

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE APRIL 10TH DRAFT DOWNTOWN ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT				
What is your name?	What is your relationship to Downtown	What do you like about the proposed zoning amendment for Downtown?	What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning amendment for Downtown?	Additional comments:
Andrew Wiley	I often visit Downtown	The increased density and height allowed.	Nothing - if anything, even MORE height and density allowed.	
Patrick Z	I live immediately adjacent to Downtown and visit daily	<p>I think you've done a great job with this plan. I am very encouraged by the fact that you encourage maximum density in most of the downtown area. I also think the carve outs for more limited development in the historic ladder blocks and wharf district are thoughtful and appropriate. When out of town friends and family visit Boston they often comment positively on this contrast between old and new in the city's architecture. I think this will continue that trend and make sure there's room for innovation and improvement but also honoring the past.</p> <p>I also am encouraged that you are allowing for denser developments on both that big above ground parking garage near State and those mostly abandoned buildings on Bromfield. I think those two sites have long been eyesores in the area and hopefully more generous zoning can encourage thoughtful and dense developments there.</p> <p>Lastly, I just wanted to highlight that I'm glad you've drastically simplified the zoning. Looking at the 'before' map and seeing the mess of different districts and zoning rules, it's great to see that you've been able to simplify it into just two districts.</p>	I don't think I have any negative feedback. I suspect some people will try to get you to downsize the plans for a variety of reasons but I hope you will stick with this plan.	
Beatrice Nessen	I live on Beacon Hill and am frequently downtown	It simplifies the existing zoning and retains the compliance with the state shadow laws, protecting the Common and Public Garden. The elimination of additional PDAs. Changes to Land use. Protection of historic theaters; historic building inventory	The Sky designation for the Bromfield parcel. It is not consistent with the proposed zoning to protect areas of historic character. There is no way that the proposed height for that parcel is consistent with the abutting context of historic buildings.	Though the staff has performed yeoman's work to develop the new form based zoning and simplified districts, the decision to retain the carved out area for the Bromfield-Washington St. height in spite of consistent opposition indicates that the public comment opportunities are a joke. Very disappointing from an administration that promised transparency and responsiveness. Design Guidelines: please consider adding lighting to design guidelines for the Tontine Crescent and other historically architectural area. With the new public space on Franklin, lighting guidelines would further enhance the area, connecting Downtown Crossing with Winthrop Square.
Matt Green	I often visit Downtown	This plan will help bring Boston into the future that will help downtown become more equitable and desirable. Increasing density will help downtown become a vibrant neighborhood to attract new residents and visitors outside of traditional working hours, allowing new commercial opportunities to open and be profitable. Proximity to public transit, outdoor spaces, offices, and necessary staples like grocery stores make further developing downtown an obvious solution. Boston has a critical housing shortage and an affordability problem; this plan is the type of bold action the city needs.	Maximize plan potential by increasing the heights allowed under the Sky-1 and Sky-Lite zones.	
Nancy Gerlach	I live Downtown	some of the area has height restrictions	remove the zoning carve out for the high-rise at Washington and Bromfield	
Karan DiMartino	I work Downtown	I like the idea of thinking outside the box to bring more life to downtown crossing.	You need to lift the 'commercial parking only' signs from every street in downtown crossing. There should be meters just like you do in the backbay (Newbury St). Commercial vehicles should have to pay like everyone else to park. Plus, they are parking there all day its just not fair. You want more people in downtown, well folks need parking. Who wants to shop and lug everything onto the T (which never works anyways). More Parking!!!	Also, I not a fan our the discount to business to convert to housing. You are only putting the Administration budget on the people who own houses in the city. Everything can't be FREE. People who own houses in the city are paying more of our fair share. You need to give us a break!! We don't get anything. All deals are for either businesses or folks who don't own a home in the city. You are only going to drive folks that own a home out of the city!!! And there goes your Administration budget!!!!
Eric Khatchadourian	I work Downtown	I like the plan to create zones for taller buildings and higher density sections of the city. The downtown area could be a lot more vibrant with more restaurants, nightlife, and activity if we had a higher concentration of people living there to support it. Additionally, increased supply of residential space would help to alleviate some affordability concerns. And, the opportunity for new tall buildings presents a chance for architecturally interesting elements to be incorporated in a prominent part of the city.	N/A	Higher density must be concentrated in neighborhoods with substantial existing transit infrastructure, like downtown, so that residents can live there without needing to own vehicles. Even Back Bay is far more limited. A more vibrant downtown would benefit the entire metro area.

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Raj	I live Downtown	Requirement for open space.	I am concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits. Height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large.	
Debra Taylor	I work Downtown	Protection of the ladder diistrict and height restrictions	No spot zoning for one Bromfield and pi alley	The plan allots excessive heights in the ladder districts and other sites. Not enough content on plan for roadways such as school, province and Bromfield st..
Kimberly Trask	I live Downtown	the prioritization of residential use	I oppose the creation of the proposed Spot Zone created for 11-21 Bromfield and Pi Alley garage sites within the important character area of the Ladder Blocks. This Spot Zone would allow a tower to be built to maximum potential height (limited only by FAA and Shadow Law likely in the range of 500'). This tower in the middle of the Ladder Blocks destroys the integrity of the character of this area, imperils the historic assets, works against tourism (which is currently providing the greatest source of activation to this portion of Downtown) and destroys the uniformity of the shopping corridor. Height should be consistently maintained in the Ladder Blocks for the historic overlay zone at 155'.	The PDT process has been upside down. The public has consistently communicated a passion for protecting the fabric of the Ladder Blocks and the BPDA process has consistently disregarded the consensus view and has actually continued to increase the height in this sensitive area. This shows a complete disregard for the value of the historic assets and the importance of tourism post-pandemic to the vibrancy of Downtown. It also lacks vision in maintaining and enhancing a distinctive shopping corridor along Washington Street as the people's main street.
Jonae Barnes	I live Downtown	Requirement for open space and residential preference.	Height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large.	Study of the impact to historical assets including the Old South Meeting House. Tourism is a large foot traffic driver of the area and we need to preserve that Boston and. national asset!!
Kathrin Schlenizg	I live & work downtown	I am deeply concerned about the spot zoning in such close proximity to the impact it has on historic buildings close proximity.	I am concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits. Height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large.	Very concerned about the process that lead to arriving at this very specific spot zoning when every public meeting over the past several years has demonstrated valid concerns from qualified constituents about hight and use of these two areas.
Prianka Bhatia	I live Downtown	The study of historic assets	I am concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits. Height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large.	
Ellis Reinherz	I live Downtown	preference for housing, the requirement for open space, and the study of historic assets.	I am concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits. Height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large.	
Steve Pearson	I live Downtown	The preference for residential development over commercial, and the required study of the impact on historic buildings.	I remain very concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits. Completely surrounding sites like Old South with mammoth buildings will destroy the character of the neighborhood, so I believe the height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large.	
Brett Leav	I live Downtown	I like the designation of Sky -low to protect neighborhoods that contain historically significant buildings and which have heavy tourist traffic.	Height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large. I am concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits.	
carla	I live Downtown	preference for housing, requirement for open space, study of historic assets	i have concerns with the spot zoning allowing height on bromfield/washington st corner and pi alley garage sites up to FAA and shadow law limits	
Aldo D'Amico	I live Downtown	I prefer the preservation of historical buildings and zoning for residential housing over commercial.	I am concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits. Height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large.	

