

# DOWNTOWN CROSSING: VITAL HEART OF DOWNTOWN BOSTON

## INTRODUCTION

For over a century, Downtown Crossing has been an important economic engine for the City of Boston. Although the district was originally a residential area, it has become Boston's primary retail district, attracting a diverse pool of shoppers ranging from neighborhood residents to suburban visitors, from office workers to tourists. Today, Downtown Crossing is evolving into a vibrant mixed-use district. Under the leadership of Mayor Thomas M. Menino and thanks to strong public-private partnerships, Downtown Crossing is re-imagining itself and making physical, programmatic, and technological improvements that will enable it to continue to be New England's busiest retail district and help enhance its identity in the 21st century.

Downtown Crossing is bounded by State Street on the north, Essex Street on the south, Tremont Street on the west, and Devonshire and Lincoln Streets on the east.

The area is first and foremost a place to shop and a place to dine, having over 450 retail stores and eating and drinking establishments. Six general merchandise stores (department stores of all types) are in the district (Filene's, Filene's Basement, Macy's, Marshalls, TJ Maxx, and H&M). Other sites include a wide variety of specialty stores, major clothing stores, jewelry stores, bookstores, pharmacies, shoe stores, and music stores.

Nearly 100 restaurants serve the area, including some of Boston's oldest (Locke-Ober's, the Last Hurrah, and Marliave's). Newer restaurants are located on streets leading to the Financial District and in the Ladder Blocks area between Tremont and Washington Streets.

All told, there are about 1.8 million square feet of retail space in Downtown Crossing with about 70% of this in the six major general merchandise establishments. Downtown Crossing's "100% Retail Corner" at Washington, Winter, and Summer Streets is the busiest pedestrian intersection in the six New England states. Rents are based upon the generally healthy sales per-square-foot volume in the district.



*Over 100,000 people a day patronize **Washington Street's** shops, kiosks, department stores, restaurants, and cafes.*

## DOWNTOWN CROSSING'S ADVANTAGES

Downtown Crossing enjoys many advantages that enable it to maintain its place as Boston's leading retail district.

# Transportation

The area is extremely well served by transportation of many means and modes. Within Downtown Crossing, 41% of all person-trips are by walking; another 35% are by public transit; and only 24% are by auto.

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) serves Downtown Crossing with a variety of subway lines, bus routes, and nearby commuter and regional train connections. Within Downtown Crossing, the six subway stations have close to 86,000 boardings daily. In the other five nearby downtown MBTA subway stations, the total for daily paying customers is about 51,000.

Buses and commuter rail also add to visitor totals. The ten main local bus routes have a daily ridership of about 25,000, and over two dozen express bus routes come into downtown Boston on a workday, carrying about 29,000 riders. The workday ridership of the commuter rail lines through nearby North and South Station from the North and South Shores bring in close to 54,000 people (excluding those who get off at the Back Bay station).

For those who must drive, over 40,000 public and private parking spaces are available in garages and lots located near Downtown Crossing. Since deliveries are necessary to stock the area stores with goods, trucks are allowed on the pedestrian mall of Washington Streets, but only during specific off-peak times. Elsewhere, commercial loading zones accommodate delivery vehicles with guaranteed spaces.

### Retail Stores

#### Downtown Crossing Retail

Type	Number	Percent of Total
Jewelry Stores	194	42.5%
Eating & Drinking Places	93	20.4%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	58	12.7%
Apparel & Accessory Stores	38	8.3%
Health & Personal Care Stores	22	4.8%
Sporting Goods, Books, Music Stores	20	4.4%
Electronics & Appliance Stores	16	3.5%
Food & Beverage Stores	9	2.0%
*General Merchandise	6	1.3%
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\*General Merchandise Stores include: Macy's; Filene's; Filene's Basement; TJ Maxx; Marshall's; and H&M  
Sources: Study conducted by Helwig Associates, Inc. for The Downtown Crossing Association, 2004; Boston Redevelopment Authority

