



Fort Point District
Open Space/Public Realm Charrette
February 21, 2004
Summary Report



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Fort Point District Open Space/Public Realm Charrette Team

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South Boston

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Ex Officio

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Boston City Council

Councilor James M. Kelly
Boston City Council

Senator John A. Hart
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Massachusetts Port Authority
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Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
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Lisa Marx (Alternate)

Executive Office of Transportation and Construction
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Astrid Glynn, (Alternate)

Boston Environment Department
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Boston Landmarks Commission
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At-Large Representatives

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Artery Business Committee

Richard Dimino, President and CEO

Bissera Antikarov, Manager of Urban Design and Planning

Boston Shipping Association, Inc.

Richard Meyer, President

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Richard F. Delaney, Director

Jack Wiggin, (Alternate)

National Park Service

Terry W. Savage, Superintendent

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Chris Hart (Alternate)

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Stephanie Pollack

Seth Kaplan (Alternate)

Boston Society of Architects

David Spillane

Boston Natural Areas Network

Valerie Burns

Greater Boston Real Estate Board

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Charette Attendees*

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* as noted on sign-in sheets

INTRODUCTION:

The Fort Point District is an area of approximately 100 acres in the South Boston Waterfront. It is defined by the Fort Point Channel on the northwest, Summer Street to the northeast, and the Bypass Road to the southeast.

In December of 2000, the Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs issued a Decision on The City of Boston's South Boston Waterfront District Municipal Harbor Plan. In his Decision, the Secretary conditioned the approval of the Fort Point Historic South and Fort Industrial Subdistricts upon the completion of a master plan for the area, one which would be achieved through the City's coordination with Gillette and the other landowners and stakeholders.

The Fort Point District Master Plan will be the culmination of a planning process initiated in order to address the concerns raised by the Secretary in his conditional approval. Beginning in May 2001, a public Working Group made up of property owners, residents, and other interested groups began meeting to assist in developing a "public realm plan" for the district that can be used as an envelope for future development. The Boston Redevelopment Authority in conjunction with the Boston Transportation Department began to address with the Working Group the concerns raised in the Secretary's Decision. The Secretary suggested a more in-depth analysis of the effect of new private development on Gillette's water-dependent uses. In addition, the Secretary requested the Master Plan look at measures to ensure public access to high-quality waterfront open space along the Fort Point Channel, pedestrian links to the waterfront from inland areas, and compatibility of new development with the existing historic character of the built environment.

The goal of the charrette was to engage the community in a discussion about open space and the public realm in the 100 Acres. Some important components included planning principles for program, design and experience as well as a hands on task of designing an open space plan. Ideas and discussions drawn from this forum will be incorporated into the planning process as it progresses in the Fort Point District.

The purpose of this document is to record the notes, plans and images created by the group members. An overview of common themes presented by the group as a whole as well as the specific open space plan alternatives the group designed are included.

SESSION ONE: TOPICS

In the first session groups were asked to identify planning principles which will be used to assist in determining program, design and experience. Facilitators asked participants to discuss what they currently like about open space and public realm conditions in the neighborhood and how this can be maintained and enhanced through public infrastructure. Participants were asked to think about how the open space/ public realm can accommodate a mix of uses as well as goals such as: connections to water, year-round enjoyment, active edges, retail and residential, maintaining a neighborhood feel, as well as connections to the broader area. Other topics for discussion were how climate (wind and shadow) impacts pedestrian uses, pedestrian flow, and principles for open space development. An overview of some common themes are as follows:

PROGRAM

- Public performances-amphitheater
- Community identifies as artist community
- Outdoor evening movies
- Design and uses: ball fields, passive spaces, dog spaces, play space, multi-purpose
- Scale open space for active recreation
- Neighborhood provides own intrinsic programming (arts, etc)

DESIGN

- Avoid open spaces that feel dominated by corporate buildings
- Buildings and green working together
- View corridors as often as possible from A St.
- Linear walking spaces
- Access to Fort Point Channel from all streets



- Maximize use of streetscape
- Public Art—Wayfinding/landmarks
- Maintenance should be considered/incorporated
- Sustainable plantings
- Need guidelines and standards
- Use open space creatively as connection to transit—think about pedestrian open space
- Sizable open space- signature park
- Town dock that is open to public not just rentals or leases slips
- Disallow dogs in small spaces of green/designated dog run
- Alleys are part of fabric—don't forget it and try to incorporate it for informal uses
- Create strong focus for community/center/wall for movies
- Streetscape elements to be created by neighborhood creative community
- Permanent/temporary artworks along Fort Point Channel from local artists endowed by major landowners/developers/Parks Department

EXPERIENCE

- Identify Fort Point as cultural community
- Child and senior friendly
- Not surrounded by traffic
- Views back to City
- Small active street side uses—lots
- Transit connections
- Indigenous businesses
- Cafes/Galleries
- Affordability of the experience
- Cultural activities; museums, concert halls, public art, historic district
- Accoustic sensitivity
- Impact of BCCA on this district
- Arts emporium outdoor & indoor—high visibility
- Axis of green- connecting open space to Fort Point Channel
- Distribution/ accessibility/ proximity
- 24 hour community



