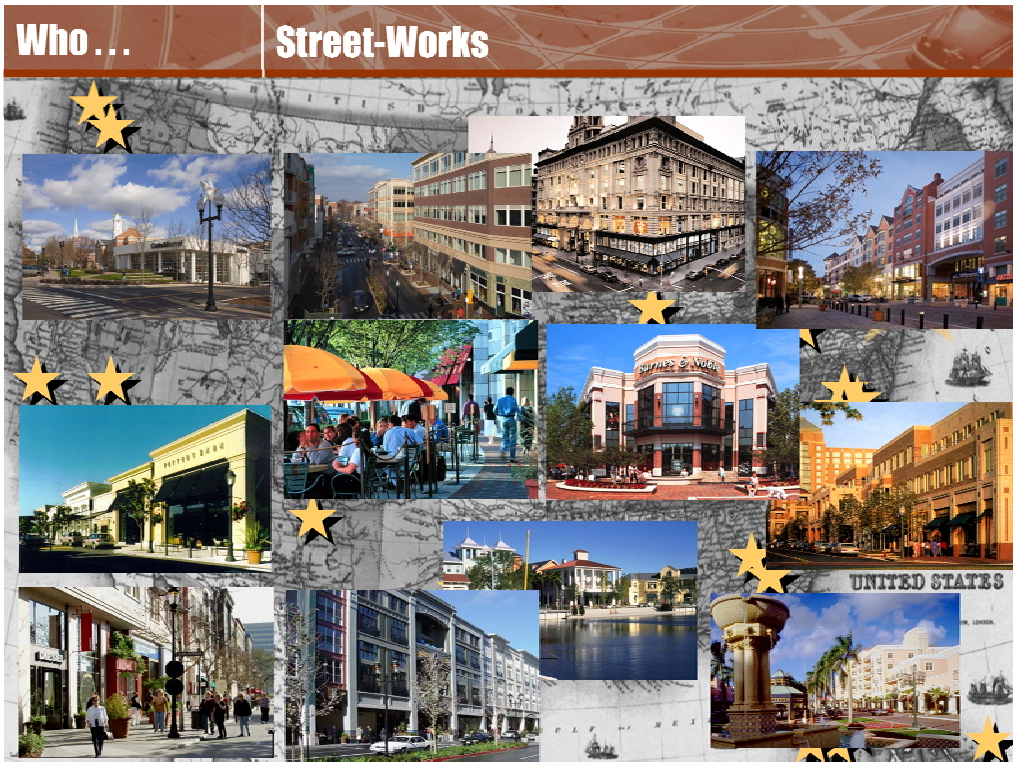
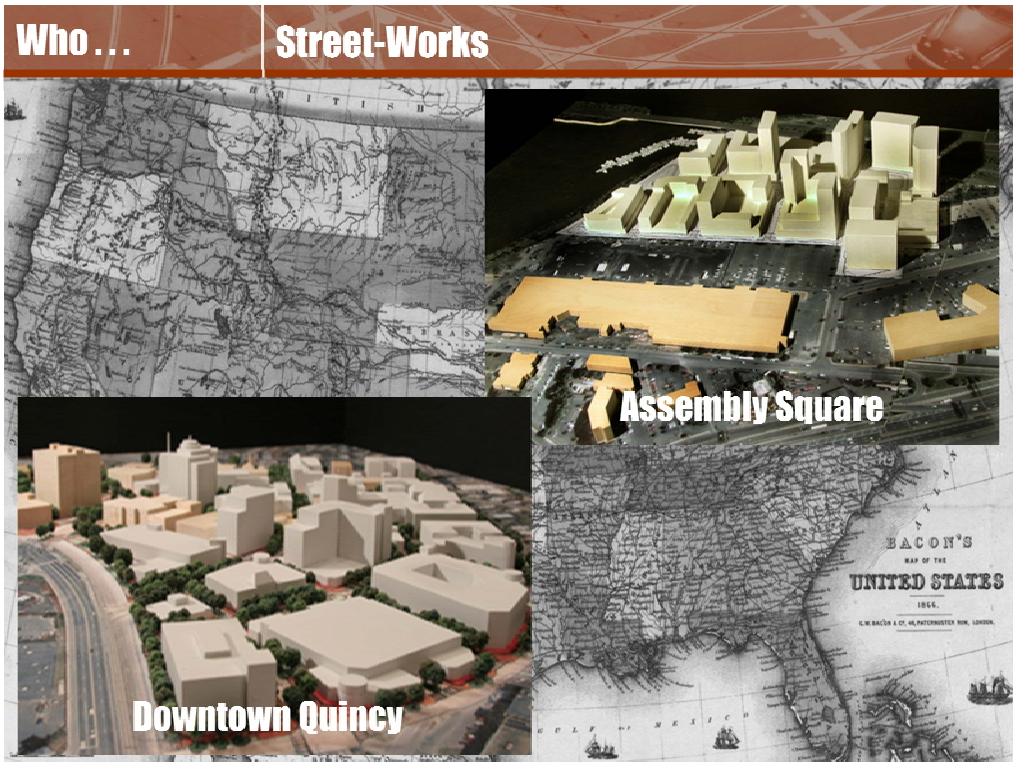
Bayside @ Columbia Point

A conversation with the Columbia Point Task Force...

Corcoran-Jennison



Street-Works is a nationally recognized development and consulting firm with more than 20 years of experience in creating mixed-use districts with a great sense of places. The firm provides development consulting services to other developers, organizations and municipalities across the country who are looking to develop or support the development of vital new community places. The firm's work is informed by its own developments, including the recently completed Blue Back Square in West Hartford, CT.



Street-Works is currently involved in a number of Boston area developments including Assembly Square in Somerville and Quincy Center. Assembly Square, which is being developed by Federal Realty Investment Trust, is a 4 million square foot development focused around a mixed-use main street anchored by the river at one end and a new public square at the other. A proposed new T station is another important element of the plan. Program components include 1800+/- units of housing, a new hotel, over 1 million square feet of housing and almost 500,000 square feet of retail. Intended to be developed in phases, the mixed-use, retail anchored main street component will be in the first phase.

As a developer, Street-Works is currently working with the City of Quincy on a plan to redevelop the downtown. Once a shopping mecca for many in the region, Quincy Center has fallen on hard times, but the “good bones” survive. Proximity to Boston, its location on the T and the involvement of Stop & Shop, a key employer in the City, are all important aspects of the development. Over 3 million square feet in size when fully built out, this project too will be phased with the first phase focused on the Hancock Street spine and a mix of retail, including an anchor, office and residential.

One of the first steps in approaching any site is to take an inventory of existing conditions that form both the opportunities and constraints that must be navigated in a redevelopment plan. At Bayside, the opportunities center around the incredible waterfront location, close proximity to downtown Boston and excellent access to public transportation via the JFK/UMass Red Line Station. But there are many other challenges and constraints at Bayside:

I. Difficult vehicular access from the surrounding roadway system

II. Lack of visual connection to the site/water from the MBTA and Mt. Vernon Street

III. Existing office and hotel buildings that must remain and be incorporated into the site plan

IV. The Teachers' Union parcel which is not owned by Corcoran Jennison and has not been included in planning the site

V. The MWRA's proposal for an odor control facility directly adjacent to the Day Blvd access road providing a new physical and visual barrier in a key location between the MBTA and Mt Vernon Street and Dorchester Bay

VI. The approximately 40% of the site that is filled tidelands and subject to state regulations regarding setbacks, height and open space requirements

Another early step in approaching the redevelopment of the site is to look at what the marketplace is telling you about the site. In the case of Bayside, the marketplace has been saying loud and clear that “big box” retail is the right use. The success of South Bay has proven this, and Corcoran Jennison has been approached by “big box” retailers and brokers who were anticipating the decline of the exposition center. The only requirement for these retail centers is access and surface parking, which is clearly available at Bayside. Despite this, Corcoran Jennison felt that Dorchester deserved better than another “big box” development and began to explore a higher and better use for the site.

In the fall of 2006, Corcoran Jennison asked Street-Works to assess the potential of the site for a mixed-use redevelopment. Out of that review came some conclusions as to how the site could best leverage its assets.

