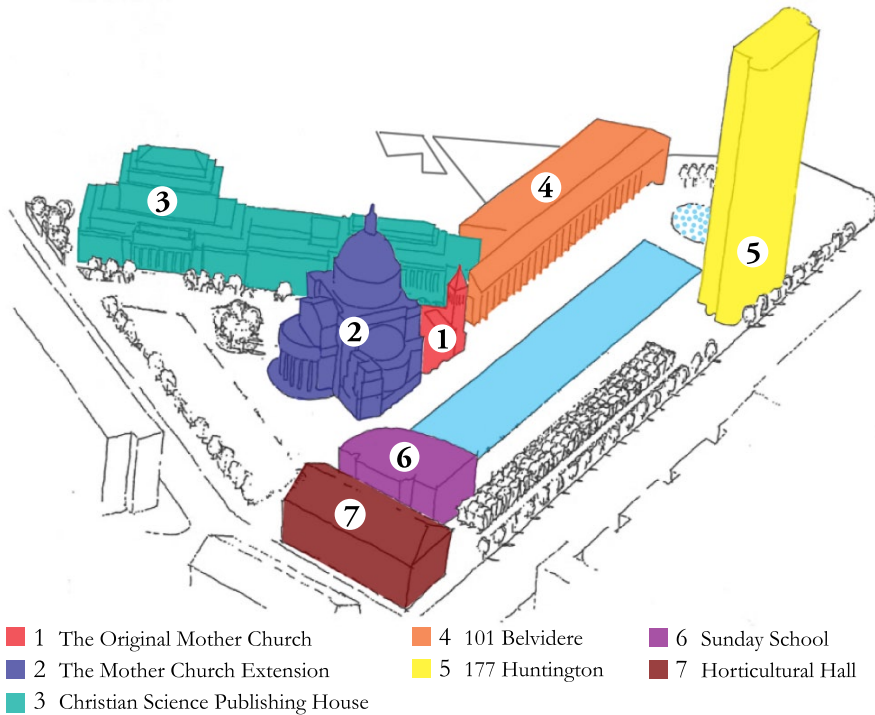
The Plaza is located at the intersection of several dynamic and diverse neighborhoods—Back Bay, Prudential, South End/ St. Botolph, and Fenway. At the core of the Plaza are two architecturally distinct buildings, the smaller Church edifice, the “Original Mother Church,” completed in 1894, and the larger domed Church, the “Extension,” completed in 1906.

The Church of Christ, Scientist – which has branch churches all over the world – has had a presence in the local Boston community for over 130 years. The public is welcome to attend weekly church services, free organ recitals, chiming concerts, and activities on the Plaza hosted by the Church.

The 14.5-acre Plaza has seven buildings (all of which will remain) and about ten acres of open space—one of the largest privately-owned urban open spaces in Boston that is accessible to the public.

Purpose, Objectives, and Design Criteria

Nearly 40 years have passed since the development of the Christian Science Plaza. A review of the Plaza’s conditions concluded that improvements to the Plaza would be in keeping with the growth and vibrancy of the nearby neighborhoods and today’s emphasis on greater environmental sensitivity.



2. Sketch of the Christian Science Plaza.

In addition, the Church is seeking to have real estate expenses covered by real estate revenues, rather than by donations, which the Church would like to devote more directly to its mission activities.

The Plaza Revitalization Project is in response to the Church's review of the Plaza conditions, and has three objectives:

1. **Enhance the open space** on the Christian Science Plaza to make it a more usable and attractive year-round destination.
2. **Improve the environmental sustainability of the Plaza** with emphasis on better water and groundwater management.
3. **Identify opportunities for underutilized real estate**, including reuse of some existing buildings and the addition of new buildings, which would generate a revenue stream to help ensure that the Plaza remains a valuable asset to the Boston community.

These objectives, combined with design criteria related to open space, land use, historic resources, transportation, environmental sustainability and economic sustainability, provide a framework for the proposed Plaza Revitalization Project.

Objective 1: Enhance Open Space

The Church and its consultants studied a number of alternatives that included various changes and upgrades to the Plaza, including changing the size and shape of the Reflecting Pool and creating new landscaped areas. The main conclusion from these studies is that the existing open space is a high-quality design

that would benefit more from improvements than a redesign.