- Flexible Waterfront and dogs neighborhood: easy to get to; to get out on
- Understand micro climate

SESSION 2: OPEN SPACE PLAN

In the second session, new groups were formed and participants were asked to develop an open space plan for the 100 Acre area. Groups were given planning kits which included several 100 scale plans, with to-scale models of existing parks and other active recreational uses such as basketball courts, tennis courts, soccer fields etc. A site plan with existing and permitted structures was provided along with a version of the BRA proposed plan for participants to work with. All group members were asked to consider phasing of park development, limitations from the central/artery tunnel tube, and seasonal usages. An overview of some common themes are as follows:

Opportunity

- Consider suggesting the trade-offs with the landowners
 - density option on existing parcel
- Depress A Street
- Iconic element @ Gillette Plant
- View corridor for Summer St. and pedestrian bridge +/- to Convention Center
- If square footage could be exchanged between vision of “amalgamated” park?
- Key assets
- One large wedge of open space: Signature Park
- Include utilities
- Need scale for dog park, amphitheater

Concerns

- “Ornamental” spaces
- Program and recreation space next to Haul Road?



Users:

- Residents – Demographics
- Workers
- Conventioneers

Connections:

- Visual
- Harborwalk
- Pedestrian

Proximity:

- Retail/galleries
- Residential areas
- Buffers between land uses

Location:

- In relation to roads/ traffic
- In relation to light
- Amenities- cafes/galleries

Mixed uses:

- Art
- Play – teens/kids
- Reading
- Sport
- Water
- Cafes
- Vendors
- Dogs
- Music

Mixed materials:

- Grass/landscaping
- Harder surfaces-stonework



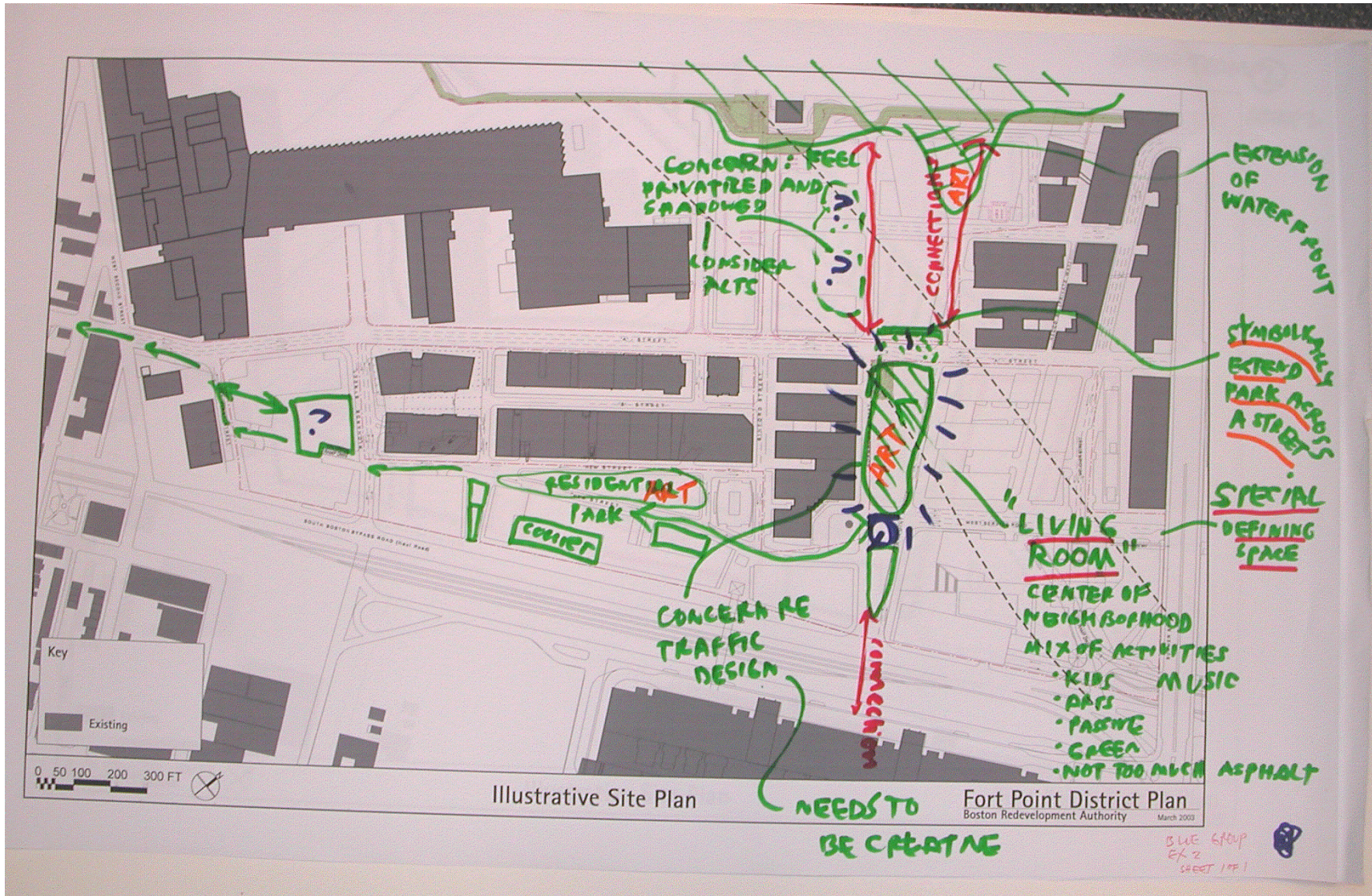
- Covered areas
- Central attractions- statues, water features