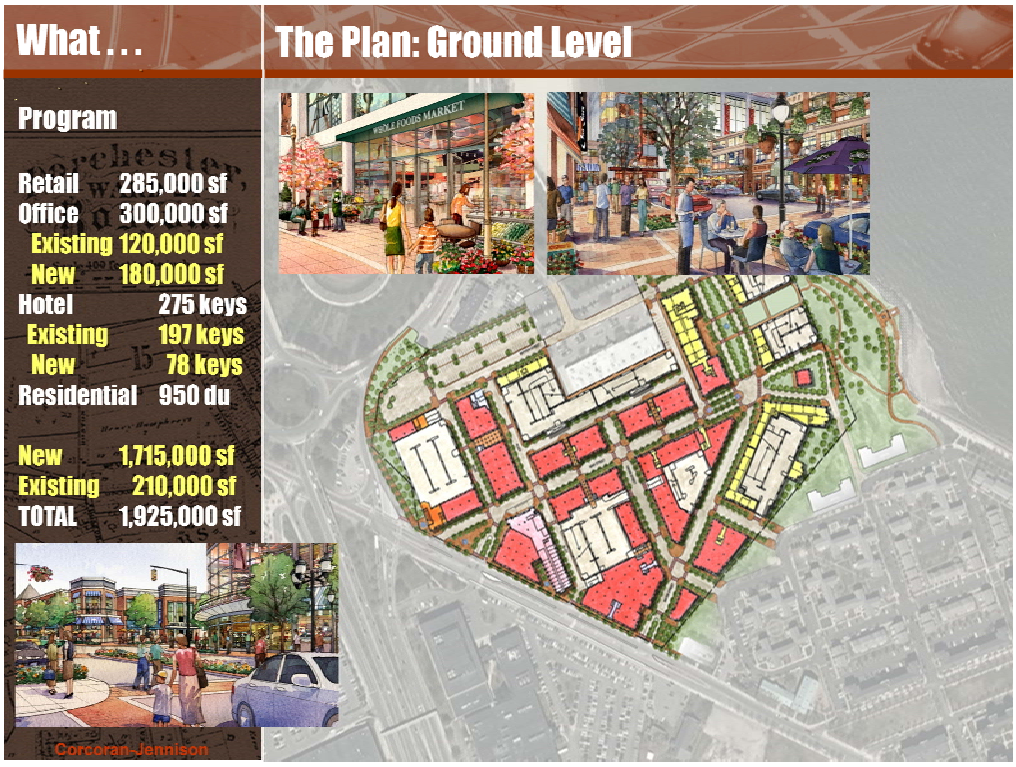
Its highway access combined with the site size create a great site for "big box" retail, although such single destination stores do not add to the community feel.

The waterfront and MBTA access combine to create a wonderful residential opportunity.

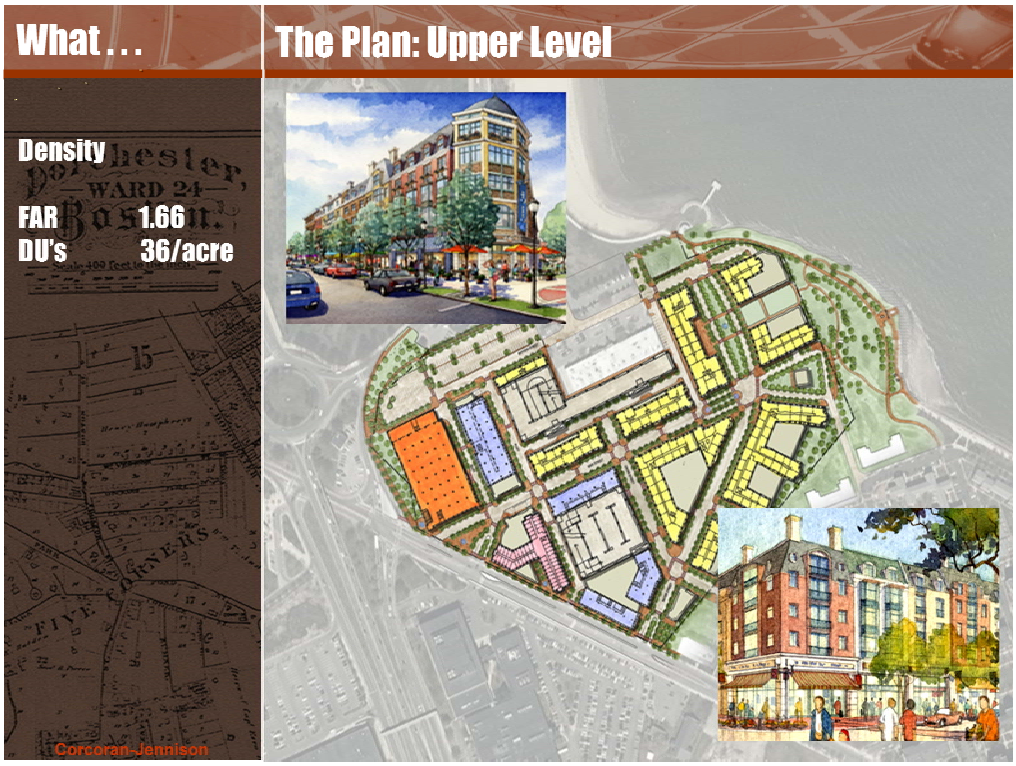
Ultimately, though, the recommendation was that the best use of the site would be to connect all of these assets by introducing a mixed use main street, that will attract the interest of the kinds of retailers who would not otherwise look at Dorchester, and that leverages the strengths of the site and has a realistic chance of overcoming its challenges and constraints. This will result in achieving Corcoran Jennison's goal of creating a great new neighborhood in Dorchester.

In looking at the site's assets and opportunities, it becomes clear that certain areas of the site are appropriate for different uses. The Mt. Vernon Street zone, with its proximity to both transit and the roadway network, is principally commercial in character. The water's edge is appropriately a residential zone, taking advantage of the views, the park and its more isolated nature. Connecting these two zones will be a mixed use transition zone which will include a "Great Place" for public gathering and activities. This transition zone will have retail on the ground floor and office or residential on the upper floors.

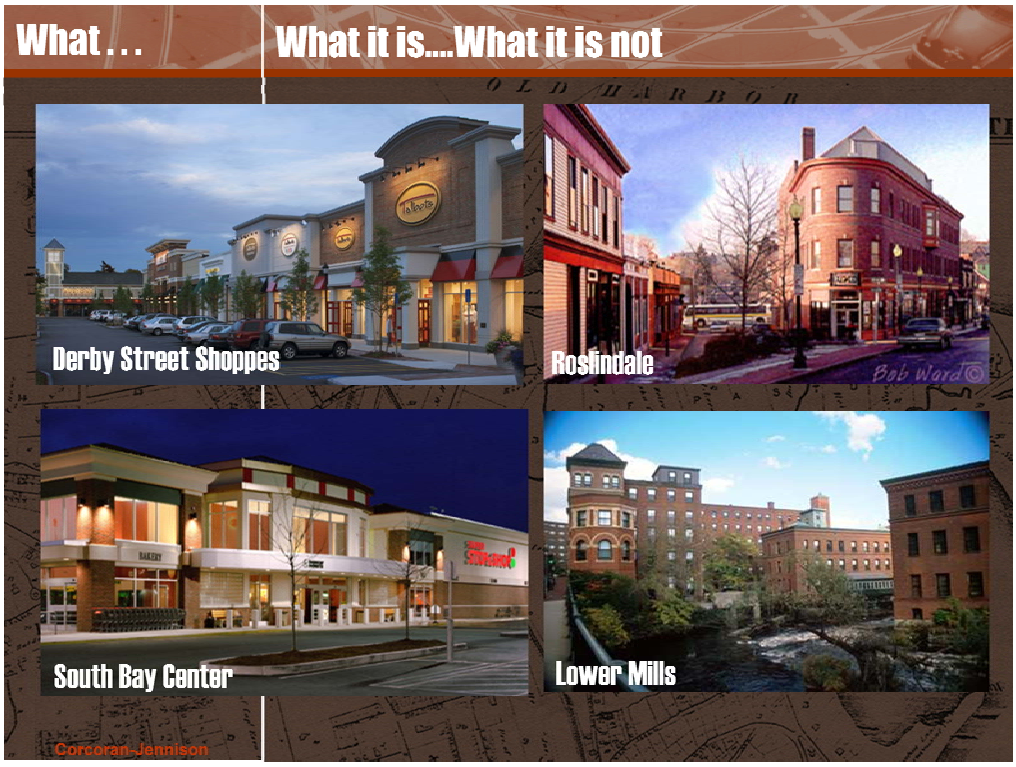
To make all of this work, a key component is getting the street network and connections right. There needs to be access and visibility to the water, a clear connection to the MBTA, block sizes and street patterns that are appropriate and welcoming for pedestrians. In addition, the site must be knit into the surrounding neighbors at Harbor Point, it must make connections to the DCR uses along Day Blvd and the waterfront park and it must create a pleasant pedestrian environment along Mt. Vernon Street.



