



# PLAN: Downtown

Advisory Group Meeting #6  
Preliminary Recommendations & Community Priorities

September 25, 2019



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# Agenda

## *Advisory Group Meeting #6 Agenda*

Summer Engagement Recap	5 minutes
Introduction	5 minutes
Vision & Goals Revisited	5 minutes
<b>Preliminary Recommendations for Public Spaces</b>	
1. Criteria for Identifying Public Space Improvements	5 minutes
2. Preliminary Recommendations for Public Spaces	10 minutes
3. Discussion: Open House + Large Group	15+10 minutes
<b>Preliminary Planning Recommendations</b>	
1. Criteria for Identifying Planning Recommendations	5 minutes
2. Preliminary Planning Recommendations	10 minutes
3. Discussion: Open House + Large Group	15+10 minutes





# Community Engagement Summer Recap

## Overview

### Pop Up Locations

- Leventhal Park
- Summer Street Art Market
- Chinatown Gate

### Walking Tours

- Chinatown Walking Tour facilitated by
- Ally's Alley's Walking Tour

### 349 Washington Street Storefront



# Community Engagement Summer Recap

## Feedback

### Identity and Public Realm

- More Open Space
- Policies that encourage thriving nightlife
- Public Art
- Cleaner Streets

### Mix- Use Core

- Celebrate Local Businesses
- Diversity of Retail

### Equity

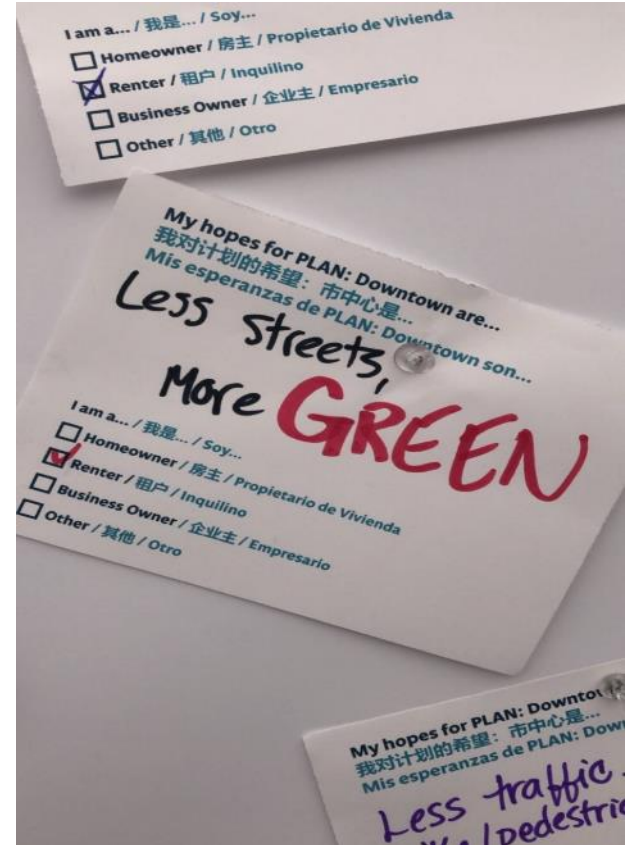
- Affordable Housing

### Mobility

- Improve sidewalks
- Prioritization of Pedestrian Zones
- Faster/ reliable transit

### Resiliency and Preservation

- Eliminate Carbon Emission



# Advisory Group Overview

*Advisory Group Schedule—Subject to Change*

1	March 7, 2019	Introduction & Project Overview
2	April 24, 2019	Existing Conditions & Character Areas
3	May 22, 2019	Preservation & Growth
4	June 20, 2019	Climate & Resiliency
5	July 17, 2019	Mobility & Public Realm
6	<b>September 25, 2019</b>	<b>Preliminary Recommendations &amp; Community Priorities</b>
7	November 7, 2019	<b>Development Scenarios</b>

8	December 17, 2019	<b>Urban Design Guidelines &amp; Zoning Recommendations</b>
9	January 2020	<b>Urban Design Guidelines &amp; Zoning Recommendations</b>
10	February 2020	<b>Design Guidelines Progress</b>
11	April 2020	<b>Draft PLAN: Downtown</b>
12	May—July 2020	Meet as needed. PLAN: Downtown must be substantially complete by July 2020.

*Meeting dates and subjects are tentative and subject to change. Extra meetings may be scheduled and will be discussed in advance with the Advisory Group. Advisory Group members will be provided with schedule updates as the project progresses.*

# Introduction

*Why identify recommendations?*

- 1. Ensure the Vision & Goals established through public input and agency consultation are supported through plan implementation**
- 2. Clearly communicate the City's overall priorities, both to the general public and to potential investors in Downtown and Chinatown**
- 3. Provide short- and long-term guidance for City and private investment in Downtown and Chinatown**

# PLAN: Downtown will...

## *Vision & Goals Draft Revisions*

**Vision:** Develop a new framework for the preservation, enhancement, and growth of Downtown Boston as a place for all, balancing livability, daylight, walkability, climate change preparedness, access to open space, affordability, and a dynamic mix of uses.

1. Preserve the cultural heritage and embrace the distinctive histories present in public spaces as essential to creating a unique and cohesive Downtown.
2. Promote dense, mixed-use development to support job growth, housing opportunities, and 18 hour/7 days/week activity for residents, workers, and visitors.
3. Improve access to housing, cultural assets, and amenities for a diverse range of Boston residents across all neighborhoods, levels of affordability, stages of life, and backgrounds.
4. Improve connections through, within, and to Downtown, with a focus on active transportation, transit, and non-vehicular modes of transportation.

# PLAN: Downtown will...

## *Vision & Goals Draft Revisions*

5. Preserve historic building fabric and cultural institutions while advancing climate preparedness and resiliency measures.
6. Ensure that new development and public realm projects are resilient, and mitigate climate risks such as sea level rise, coastal storms, rising temperatures, and increased stormwater.
7. Encourage consistent, safe, healthy, and high-quality improvements to the public realm that welcome everyone year-round.
8. Support business development that maintains Downtown as a regional economic center.
9. Promotes the retention, growth, and diversity of ground-floor retail businesses, especially legacy and small businesses.





# Preliminary Recommendations for Public Spaces



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# Public Space Definition

Publicly-accessible spaces between and within buildings that support public life and social interaction, such as:

- Streets
- Plazas
- Parks and open spaces
- Publicly-accessible indoor spaces

WHEREVER the public is welcome.

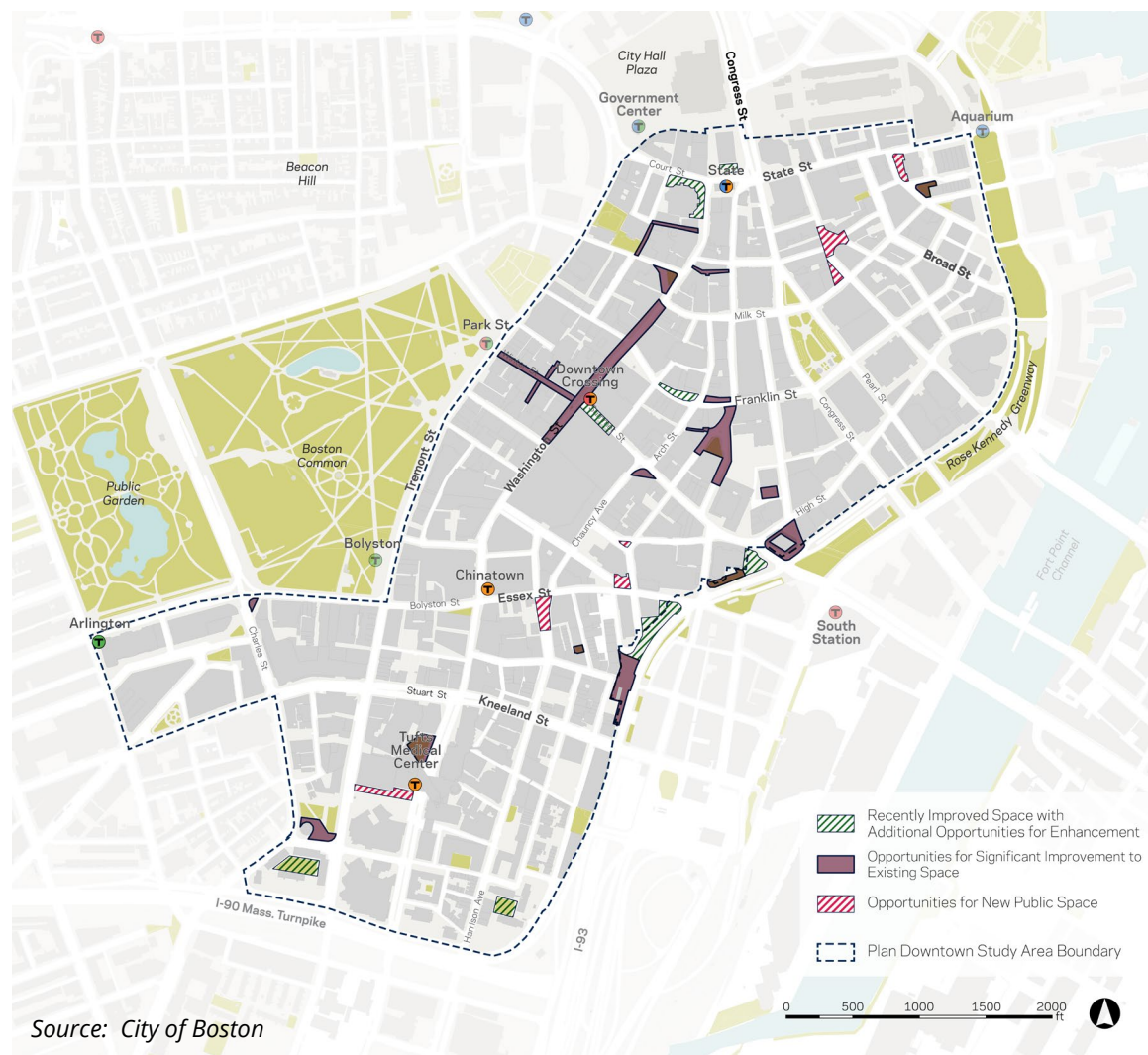
# Existing Outdoor Spaces + Plazas

- *Boston Common*: The Boston Common Master Plan is currently underway
- *Boston Public Garden*
- *Rose Kennedy Greenway*: The Greenway Conservancy and newly formed Greenway Business Improvement District (BID) is focused on local improvements and programming



# Outdoor Spaces and Plazas: Assessment

- There are a number of recently improved or new spaces that could perform even better
- There are opportunities, through road diets and reconfigurations, for new public spaces
- Improvements could include elements such as shade and shelter, increased seating, playable landscapes, integrated public art and lighting



# Criteria for Identifying Public Space Improvements

1. Can a currently leftover space be transformed to create a usable public space?
2. Does a space have the potential to support more inclusive public use?
3. Does a space provide the opportunity to mitigate climate & environmental impacts?
4. Is a space along a major pedestrian connective route (especially one lacking public spaces at regular intervals)?
5. Does a space have the potential to serve adjacent ground floor activities?
6. Does a space have the potential to dramatically transform residents' or visitors' experience for the better?
7. Is there a lack of current initiatives addressing the long-term needs of the space?