Activities:

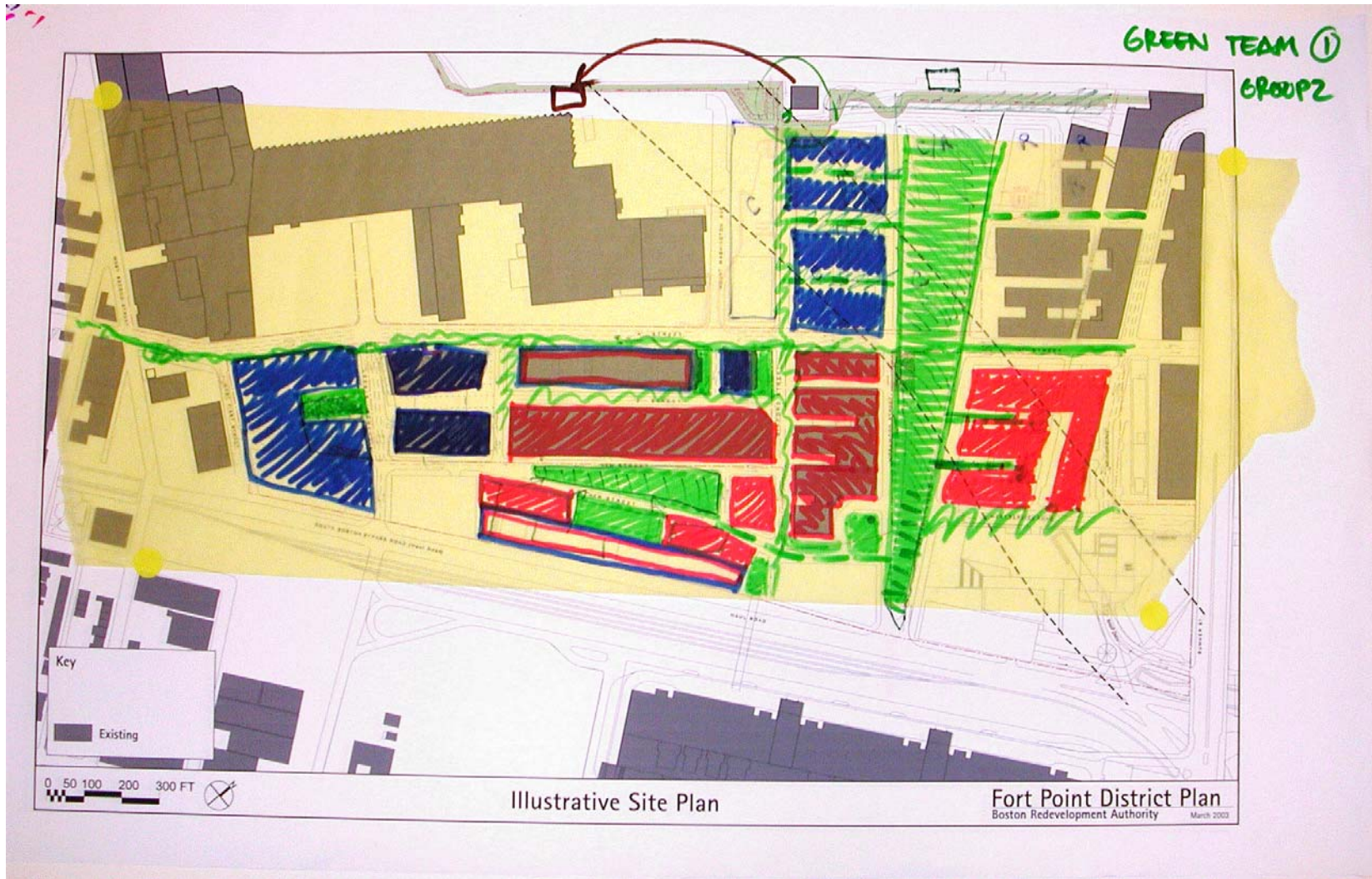
- Basketball (2)
- Tennis Court (1)
- Multi-use Field (junior soccer field)
- Work areas
- Bocce
- Playgroup/tot lot
- Central space with special feature (fountain, merry-go-round)
- Community garden
- Game tables
- Outdoor movies/theater/performances/music/gathering space
- Trees/park benches/picnic tables/public art
- Dock
- Dog run
- Location of residential/commercial creates tension
 - Balance residents need to access water—locate gathering space near Channel
- Open Space should be close to residential
- Multi-purpose field/town square/courts
- Create connections between open spaces