### Daily Passenger Entrance by MBTA Subway Station

Downtown Crossing District	
Station	Passengers
Downtown Crossing	25,500
Park Street	17,000
State Street	17,000
Government Center	16,100
Boylston	5,950
Chinatown	4,000
<b>Total - District</b>	<b>85,550</b>

Rest of Downtown	
Station	Passengers
South Station	20,800
North Station	13,200
Haymarket	8,600
New England Medical Center	6,600
Bowdoin	1,500
<b>Total - Rest of Downtown</b>	<b>50,700</b>

Sources: Boston Transportation Department; Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

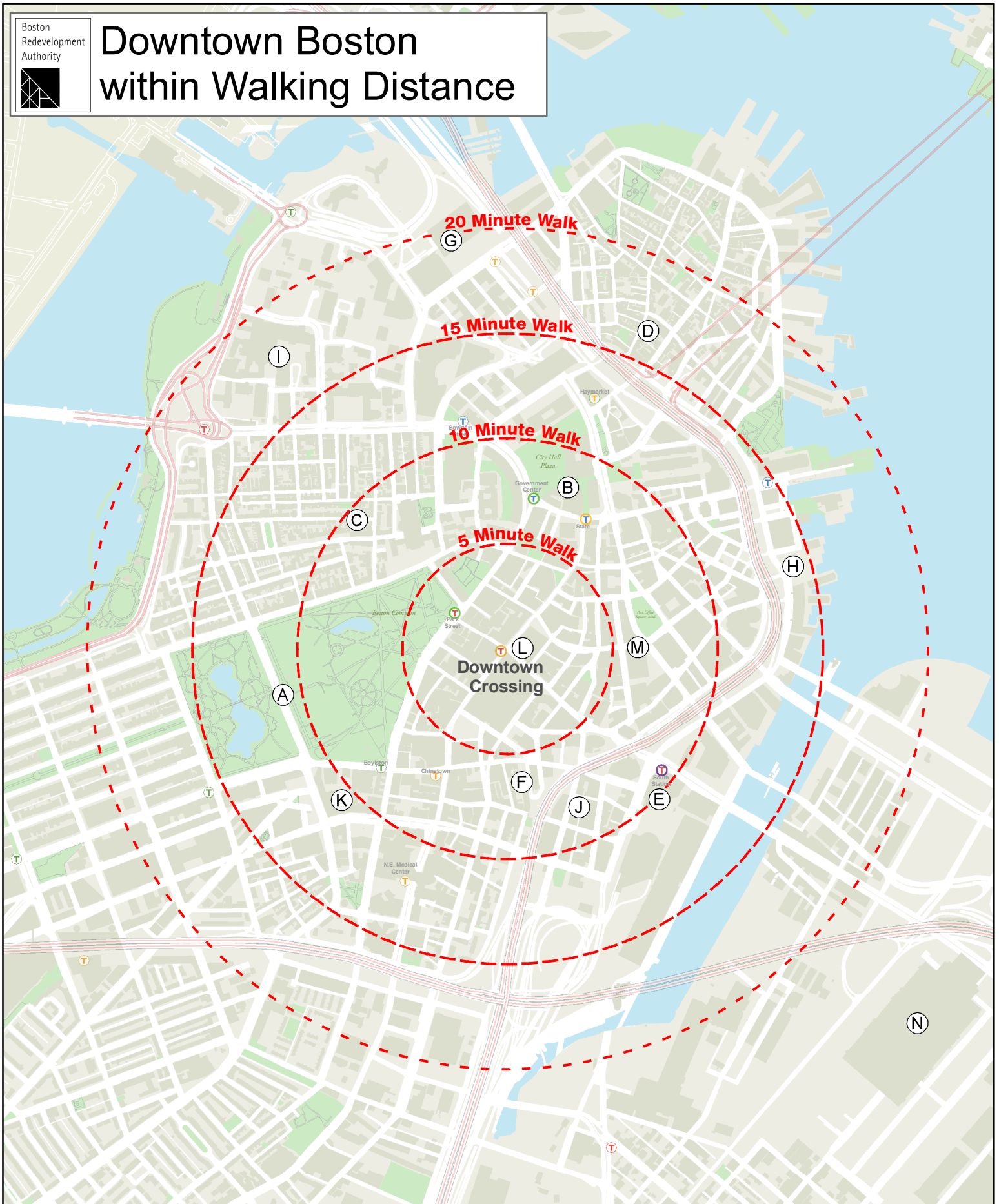


The MBTA's Silver Line service connects Downtown Crossing to Dudley Square, the South Boston Waterfront, and Logan Airport.