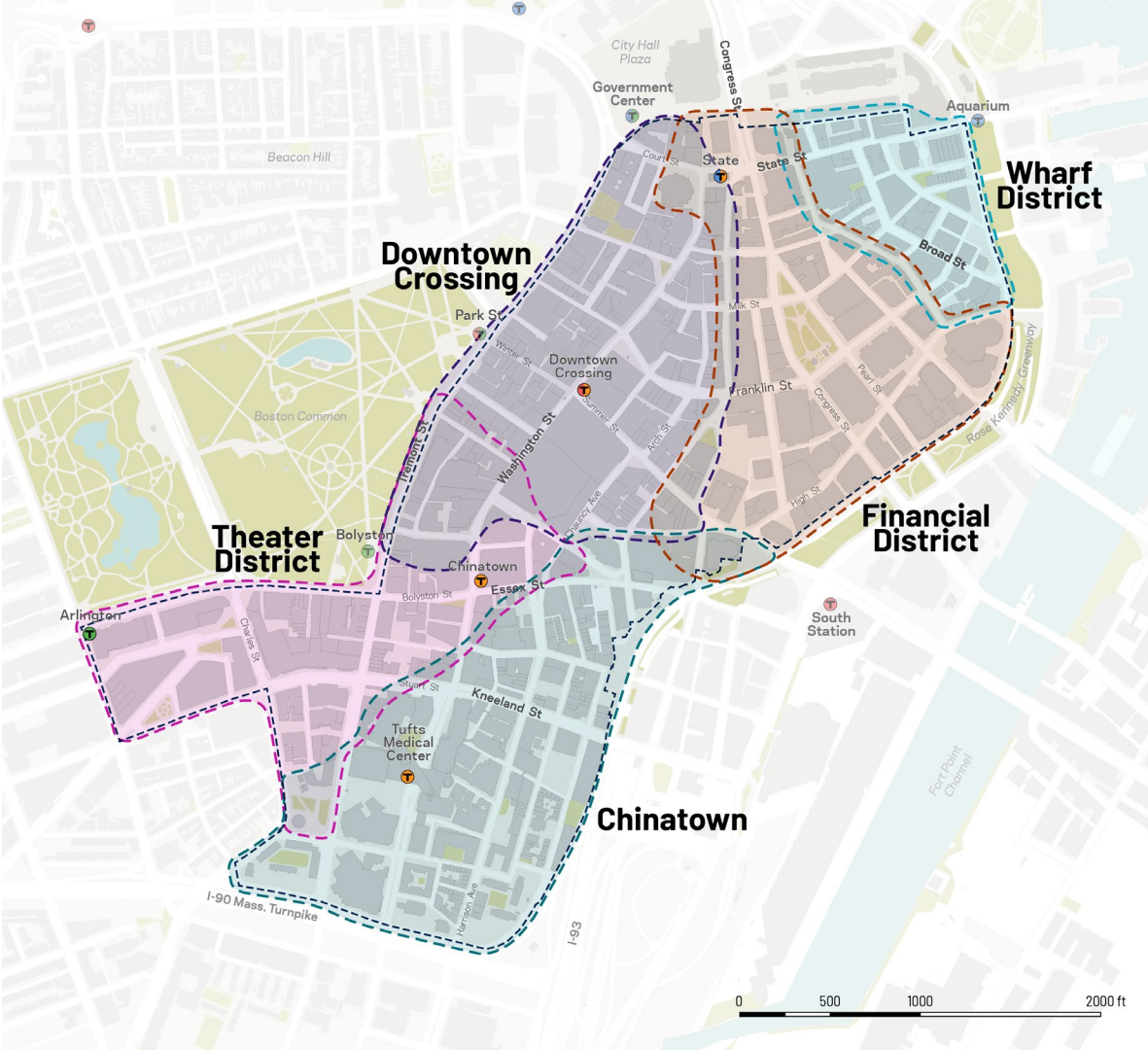


# Questions to Consider

*Preliminary recommendations for public space improvements*

- Have we identified the right public space improvements?
- Have we forgotten any spaces or opportunities for new spaces?
- Are there more places beyond the Downtown Crossing Character Area that should prioritize pedestrians? Where are major pedestrian desire lines?
- How should we prioritize these improvements?

# Character Areas

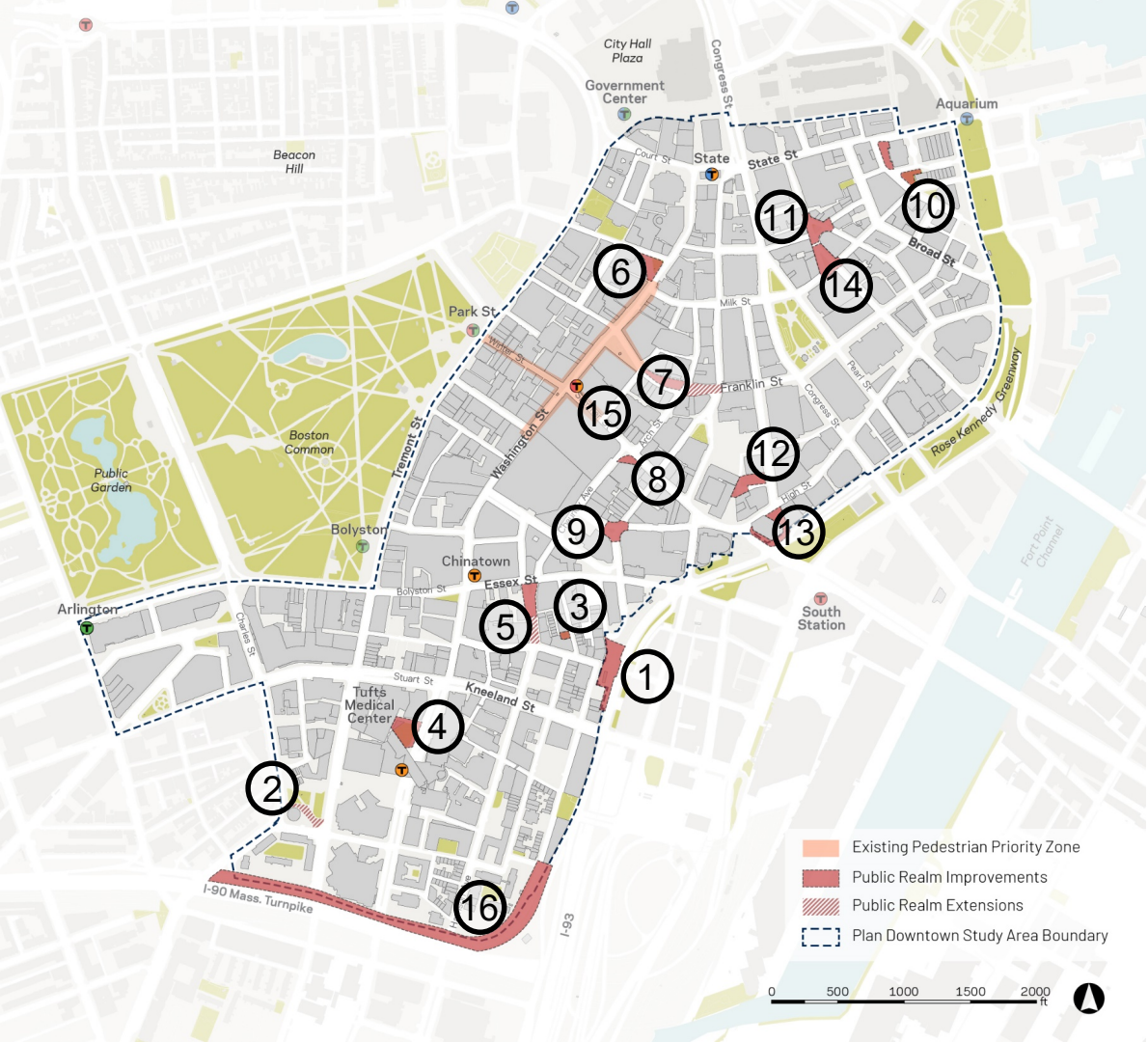






# Potential Public Space Improvements

1. Chin Park
2. Eliot Norton Park Extension
3. Oxford Place Playground
4. Tufts Medical Center
5. Philips Square Extension & Permanent Design
6. Readers' Park
7. Franklin Street / Tontine East
8. Chauncey Street / Summer Street
9. Bedford Street / Kingston Street
10. Jenney Plaza
11. Liberty Square
12. Milton Place
13. Fiduciary Trust Building
14. Kilby Street / Milk Street
15. Extended Pedestrian-Priority Zone
16. Hudson Street /Marginal Street

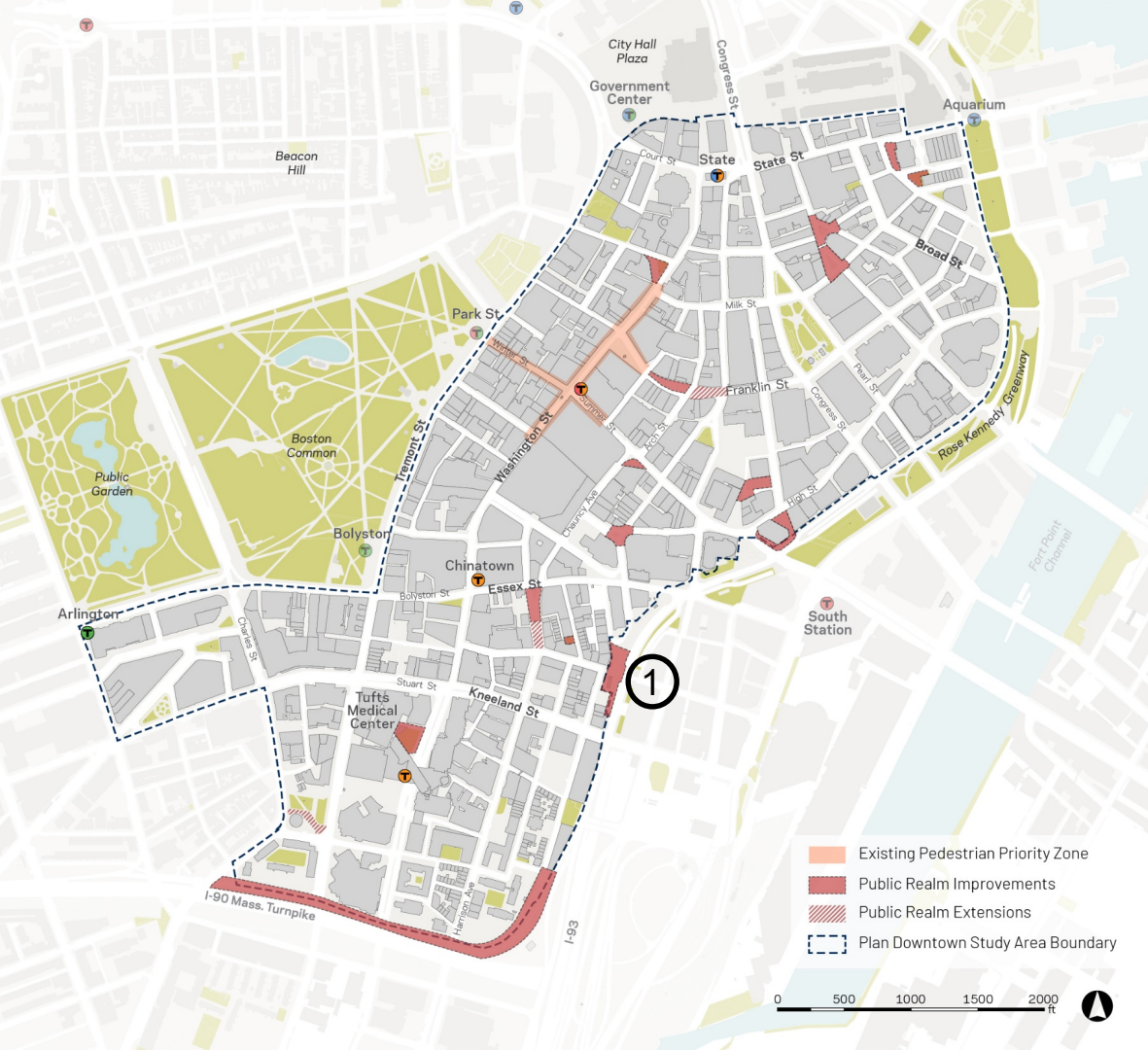


# Potential Public Space Improvements

## 1. Chin Park



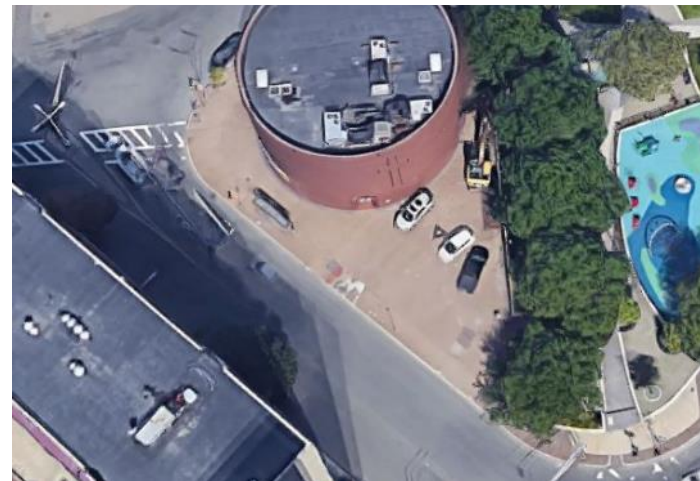
More seating, landscaping and shade would enhance the Park.