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Chantal Marquis-D'Amico	I live Downtown	I prefer the preservation of historical buildings and zoning for residential housing over commercial.	I am concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits. Height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large.	
Anthony D'Amico	I live Downtown	I prefer the preservation of historical buildings and zoning for residential housing over commercial.	I am concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits. Height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large.	
Eliza French	I often visit Downtown	I oppose the creation of the proposed Spot Zone	I oppose the creation of the proposed Spot Zone created for 11-21 Bromfield and Pi Alley garage sites within the important character area of the Ladder Blocks. This Spot Zone would allow a tower to be built to maximum potential height (limited only by FAA and Shadow Law likely in the range of 500'). This tower in the middle of the Ladder Blocks destroys the integrity of the character of this area, imperils the historic assets, works against tourism (which is currently providing the greatest source of activation to this portion of Downtown) and destroys the uniformity of the shopping corridor. Height should be consistently maintained in the Ladder Blocks for the historic overlay zone at 155'.	
Brennan White	I live Downtown	I like the preference for housing and the requirement for open space. I love the way Seaport has built parks and open spaces into their development efforts. Downtown should do the same	I am concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits. Height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large.	Thanks for your work keeping development going with respect for the current residents and workers of downtown
David Cohen	I live Downtown	N/a	I am concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits	
Mary Louise Seidner	I live Downtown	I like that the proposal develops framework for preservation, enhancement and growth taking into account livability, day light, affordability, and access to open spaces. i really love living in the Ladder District downtown neighborhood and only desire improvements to it.	I have a concern based on this plan. I do not understand the creation of random sites for large scale development within the ladder district which I see in Pi Alley and 11-21 Bronfield Street. I oppose the creation of these zones. I do not understand any increase above current zoning of 155' in the Ladder District. This increase in height decreases - livability, daylight, access to open spaces and depending on the usage affordability of this neighborhood. The creation of spot zones seems to me to be in opposition to careful planning of current historic districts which are traveled by thousands of people every day for residing here, working here and touring here (with and without historic tour guides which is a growing business in this area).	
Moritz Schlenzig	I live Downtown	Focus on residential building	I am extremely concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits. Height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large.	The feedback of the downtown community on the spot zoning issue has been broad, consistent, and backed up by valid concerns. The fact that the renewed plan contains the exception zoning again is disturbing. There is no capacity for the additional traffic congestion; it will further endanger historic buildings; it flies in the face of the commission's stated objective to eliminate zoning decisions based on individual developers' proposals.

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Nathaniel Sheidley	I am the president of Revolutionary Spaces, a non-profit organization that cares for two 18th-century buildings located Downtown	I greatly appreciate the smaller floorplate restrictions and the ceiling of 155' in the Sky-Low zones. Attention to a more coherent taxonomy of allowable uses throughout the zoning regulations is also a step forward.	As I have stated in public and private meetings throughout the Downtown planning process, I believe it is a terrible error to zone for maximum height in the blocks at the north end of Washington Street (the area bounded by School, Devonshire, State/Court, and Tremont Streets). This neighborhood contains one third of the city's eighteenth-century structures, which are a magnet for millions of visitors to the neighborhood and a defining feature of the character not only of Downtown but the entire city. Zoning should be designed to protect these structures, amplify their visual impact, and enhance the experience of the millions of pedestrians who enter the neighborhood to visit them. There is a missed opportunity to capture these visitors by enhancing the experience at street level and encouraging them to spend more time, not less, in the Downtown neighborhood. Creating a greater density of towers with maximum height and massive floorplates threatens to result in a canyon along the north end of Washington Street, with diminished sunlight, more wind, and little that would encourage pedestrians to linger and explore the neighborhood. In addition, the cumulative impact of shadow and wind resulting from greater height and massing will accelerate the deterioration of the historic surfaces (masonry, windows, etc.) on the precious eighteenth-century structures in the neighborhood, increasing the cost of preservation and maintenance and placing an undue burden on the small non-profit organizations that care for and operate these structures.	The Sky-Low district encompassing the Ladder blocks has a small bite taken out of it to allow for greater height precisely at the location where a new development is proposed for 11-21 Bromfield Street. There is little explanation of this detail, which appears to be an example of spot-zoning at odds with the overarching purpose of the amendment. An additional concern is that the proposed amendment is not accompanied by modeling that might provide a view to the cumulative impact of the new zoning on traffic, transportation infrastructure, and the like.
Tony Ursillo	I live Downtown	After many years and dozens of meetings, including a persistent push by the public to highlight numerous deficiencies in previous drafts, it is encouraging to see improvements such as the elimination of PDAs, a stated preference for residential use that is consistent with the city's needs, and a study of historic assets to gauge the impact of future development on them.	Despite what I noted above, I can't support PLAN: Downtown in its current iteration. The city is still falling short of a plan with true integrity in its deliberate and wholly transparent attempt to create a spot zone exception for a site owned by a single developer at the corner of Bromfield and Washington streets by including it in the Sky-1 zone instead of the Sky-Low zone. Doing so is inconsistent with so much of the other language in the amendment ("SKY-LOW District is distinguished by areas of cohesive historic buildings" and "The Ladder Blocks are an architecturally- and historically-significant area...bounded by Washington and Tremont Streets" among others), let alone the spirit of this planning effort, which aimed to strike an agreeable balance between economically stimulative development and protection of historically sensitive areas. The irreparable negative impact and disruption to the character of the Ladder Blocks, tourism and existing small businesses from allowing egregious height here should far outweigh an immaterial benefit from the incremental height at that site that is beyond what would otherwise be inconsistent with neighboring buildings. Development on this site, tall or moderate, won't save Downtown or the city of Boston, so it makes no sense to create a massive zoning exception that will in turn cause so many casualties in the process. Numerous precedents in the Ladder Blocks area over the last decade or so (Millennium Place, Godfrey Hotel, and the approved 7-9 Hamilton Place hotel project) demonstrate that projects of more modest stature can be economically viable and indeed thrive while being immensely additive to the neighborhood. I urge the BPDA to eliminate the misguided and likely ill-fated favoritism for the aforementioned site and its developer and incorporate that area into the Sky-Low zone. The neighborhood will not only benefit from such a common sense decision, but will also be able to get behind any future project proposal. With the community's support, this part of the neighborhood may finally see revitalization after years of underinvestment, decay, and neglect by the same developer that the city now wants to accommodate with an extraordinary favor.	
Michele Guzzi	I live Downtown	the focus on residential	I oppose the creation of the proposed Spot Zone created for 11-21 Bromfield and Pi Alley garage sites within the important character area of the Ladder Blocks. This Spot Zone would allow a tower to be built to maximum potential height (limited only by FAA and Shadow Law likely in the range of 500'). This tower in the middle of the Ladder Blocks destroys the integrity of the character of this area, imperils the historic assets, works against tourism (which is currently providing the greatest source of activation to this portion of Downtown) and destroys the uniformity of the shopping corridor. Height should be consistently maintained in the Ladder Blocks for the historic overlay zone at 155'.	