Having defined appropriate uses, and where they belong on the site, determining how much of each use is appropriate in the marketplace and necessary to make the place “sing” is essential. Street-Works has worked hard with Corcoran Jennison on this issue over the past 18 months. We have tested various schemes in the marketplace at retail trade shows and with the retailers and brokers who have shown an interest in the site. This slide outlines the total redevelopment program.

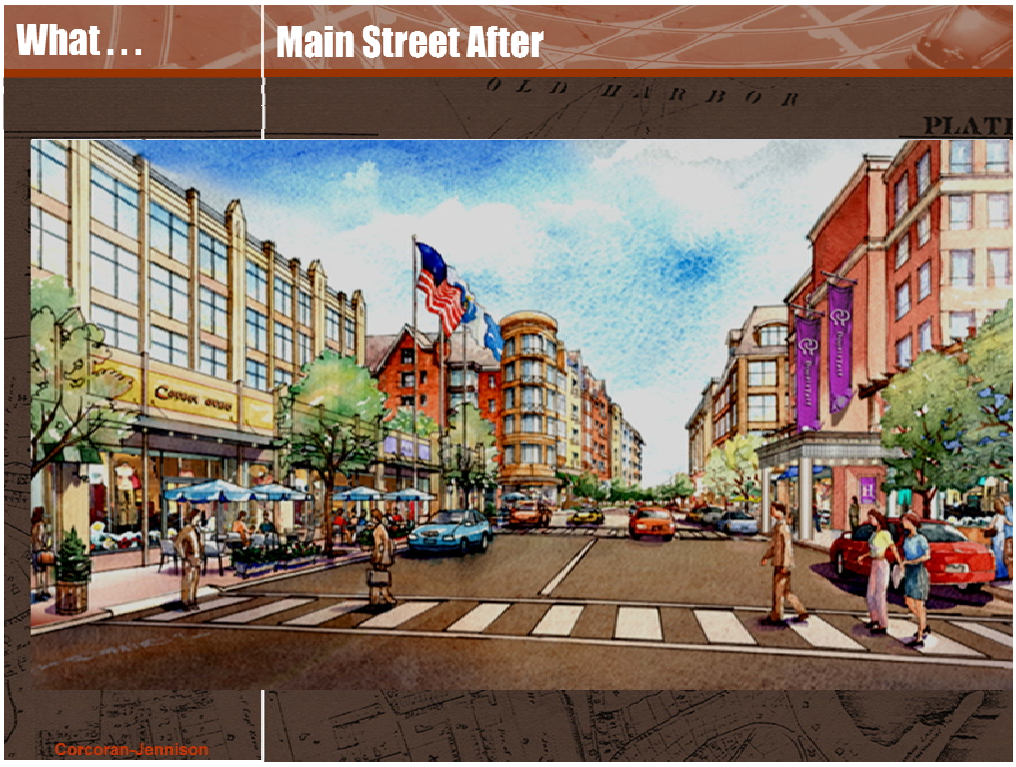


Density has been a topic that the Task Force has been reviewing over the first few meetings. This full build out plan at Bayside will have an FAR of 1.66 and will include approximately 36 residential units per acre. This is in the same range as many of the areas of Boston that have been discussed previously.



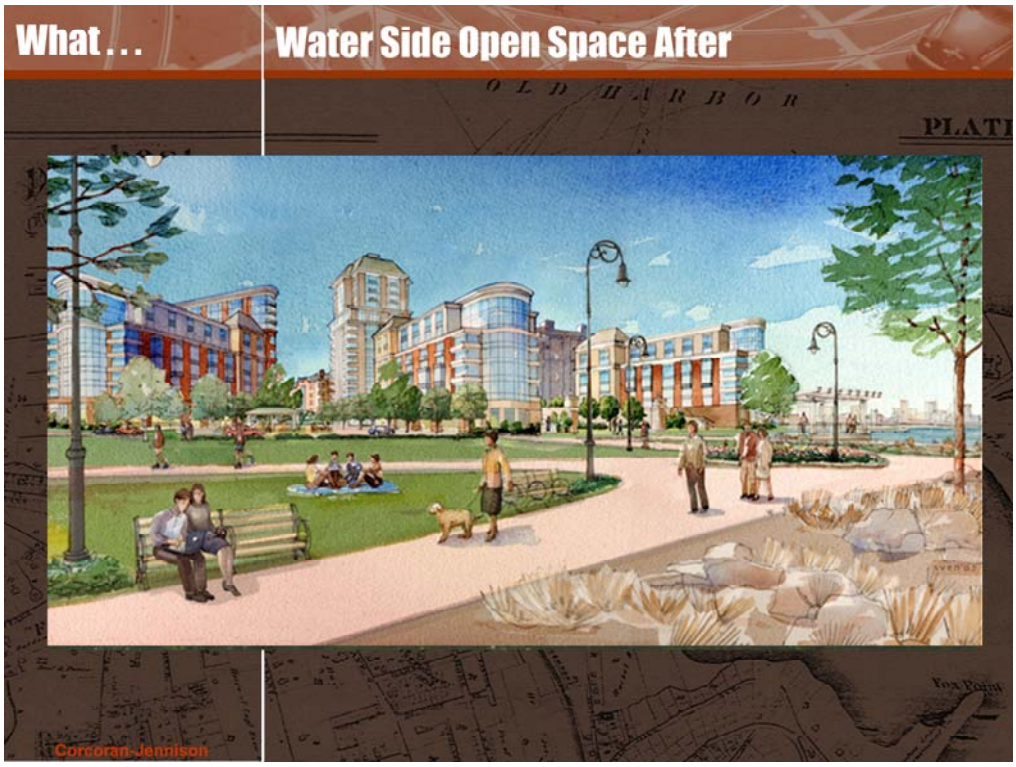
We just wanted to take a minute to again compare the Bayside proposal to some existing areas that you would be familiar with. Bayside is not the Derby Street Shoppes — Derby Street is a retail only project that combines some larger format tenants with national boutique retail chains. Bayside is not South Bay — South Bay is a pure big box retail center surrounding a significant parking lot. Bayside is a mix of uses, a pedestrian oriented site where people can live and work and recreate without getting into a car to drive to each of these activities. Bayside will be a new neighborhood, much like many neighborhoods we see throughout Boston with their main street retail and commercial areas mixed in with residential uses. Bayside will be much like Roslindale Village or Lower Mills when fully built out.

A vast parking lot today will be transformed by this new development.



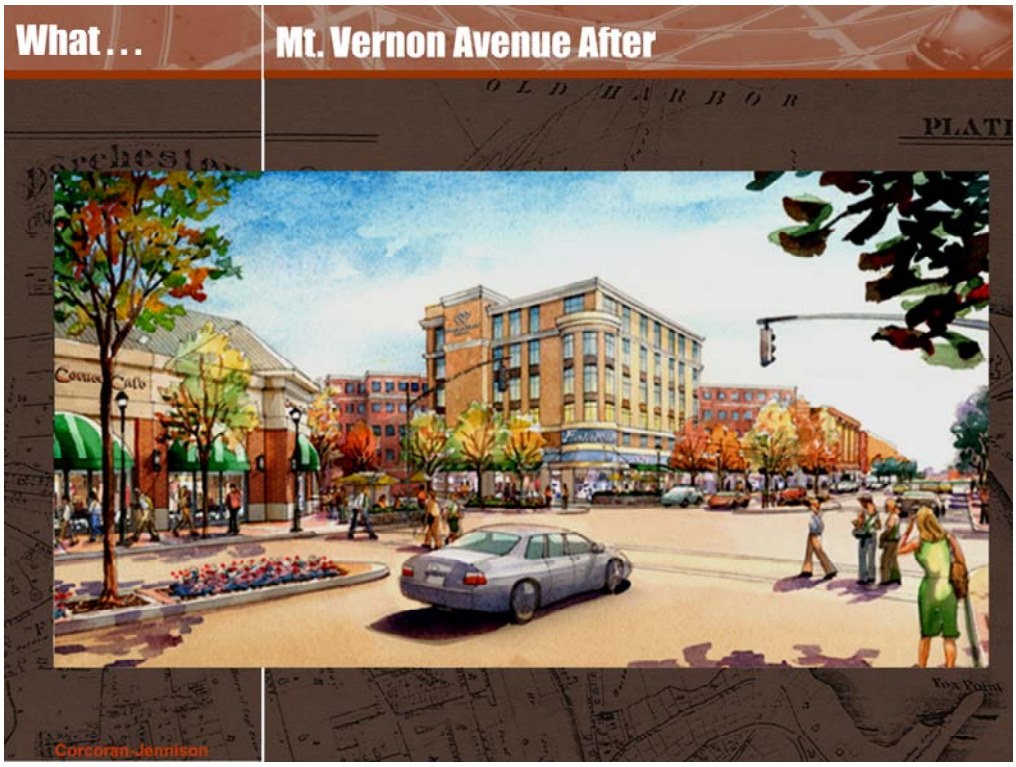
In place of the parking lot will be a vibrant new main street, connecting Mt. Vernon Street to the water. It will be anchored by a grocery store and the hotel and will be enlivened with small shops at street level with residential and office space above. Large trees and generous sidewalks will enhance the pedestrian experience.