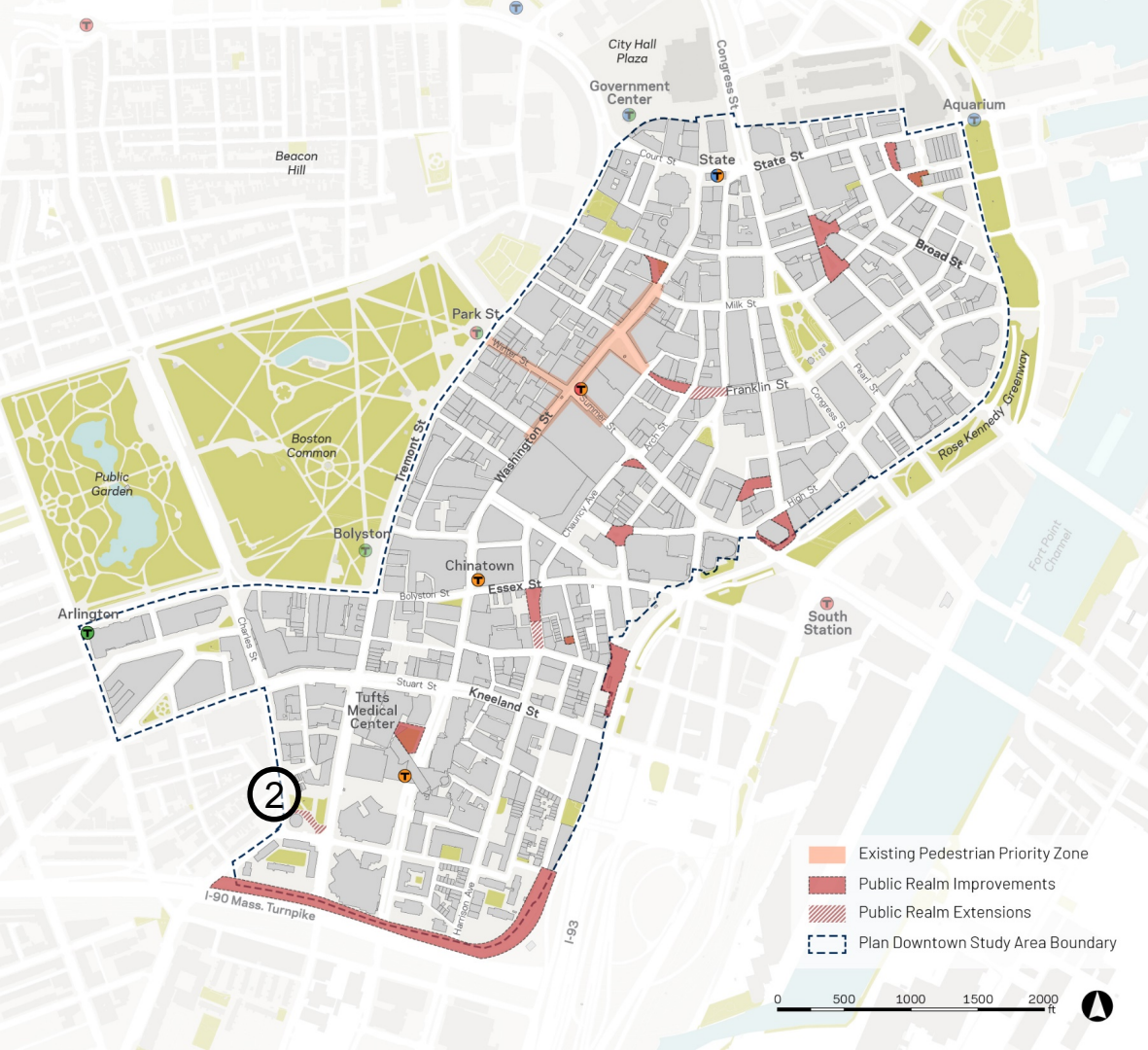


# Potential Public Space Improvements

## 2. Elliot Norton Park Extension

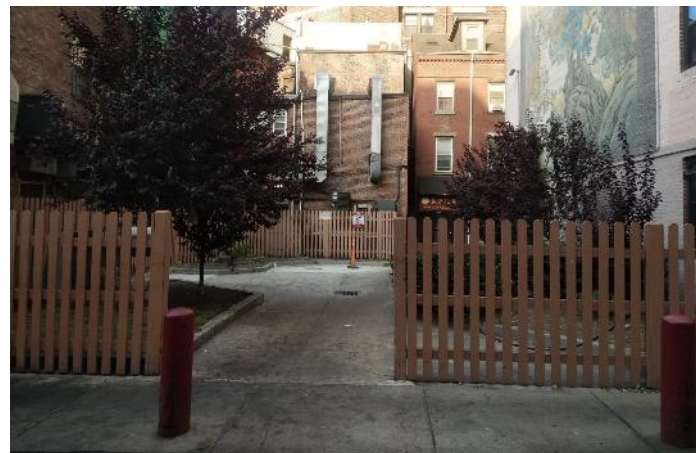


Greater integration of the area around the church with the playground could provide more amenity space and local connectivity.

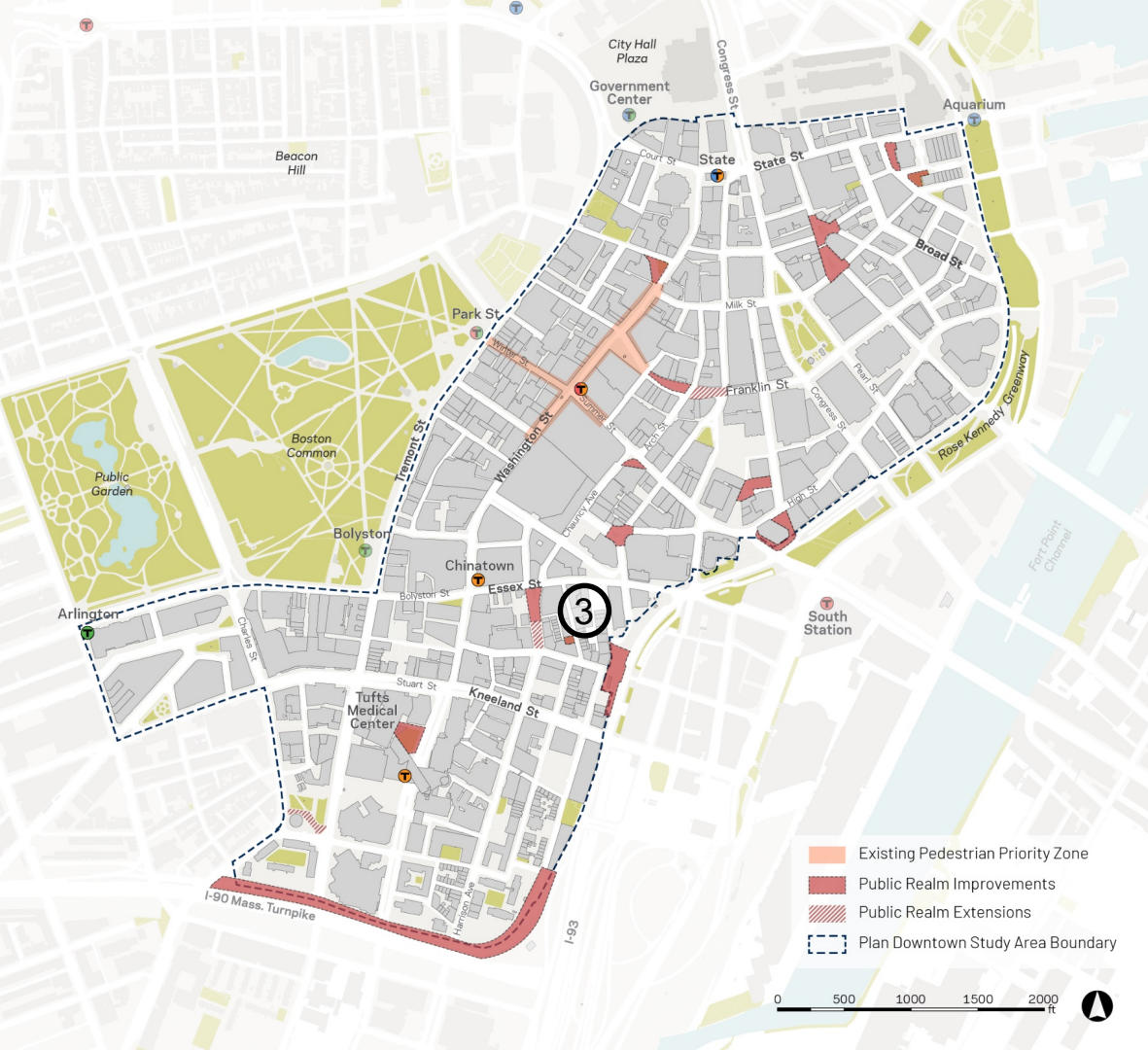


## Potential Public Space Improvements

### 3. Oxford Place Playground



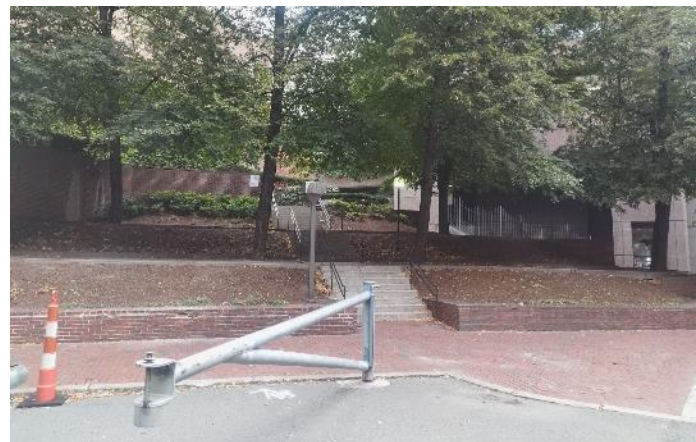
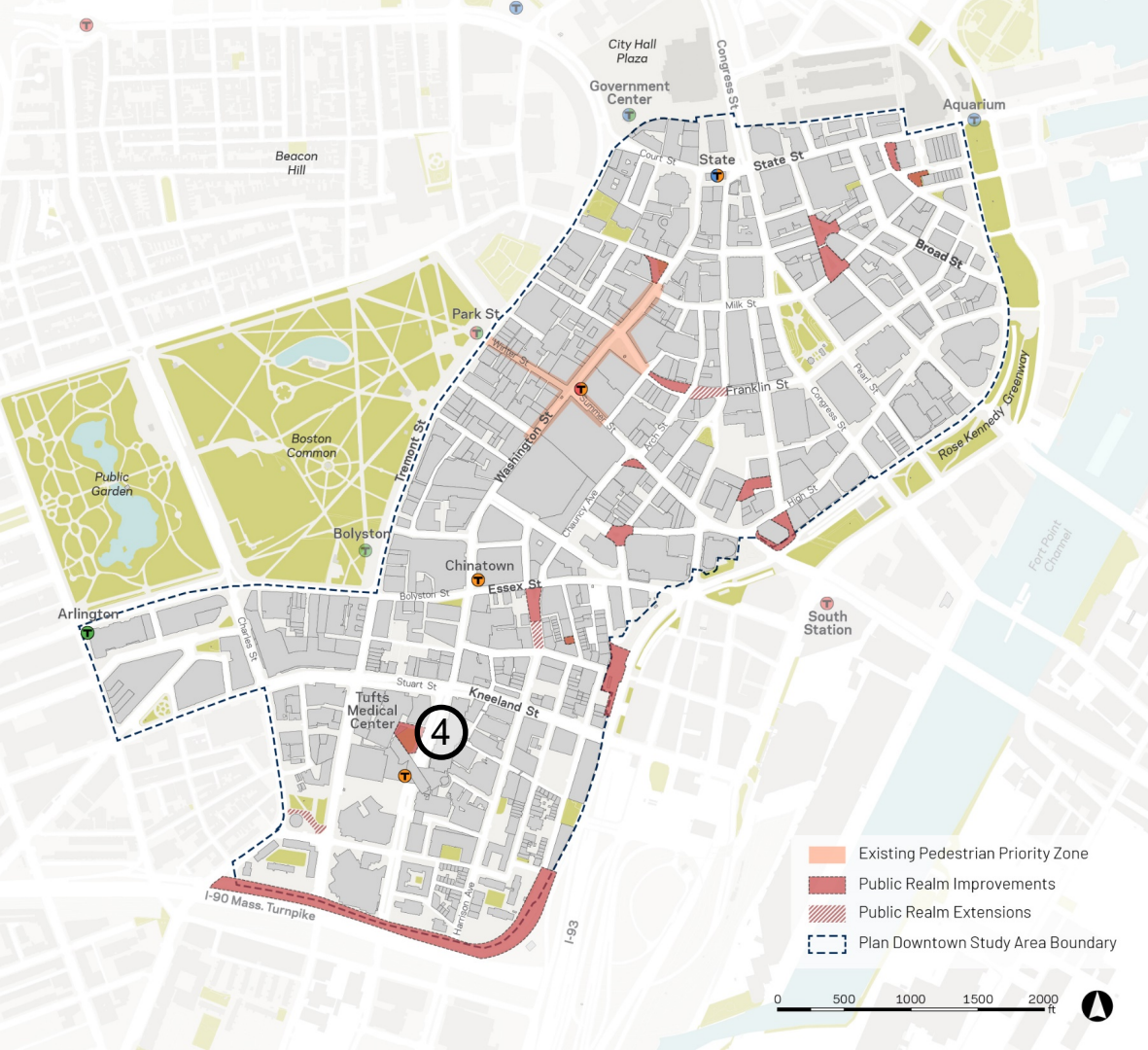
Playable landscapes and equipment, and improvements to the fence could create a more welcoming playground.