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Amy Siegel	I live Downtown	I like that there is a plan, though sadly with unfortunate spot zoning	I oppose the creation of the proposed Spot Zone created for 11-21 Bromfield and Pi Alley garage sites within the important character area of the Ladder Blocks. This Spot Zone would allow a tower to be built to maximum potential height (limited only by FAA and Shadow Law likely in the range of 500'). This tower in the middle of the Ladder Blocks destroys the integrity of the character of this area, imperils the historic assets, works against tourism (which is currently providing the greatest source of activation to this portion of Downtown) and destroys the uniformity of the shopping corridor. Height should be consistently maintained in the Ladder Blocks for the historic overlay zone at 155'.	
Patrick Wetherille	I live Downtown	I like the preference for residential housing. We need more housing downtown!!	I am concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits. Height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large.	
Martha McNamara	I work Downtown	I wish there was something positive I could say about the proposed zoning amendment. Unfortunately, it is clear that the BPDA has paid absolutely no attention to feedback from residents and other stakeholders in the very long process of developing PLAN Downtown. It is deeply discouraging to be so utterly ignored by a process that claims to be inclusive and responsive.	The allowance for maximum height along Washington Street continues the tragic planning mistakes of the 1980s-2000s. Creating a canyon of tall buildings along Washington Street will drive foot traffic out of the neighborhood -- just at the time when local businesses are desperate for more street activation. In addition, the allowed height will cast into shadow the neighborhood's character-defining buildings and landscapes. The densest concentration of 18thc buildings in the city -- those in the downtown neighborhood -- will be dwarfed by tall buildings and will experience rapid deterioration from the wind and rain driven into these buildings' fragile 18thc. masonry by the micro-climate effect created by tall buildings. This	I really cannot understand why after years and years of public meetings on PLAN Downtown in which stakeholders have begged the BPDA to listen to our concerns, we have been so utterly and completely ignored. I am particularly disgusted by the spot-zoning carveout allowed for 11-13 Bromfield Street. This clearly signals that we are still stuck the "bad old days" of the BRA. We voted for change -- we believed Mayor Wu when she campaigned on reforming urban planning in the City of Boston -- but PLAN
Sumit Mehra	I live Downtown	Requirements for public spaces	I am concerned with the spot zoning allowing height on the Bromfield/Washington street corner and Pi Alley garage sites up to FAA and Shadow Law limits. Height on these sites in the historically sensitive Ladder Blocks should be limited to the Sky-Low maximum of 155 feet for the benefit of the neighborhood character and tourism at large.	
Lily	I live Downtown	Please do not do construction in downtown	Please do not do construction in downtown	Please do not do construction in downtown
Jordan Sorensen	I often visit Downtown	Strongly support the increased height and density provided for by this amendment. After seeing many other city centers become dangerous, undesirable places to visit after the pandemic, I want to ensure Boston has an opportunity to be a vibrant and bustling downtown. We should increase density in Boston to ensure it is a vibrant economic center - with housing that brings people and shops / restaurants along with communal spaces to make it a destination. We should increase housing density to make sure that Boston does not become a city where only the wealthiest can afford to live, and to keep Boston's roads from becoming jammed with polluting vehicles of commuters spending an hour plus to get in from the more affordable adjoining cities. I also appreciate that the planners are looking beyond biotech - though I'm very happy for the recent biotech boom and everything it has brought to Boston, I think we risk overbuilding for one industry.	I think the plan could extend even further - Boston has a core beyond downtown that is walkable, well connected via transit, and could have many opportunities for development.	I live on one side of downtown, work on the other side, and commute via transit through downtown, so I'm a frequent visitor. On top of the time I spend in downtown directly, the success of the neighborhoods where I live and work depend on the success of downtown (and I want ALL those areas to allow for increased density).