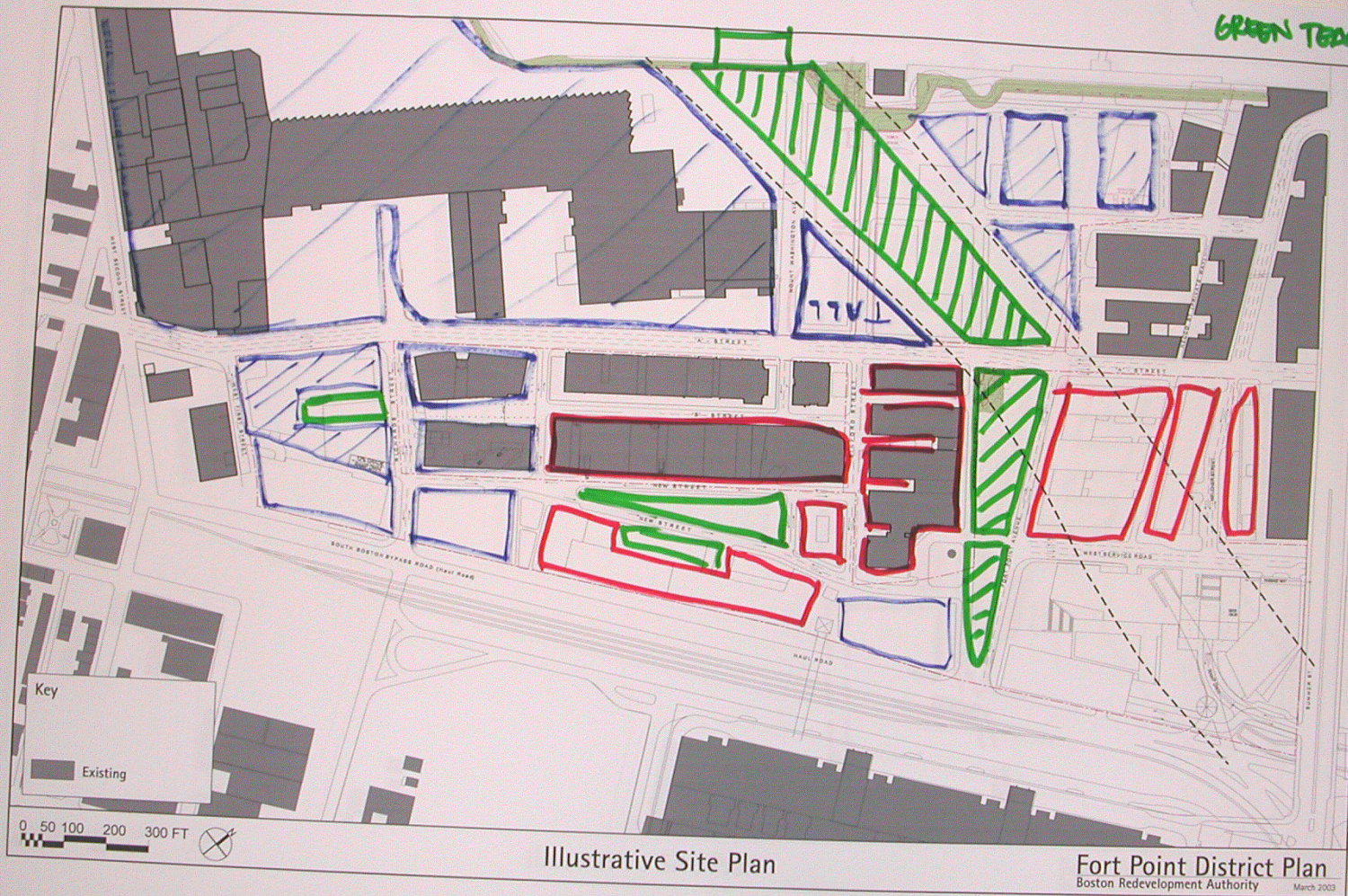


Blue Team