The view from the waterside park today is not terribly appealing.



In the future, this development will enhance and complement the existing DCR park. This area will include appropriate amenities, lighting and great places for people to gather and enjoy the waterfront.

Mt. Vernon street today is functional – a way to get where you are going – but not an environment you would stroll.



Once this site is redeveloped, the experience of Mt. Vernon Street will be transformed into one that is inviting to pedestrians and activated with retail and the hotel addition at the street edge.

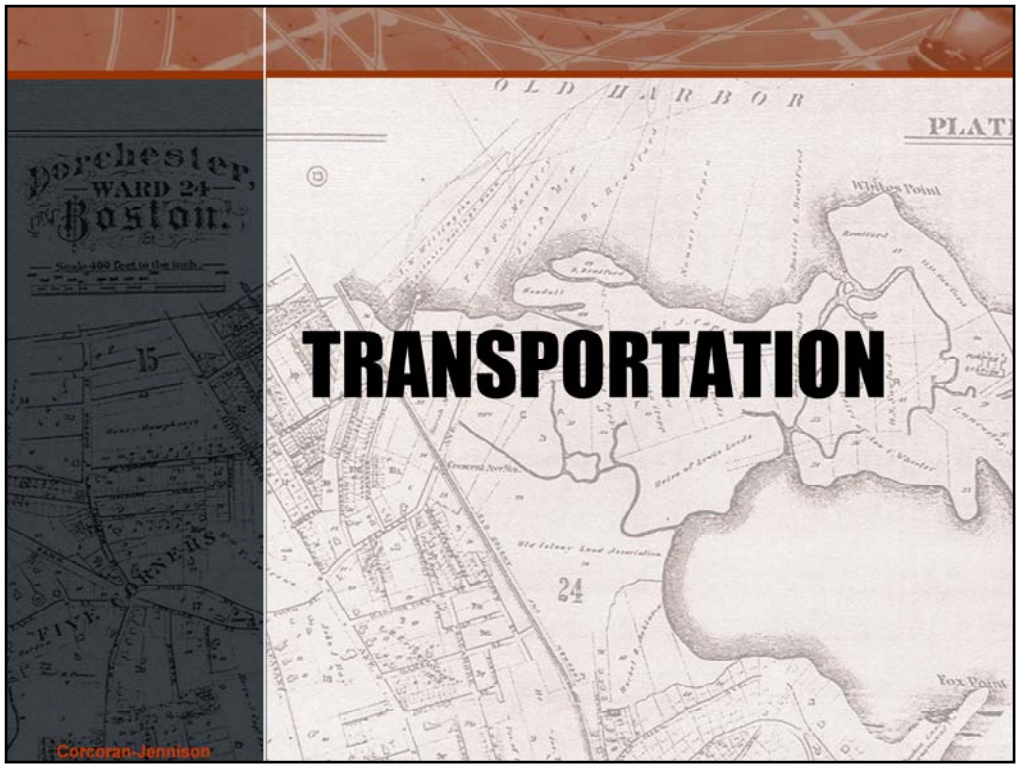
As discussed, the redevelopment will take place in phases. This first phase is most important as this is when we need to establish Bayside as a new and appealing place to be. The goal is to build out the majority of the retail and to target a mix of retailers that will make this site work. This requires a certain density of retail and a mix of uses that will transform the perception of the site. The program includes approximately 250,000 sf of retail. At least one anchor tenant, envisioned to be a specialty grocery experience, as the neighborhood has expressed an interest in, is essential. The anchor will be complemented by smaller, specialty retail, restaurants, and neighborhood services such a bank, bakery, and drycleaner, which will line the ground level of Main Street. Once the retail is established and the “Place” has been created, once Bayside has become a new destination for the community, the future phases will add additional housing along the water’s edge to complete the building of a neighborhood.

What . . .

The Plan: Phase One

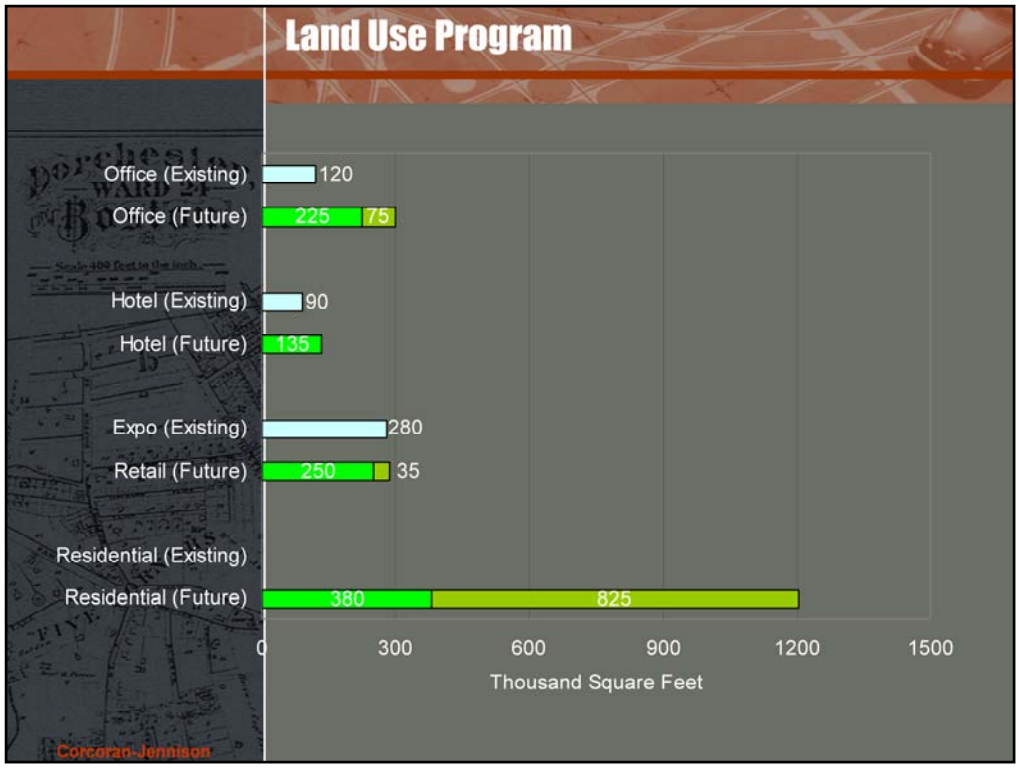
The street level of Phase One is primarily retail, extending from Mt Vernon Street towards the water. The anchor retailer is located at the front of the site where it serves to draw shoppers in to experience the rest of the development. An addition to the hotel is also envisioned as a component of Phase 1. New uses are proposed along Mt. Vernon Street to begin the transformation of the street experience.

Residential units and some office space are proposed for the upper levels above retail along the new main street. It is this combination of uses that will create the sense of activity and vitality that are central to creating a compelling new place. Much of the parking in Phase 1 is provided in surface lots, behind the buildings, and will become the site of future development in Phase 2.