The major improvements include:

- ◆ Reducing water use.
- ◆ Making the Plaza, including the Reflecting Pool, more attractive year-round.
- ◆ Eliminating leakage from the Reflecting Pool to the garage below.
- ◆ Improving the pedestrian experience.
- ◆ Softening the landscape.
- ◆ Working with the City of Boston to relocate the idle bus area on Huntington Avenue.

To enhance the open space and address the above issues, the Church has created an open space plan. This plan includes:

- ◆ Rebuilding the Reflecting Pool, which can no longer be repaired, with one of similar size that retains its reflective nature, is shallower to reduce water usage, and has elements to enhance its winter-time beauty.
- ◆ Adding a welcoming pedestrian crossing through the Reflecting Pool between the Original Mother Church and Huntington Avenue, reestablishing an historic connection.
- ◆ Shortening the Pool slightly to allow a wider pedestrian passage near the Sunday School Building.
- ◆ Preserving the Children's Fountain and possibly adding winter activities such as ice skating.
- ◆ Creating new pathways across landscaped areas, such as along Massachusetts Avenue.
- ◆ Expanding lawn areas and adding more shade trees, benches, and tables.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objective 2: Improve Environmental Sustainability

The Church has taken significant steps to become more environmentally responsible in its current operations. In 2009, the renovation of floors 5-9 in the Publishing House achieved a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Commercial Interiors (LEED-CI) Gold rating from the U.S. Green Building Council. To improve environmental sustainability within its operations, the Church has taken a number of steps, including:

- ◆ Recycling paper and non-food cardboard.
- ◆ Taking steps to reduce energy use, including installing more energy-efficient lighting and lighting fixtures and using an automated temperature control system.
- ◆ Providing employees incentives to use public transportation and providing bicycle racks, lockers, and showers.

The Plaza Revitalization Project builds upon these efforts by:

- ◆ Reducing water use through changes to the Reflecting Pool.
- ◆ Improving groundwater management for the approximately 4,800 wood piles under the Original Mother Church and The Mother Church Extension.
- ◆ Reducing the urban heat island effect by planting trees and more grass areas.
- ◆ Repurposing buildings, which limits the need for new construction in the city.

Objective 3: Plan for Underutilized Real Estate*Rationale for Development*

The Church has limited the amount of proposed new development to 950,000 square feet since any more density would impact the Plaza and its surrounding areas in undesirable ways, including reducing the amount of open space. The amount of new development was determined by analyzing the surrounding neighborhoods, the existing zoning as-of-right development potential on the Plaza, and five additional factors:

1. The Plaza's existing density, or floor area ratio (FAR), is below its zoned FAR and is also very low when compared to the FAR of surrounding areas.
2. The Plaza's open space in proportion to its built space is high—nearly two-thirds of the total acreage of the Plaza—and it is perhaps the largest privately owned, publicly accessible urban open space in the City of Boston.
3. The total cost of operating and maintaining the open space is very high.
4. The cost of the open space as a percentage of building square footage is also large, and far exceeds the norm for privately owned spaces in Boston.
5. The Church's real estate costs represent a disproportionate amount of its total spending, limiting the amount of donations that can be directed to mission activities.

Development Analysis

The Church, its consultants, and the CAC studied nine Sites for possible development potential on the Plaza. Five of the Sites were eliminated from consideration because of their urban design implications, their size, location, or existing features, such as the Reflecting Pool. Three Sites (two of which will be combined into one Site) were determined to be the best locations for development: Belvidere/Dalton Site and Huntington Site.

The Belvidere/Dalton Site consists of two parcels of land that can be connected through appropriate easements and/or arrangements with the City, creating one complete site and a new Belvidere Street/Dalton Street intersection. The preferred building configuration on the Belvidere/Dalton Site includes two buildings—a high-rise of approximately 512 feet and a mid-rise of approximately 251 feet (heights measured according to the Boston Zoning Code). In addition, a new open space will be created on the Site. Parking will be provided in an underground garage beneath the Site. The development of the Site also includes improvements to the adjacent Belvidere Street/Dalton Street intersection. Planned uses for the two buildings on the Belvidere/Dalton Site are residential and hotel, with ground-floor retail. Some limited office use is possible, depending on market demands.