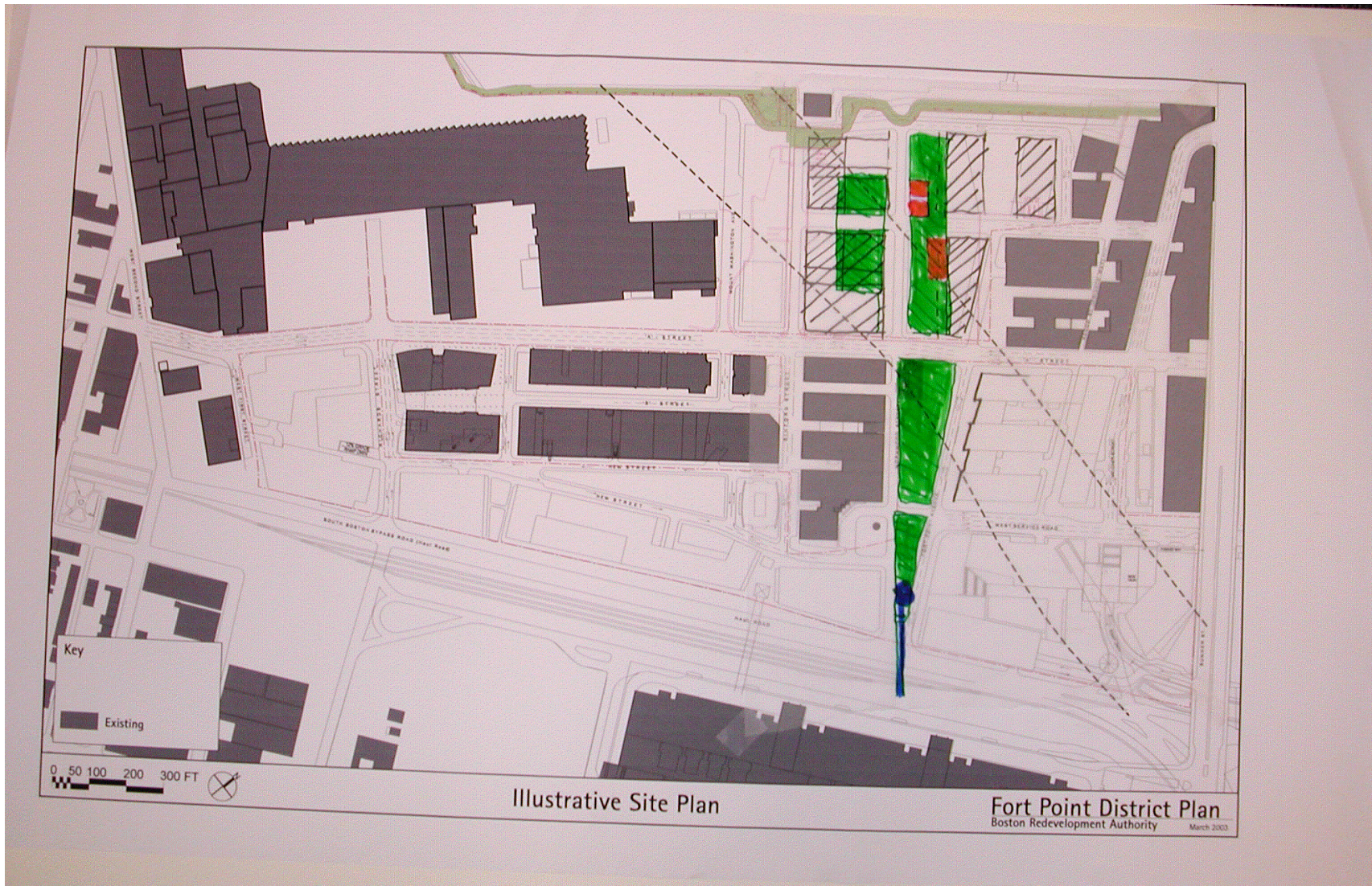


Green Team

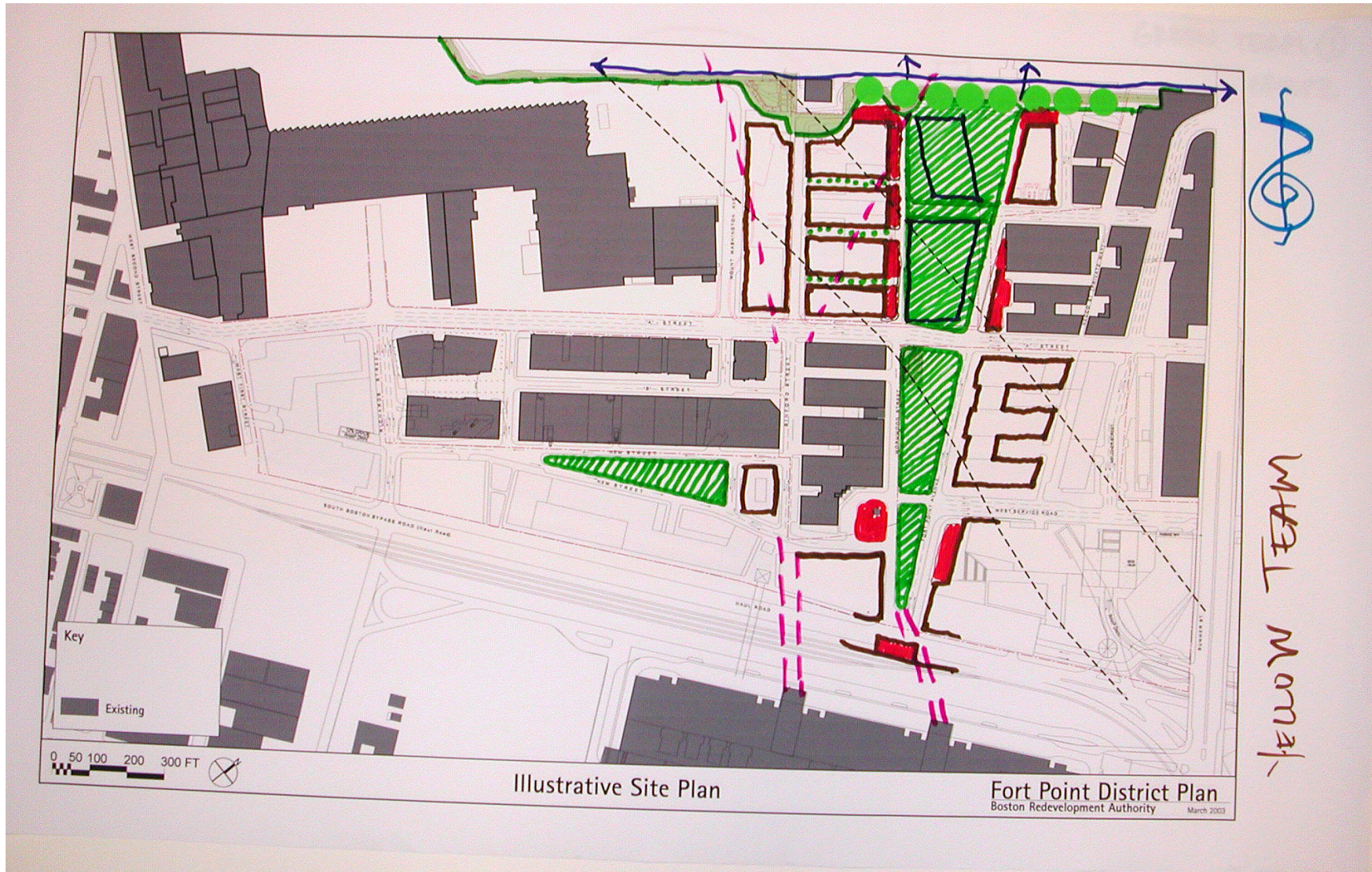