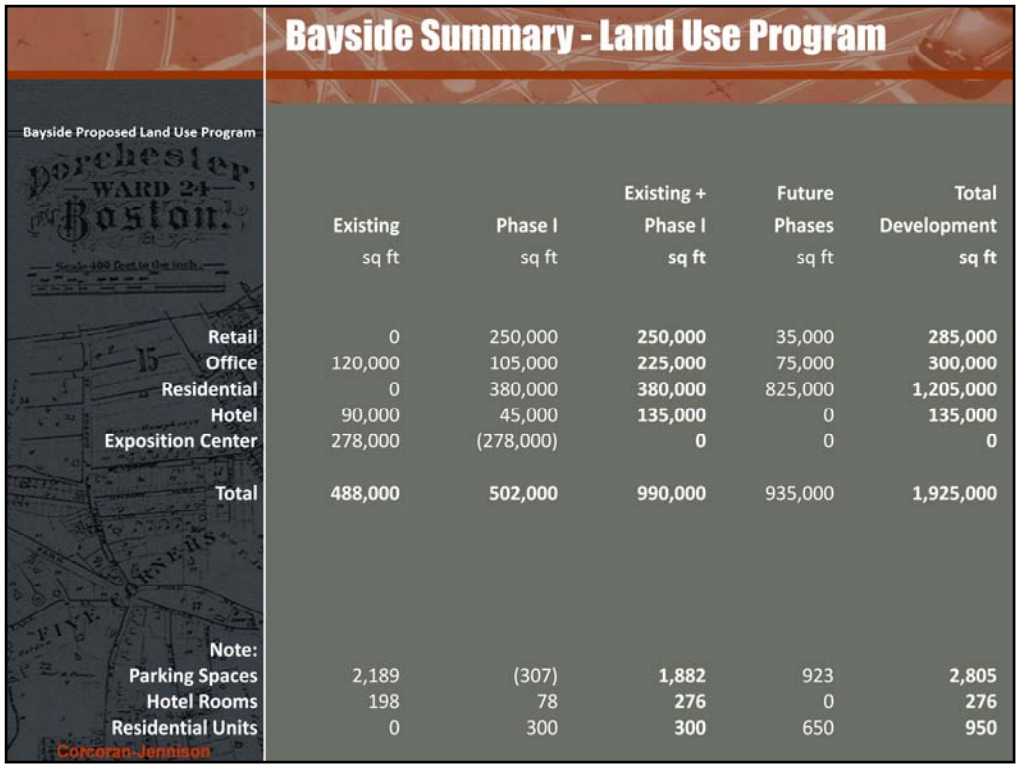


Corcoran Jennison has retained Tetra Tech Rizzo to conduct a comprehensive traffic study for the proposed Bayside redevelopment project. Tetra Tech Rizzo has a long history studying event traffic at the Expo Center and brings this experience to the current project.

The traffic study is presently underway and encompasses 16 intersections scoped by the Boston Transportation Department. The objective of the study is to identify project impacts and necessary mitigation measures to ensure that pedestrians and the motoring public can safely and efficiently traverse the roadway system providing access to the project site. Preliminary findings from this study are presented herein. Notice will be given when the final study is available for public review.

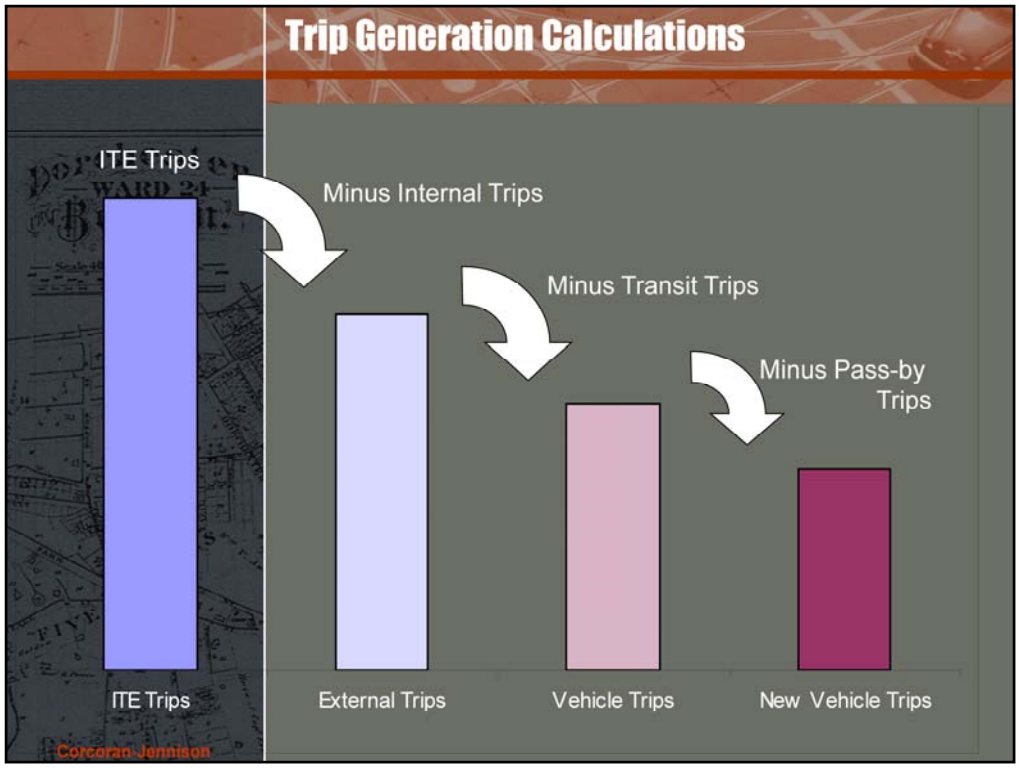


Trip generation estimates for the proposed project are based the proposed land use program. Assumptions regarding the program are noted above. As noted, over 60% of the project upon completion is residential space and most of this will be built in the later phases of the project. Phase I is a replacement of the existing Expo Center with comparably sized retail space. The existing Expo Center draws visitor traffic from a wide geographic area who tend to drive to the facility. The proposed retail space will serve more local needs and attract visitors who may be much more inclined to walk or travel by public transportation. Those who do drive will be more familiar with local roadway and traffic conditions than Expo Center visitors and better able to avoid peak travel times and congestion points. A table with these data is shown on the next slide.

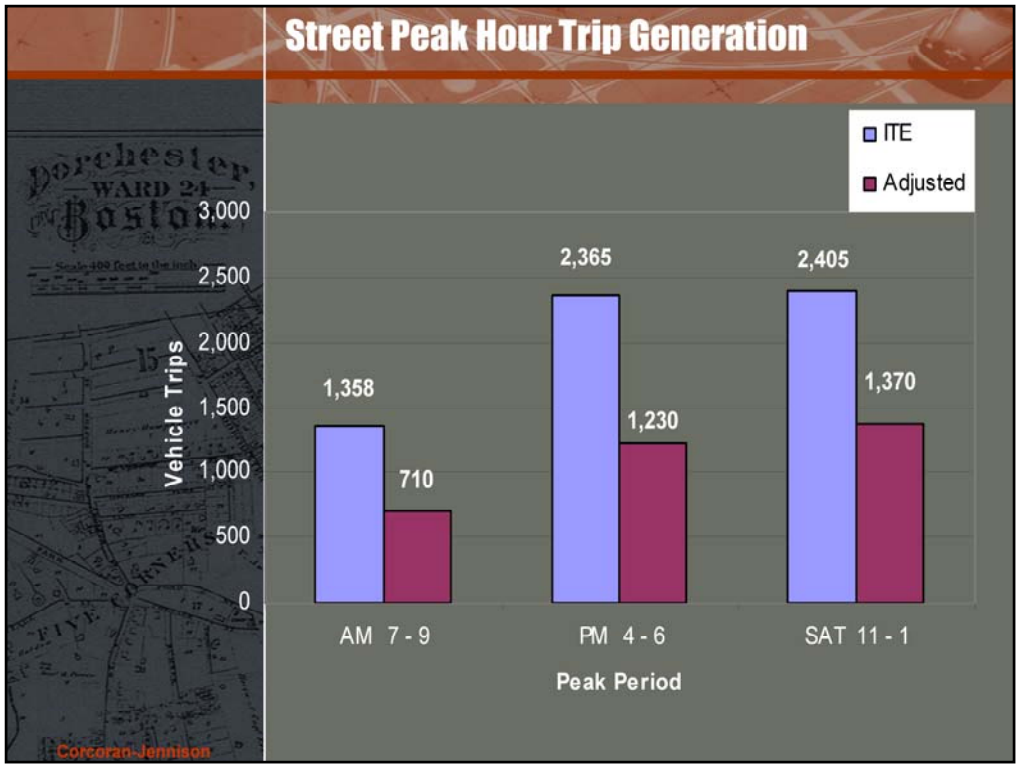


	Existing sq ft	Phase I sq ft	Existing + Phase I sq ft	Future Phases sq ft	Total Development sq ft
Retail	0	250,000	**250,000**	35,000	**285,000**
Office	120,000	105,000	**225,000**	75,000	**300,000**
Residential	0	380,000	**380,000**	825,000	**1,205,000**
Hotel	90,000	45,000	**135,000**	0	**135,000**
Exposition Center	278,000	(278,000)	**0**	0	**0**
Total	**488,000**	**502,000**	**990,000**	935,000	**1,925,000**
Note:					
Parking Spaces	2,189	(307)	**1,882**	923	**2,805**
Hotel Rooms	198	78	**276**	0	**276**
Residential Units	0	300	**300**	650	**950**