# Downtown Boston within Walking Distance



## Reference Points

- A. Boston Common/Public Garden
- B. Government Center
- C. Beacon Hill

- D. North End
- E. South Station
- F. Chinatown
- G. North Station/Gardens

- H. Downtown Waterfront
- I. West End
- J. Leather District
- K. Theater District

- L. Downtown Crossing
- M. Financial District
- N. Boston Convention and Exhibition Center

# Residential Population

One of the biggest changes in Downtown Crossing in recent years is the increase in the number of residential units. In 2001, with the guidance of Mayor Thomas M. Menino, the Boston Redevelopment Authority amended the areas Interim Planning Overlay District (IPOD) in order to foster this emerging neighborhood.

Currently, there are nine large residential buildings (including Tremont-on-the-Common and Devonshire Towers), as well as other market rate and affordable housing, and a number of college dormitories in the area. According to the 2000 Census, the population of Downtown Crossing was 2,451 and there were 1,612 housing units in the area.

Recently, construction of the Ritz-Carlton, Boston Common and The Residences at the Ritz-Carlton Towers at the southern end of Downtown Crossing brought a luxury hotel, residential units, and a new health club to the area. Currently, two high-rise residential buildings, Kensington Place and the Park Essex, are under construction at the southern end of the district. They will further increase the number of local residents and add to the street vitality.

Making Downtown Crossing even more vibrant is the fact that within a 20-minute walk there are a total of 22,000 housing units with over 34,000 residents. Many of these residents - from nearby Chinatown, Bay Village, Park Square, the Waterfront, and Beacon Hill - use Downtown Crossing as one of their main retail and service destinations.

## Major Residential Buildings in Downtown Crossing

Residence	No. of Units
Tremont on the Common	374
Ritz-Carlton Towers	350
Devonshire Towers	278
110-120 Tremont	150
The Stearns Building	140
80 Mason Place	129
Parkside West	94
Tremont Towers	89
Chauncey House	87
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	<b>1,691</b>

Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority

## Residential Areas by Population within a 20-Minute Walk

Residential Area	Population	Units	Minutes
Downtown Crossing	2,451	1,612	5
Financial District	26	19	10
Government Center	839	416	10
Chinatown/NEMC	2,964	878	10
Theater/Park Square/Bay Village	2,288	1,054	15
Beacon Hill/State House Offices	10,805	7,132	15
South Station/Leather District	219	157	15
MGH/West End	4,622	2,567	20
North Station/North End/Waterfront	9,792	8,145	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,006</b>	<b>21,980</b>	

Sources: U.S. Census, 2000; Note: Unit total based on US Census 2000

Within 5 Minute Walk	2,451	1,612
Within 10 Minute Walk	6,280	2,925
Within 15 Minute Walk	19,592	11,268
<b>Within 20 Minute Walk</b>	<b>34,006</b>	<b>21,980</b>

Source: Central Transportation Planning Staff

# Historic Sites

History is Boston's primary tourist attraction, and many of the city's major historic sites are located in or near Downtown Crossing. Three of the 16 sites on Boston's famed Freedom Trail - the Old Corner Bookstore, Old South Church, and the Old State House - are located on Washington Street, and the trail attracts over two million visitors annually. The entire Greater Boston area attracts over 16 million tourists each year, and many - probably most - of them make several visits to downtown Boston per trip.