## Potential Public Space Improvements

### 4. Tufts Medical Center



The integration of playable landscapes and seating would increase the usage of this space.

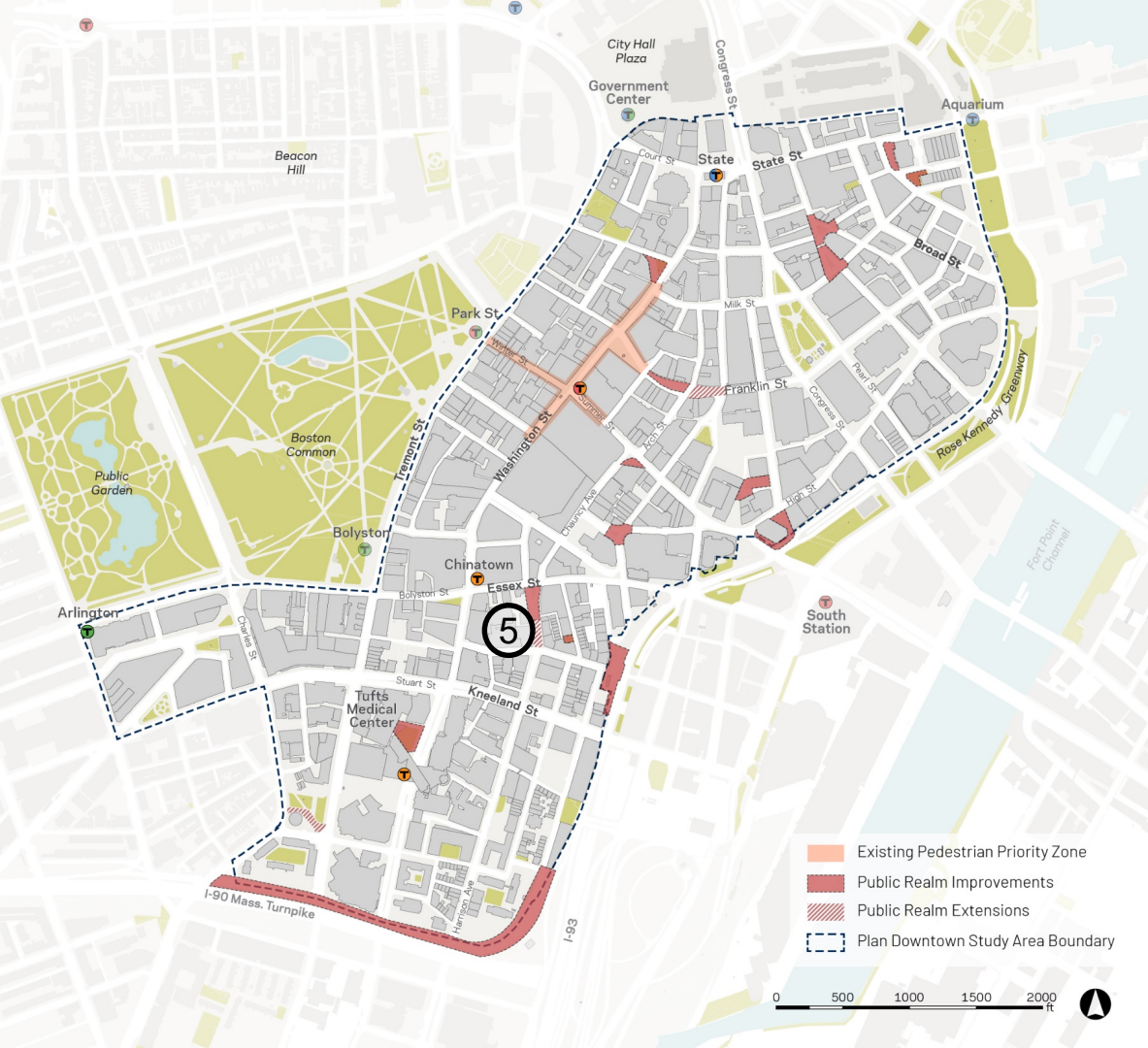


## Potential Public Space Improvements

### 5. Phillips Square Extension & Permanent Design



- If successful the temporary public space will need a permanent design / configuration.
- The reclamation of the temporary public space could extend further south.



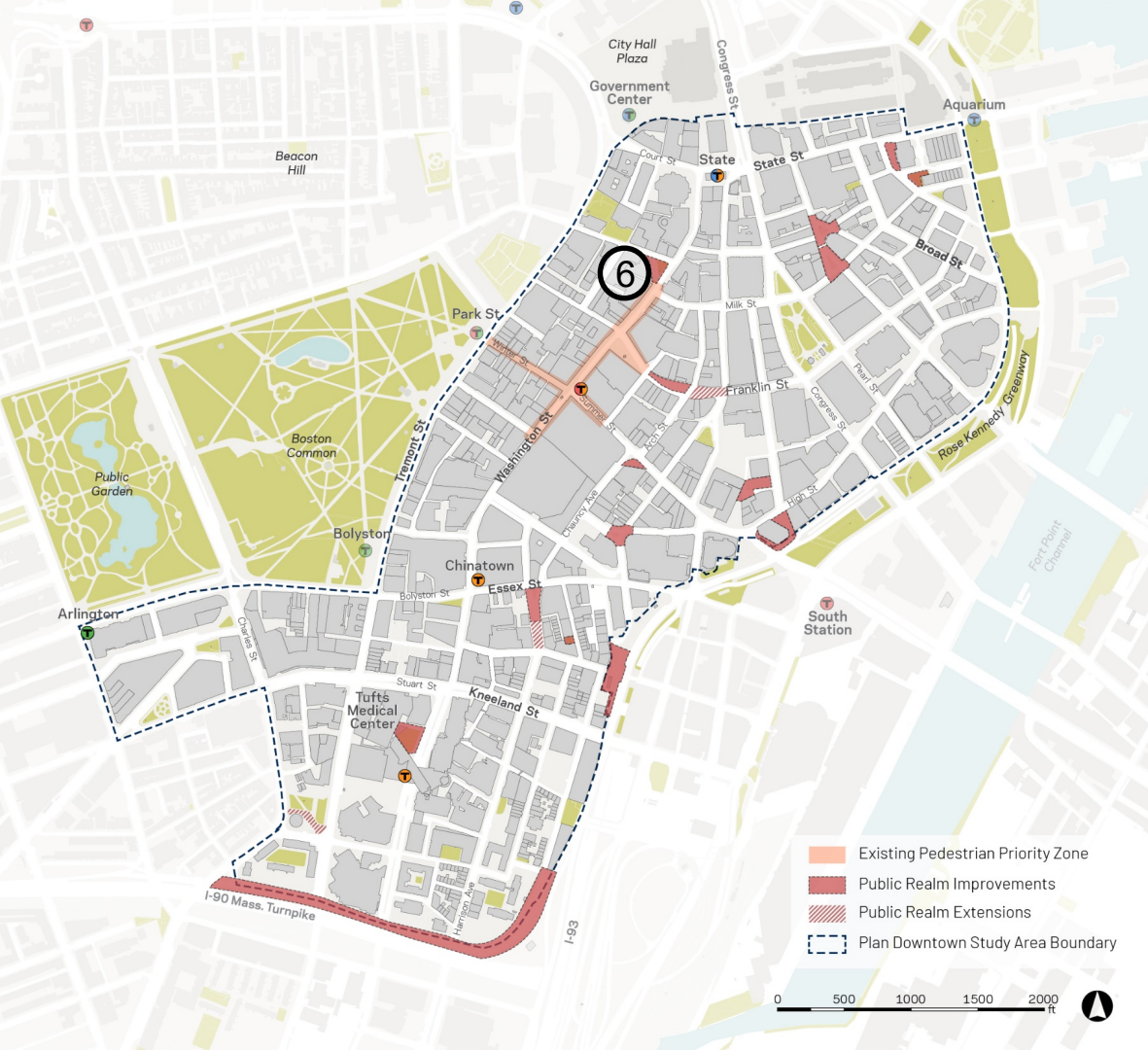


## Potential Public Space Improvements

### 6. Readers' Park



This corner could incorporate more permanent planting / softscape and greenery.