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James Thornton	I live just outside the officially zoned downtown area but I am there every single day for a variety of reasons	I like that this is an explicit effort to increase the zoning capacity of downtown Boston and promote additional mixed use development. More housing is good, more affordable units or linkage fees under our current system is good, and finding strategies to increase workers and residents in downtown Boston is good. If anything, BPDA has not been aggressive enough to support the building of new units in the dense, excellently situated Downtown area.	Frankly I would prefer a sufficiently robust and transparent zoning code so that most new projects don't need to seek variances during permitting. Community input should be communicated through elected representatives, not by loud letter writing campaigns that serve as effective veto points for the development of private property. It would be excellent if the zoning were succinct enough that all information could be described in a few short pages so that cost, time, and friction can be minimized, providing certainty to land owners and developers. Preservation is important, and downtown (especially the Ladder Streets) has many important historical buildings. There are also a number of decrepit buildings, vacant lots, and parking garages that should not, under any circumstances, be landmarked or preserved.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eliminate parking minimums in all new developments in the City of Boston 2. Eliminate all height and FAR limits in the Downtown core, allowing infinite height up to the FAA maximum 3. Allow single room occupancy/co-living residential development by-right 4. Allow single-loaded staircases in all buildings that do not require an elevator 5. Do not allow thinly veiled concerns about high-rise residential views hold sway on an important policy question. <p>Cities are safer, wealthier, more dynamic, and all around better off when there are more people. Zoning for and encouraging more housing in downtown Boston will be an unmitigated positive for current and future residents.</p>

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Anthony Pangaro	<p>> Thank you for the opportunity to comment.</p> <p>></p> <p>> The promise of Plan Downtown was exactly that: a plan that would replace the constant overlay of our successive zoning regulations that left uncertainty as to development outcome. Sadly, Plan Downtown substitutes “deregulation” for planning, eliminates any idea about a wholistic vision, and does not creat a viable plan.</p> <p>></p> <p>> Hiding behind the gloss of “form based zoning”, we find that most of the Downtown Business district, according to the Plan, has no discernible proposed form: no height limits beyond those required by airplane flights and meager current parkland shadow restraints; no urban design guidelines that govern building shape (save a few diminimus setbacks or floor reductions); and no limits at all on density as a function of lot size or any other measure. Rather than providing certainty, it creates entropic uncertainty in its Sky High zones.</p> <p>> The Plan also creates “spot zones” within the Ladder District that allow vastly increased density and height that will discourage rehab of historic structures otherwise suited for conversion to housing. Instead, they promote demolition by overvaluing the underlying land.</p> <p>></p> <p>> Even the most rudimentary “master plans” that survived from the early days of the BRA had reasonably accurate depictions and projections that allowed a public and interpretative reaction to those plans. This Plan Downtown has no such projections: no calculations of area and mass to be added, no shadow studies, no traffic and network analysis, and no other infrastructure capacity calculations. It also lacks any analysis of its real estate economics, especially its effect on reinvestment in historic structures that will be overwhelmed by increases in land value that encourage demolition.</p> <p>> In short, Plan Downtown provides no means by which we can evaluate it.</p> <p>></p> <p>> These measures should be part of any good plan and would enable a citizen’s understanding of what is proposed in the plan. Instead, these basic questions are not even asked. The Plan leaves its city forming outcome to a seriatim Article 80 review process that is, at best, a series of incremental evaluations for individual proposed projects that will constitute a piecemeal whole. This, well after it is too late to evaluate the cumulative effect of Plan Downtown.</p> <p>></p> <p>> In short, this is a very disappointing piece of work, hastily created in the aftermath of public protest. It is rushed to adoption without adequate vetting. Rather, it should be carefully checked out, discussed in a public forum and made subject to further review. Otherwise, it will irreversibly alter the Boston that we know and love.</p> <p>></p> <p>> Please rethink it. Open an interactive dialogue with residents, stakeholder historic property owners and other interested parties to produce a better Plan. Boston deserves that and we know that the BPDA is capable of it.</p> <p>></p> <p>> Sincerely,</p> <p>></p> <p>> Anthony Pangaro</p>
Duke Collier	<p>To the BPDA,</p> <p>I share the concerns many have voiced about the “skyscraper” niche north of Washington at 1 Bromfield and Pi Alley. Even if one puts aside issues of aesthetics, wind, shadow, etc, I would point out the area north of Washington is quite a bit more constrained than south of Washington: the street grid of School, Province, Bromfield and pedestrian-Washington too intimate for large buildings. The only traffic escapes are up Bromfield to Tremont or down School to Washington. These small streets are already overwhelmed for much of the business day, and well into the evening. I suppose you could decant some of the traffic back in front of the Millenium Tower toward Franklin, but that’s a very tight little space, or open Washington back up to traffic.</p> <p>We surely need new housing, and moderately sized buildings at 1 Bromfield and Pi Alley can add needed housing. (We surely don’t need more offices there.) Oversized buildings on those sites, by contrast, will place an excessive and lasting burden on these few fragile square blocks. Please don’t let the short-sighted exigencies of wanting to break ground now, rather than perhaps two years from now, overwhelm common sense and good urban planning.</p> <p>Regards, Duke Collier</p>

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Nancy Gerlach-Spriggs	<p>I attended the PLAN Boston meeting on April 9th. It is clear an enormous amount of research and careful thought have gone into the plan. I was disappointed that with so many components, so many issues to discuss, that the majority of the discussion revolved around the Bromfield zoning carve out. It is clear it is an issue of great importance to the community - and not just to those of 45 Province. I do not live at 45 Province.</p> <p>I have been told that the would-be developers of the site have owned the property since 1997. (You would know exactly.) They have intentionally let the buildings deteriorate. They are now eyesores, but that does not justify development of a high-rise. If the high-rise proposal were ever appropriate, the market has changed. Downtown today does not need another high-rise office or apartment building or even a lab. The City is attempting to convert already vacant commercial/office space to residential. More new modern apartments will only compete with these efforts to renovate and continue the older buildings to be used. For ecological reasons alone, this building should not be built.</p> <p>Boston is unique in this country with its colonial era buildings and its large nineteenth century neighborhoods. Downtown is filled with historic buildings like the department store buildings, the Jewelers Building, and others of Art Deco design, gothic revival, etc. If each time there were an economic downturn, the solution was to raze and rebuild, there would be no Boston as we know it- no Beacon Hill, no Back Bay, no South End, no Bay Village, etc.</p> <p>I'm sorry the participant who spoke and lives in the Millennium Towers does not know what the Ladder Blocks are or that they serve as a transition from the Common and Tremont Street to Washington Street and the rest of Downtown. I'm sorry he seems to think the City somehow determines what it wants to be rather than people like developers (sometimes rapacious) and those of you at BPDA, Zoning Board, etc. It is your responsibility to protect what is of value and allow, encourage even, honest development that will enhance the lives of current and future citizens.</p> <p>The carve out for the Bromfield project is inappropriate and should be revised. Thank you for your consideration.</p> <p>Nancy</p>



May 23, 2024

Mr. James Arthur Jemison, Chief of Planning
c/o Mr. Andrew Nahmias, Senior Planner II
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square, Room 900
Boston, MA 02201

RE: PLAN: Downtown Draft Zoning Text Amendment

Dear Chief Jemison:

On behalf of the Downtown Boston Business Improvement District (BID), I am pleased to offer our organization's comments on the PLAN: Downtown draft zoning text amendment (hereafter referred to as "the amendment"). This letter serves as a follow-up to our PLAN: Downtown draft report comment letter from September 18, 2023.