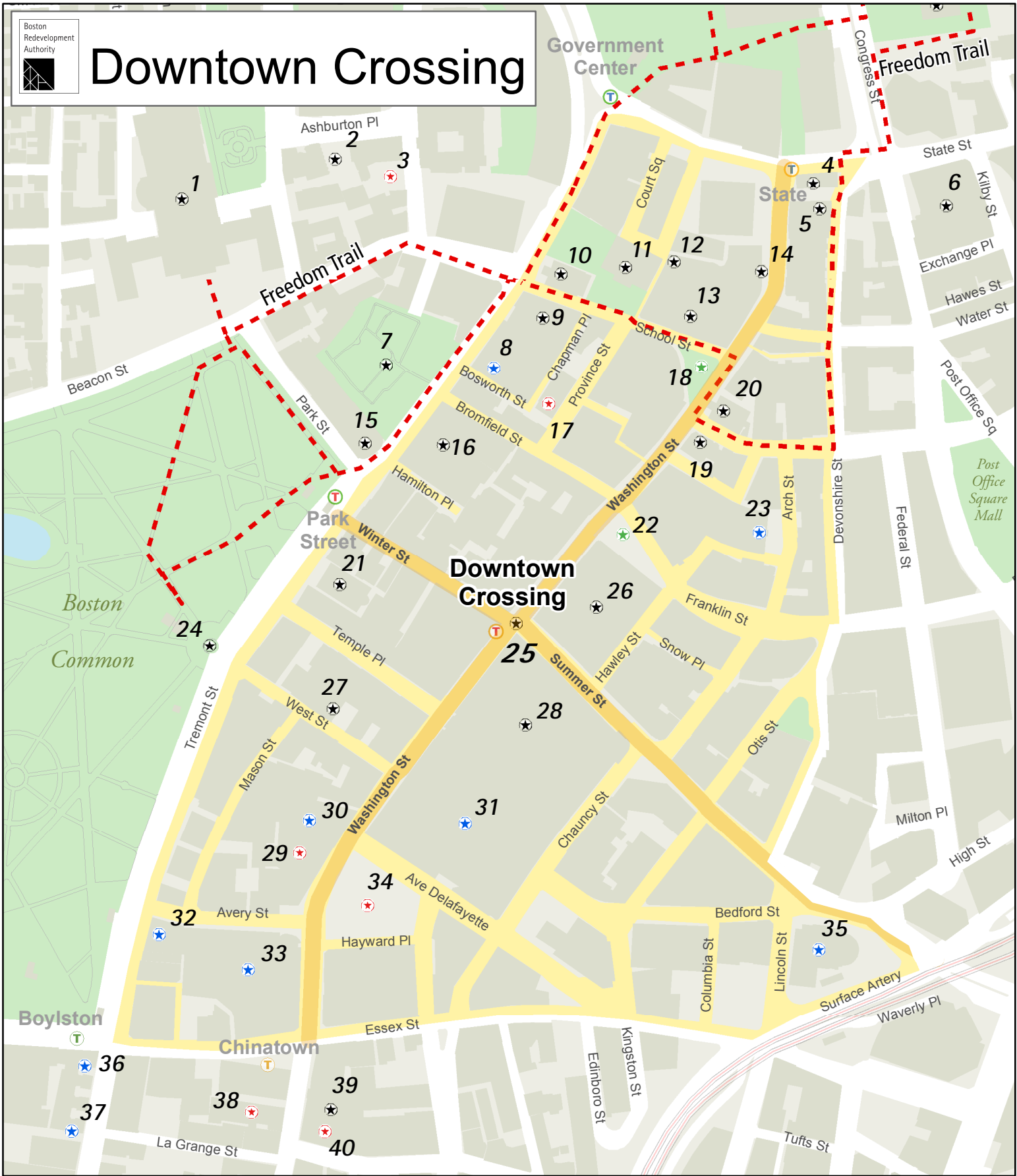
Downtown Crossing is also the site of numerous historic retail buildings - including Filene's and the Jewelers Building. The Filene's building has been restored to its former glory, and the Jewelers Building, which houses retail and commercial tenants offering the latest fashions and products, will soon feature redesigned signage.