The Huntington Site is adjacent to the Sunday School Building on Huntington Avenue. The Huntington Site was chosen because of its size and location, suitable for residential uses that would activate the “pedestrian-dormant” corner of the Plaza with new life and activity. The proposed building will be a slender structure, approximately 291 feet tall (shorter than 177 Huntington Avenue) and

will provide approximately 150,000 square feet of space.

Potential Impacts

The proposed developments are anticipated to have minimal impact on the surrounding environment. Preliminary analyses have been undertaken on the proposed development, including historic resources, transportation, wind, shadow, geotechnical conditions/groundwater, and water and sewer infrastructure. These analyses were shared with the CAC and updated over time to reflect CAC input to the proposals.

Historic Resources

Over the years, the Church has diligently maintained, protected, and preserved the seven buildings located on the Christian Science Plaza. Each of the buildings contributes in its own way to the historic and architectural significance of the site. Going forward, there are no plans to demolish any of the existing buildings. Proposed new construction would be executed in a manner that would be respectful of the existing buildings while reflecting contemporary designs to illustrate the continual architectural evolution of the site.

The siting of the proposed new development has been carefully selected in order to minimize impacts to the historic resources on the site and in the area, including the adjacent residential buildings on St. Germain Street.

Transportation

The proposed development plan is anticipated to have minimal transportation impacts on nearby intersections because of the proposed predominance of residential and hotel land uses (as opposed to more

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

vehicular-intense office and commercial uses). With the inclusion of the Symphony Streetscape Project transportation improvements and the improvements to the Belvidere/Dalton Street intersection as part of the Revitalization Project, all signalized and unsignalized study area intersections are expected to operate at an acceptable level of service (LOS) under the 2019 Build Conditions. These improvements will benefit both existing and new users of the site.

The proposed development is also anticipated to have minimal impact on parking. Because of the existing on-site parking supply and residential and hotel land-use development program, a minimal net increase in parking needs is anticipated. In addition, the area currently has a high use of transit, bicycling, and walking versus drive-alone commuting. This high use will continue to be encouraged as part of the development program.

Wind

It is projected that pedestrian-level wind conditions will generally remain similar to the existing conditions after the addition of the proposed buildings. Annual wind conditions will remain suitable for walking across the majority of the Plaza, similar to the existing conditions. Pedestrian-level wind conditions will be addressed during final design of the new buildings. Uncomfortable wind conditions can be mitigated by implementing design features such as trellises, canopies, wind screens, and landscape solutions.

Shadow

It is anticipated that the proposed development will have minimal net new shadow impacts on the surrounding area. The new shadow created by the Huntington building will be cast in the area between

Massachusetts Avenue and Huntington Avenue, including at times on portions of the Plaza open space, the Original Mother Church and The Mother Church Extension, and the Reflecting Pool. New shadow from the proposed Belvidere/Dalton buildings will generally be in the zone north of Belvidere Street and east of Huntington Avenue, including the pedestrian areas at the intersection of Dalton and Belvidere Streets and along Belvidere Street. Most of the new shadow from the Belvidere/Dalton buildings will be cast on rooftops. No new shadow is cast on the open space at the intersection of Clearway Street and Dalton Street. No new shadow is created on parks or open spaces in the vicinity of the Plaza, except for a small portion of Southwest Corridor Park in the evening during the summer.

Geotechnical Conditions/Groundwater

The planned redevelopment of the Plaza will involve construction of new buildings extending below the groundwater table on the Belvidere/Dalton site. Construction below the groundwater table will include installation of groundwater cutoffs extending into the marine clay layer and waterproofed below-grade structures. In addition, measures will be taken to minimize connections between the Upper and Lower Aquifers. Furthermore, the stormwater from the developed areas of the site will be recharged. These issues will be addressed during the Article 80 review process.

Water and Sewer Infrastructure

It is anticipated that the location and capacity of existing water and sewer infrastructure in the vicinity of the Plaza will be able to accommodate the proposed development.