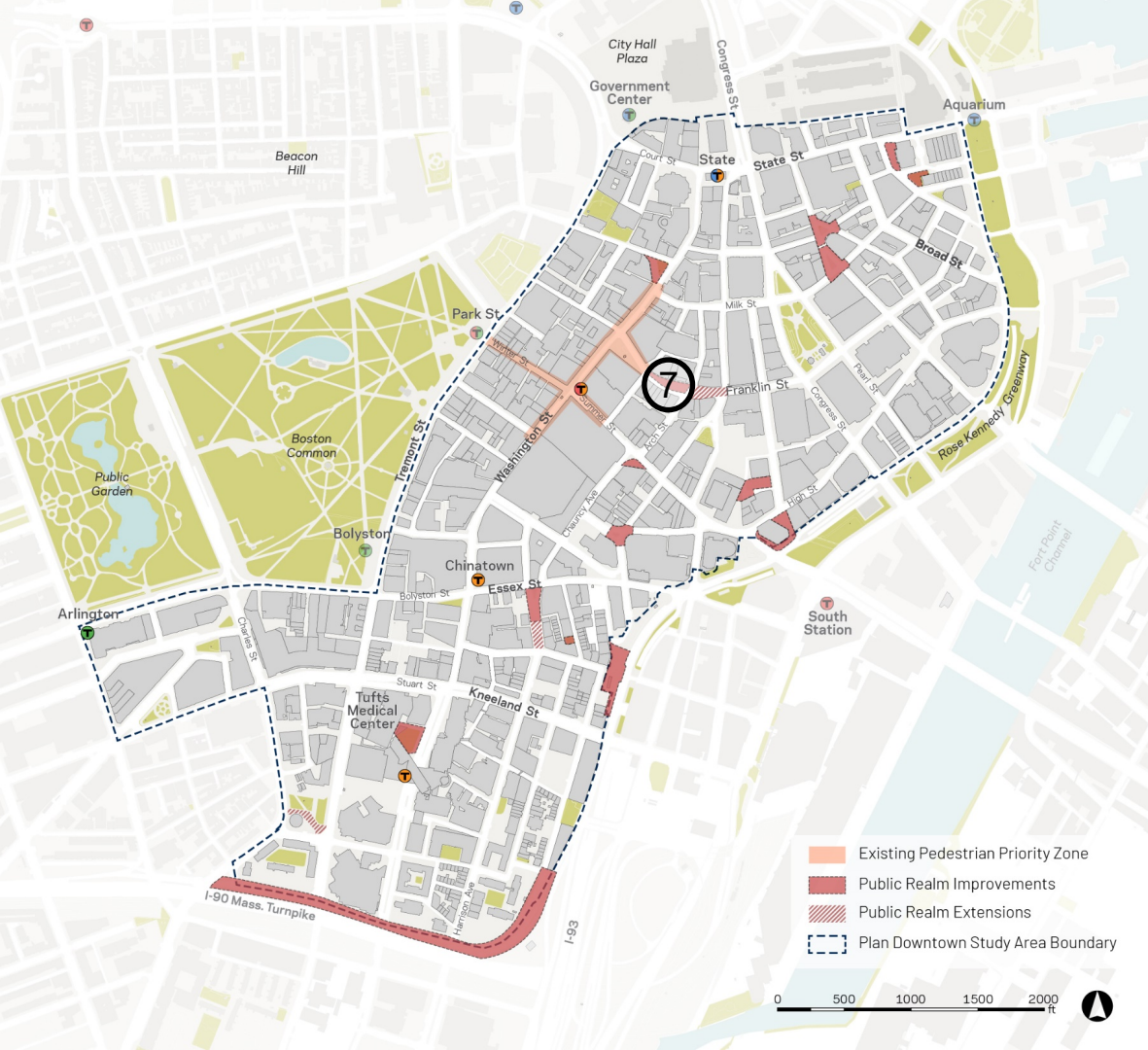


## Potential Public Space Improvements

### 7. Franklin Street / Tontine East

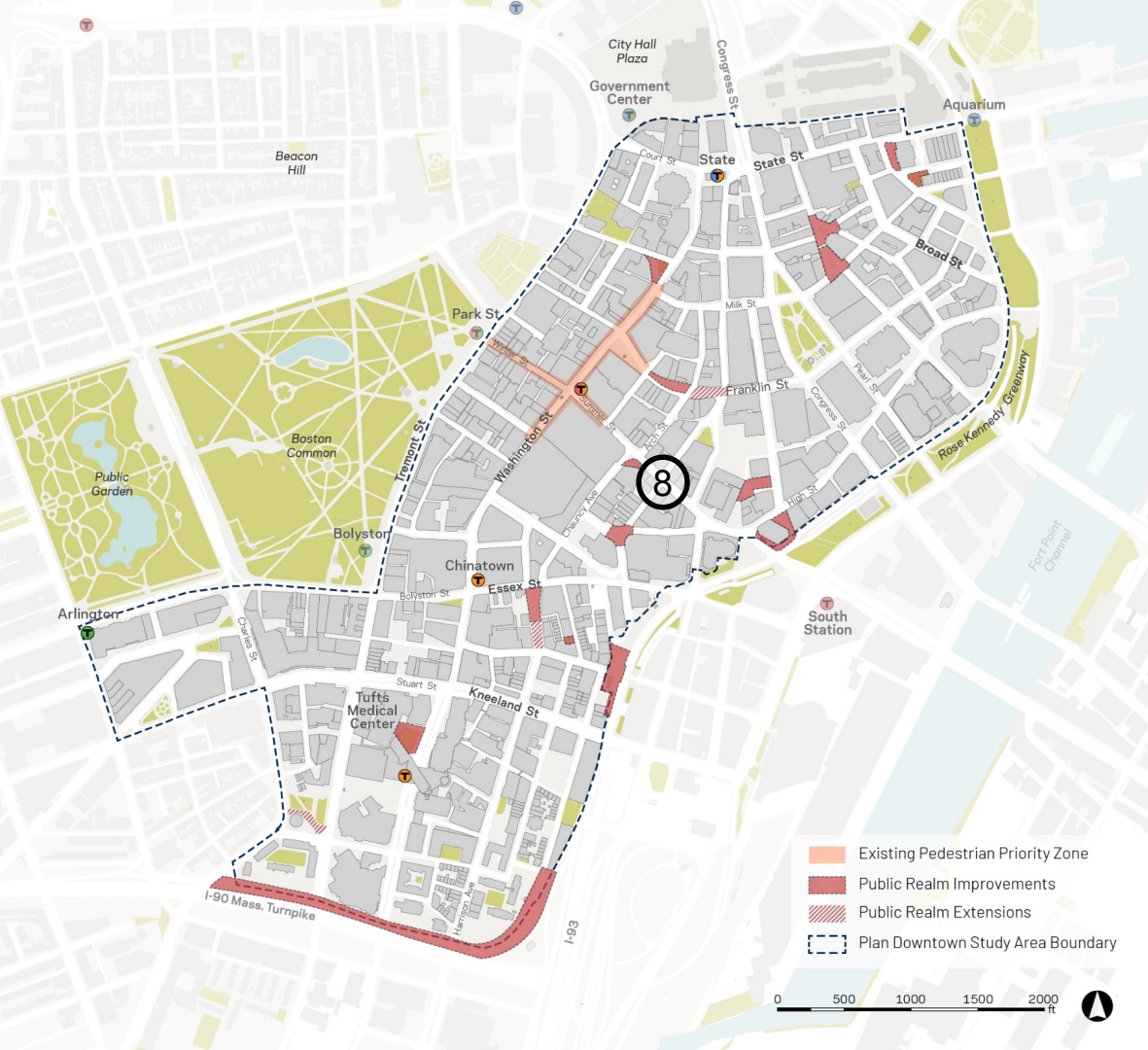


The success of Tontine Crescent should catalyze a road 'diet' further east and another new addition to the public realm.



## Potential Public Space Improvements

### 8. Chauncy St/Summer St



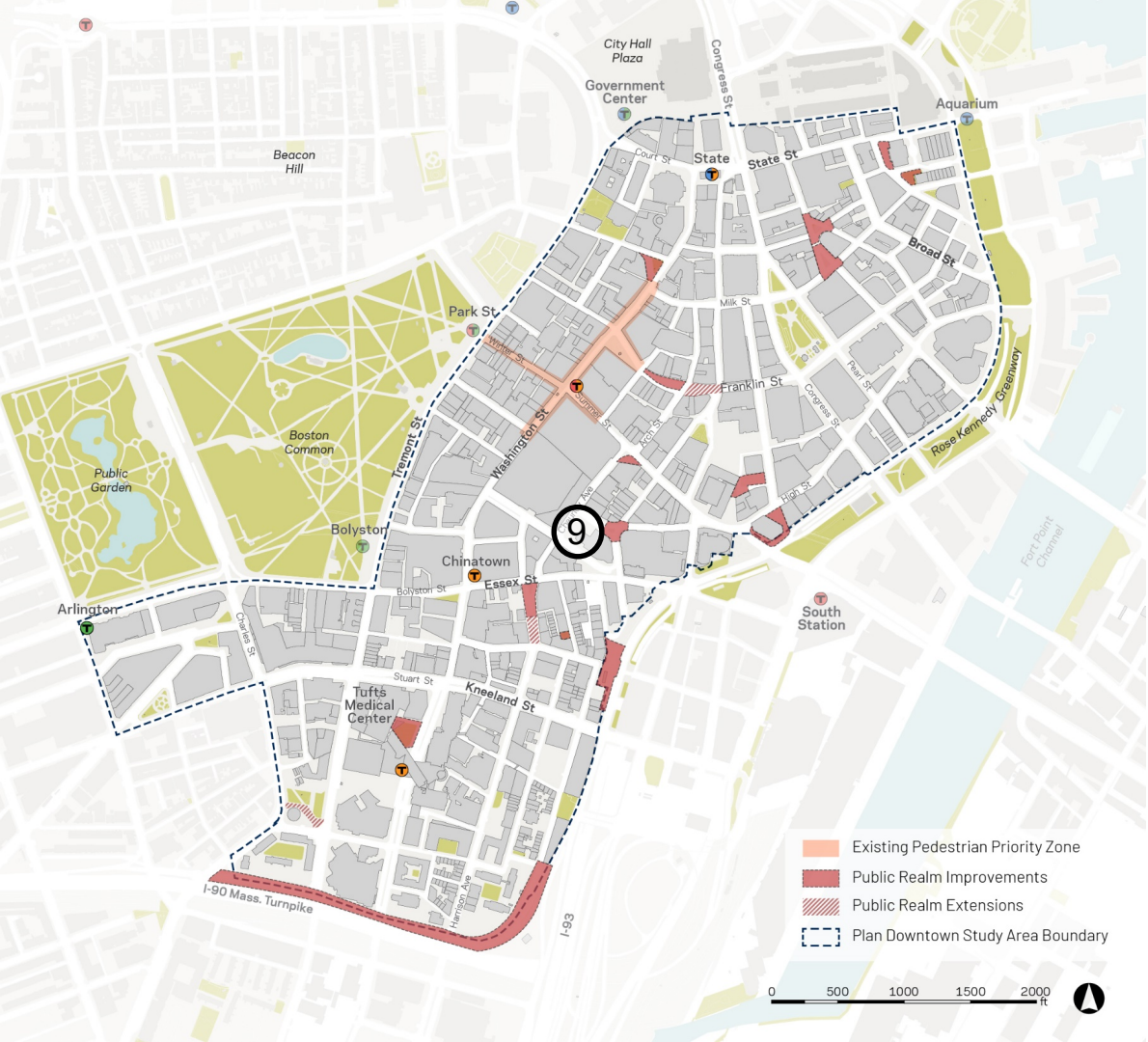
The rationalization of the clutter would allow for a well-shaded cohesive space, potentially treated as an extension to Summer Street's pedestrian zone.





# Potential Public Space Improvements

## 9. Bedford St/Kingston St



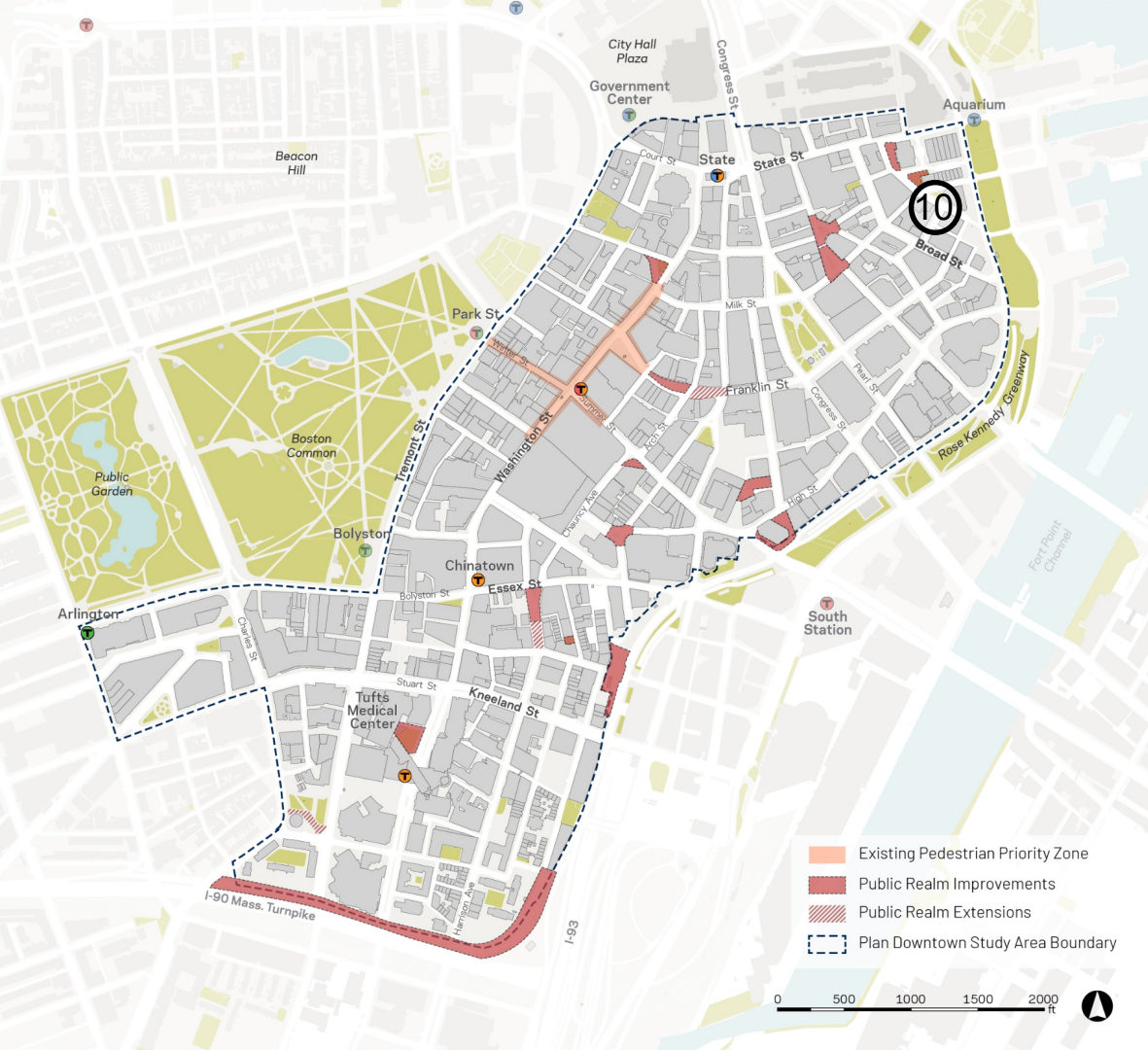
Merging the traffic island with the sidewalk to the north could create a new public space.