Red Team



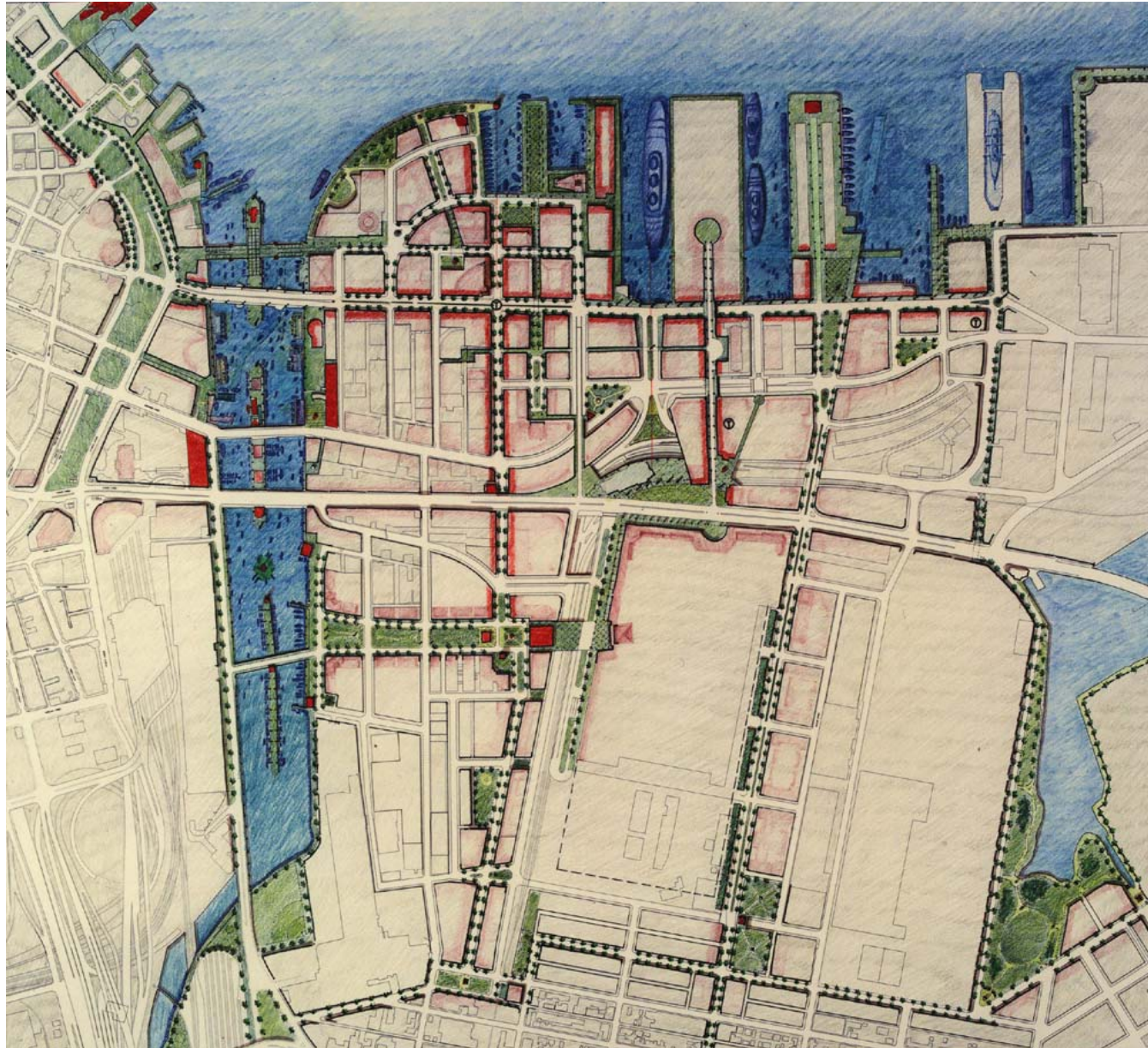