The Old State House (c 1713) is one of several historic sites on Boston's Freedom Trail, which winds through Downtown Crossing.



# Downtown Crossing



- ★ Existing
- ★ New
- ★ Planned
- ★ Open Space

- 1. The State House
- 2. Suffolk University
- 3. Suffolk University Dormitory
- 4. Old State House
- 5. National Park Service HQ
- 6. Boston Massacre Site
- 7. Granary Burying Grounds
- 8. Nine Zero Hotel
- 9. Parker House Hotel
- 10. King's Chapel and Burying Ground

- 11. Old City Hall
- 12. Kirstein Library
- 13. Old Corner Book Store
- 14. Pi Alley
- 15. Park Street Church
- 16. Suffolk University Law School
- 17. 45 Province Street
- 18. Famine Memorial (Readers Park)
- 19. Benjamin Franklin's Birthplace
- 20. Old South Meeting House

- 21. St. Paul's Cathedral
- 22. Readers Park
- 23. 33 Arch Street
- 24. Boston Common Information Center
- 25. Downtown Crossing**
- 26. Filene's & Filene's Basement
- 27. Brattle Book Shop
- 28. Macy's
- 29. Paramount Theater

- 30. Opera House
- 31. Lafayette Corporate Center
- 32. Loew's Theatre Cineplex
- 33. The Residence - Ritz-Carlton Towers
- 34. Hayward Place
- 35. One Lincoln Street
- 36. Emerson Dormitory/Classrooms at Piano Row
- 37. Emerson Cutler Majestic Theater
- 38. Kennington Place
- 39. Registry of Motor Vehicles
- 40. Park Essex Housing



# Workplace Population

## Downtown Employees Within a 20-Minute Walk

District	Employees	Minutes
Downtown Crossing	19,600	5
Financial District	74,600	10
Government Center	27,700	10
Chinatown/NEMC	7,100	10
Theater/Park Plaza/Bay Village	17,900	15
Beacon Hill/State House Offices	15,100	15
South Station/Leather District	19,000	15
MGH/West End	16,200	20
North Station/North End/Waterfront	30,400	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>227,600</b>	
Within 5 Minute Walk	19,600	
Within 10 Minute Walk	129,000	
Within 15 Minute Walk	181,000	
<b>Within 20 Minute Walk</b>	<b>227,600</b>	

Source: Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS)

Downtown Crossing itself has close to 20,000 workers. Just to the east, Boston's Financial District has over 74,000 more workers in a thirty-block area, and is home to some of the premier financial businesses in the world (including Fidelity Investments and State Street Bank). The entire 1.5 square mile area of Downtown Boston hosts over 227,000 workers on an average week-day and contains close to 50 million square feet of public and private sector office space.

In the late 1990s, additional commercial and office space was constructed throughout Downtown Crossing. In the center of the district, the Lafayette Corporate Center has reinvented itself as an office and telecommunications site in the midst of a retail area. At the northern end, the Woolworth building was redesigned into an office and commercial structure known as 33 Arch Street, which attracted three new retail tenants (TJ Maxx, Marshalls, and H&M). At the southern end, One Lincoln Street has become one of Boston's newest office towers.

*Suffolk University Law School's recent relocation to Downtown Crossing, combined with Emerson College and Tufts University graduate schools, have resulted in attracting almost fifteen thousand students and 5,000 faculty and staff to the area.*

## Nearby Institutions

Downtown Crossing receives added vitality from a variety of colleges, hospitals, churches, and government and social service agencies located in and around the area that provide an influx of students, visitors, and workers which enhances the economic and social vitality of the district.



The decision by Emerson College to relocate to the area from the Back Bay has had a tremendously positive impact on Downtown Crossing. In addition to bringing its student population into the area as residents and customers, the college has renovated former office buildings into dormitories and classrooms along the Piano Row section of Boylston Street, and completed a new arts center on Boylston Place.

Suffolk University recently relocated its Law School to Tremont Street. The rest of the university and Tufts graduate schools ring the Downtown Crossing area. Along with Emerson, these three colleges have a combined enrollment of close to 15,000 students and employ over 5,000 faculty and other staff. Several dormitories house resident students.