# Potential Public Space Improvements

## 10. Jenney Plaza



A thinning/limbing of the trees and the multiple perimeter barriers would create a more welcoming space.



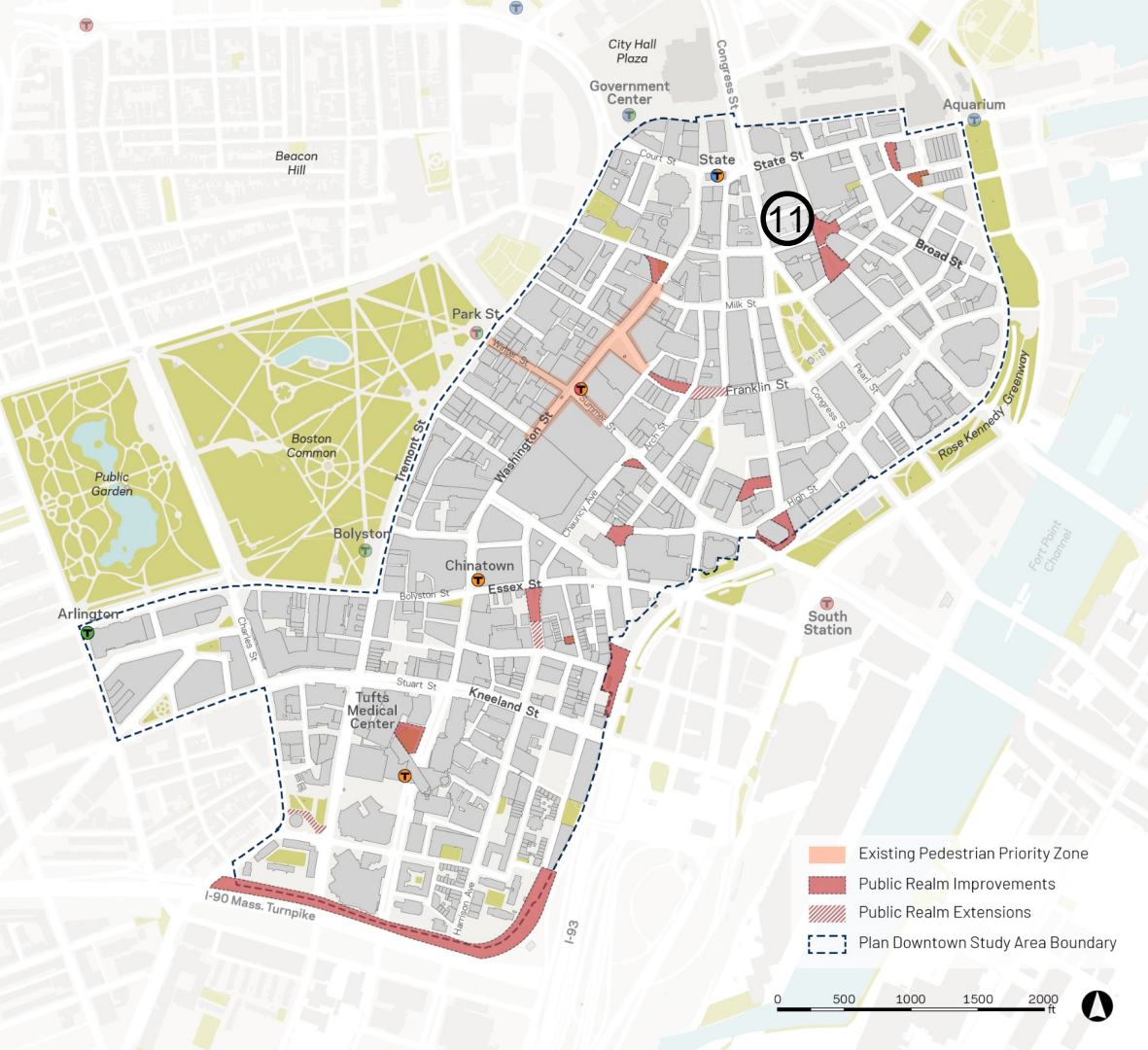


# Potential Public Space Improvements

## 11. Liberty Square



The traffic island could be connected to the sidewalk to the north creating a generous public realm and outdoor space for adjacent restaurants.

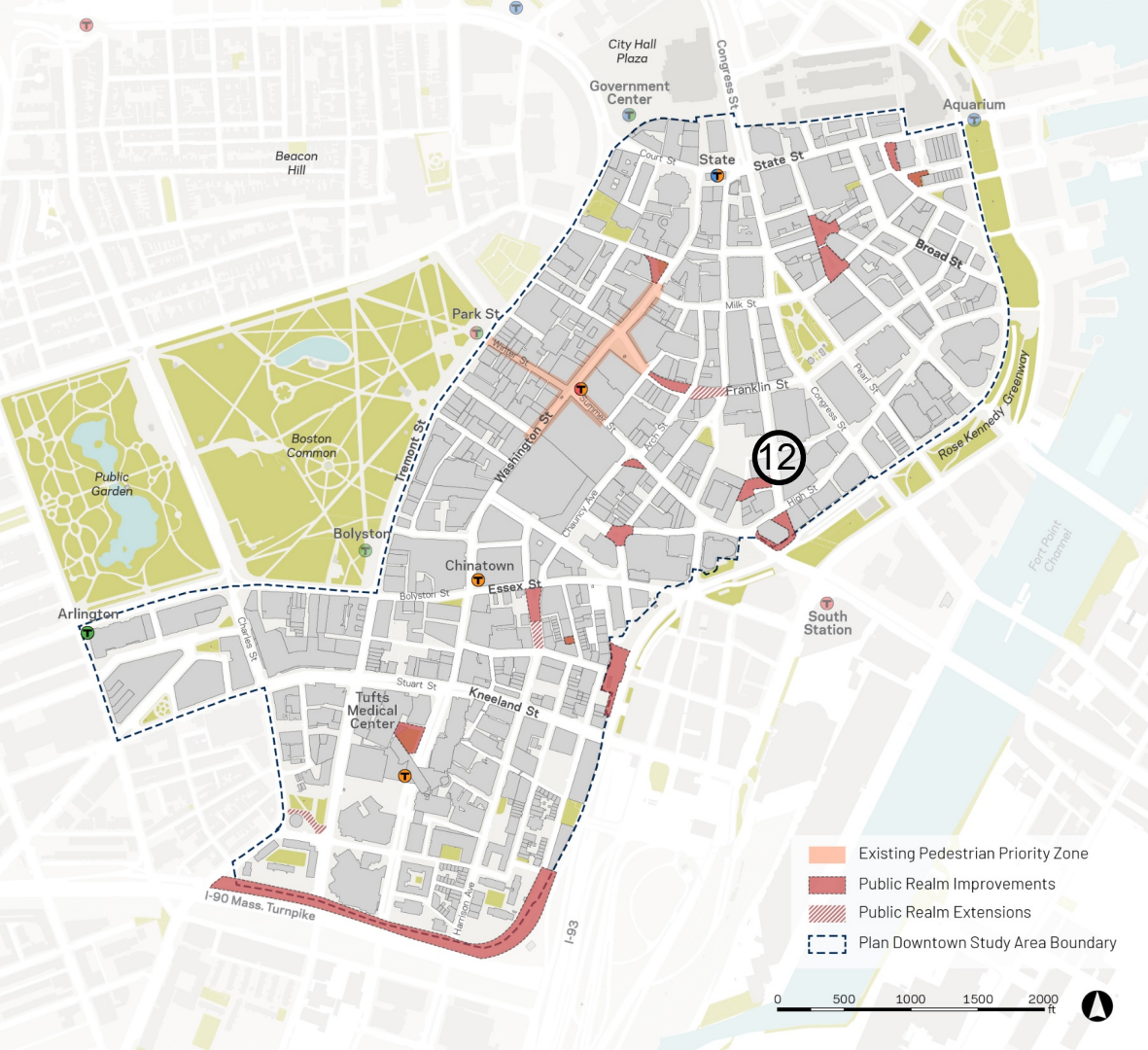


# Potential Public Space Improvements

## 12. Milton Place



An accessible public connection along Milton Place could connect Summer to Federal Street.