The infrastructure systems serving the Plaza will be designed to meet or exceed applicable guidelines and regulations. At this early stage of the Revitalization Project, no significant infrastructure mitigation measures are anticipated, but the Church will undertake appropriate steps to ensure compliance with all regulations. For each development project, a Site Plan and a General Service Application will be prepared and submitted to the Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) for all new water, sewer, and storm drain connections to the new buildings. As required by BWSC, all new connections to the BWSC's systems will be constructed at the Church and/or future development partner's expense and are subject to approval by the Commission.

Many of the existing infrastructure systems that serve the Plaza are privately owned and maintained by the Church. At this time, it is anticipated that this arrangement will be continued.

Implementation

The implementation of the Project will require certain zoning relief. There has been no final determination as to the exact form this will take, but it will include one or more of the following alternatives:

- ◆ Establishment of a Planned Development Area.
- ◆ Establishment of an Urban Renewal Area District.
- ◆ Zoning map changes.
- ◆ Zoning variances.

All of these alternatives will require further public process in the form of formal submissions to the BRA and other City agencies,

with public hearings and the opportunity for additional community input.

In addition, regardless of the form of zoning relief, Article 80 Large Project Review will be required for each building that is developed as a part of the Project, which will require a formal submission to the BRA, a public hearing, and the opportunity for community input concerning the specific building.

Boston Landmarks Commission Petition

In January 2007, a petition was submitted by 15 Boston residents to the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) to designate the Christian Science Plaza as a Boston Landmark.

At its January 23, 2007, public hearing, the Boston Landmarks Commission voted to accept this petition for further study. The Church has been cooperating with the BLC and provided research material to them.

The BLC Study Report was made available for review on June 22, 2010, and a public hearing was held on July 13, 2010. The BLC will consider public comments and requested amendments before a vote is taken at a subsequent public hearing.

The Church is looking forward to working with the BLC to develop appropriate standards and criteria for the revitalization and redevelopment of the Plaza so improvements are integrated sensitively within the historic context.

Public Benefits

The Plaza Revitalization Project will have significant public benefits related to the

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

physical space of the Plaza, sustainability efforts, and the new development. These benefits include:

- ◆ Improved open space for the public's use year-round.
- ◆ Additional green space.
- ◆ Improved aesthetics year-round.
- ◆ Improved site circulation.
- ◆ Decreased water use.
- ◆ Less water from the Reflecting Pool and rainstorms discharged to the combined sewer system.
- ◆ Decreased urban heat island effect.
- ◆ Increased groundwater infiltration to support adequate groundwater levels.
- ◆ New vitality to the area.
- ◆ New retail spaces and increased street-level activity.
- ◆ New construction and permanent jobs.
- ◆ New affordable housing units that comply with Mayor Menino's Executive Order.
- ◆ Integrated improvements with the Symphony Streetscape upgrades.
- ◆ Increased tax revenues for the City.
- ◆ Statutory linkage from possible office or hotel use.