Having attended the April 9 Downtown Zoning Text Amendment public meeting and reviewed the accompanying draft zoning text amendment summary, our position from last summer remains unchanged. **We are strongly in support of PLAN: Downtown and its reforms—but respectfully request some targeted modifications, as described below.**

I. Article 31: Skyline Districts

Under PLAN: Downtown's proposed new zoning regime, the BID's 34-square-block service area would be subject to just two zoning districts, with 76% (76 out of 100 acres) falling within the proposed Sky subdistrict, and the remaining 24% (24 out of 100 acres) comprised of the Sky-Low-D subdistrict. Although we strongly approve of Article 31's guiding principles and the zoning simplification it would achieve, the elimination of PDAs would have a detrimental impact on our neighborhood's ongoing post-pandemic revitalization. In a high-density district such as ours, with few remaining parcels suitable for transformative developments, PDAs remain a vital instrument in the City's redevelopment toolkit.

Only a handful of locations, including the 11 Bromfield Street cluster, the Orpheum Block, the Pi Alley Garage complex, and 600 Washington Street, have the potential to host truly dynamic redevelopments for our district and Boston overall—projects that could deliver *hundreds* of desperately-needed housing units along with *tens of millions of dollars* annually in new property taxes and *millions of dollars* in community benefits. But the complexity of these sites—all, save 600 Washington Street, involve multiple parcels shoehorned into complicated urban surroundings—require the type of intervention that only PDAs can supply. Crucially, in the case of the Orpheum Block, a PDA designation will unlock opportunities that would make the renovation of the vital and historic Orpheum Theatre economically feasible. Given the circumstances, we ask the BPDA to maintain this critical planning and redevelopment tool.

II. Article 8: Regulation of Uses

As with Article 31, we endorse the guiding principles animating Article 8 and its proposed changes. We are in favor of the proposed Uses table and have not heard any concerns or complaints from our stakeholder community about it. That said, we ask that the BPDA consider two modifications.

First, we note that Retail Stores/Extra Large are slated to be conditional uses in the proposed Sky district. However, the BID area already hosts several very large retail complexes: as the BPDA's April 9 presentation deck notes, Primark is 77,000 sq.-ft.; moreover, Macy's is nearly 300,000 sq.-ft.; the Marshalls/TJ Maxx/HomeGoods cluster is well over 50,000 sq.-ft., and Lafayette City Center is highly suitable for extra-large retail. Thus, we argue that making extra-large retail a conditional use in the Sky district contradicts the area's preexisting character.

In addition, we note that the Light Manufacturing/Trade Establishment use is Forbidden in Sky-Low-D and only Conditional in Sky. Such restrictions would hamper our district's potential to host the emerging climate tech industry (to cite just one example) and mute its overall economic vibrancy and diversification. As the *Boston Globe* [recently argued](#), "As a new manufacturing hub in the center of the city, downtown would experience an unparalleled revival as a place where diverse ideas flourish, [drawing] a much broader range of talent into the center to support ancillary small businesses [along with] professionals." The remarkable success of CIC Boston's pioneering tech accelerator at 50 Milk Street, now celebrating its tenth anniversary in Downtown, further demonstrates what can be achieved in this realm. Given the above, we ask that you revisit this use.

III. Article 2: Definitions

From Summer Street to Winthrop Square Park, Old City Hall, and points in-between, our district's public realm is characterized by a rich assortment of a dozen-plus parks, plazas, and squares. Much of our organization's resources are devoted to activating, maintaining, and monitoring these key amenities; thus, we are pleased to see them poised to be recognized in the zoning code via the proposed Ground Floor Outdoor Amenity Space insertion.

IV. Article 3: Establishment of Zoning Districts

Given our support for the Skyline districts proposal, we also support Article 3's proposed zoning amendments.

V. Article 11: Signs

Given that the Midtown Shadow Overlay remains in force, we approve of this initiative to harmonize Article 11 with state law.

VI. Article 23: Parking

One of our district's chief attributes is its highly walkable, pedestrian-friendly nature. Given this key selling point, we are strongly in favor of Article 23's proposal to waive off-street parking requirements.

VII. Article 85: Demolition Delay

The Washington Street's corridors iconic Jazz Age theaters rank among our district's premier

cultural attractions and economic engines. Thus, we support Article 85's proposed additional protections for them.

VIII. The Big Picture

In conclusion, we reiterate our overall strong support for PLAN: Downtown and its assortment of robust, much-needed reforms—while asking the BPDA to reexamine the concerns outlined above. Seven years after the Legislature charged the BPDA with conducting a planning initiative for Downtown, the mission of PLAN: Downtown remains as urgent as ever. We applaud the BPDA, City, elected officials, our members, and all other community stakeholders with having preserved through the pandemic's unprecedented impacts to arrive at this juncture—and urge you now to bring this effort to as speedy and successful a conclusion as possible.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Nichols
President
Downtown Boston Business Improvement District

cc: Ruthzee Louijeune, President, Boston City Council
Gabriela Coletta, Boston City Councilor, District 1
Ed Flynn, Boston City Council, District 2

Alexa Pinard, Asst. Deputy Director of Design Review, BPDA
Jack Halverson, Zoning Reform Planner II
Kathleen Onufer, Deputy Director of Zoning
Aimee Chambers, Director of Planning, BPDA

Chulan Huang, Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services/Downtown
Rishi Shukla, Co-Founder, Downtown Boston Neighborhood Association

275 WS Realty, LLC

275 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02108

May 30, 2024

James Arthur Jemison II, Director
Boston Planning & Development Agency
Boston City Hall
One City Hall, Ninth Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

Re: Draft Downtown Zoning Amendment – Request for Clarification re: Building Massing Requirements for Towers

Dear Director Jemison,

Thank you for providing an opportunity to review and comment on the Boston Planning and Development Agency's draft zoning text amendment and map changes for the proposed Skyline Districts in Downtown Boston.

I work with a family group that has owned the Pi Alley Parking Garage at 275 Washington Street in Downtown Crossing since 1986. The Pi Alley Parking Garage is a 792-space, public-private parking garage built in 1969, located on a 32,864 square-foot lot. For the past several years, we have actively considered redeveloping the property for a mixed-use tower which includes replacement parking.