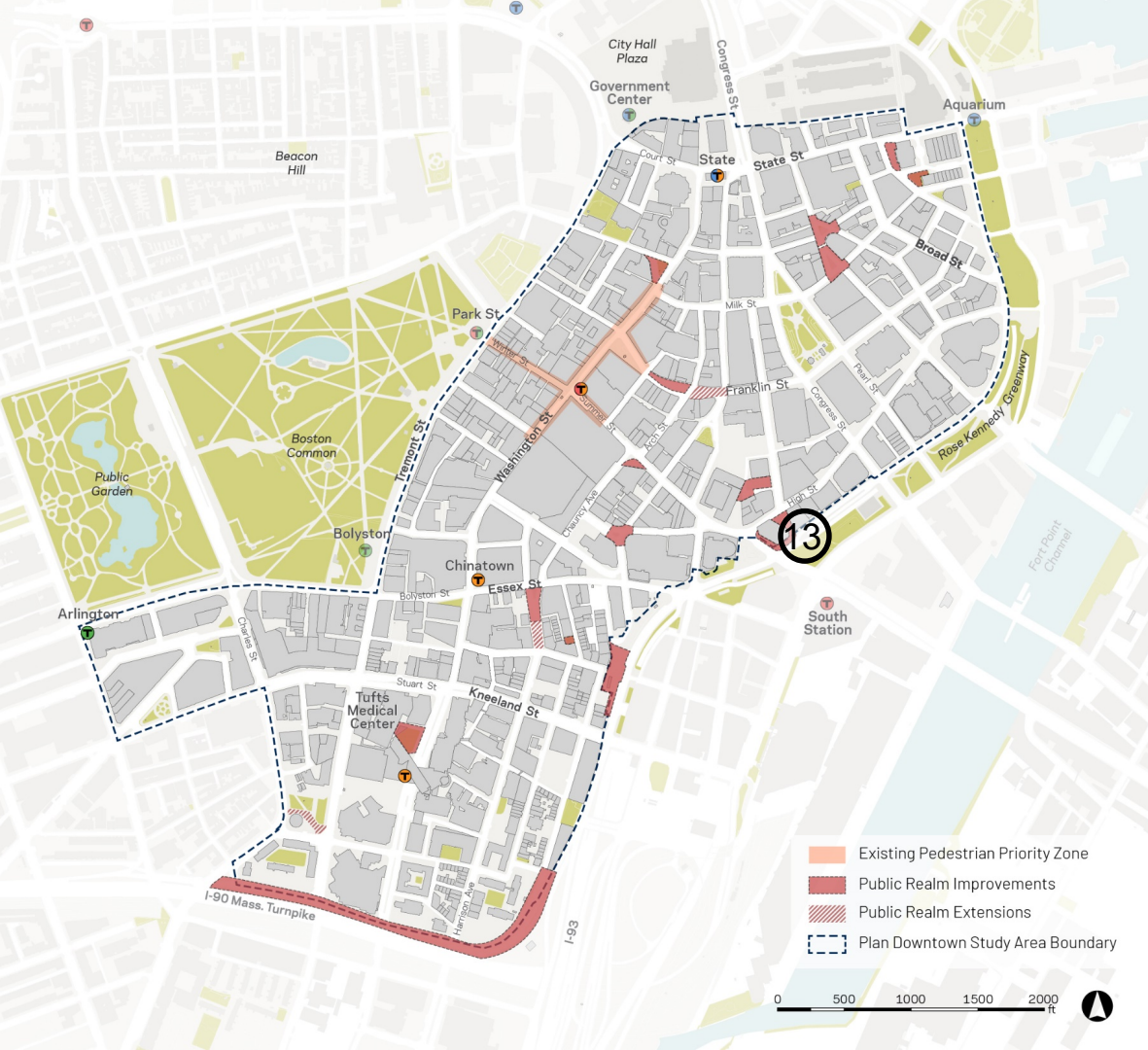


## Potential Public Space Improvements

### 13. Fiduciary Trust Building

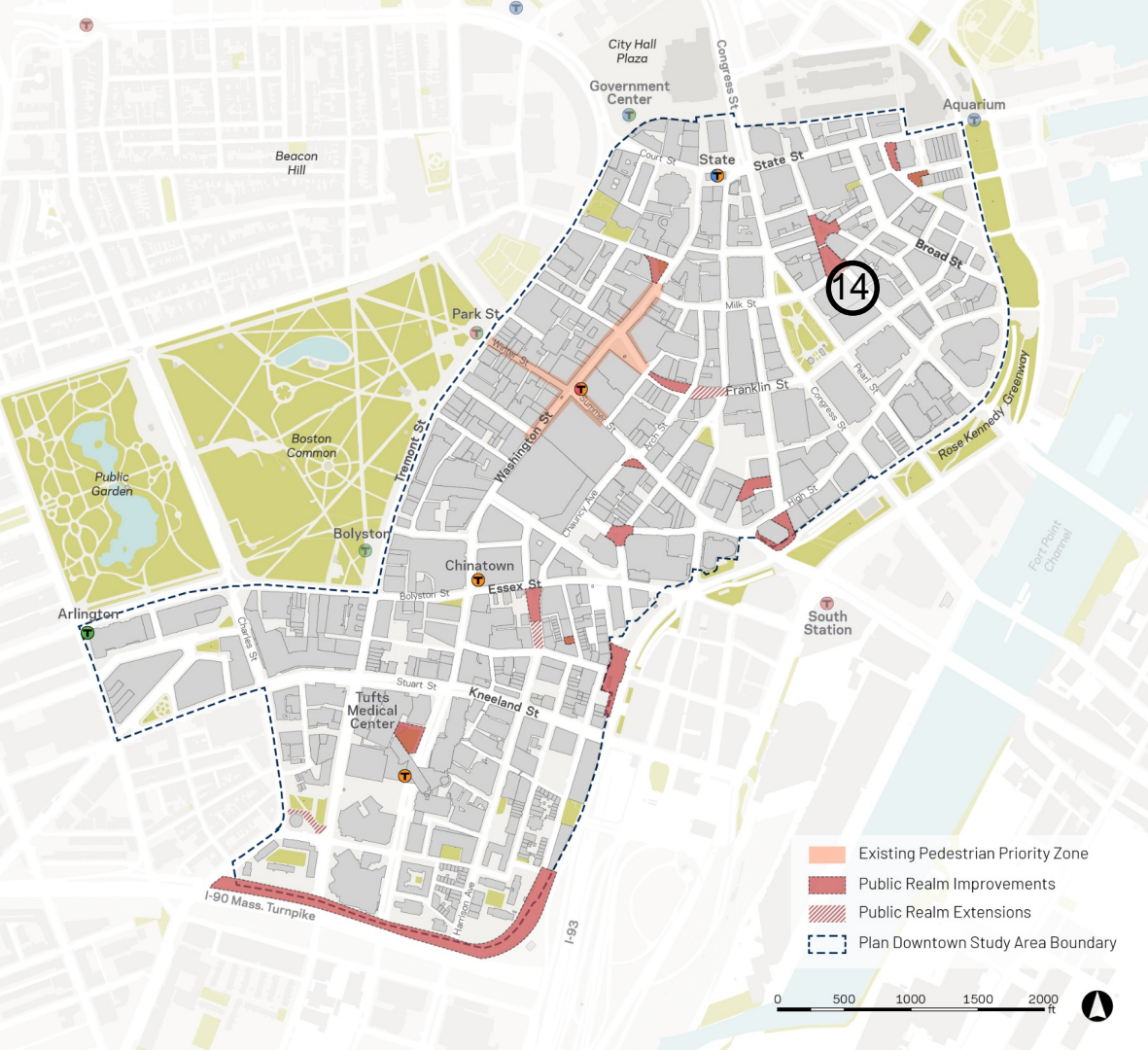


Public space improvements will make improved connections to the Greenway for this heavily used pedestrian pathway.



# Potential Public Space Improvements

## 14. Kilby St/Milk St



Merging the traffic island with the sidewalk to the west could create a generous public plaza that can still host food trucks.





## Potential Public Space Improvements

### 15. Expanded pedestrian-priority zone



The pedestrian zone could extend in acknowledgement of areas of high pedestrian activity (while taking account of vehicular access).

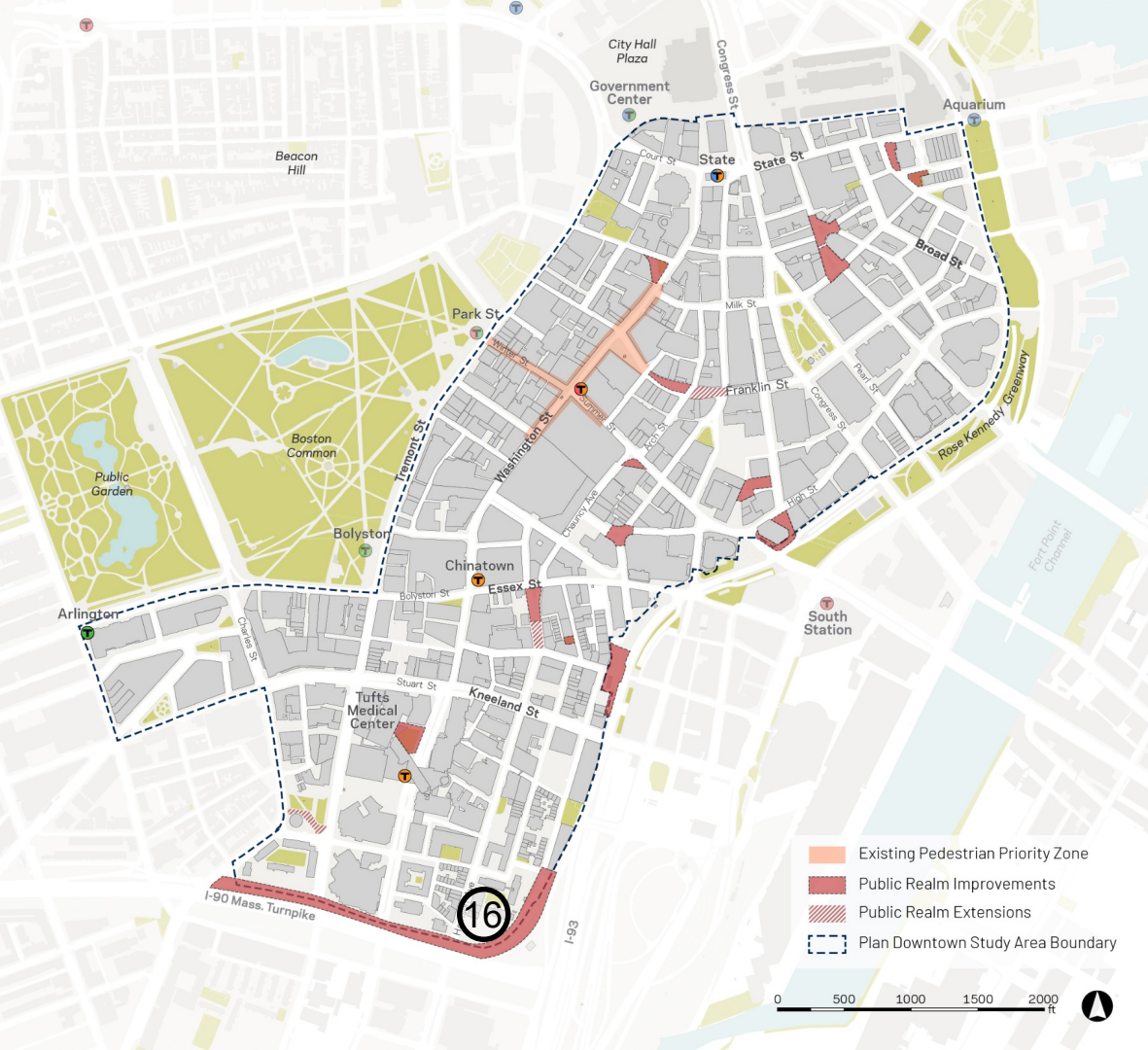


## Potential Public Space Improvements

### 16. Hudson St/Marginal St



Intense 'greening' of these streets would provide a more hospitable edge to the existing buildings, mitigating highway air and noise pollution.





# Discussion



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# Questions to Consider

*Preliminary recommendations for public space improvements*

- Have we identified the right public space improvements?
- Have we forgotten any spaces or opportunities for new spaces?
- Are there more places beyond the Downtown Crossing Character Area that should prioritize pedestrians? Where are major pedestrian desire lines?
- How should we prioritize these improvements?

# Preliminary Planning Recommendations



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# Criteria for Planning Recommendations

1. Has the PLAN: Downtown engagement process identified a recommendation as desired by the public?
2. Does the recommendation support one of the PLAN: Downtown goals and vision?
  - Does the recommendation work to enforce climate and resilience goals?
  - Does the recommendation improve public space, making it more inclusive and accessible?
  - Does the recommendation support needed land uses and ground floor activities?
3. Does the recommendation help clarify the balance between preservation and growth?
4. Does the recommendation support the priorities of prior related planning efforts?



# Questions to Consider

## *Planning Recommendations*

- Are the recommendations focused on the right issues?
- Have we forgotten any categories of recommendations?

# Recommendations Topic Areas

## *Growth & Preservation*

- Preservation
  - Historic Façades
  - Significant Building Protections
  - Storefronts
- Housing
- Community Services
- Small Businesses

## *Climate & Resilience*

- Flood Mitigation & Adaptation
- Heat Mitigation
- Historic Building Design Guidelines
- Building Emissions Reduction

## *Mobility & Public Space*

- Public Spaces
- Street Directionality
- Balancing Pedestrians, Cars, & Bicycles
- Public Transit Service Improvements



# Growth & Preservation

## *Draft Policy Recommendations*

### **Preservation**

#### **Significant building protection**

- Continue to follow the Secretary of the Department of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
- Proactively identify important architectural context and zone accordingly (e.g. Chinatown Row Houses).

#### **Storefronts**

- Require individual storefronts at a human scale at street level, echoing those nearby.

### **Historic Facades**

- Street frontage with historic buildings of significant design quality and visual effect should retain individual building facades.
- Maintain cornice lines, and arrangement of windows and doors on the elevations of a building in relation to surrounding buildings





# Growth & Preservation

## *Draft Policy Recommendations*

### **Housing**

- Provide workforce/affordable housing on publicly-owned land (*within mixed-use developments*)
- Expand family housing options by requiring a percentage of 3-bedroom units within each residential development
- Incorporate the 2019 Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) Update into PLAN: Downtown once completed
- Explore options for addressing housing stabilization in Chinatown
- Expand affordable housing stock for seniors

### **Community Services**

- Create a fund that new development and redevelopment projects contribute to that is allocated to cultural and community uses (*prioritize by character area need*)



# Growth & Preservation

## *Draft Policy Recommendations*

### **Small Businesses**

- Streamline the permitting and approvals process to encourage small businesses.
- Development that displaces small (3,000-sf) independent business must provide short-term (construction) strategy for tenant retention plus one tenant space of equivalent size.
- Create a small business support fund for new development and redevelopment projects to contribute
- Model a new program off the Acquisition Opportunity Program to preserve the Class C office space stock. *(loans to help investor-owners buy occupied, rental properties – they are able to pre-qualify for a set amount of funding)*
- Provide an incentive to property owners to ensure storefronts are occupied.



# Climate & Resilience

## *Draft Policy Recommendations*

### **Flood Mitigation and Adaptation**

- Refer to existing (or imminent) flood mitigation policies as captured in Article 25 CRB, the Flood Resilience Zoning Overlay district, and Article 37.

### **Heat Mitigation**

- All new roofs must be green, white, blue, or solar.

### **Historic Building Design Guidelines**

- All development that includes historic buildings must follow the *Resilient, Historic Buildings Design Guide*.

### **Building Emission Reduction (Net-zero)**

- All buildings will comply with the net-zero emissions readiness requirements – *articulate how to apply to major renovations and existing buildings*
- Develop deep-energy retrofit program for existing buildings– *i.e. PLAN area becomes the leading neighborhood in delivering on Carbon Free Boston goals*





# Mobility & Public Space

## *Draft Policy Recommendations*

### **Public Spaces\***

- Provide interior publicly accessible route when a private parcel is located such that route would serve to connect existing exterior or interior passages
- Provide publicly accessible open space - e.g. pocket park or activated plaza

*\*See earlier portion of this slideshow for a list of specific public space improvements*



# Mobility & Public Space

## *Draft Policy Recommendations*

### **Street Directionality**

- Review directionality to optimize circulation in Downtown without compromising wider area vehicular movement.