Four hospitals (Mass. Eye and Ear Infirmary, Mass. General Hospital, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, and Shriners' Burns Institute) are located just north of Downtown Crossing. These institutions employ 19,000 workers, have over 1,300 beds, record 50,000 patient admissions each year and receive another 1.2 million outpatient visits annually. Tufts New England Medical Center and the Floating Hospital for Children are located just south of Downtown Crossing and have 5,500 workers, 400 beds, 17,000 admissions, and 356,000 outpatient's visits. Many of the employees of and visitors to these medical institutions also shop downtown.

Several churches are located in the Downtown Crossing area (including St. Paul's Cathedral, St. Anthony's Shrine, the Park Street Church, the Tremont Temple, and the Paulist Center). Government buildings include the Massachusetts State House and two high-rise state office buildings to the northwest, City Hall and the JFK federal building to the north, the State Transportation office building to the south, and the Federal Reserve Bank to the southeast. Social service agencies include the New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans on Court Street and St. Francis House on Boylston Street.

# Hotels

Downtown hotels host visitors from both out-of-town and from other countries who spend a considerable amount of money at area stores, restaurants, and theaters. There are six hotels located within the district, containing 1,600 rooms. They range from the historic Parker House which opened in 1856 to the Hyatt Regency Boston (formerly the Swissotel), to the recently opened Ritz-Carlton at Boston Common and the Nine Zero on Tremont Street. Another 18 hotels with over 4,100 rooms are located within a twenty minute walking distance.

Construction has recently begun on a new hotel in Downtown Crossing, which will be located in the historic Ames Building at 1 Court Street, which at the time it was built was New England's first "skyscraper."

*Nine Zero Hotel - Nearly 400 rooms have been added to the Downtown Crossing area in the past five years, with another 300 rooms planned or under construction.*

On a typical day, these 24 hotels maintain a 75% occupancy rate with an average of 1.5 persons per room. This translates into an average of 8,550 visitors who spend an estimated \$200 per day, generating \$1.6 million daily into the center of the city, much of it spent in Downtown Crossing stores.

Finally, Downtown Crossing is located just 1.1 miles or a 15-minute walk from the new Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, putting its stores and restaurants within easy reach of even more visitors to the city.



# Arts & Culture

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Downtown Crossing area became home to many of the city's theaters, vaudeville houses, and concert halls.

As live entertainment was replaced by movies, many of the theaters closed; others were put to less wholesome uses as "adult entertainment" venues. Today, however, thanks to Mayor Menino's leadership and a number of strong public-private partnerships, all but a handful of those establishments on lower Washington Street are now gone.

Boston's Theatre District is located just south of Downtown Crossing. Venues like the Wang Center (formerly the Metropolitan Theatre), the Colonial, Shubert, and Wilbur are fixtures in Boston's cultural life, drawing audiences night after night, year after year.

More recently, sparked by a 1995 charrette on Boston's Theatre District sponsored by Mayor Menino and Boston's preservation and historic communities, Boston's theatrical scene has begun to move up Washington and Tremont Streets toward Downtown Crossing. Emerson College acquired and has renovated the Cutler Majestic Theatre on Tremont Street. The Opera House (originally the Keith Boston) has also been restored, and the Paramount Theatre is undergoing a restoration. Finally, the Boston Redevelopment Authority has acquired the Modern Theatre, as the first step in an effort to save that historic building.

The new Loews Theatre Cineplex, the sixth largest urban cinema on the east coast, also opened not long ago on Tremont Street across from Boston Common.