With the assistance of our legal counsel at Goulston & Storrs, we have closely followed the evolution of the BPDA's PLAN: Downtown and have also reviewed the provisions of the draft Downtown zoning amendment to identify how they might affect our property's redevelopment potential. Based on the draft map changes accompanying the draft Downtown zoning amendment, the Pi Alley Parking Garage would be located in the SKY district, which allows for building up to the maximum height allowed by state shadow laws (and FAA regulations). This will be helpful in accommodating redevelopment options for the site.

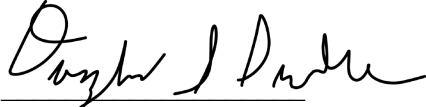
We ask that you consider making a minor clarification to the proposed building massing requirements applicable to "Towers" in order to better accommodate mixed-use developments that include parking reserved for residents. Section 31-3 of the draft zoning text amendment includes a floor plate reduction requirement and building stepback requirement for "Towers" located in the SKY district. The extent of these requirements varies based on a building's mix of uses; buildings with at least fifty percent (50%) of gross floor area occupied by "residential use" are subject to less restrictive requirements. As currently defined in Article 8 of the Zoning Code, the term "residential uses" does not include *parking accessory to residential uses*.

The existing Pi Alley Parking Garage contains above-grade parking that could be repurposed to serve residential uses as part of a site redevelopment. A complete site redevelopment would also likely include accessory parking for residential uses. We ask that you consider revising the draft zoning text amendment **to clarify that "residential use," as used in Section 31-3, includes**

parking accessory to residential uses, in order to give a primarily residential development the benefit of the more permissive building massing requirements.

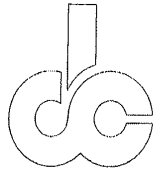
Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Sickler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Doug Sickler
Managing Director

Cc: Matthew J. Kiefer



The Druker Company, Ltd., Suite 1000, 50 Federal Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02110-2536

June 4, 2024

VIA EMAIL

James Arthur Jemison II, Director
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall, Ninth Floor
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

Re: PLAN: Downtown; Proposed Zoning Text and Map Amendments

Dear Director Jemison:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft zoning text and map amendments for the proposed Skyline Districts in Downtown Boston. We are writing to request a limited revision which we believe will further the goals of PLAN: Downtown, including economic revitalization, creation of new downtown housing (including affordable housing), and protection of historic resources and a cherished theater, on a critical block in Downtown Crossing.

The Druker Company, Ltd. has been an active member of the Boston community for well over a century and is a founding member of the Downtown Boston Business Improvement District (BID). We own a significant portion of the block bounded by Winter Street, Washington Street, Bromfield Street, and Tremont Street, including The Orpheum Theatre and The Corner Mall. We refer to this area as the “Orpheum Block”. Accordingly, we are one of the largest landowners affected by the proposed zoning amendments.

We have been actively involved in the PLAN: Downtown planning process since its inception in 2018. We served on the Advisory Group and wrote a comment letter on the initial rezoning concept in September of 2023.

We believe the Orpheum Block can be a key catalyst for rejuvenating Downtown Crossing and is uniquely suited to bring to fruition the goals of PLAN: Downtown. In fact, virtually *all* of the major goals are achievable in this area: economic revitalization by providing ground-floor retail and restaurant space; creation of significant new housing, including affordable housing; protection of the area’s unique architectural heritage through preservation of historic buildings and facades; support for cultural and entertainment uses through renovations to The Orpheum Theatre; and creation of new construction and permanent jobs as well as greater real estate and other tax revenues.

To unlock these public benefits including funding for renovations to The Orpheum Theatre, we envision new mixed-use development on the Orpheum Block which strikes a careful balance between new construction and protection of the architectural heritage of the Ladder Blocks. Any new development would be consistent with FAA-mandated height limits and the Boston Common shadow legislation and would be planned to preserve existing historic buildings and/or building facades to the greatest extent possible.

However, such development would not be achievable under the current draft text and map amendments, which effectively prohibit any sizeable new development within the Orpheum Block. We strongly request, therefore, that the boundary line between the SKY and SKY-LOW districts be changed so as to include the eastern half of the Orpheum Block within the SKY district. This would unlock the development potential which is essential to furthering the goals of PLAN: Downtown and would be consistent with similar treatment afforded to other properties with development potential on Washington Street. This approach would require no changes to the proposed zoning text and only a limited revision to a boundary line in the proposed map amendment.

We would be happy to work with the BPDA on other potential approaches to accommodate redevelopment on the Orpheum Block. For example, we believe PDA eligibility within the Orpheum Block would be an excellent way to accommodate mixed-use development with appropriate design and development controls and would be fully consistent with the purpose and intent of the PDA provisions in the Zoning Code. We could also discuss text changes consistent with the current Article 38 Midtown Cultural District zoning (which provides density bonuses and other incentives for rehabilitation of theaters and provision of housing and other public benefits) and other approaches.

Thank you again, and we look forward to continuing to work with the BPDA on our mutual efforts to revitalize the downtown area and to achieve the goals of PLAN: Downtown. We welcome your response to this letter and would be glad to meet with you at your convenience to continue this discussion.

Sincerely,



Ronald M. Druker
President

cc: Mayor Michelle Wu
Aimee Chambers, Chief of Planning, BPDA
Casey Hines, Deputy Director of Development Review, BPDA
Andrew Nahmias, Senior Planner II
Steven D. Fessler, The Druker Company, Ltd.
Barbara J. Boylan AIA, The Druker Company, Ltd.
Michael Nichols, BID
Matthew Kiefer, Esq., Goulston & Storrs, PC



BAY VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, INC.

June 4, 2024

Via Electronic Mail

James Arthur Jemison, Chief of Planning
Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall, Ninth Floor
Boston, MA 02201

Re: PLAN: Downtown

Dear Chief Jemison,

On behalf of the Bay Village Neighborhood Association (the “BVNA”), we are writing to provide community comments to PLAN: Downtown, which proposes a significant change in the zoning for a large portion of Boston’s downtown area. The proposed zoning change covers a large area that surrounds and abuts Bay Village and includes changes to areas included in Bay Village’s zoning district.