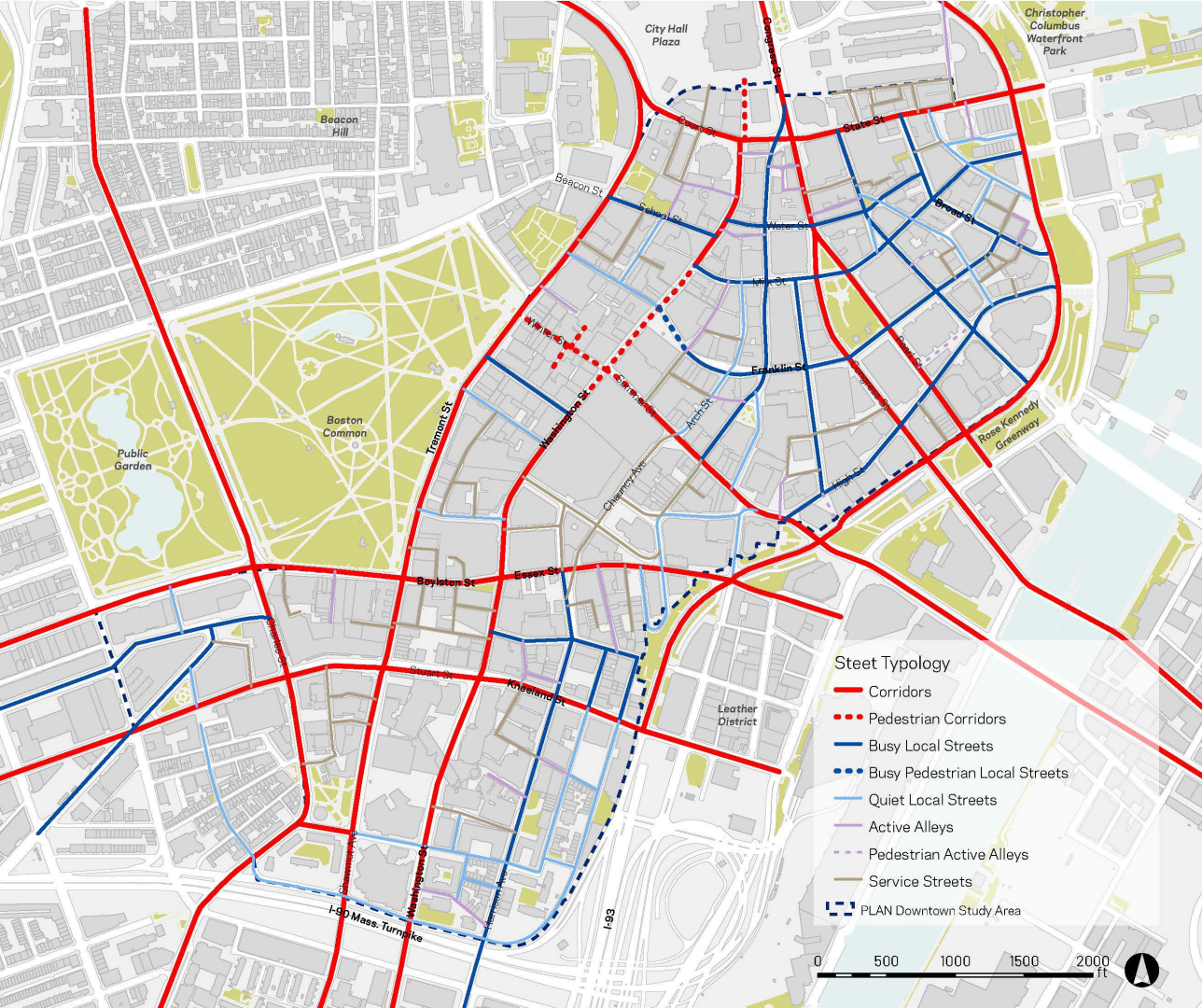
### **Balancing Pedestrians, Cars, & Bicycles**

- Prioritize high-occupancy transportation modes on all streets (*e.g. buses*)
- Mode split should be determined based on Transportation Demand Management (TDM) guidelines
- Study the expansion of the pedestrian-priority zone and location opportunities for new zones

### **Transit Service Improvements**

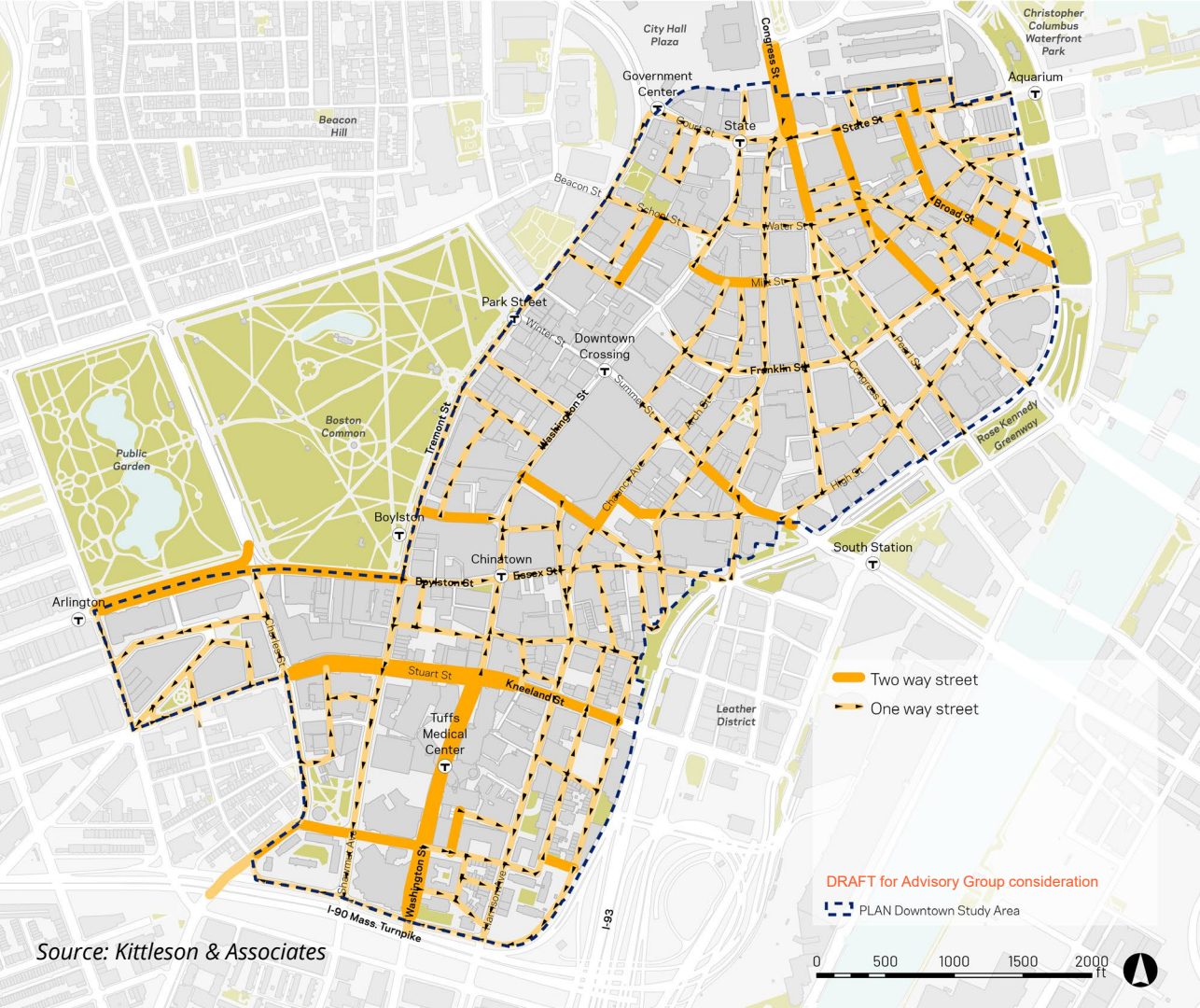
- Improve transit services through a systems approach to upgrading infrastructure (*e.g. Cambridge KSTEP program*)
- Explore the creation of bus hub
- Explore alternative bus routes to ensure efficiency for buses and riders (*especially in relation to potentially expanded pedestrian-priority zone*)

# Street Types





# Street Directionality: All Existing

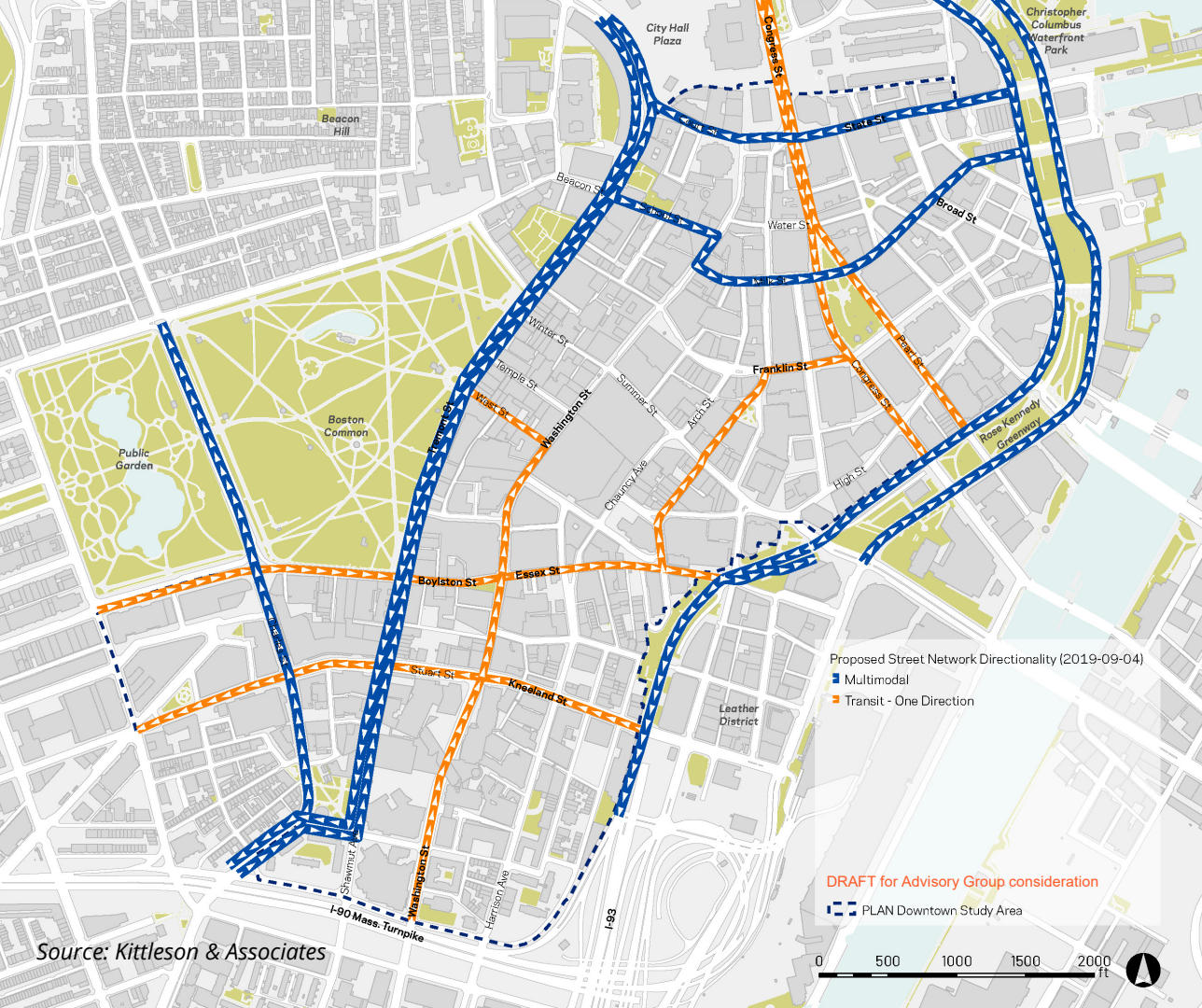




# Updated Road Types

- Multimodal Streets
- Transit Streets

\* Some streets may need to change direction to support the goals of this plan, increase pedestrian-focused areas, and enhance transit connections.



# Discussion & Next Steps



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# Next Steps

- **Online Survey**
- **Public Meeting #3:** Public Space and Planning Recommendations
- **Advisory Group Meeting #7:** Development Scenarios  
November 7, 2019
- **Advisory Group Meeting #8:** Urban Design Guidelines  
December 17, 2019

# Questions to Consider

## *Planning Recommendations*

- Are the recommendations focused on the right issues?
- Have we forgotten any categories of recommendations?