## Downtown Hotels

Downtown Crossing Hotels	Rooms
Parker House	535
Hyatt Regency	500
Ritz Carlton Boston Common	191
Nine Zero	190
Phillips House at Millennium Place	63 (extended stay)
Club Quarters	170 (corporate)
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1,649</b>
Park Plaza/Theater District Hotels	Rooms
Boston Park Plaza	960
Tremont House Boston	281
Four Seasons	288
Club by Doubletree	212
Milner Hotel	64
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1,805</b>
Financial District Hotels	Rooms
Wyndham Boston	362
Langham Boston	326
Customs House	84 (time share)
Harborside Inn	56
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>828</b>
Waterfront/North End Hotels	Rooms
Marriott Long Wharf	400
Boston Harbor Hotel	230
Millennium Bostonian	187
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>817</b>
North Station Hotels	Rooms
Hotel Onyx, Kimpton Boutique	112
Bulfinch Hotel Clarion	80
Shawmut Inn	66
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>258</b>
Beacon Hill/West End Hotels	Rooms
15 Beacon Street	61
Beacon Hill Hotel	13
Holiday Inn Select	300
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>374</b>
<b>Total DOWNTOWN HOTEL ROOMS</b>	<b>5,731</b>

Source: Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)



A collection of squares, including **Reader's Park**, line Washington Street and provide an opportunity to sit and watch the Downtown Crossing shoppers pass by.

# Plans for the Future

The revival of Downtown Crossing is far from finished. Currently, a number of additional developments are poised to go forward.

In the center of the area, a vacant parcel at the corner of Washington Street and Avenue de Lafayette is set to be developed into office and retail uses. Not far away, Emerson College is planning to construct a new dormitory building on Boylston Street. At the northern end, a housing development is slated to be built at 45 Province Street. These three projects - and, no doubt, others to follow - will continue to breathe new life into Downtown Crossing.

## New Leadership

In November 2004, Mayor Menino announced the Downtown Economic Improvement Initiative to improve the area's physical surroundings and strengthen its economic vitality. The Boston Redevelopment Authority, spearheading this initiative, is working closely with area stakeholders, including the Downtown Crossing Association, property owners, and retailers to bring increased strength to the downtown district.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority is marketing Downtown Crossing nationally to retailers and developers through a citywide initiative, which includes a concentrated focus on this important district. The Downtown Crossing Association recently commissioned a market analysis and consumer research study to generate new data that will add to understanding the district's opportunities and challenges.

The initiative includes a focus on streetscape improvements funded through a public private partnership (new sidewalks and lighting, the addition of flower baskets, benches, new awnings and umbrellas for the push-carts, and banners), and special attention to "pocket" open spaces (at the Old State House, the Famine Memorial, near Filene's, at the intersection of Washington and Summer Streets, and in front of the Opera House). These areas may even have Wi-Fi/Wi-Max connections to encourage their use as "cyber-café's," as well as public information kiosks programmed in coordination with the Mayor's Office of Arts, Tourism & Special Events.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority and other city agencies will work with property owners to help design and improve signage throughout Downtown Crossing, and make other improvements, not only at street level but also at basement and second and third-floor levels. Project Place, a non-profit organization that assists low-income and homeless residents, has been hired to assist the city in cleaning sidewalks and streets.

In April 2005, as part of the initiative, Mayor Menino inaugurated Boston Art Windows, a joint effort among the City of Boston, the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and property owners to enliven underutilized commercial storefronts with curated, cutting-edge art exhibits. It has proven so successful that it is being used as a model for other commercial areas in the city.

In early Fall 2005, the Boston Redevelopment Authority will issue a Request for Proposals to prepare an Identity, Image and Urban Design Branding Strategic Plan for Downtown Crossing to help the area redefine itself for the 21st century.

Finally, construction of the Rose Kennedy Greenway above the submerged Central Artery and the Mayor's Crossroads Initiative, which will redesign a number of key streets, will better connect Downtown Crossing with neighboring areas and spur increased activity in the Downtown Crossing district.

## CONCLUSION

Downtown Crossing today - more than ever in its history - is the vital heart of central Boston and a place for residents and visitors to live, work, shop, dine, and to be entertained. All of the elements are there - residential, commercial, cultural, architectural and historic - and strong partnerships have emerged among the public, private, and non-profit sectors that will guarantee an even brighter future for Downtown Crossing, its residents, businesses, and visitors.



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