Background

The BVNA was founded in 1979 and has operated as an active neighborhood association with a strong membership from that time. Since its merger with the Friends of Elliot Norton/Friends of Bay Village Parks, Inc. in 2018, the BVNA has also acted as the “Friends” group for Elliot Norton Park.

The BVNA defines Bay Village to include the entire geographic area within the current “Bay Village Neighborhood District” described in current Boston Zoning Map 1C/1G/1N, as well as the “Bay Village Protection Area” defined in Article 38 of the Zoning Code (Midtown Cultural District) and identified in current Zoning Map 1A.

The BVNA has a long-standing and extensive commitment to Bay Village Protection Area, including:

- Creation, maintenance, and funding of the Bay Village Dog Park. The BVNA funded the creation of this heavily-used park, has a current license on the parcel, and provides significant ongoing funding and volunteer labor to maintain this park (wood chips, signage, fencing, plantings, trash removal, etc.).

- Maintenance and financial contributions to Elliot Norton Park and the adjacent “woodland” between this Park and Warrenton Street. This includes soliciting and devoting significant funds to the renovation of Elliot Norton Park and providing ongoing labor for maintenance of these parks. Currently, the BVNA is awaiting approval of ARPA funds to be spent on these efforts.
- Resident membership along Warrenton and Charles Street South.
- Management of issues with use of 333 Tremont Street.

In short, and with due deference to the important work of our Chinatown neighbors, the BVNA has been the primary neighborhood association engaged with respect to planning, licensing, and community process in the Bay Village Protection Area. Our organization has devoted tens of thousands of dollars and countless volunteer hours to improve the parks in the Bay Village Protection Area for the use of all Boston residents. The BVNA has also led the charge on zoning, planning, and licensing issues in this area.

Comments

The current PLAN: Downtown proposal eliminates the Midtown Cultural District and replaces it with the new SKY and SKY-LOW-D designations. The BVNA’s primary comments relate to how the PLAN: Downtown proposal addresses the Bay Village Protection Area. **In short, the PLAN: Downtown proposed changes should place the entire Bay Village Protection Area within the Bay Village Neighborhood District.**

Working with the materials provided, PLAN: Downtown appears to split the Bay Village Protection Area into 3 sections.

Section 1. It appears that PLAN: Downtown proposes that those portions of the Bay Village Protection Area at Parcels 0500078000 (94 Warrenton), 0500090000 (58 Charles Street South)¹ and 0500077000 (56 Charles Street South) be included in the SKY designation. If this is incorrect, please clarify. The BVNA’s position is that these parcels should instead be included in the Bay Village Neighborhood District. These parcels are at an intersection that has significant massing on three corners. Traffic at this intersection is currently difficult. The nightclub at this location has a troubled history. These parcels should be the start of the transition to the residential and historic Bay Village Neighborhood District and retain the restrictions of the Bay Village Protection Area.

Section 2. This is the area formerly in the Bay Village Protection Area that PLAN: Downtown had designated to be added to the Bay Village Neighborhood

¹ The maps provided by the BPDA lack basic information such as street names and numbers or parcel numbers, and do not take advantage of the ability to clearly map proposed changes onto the GIS parcel lines already used by the City. In particular, the BPDA maps have a thick black line over this parcel. The use of unclear and imprecise maps in the BPDA’s presentations is inexcusable in this day and age.

District. We agree with this proposal, particularly as this encompasses areas historically included in the BVNA's geographic area and where the BVNA has always had dedicated members and has devoted significant resources for the upkeep of the Bay Village dog park. This is also consistent with past promises by the BPDA to ensure the use of the dog park land by the BVNA.

Section 3. This is the remainder of the area formerly in the Bay Village Protection Area that PLAN: Downtown designates as "to be determined alongside Chinatown Zoning Process." The BVNA strongly opposes both the decision to not include this area in the Bay Village Neighborhood District and the plan to tie the future zoning of this to the Chinatown Zoning Process. This area, and in particular 333 Tremont Street, is historically associated with Bay Village. The BVNA has always defined this to be included in our neighborhood and it is closer to Bay Village and its residents than Chinatown. There is no rationale to change the designation of this parcel or to include it in Chinatown. This parcel should be included in the Bay Village Neighborhood District.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and request that the BPDA present any changes that impact zoning in or adjacent to Bay Village directly to the BVNA in a community meeting. The BVNA has a standing monthly Executive Committee Meeting, and a standing monthly Planning meeting.

Sincerely,

/s/ Sarah B. Herlihy

Co-Chair, Licensing and Planning
Bay Village Neighborhood Association
sbherlihy@yahoo.com

Enclosures

cc: Mayor Michelle Wu
Councilor Ed Flynn
Trish Gillis, BVNA President

June 4, 2024

Boston Planning & Development Agency
Attention: Andrew Nahmias

Re: Opposition to PDT Spot Zone at 11-21 Bromfield and Pi Alley Garage Sites

This letter outlines my strong opposition to the Plan Downtown Draft Zoning Amendment coming out of the Plan Downtown process which creates a Spot Zone for one developer at 11-21 Bromfield Street at the heart of the Ladder Blocks and another Spot Zone for Pi Alley Garage Site.

For the reasons stated below, the creation of a Spot Zone in the Sky-Low-D Historic Overlay in the Ladder Blocks for a single developer disrespects the public planning process which has taken place over a span of 5+ years.