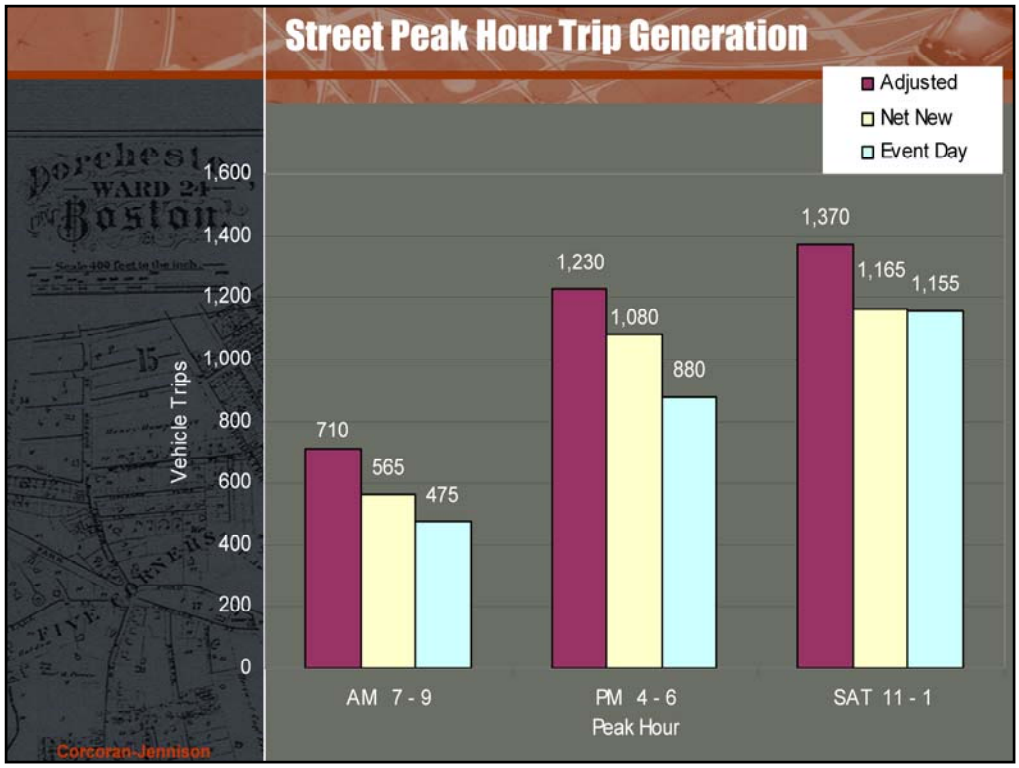
Above is a table showing the Land Use Program as distributed at the BRA Presentation to the Columbia Point Master Plan Task Force on Thursday March 27th, 2008



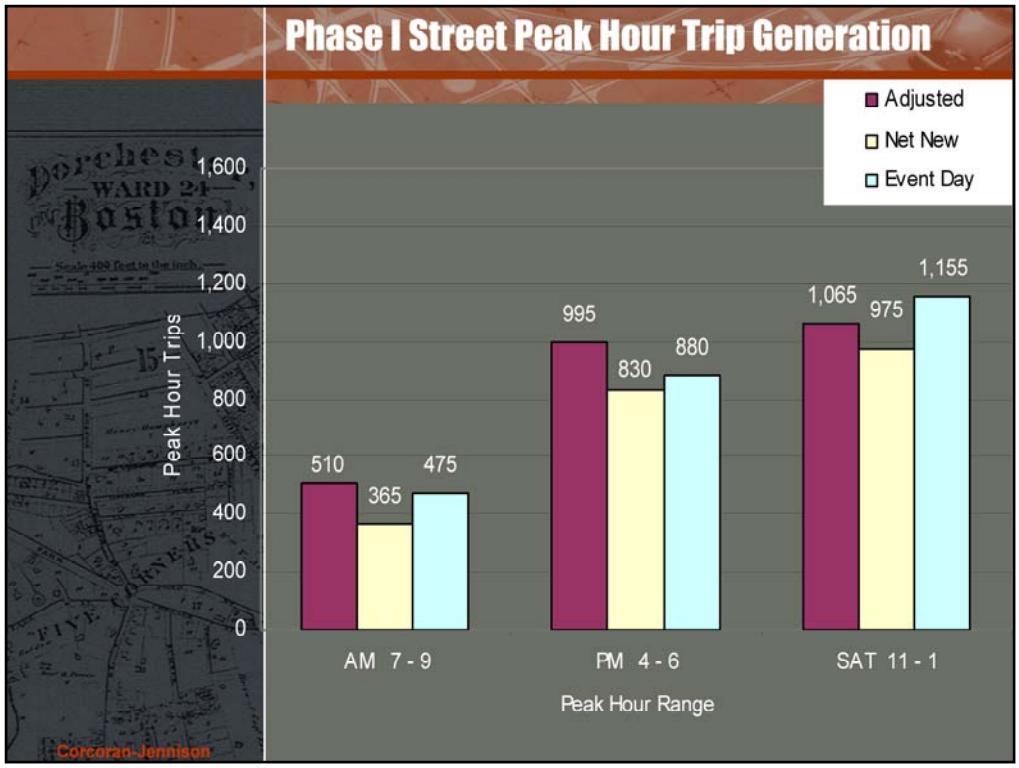
Estimating the actual number of vehicle trips generated by the project is a multi-step process. The analysis begins by considering published Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) trip rates. These ITE rates assume that most everyone drives to the site; their numbers more accurately represent a shopping center in the middle of an Iowa cornfield where everyone who accesses the site does so by car. According to procedures set in place by the City of Boston and the State of Massachusetts, these numbers must be adjusted for urban settings. For this site, adjustments are made to account for internal trips. (As a mixed-use project the office and residential components of the project will generate trips to the retail stores. These internal trips do not impact the roadway system adjacent to the site.) Visitors to the site may also walk or use public transportation. (The site will have excellent access to the MBTA UMass Red Line and Commuter Rail Station.) Finally, for the retail component, a portion of the trips will be “pass by” trips, that is, visitors drawn from existing traffic on the adjacent roadway system. As a result, these pass by trips do not add volume to the regional roadway system.



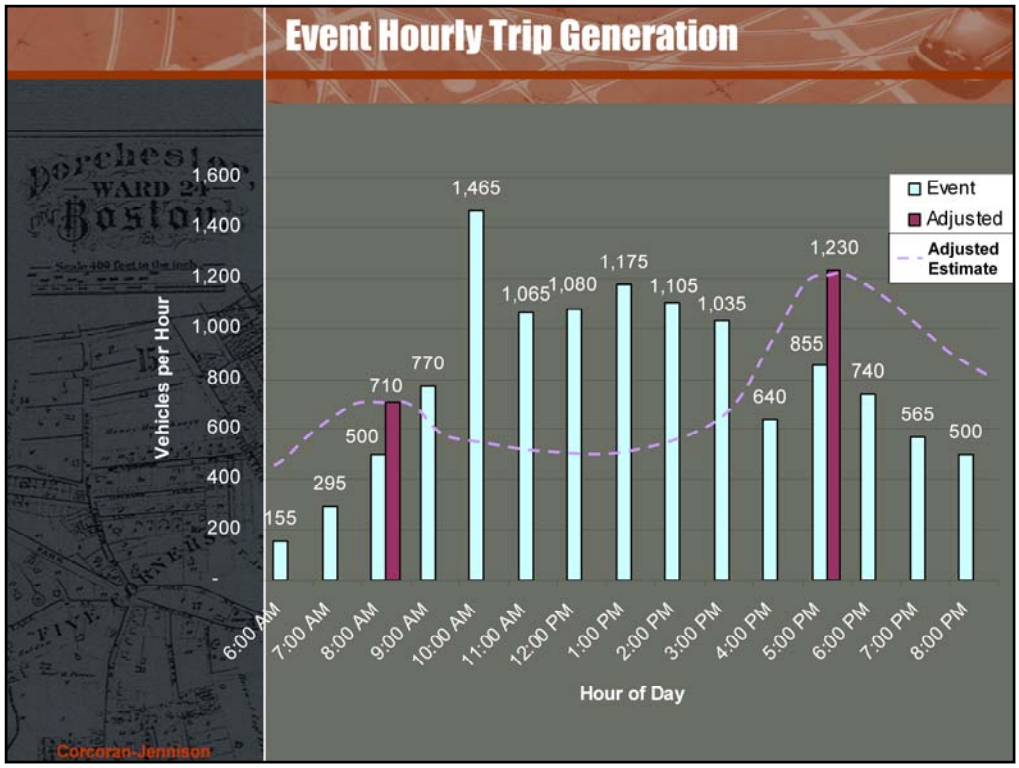
Adjustments were made to the ITE trip estimates in accordance with the procedures described on the previous slide. The adjustment factors applied for pass-by and internal trips are based on ITE formulas, the accepted industry standard for traffic generation estimates. The adjustment for transit use is based on Boston Transportation Department guidelines. The resulting peak hour estimates are for new trips generated by the project and existing trips generated by the office and hotel currently located on the site. As noted, peak generation is expected during the Saturday midday peak hour (1,370 new vehicle trips) when the retail use is most active. A vehicle trip represents a one-way movement to or from the site. As such, 1370 vehicle trips represent only 685 vehicles driving to and from the site.