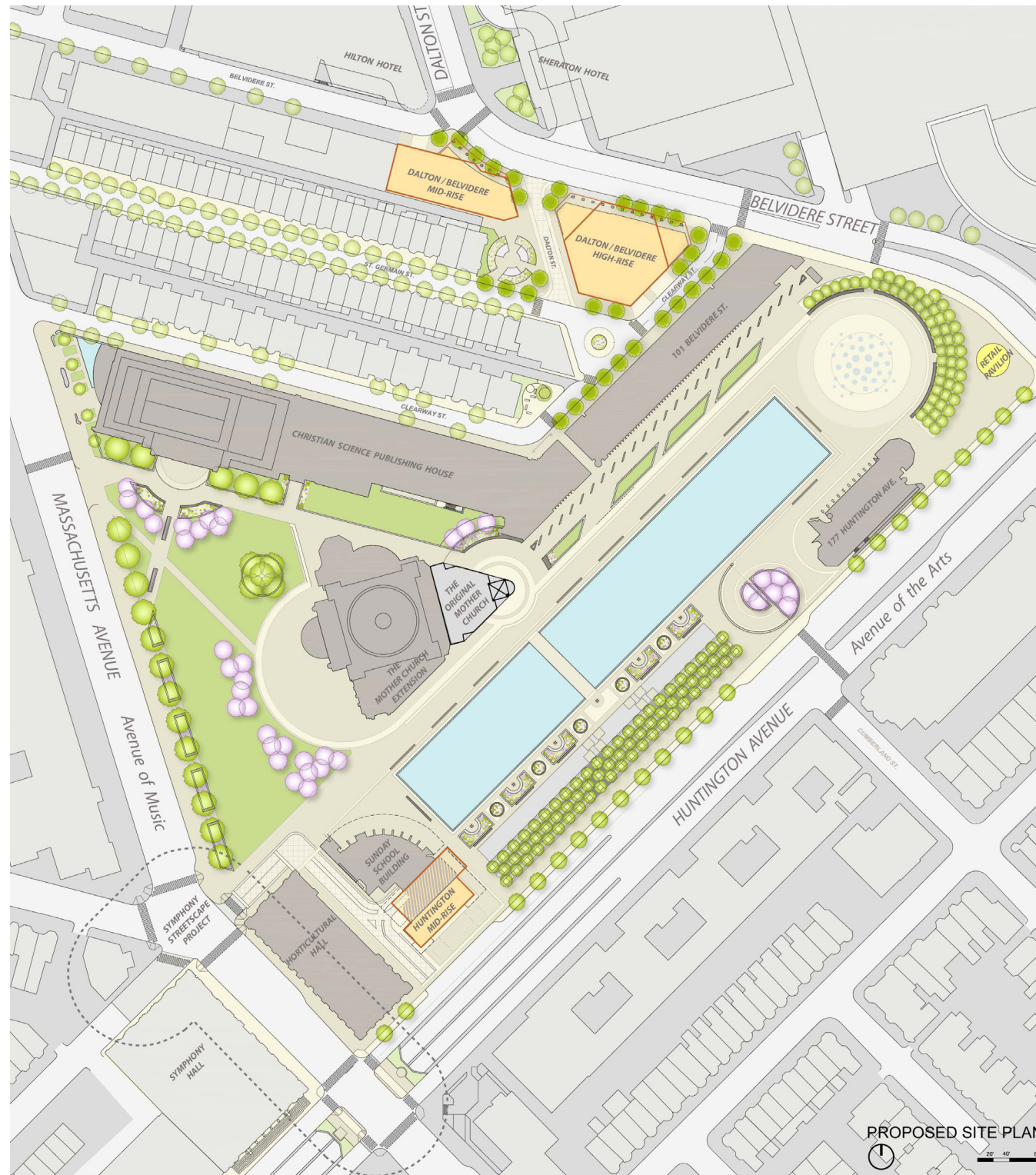


3. Aerial view of Christian Science Plaza and surrounding areas.

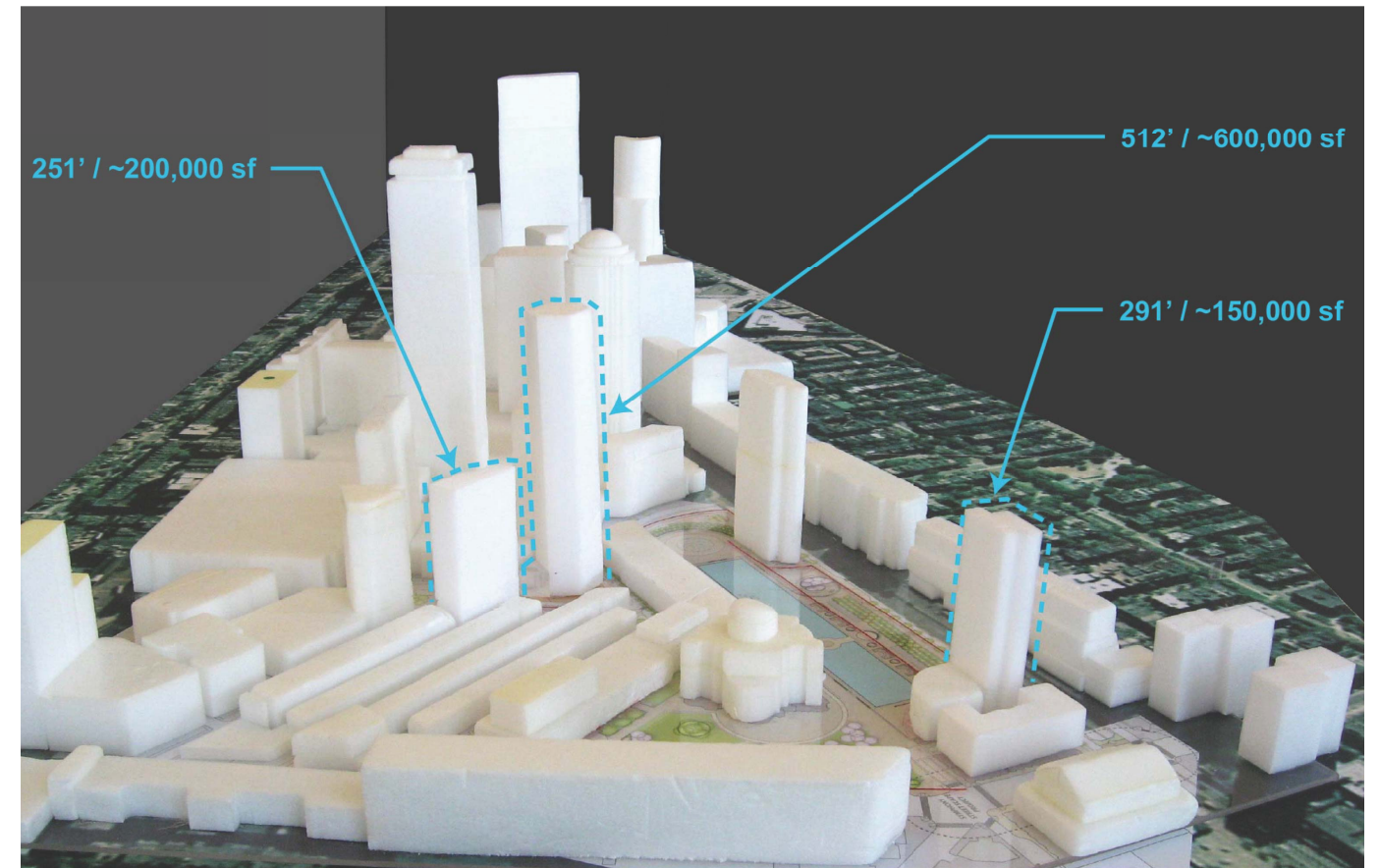


4. Existing Site Plan

EXISTING: Aerial & Plan



5. Plan showing proposed open space improvements and footprints of new buildings.



ZONING HEIGHT & SQUARE FOOTAGE -----
 * Massing Height is equal to Zoning Height plus ~20' of mechanical penthouse

6. Model showing proposed new buildings.



PROPOSED: Plan & Model

DRAFT



INDEX OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND DRAWINGS

Photographs and Drawings

COVER

Figure	Title	Description	Credit	Creator	Image
Front	Boston Aerial	Photo of the Christian Science Plaza and Boston.	© Skyshots	Skyshots	
Back	The Mother Church	The Mother Church at sunrise.	Photo by Charles Meyer © meyermedia	Meyer, Charles	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Figure	Title	Description	Credit	Creator	Image
0	Plaza - from Prudential Skywalk	Photo of the Christian Science Plaza from the Prudential building Skywalk.	© The First Church of Christ, Scientist	Photo: Herlinger, Robert A.; Modified by: Williams, Kayle	
1	Boston Aerial	Photo depicting the location of the Christian Science Plaza.	© Skyshots	Aerial: Skyshots; Modified by: Williams, Kayle	
2	Site Sketch	Site Sketch of the Christian Science Plaza.	Courtesy of The First Church of Christ, Scientist	Sketch: Unknown; Modified by: Williams, Kayle	
3	Boston Aerial	Aerial view of the Christian Science Plaza and surrounding areas.	© Skyshots	Aerial: Skyshots; Modified by: Williams, Kayle	
4	Existing Conditions Plan	Existing Site Plan.	Courtesy of The First Church of Christ, Scientist	Elkus Manfredi Architects	
5	Enhanced Open Space	Illustrative plan showing proposed open space improvements and footprints of new buildings.	Courtesy of The First Church of Christ, Scientist	Elkus Manfredi Architects	
6	Massing Model	Model showing proposed new buildings.	Courtesy of The First Church of Christ, Scientist	Elkus Manfredi Architects	

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