Yellow Team



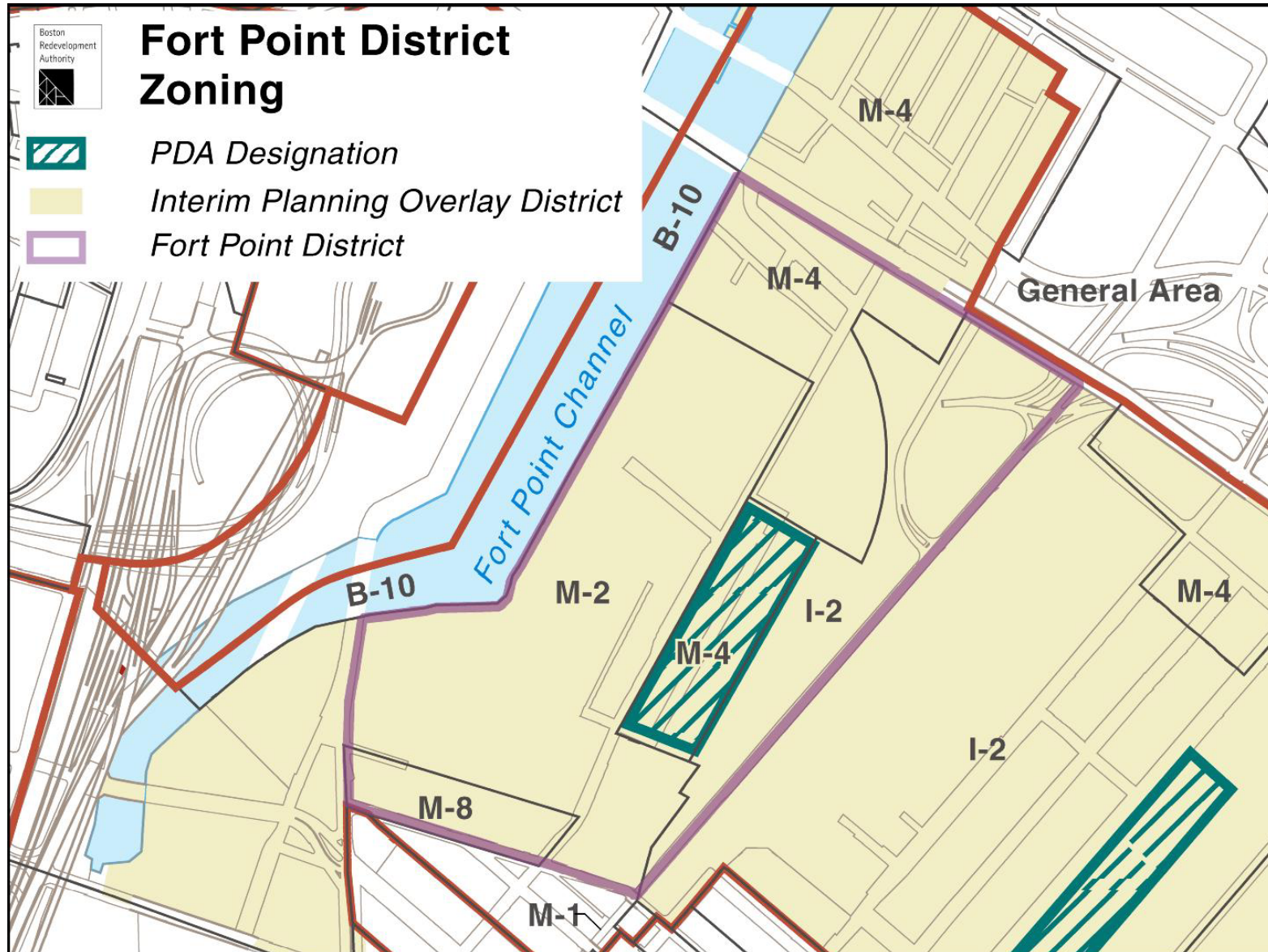
Appendix:

**Additional Graphics Provided at the
Charrette**

Seaport Public Realm Plan Open Space Plan



Zoning Map



Illustrative Site Plan

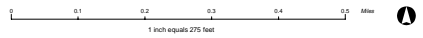
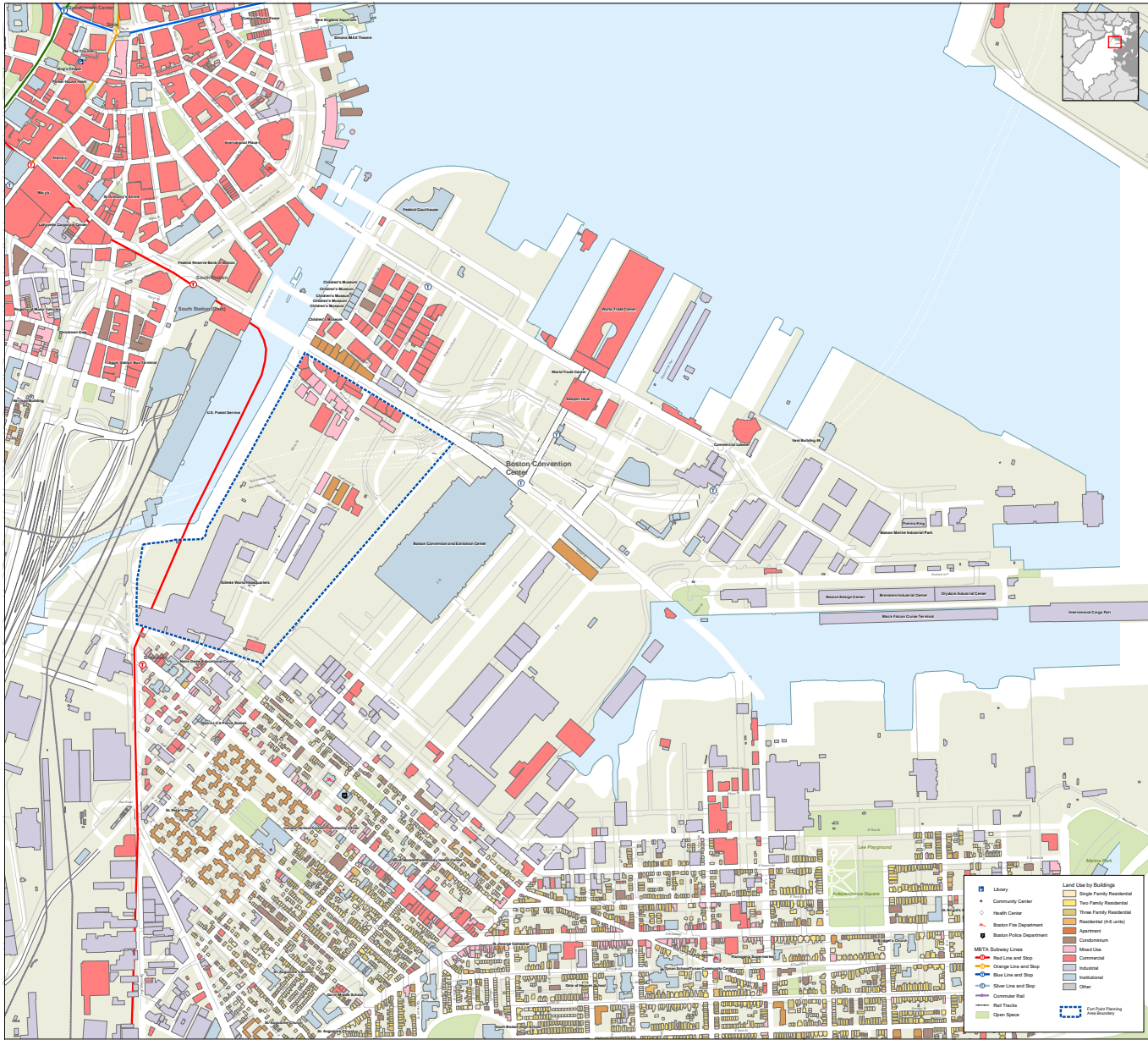


Illustrative Site Plan

Constraints in Planning Area



South Boston Land Use



This map is not a warranty, representation, or contract. It is for informational purposes only. The City of Boston reserves the right to change the information on this map without notice.

**South Boston
Waterfront District
Land Use**

**Select Shadow Analysis for Existing Conditions:
October 23rd at 9am, 12 noon, and 3pm**



Advisory Committee's DRAFT Fort Point District Planning Principles:

- Mix of Uses
- Recognizing needs of both daytime and night-time population
- Emphasis on the special features of the neighborhood such as the Fort Point Channel, the Gillette plant, cultural and historic features
- Strong pedestrian environment
- Program of open space/use
- Sensitivity to southern section of the planning area towards the neighborhood with respect to building height
- Visual and perceptual connections
- A sustainable neighborhood, non-dependent on visitors
- Connections to the Fort Point Channel and it's activities
- Keeping future development aligned with the historical context and fabric of the area
- Maintaining the Haul Road as a vital connection to the Port as well as a method to diminish truck traffic on residential streets
- Residential uses should not be abutting the Haul Road/ industrial uses
- Open space connecting to residential uses