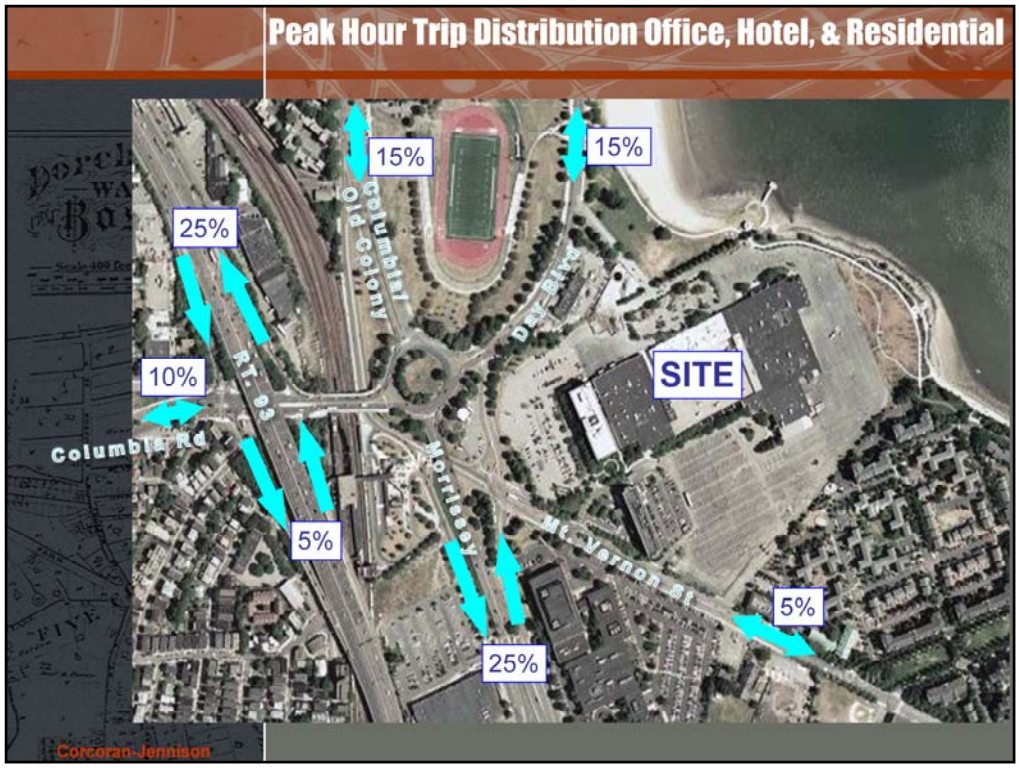
This chart separates out net new trips added by the proposed development and compares this to total site trip generation, and to an Expo Center event day scenario. Event day traffic represents conditions counted during the 2008 Flower Show. Relative to the Event Day scenario, during the Saturday midday peak hour the project will add 215 vehicle trips (1,370 minus 1,115) – or less than four vehicle trips every minute – on the roadway system. These trips will be distributed on multiple routes to and from the site such that any one roadway will only experience an increase of approximately one vehicle trip per minute under full build out conditions.



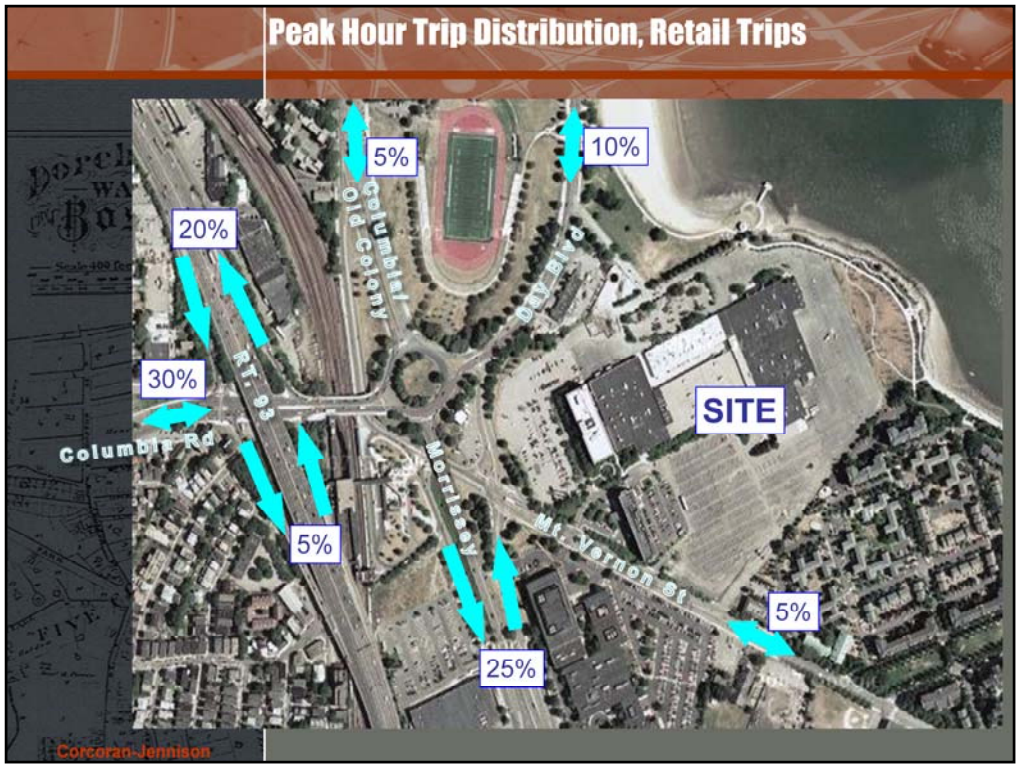
As previously discussed, the project will be built in phases with Phase I to include substantially the entire retail component, approximately 250,000 sf, as well as modest expansions of the existing office and hotel, and approximately 300 residential units. With the inclusion of this retail component, Phase I will have the biggest impact on traffic entering and exiting the site of all phases of the full build out redevelopment plan. This analysis focuses on the Phase I project site traffic generation. During the Saturday peak hour, which is the highest traffic generator due to the retail, total trips will be less than that experienced under existing conditions during an event. Phase I traffic volumes during traditional commuter peak hours are comparable, although slightly higher than event volumes.



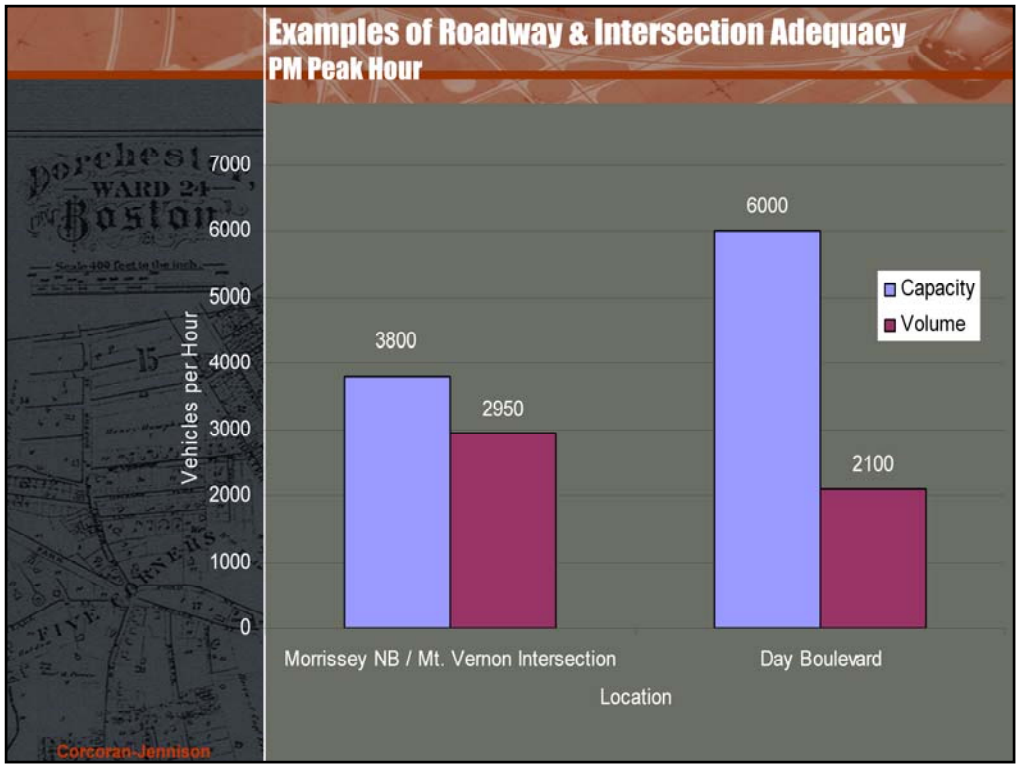
Event traffic volumes do not peak during the traditional commuter peak hours. As shown in magenta, the proposed project will generate 710 and 1230 new trips during the AM and PM commuter peak hours, respectively. Event day traffic is lower than project traffic during these two hours, 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, as shown in light blue. However, midday event volumes are comparable to the PM peak hour figure for the proposed development. The peak traffic hour for the observed event occurred at 10 AM when more than 1400 vehicle trips were generated.



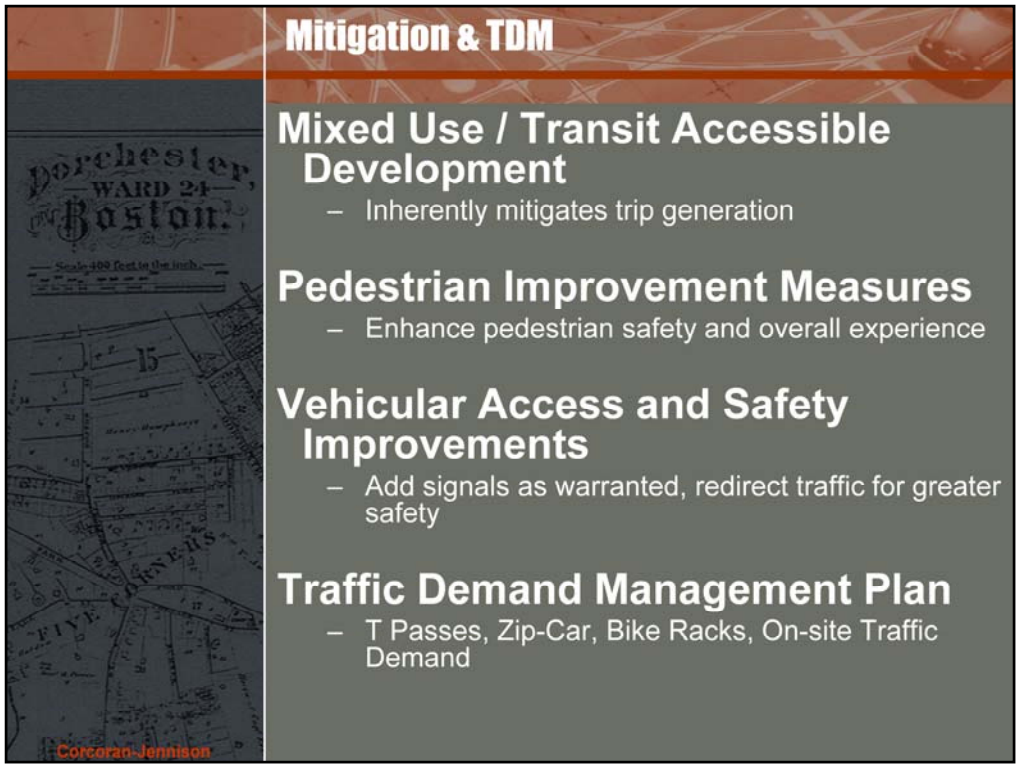
After estimating the volume of new site generated traffic the volume must be assigned to the roadway system. Distributions for site traffic have been developed based on observations of existing traffic patterns and review of Journey to Work data from the US Census. The census data matches peoples place of employment with their place of residence. It also provides data regarding population by census tract. The data were used to develop a distribution for office, hotel and residential trips as shown above.



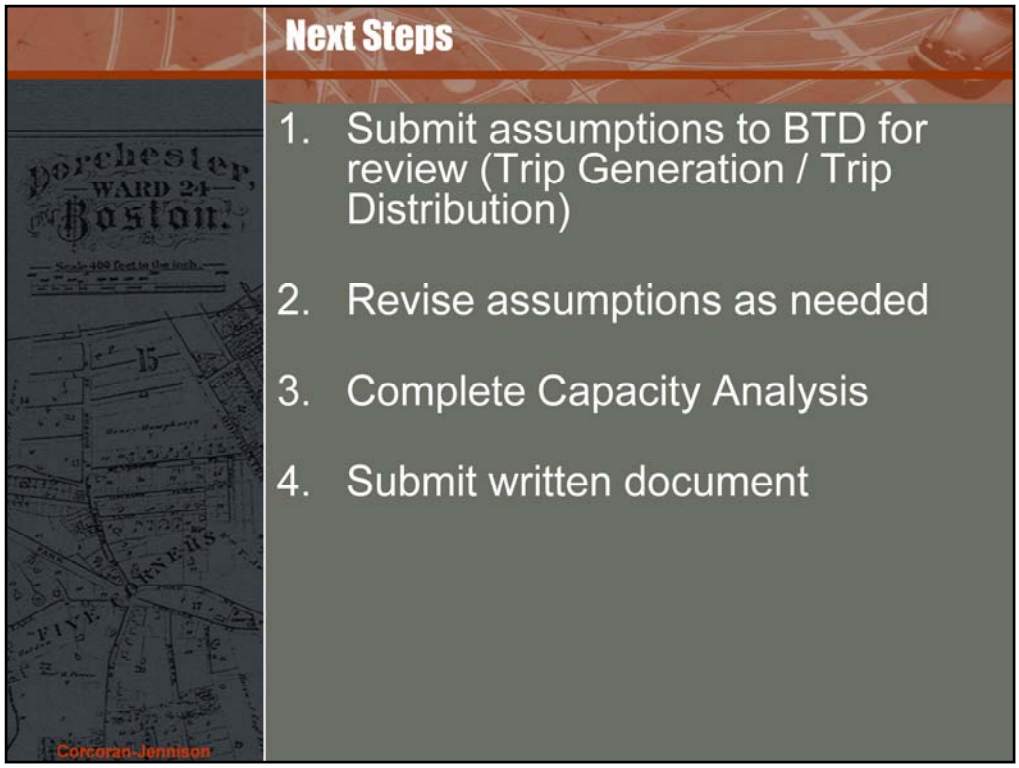
A separate distribution was developed for retail trips as shown above, using a set of assumptions appropriate for retail trips, which are different from those described on the previous slide.



The study process continues by comparing the projected future peak hour roadway volumes to roadway capacity. Roadway capacity is determined by the type of roadway, number of travel lanes and method of traffic control. Preliminary findings for two locations are shown above as an example of roadway and intersection adequacy. At the Morrissey Boulevard/Mount Vernon Street signalized intersection the estimated capacity during the PM peak hour is 3800 vehicles per hour (vph) compared to a projected demand in the year 2013 of 2960 vph. Day Boulevard is a four-lane parkway capable of carrying 6000 vph. Projected volumes on Day Boulevard will reach 2100 vph during the PM peak.



Based on the analyses completed to date and an understanding of the City and State permitting processes certain actions are expected to mitigate project traffic impacts. Perhaps most significant is the development of the site as a mixed-use project at its current location. As described earlier, taking advantage of the project's mixed-use nature and proximity to public transportation results in significant reductions in the traffic projections for the project. It's location and mixed-use program make it a "smart growth" project. Also, in order to fully benefit from the site's proximity to the Red Line and other transit services, measures will taken to enhance the pedestrian experience traveling between the site the Red Line station, including shortening cross walks and modifying signal timing and phasing to provide better protection for pedestrians. New traffic signals are expected at the major site driveways to manage the daily vehicular traffic flows generated to the site. Finally, at Travel Demand Management plan will be provided to encourage the use of alternative travel modes by site visitors and residents.



As noted, preparation of the final traffic study is still in progress. The trip generation and trip distribution assumptions presented herein will be submitted to the Boston Transportation Department for review and comment. Adjustments will be made to these assumptions if warranted prior to completing the more time-consuming intersection volume/capacity analysis. Final results will be documented in a written report and made available to the Task Force and the public to assist in the ongoing master plan effort.