- **Downtown SKY-LOW-D HISTORIC OVERLAY - Ladder Blocks:** The Downtown Historic Overlay includes the Ladder Blocks and is protected in the Draft Zoning Amendment to provide a maximum height of 155'. This area is described as follows in the Draft Amendment:
Draft Amendment Text: The Ladder Blocks are an architecturally- and historically-significant area of Downtown. Connecting Downtown and the Boston Common, the Ladder Blocks have a rich mix of notable 18th- and 19th- century buildings. Bounded by Washington and Tremont Streets, the area is named for the cross streets that create a street grid resembling a ladder.
- **Spot Zone:** The Draft Zoning Amendment creates a Spot Zone around the exact boundaries of the 11-21 Bromfield Project Site proposed by one developer. This Spot Zone contradicts the spirit and stated purpose of the Sky-Low and Sky-Low-D Historic Overlay zones as stated in the Amendment (see text above). The Spot Zone would be the only exception as a tall building to the zoned height along the west side of Washington Street within the Sky-Low-D Historic Overlay of the Ladder Blocks. An incongruous tower located in the midst of the historic Ladder Blocks would destroy the uniformity and integrity of this portion of the Washington Street corridor.
- **Ladder Blocks Significance:**
 - **Additional Historic and Economic Context:** The Ladder Blocks have the highest concentration of 18th century buildings (i.e. constructed in 1700s) in Boston and are located at the hub of Freedom Trail, attracting over \$3M people per year, generating critical foot traffic for local businesses, and providing critical activation to the Downtown. Historic buildings in this area include: Old City Hall, Old State House, Old South Meeting House, King's Chapel, Granary Burying Ground, Old Corner Bookstore, the Commercial Palace District and at least 5 properties seeking Landmark protection (Sam Lagrassa, Jewelers Building, Omni Parker House, The Temple on Tremont Street and building located at the corner of Bromfield/Washington Street).
 - **Structural Threat:** Historical Experts have spoken repeatedly as to the existential threat to these historic buildings from incorporating additional height into this area. This is due to the harsh effects from the existing tall buildings in the Sky District, as exacerbated by global warming.
- **Plan Downtown -- Consensus View:** The Plan Downtown planning initiative began in 2018 and has continued through the present time. The overwhelming consensus view coming from both the public and the Advisory Group for Plan Downtown (as well as in the context of the 11-21 Bromfield Project) has strongly opposed adding height within the Ladder Blocks
- **Mayor's Pledge for Community Led Planning:**
 - **Spot Zone Disenfranchises the Public Voice:** Given the clear and consistent consensus view that came out of the Plan Downtown process, the 11-21 Bromfield Spot Zone does not respect the Mayor's pledge to support community led planning. It does the exact opposite. Despite the public and AG consensus view to protect the Ladder Blocks, the draft Zoning Amendment increases the height for the Spot Zone to the benefit of one single developer to nearly triple (3x) the height of the Sky-Low-D Historic Overlay zone for the Ladder Blocks (from 155' to shadow law --- potentially in excess of 400'). It's

hard to see this process as working for the people when the result is in direct opposition to the public feedback. This has left the community feeling unheard and disenfranchised.

- **Enforcement Process:** The Shadow Law height is not documented in the Zoning Amendment so this would likely require public enforcement on a project by project basis.
- **Authorized versus Conditional Use:** The new zoning amendment does not specify criteria / requirements for a zoning variance to change use from authorized (residential) to conditional (office). This deficiency puts enforcement and consistency at risk.
- **Success:** There is no reason to create a tall tower at the center of this historic area as an exception for a single developer. Successful development can, and has happened recently, at lower heights respecting zoning including at The Godfrey Hotel, Millenium Place, the Boulevard on the Greenway (110 Broad Street) and the new Canopy by Hilton.

I am requesting that the Plan enforce the zoning height *consistently* within the Sky-Low-D Historic Overlay for the Ladder Blocks (i.e. removing the Spot Zone) in order to protect this historic area and to respect the extensive public process for Plan Downtown.

Sincerely,

Kimberly A Trask



Massachusetts Port Authority
One Harborside Drive, Suite 200S
East Boston, MA 02128-2909
Telephone (617) 568-1000
www.massport.com

June 4, 2024

James Arthur Jemison, Director
c/o Andrew Nahmias, Senior Planner II
Boston Planning and Development Agency
One City Hall Square, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201

Subject: Downtown Draft Zoning Text Amendment Comment

Dear Director Jemison:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Port Authority (“Massport”), thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Downtown Draft Zoning Text Amendment – Article 31 Skyline Districts (the “Zoning Amendment”). The Zoning Amendment was developed from the PLAN Downtown planning initiative recommendations, which include: creating new opportunities for housing and mixed use growth; updating land use regulations to encourage new and diverse businesses; and, establishing new dimensional and use standards to enhance activation at the street level, protect historic resource areas, and improve the public realm.

Massport appreciates the cooperation of Boston Planning and Development Agency (“BPDA”) planning staff during the development of the PLAN Downtown report last fall, and inclusion of language in the planning report’s Existing Zoning section regarding Logan Airport’s Critical Airspace Map (“Airspace Map”) and the Federal Aviation Administration (“FAA”) process for review of development project building heights. Massport developed the Airspace Map to define the critical airspace around Logan Airport. This resource was created with input from airlines, pilots, city officials, and the FAA to protect the flight corridors in and out of Logan Airport. The Airspace Map aids developers early in their planning and informs the Massport and FAA review process of individual building projects to determine if they present a potential hazard to air navigation.

Massport has found it beneficial to engage developers early in the design process to ensure that building heights and all associated roof area structures do not exceed the critical airspace limit. Since zoning is one of the first resources developers review when assessing potential development sites, it would be helpful to include in the Zoning Amendment and Draft Zoning Map Guide language similar to that in the PLAN Downtown report: *The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Massport have critical airspace maps and a process for building heights. We suggest adding a footnote in the Zoning Amendment after the “Height in feet (max)” reference in the Building Form Standards of Table B: Dimensional Regulations, and in Table C: Skyline Historic Overlays. In the Draft Zoning Map Guide we request inclusion of a footnote with the “Height” reference on the Sky District page of the document.*

Director Jemison


June 4, 2024

Pg. 2

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and please do not hesitate to contact me at (617) 568-3705 or at jbarrera@massport.com if you wish to discuss any of our comments.

Sincerely,

Massachusetts Port Authority

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JAB", positioned above a thin horizontal line.

Joel Andres Barrera

Director, Strategic and Business Planning

Massachusetts Port Authority

cc: A. Carvalho, F. Leo, S. Gongal, B. Washburn, C. Busch/Massport



June 4, 2024

By Email

Boston Planning & Development Agency
One City Hall Square
9th Floor
Boston, MA 02201
Attn: Andrew Nahmias, Senior Planner
Email: Andrew.Nahmias@Boston.gov
PLANdowntown@boston.gov

Re: Downtown Draft Zoning Text Amendment, Skyline Districts

Dear Mr. Nahmias:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Downtown Draft Zoning Text Amendment (the “Draft Zoning Amendment”) for the proposed new Skyline Districts. I write on behalf of Nan Fung Life Sciences Real Estate, LLC (“NFLSRE”), a real estate investment and operating company focused on acquiring, developing, and managing life sciences-related properties in innovation-driven markets across the United States and United Kingdom. NFLSRE is a subsidiary of Nan Fung Group, a Hong Kong-based international conglomerate with core businesses in property development and investment, including more than 165 properties and 66 million square feet held worldwide. We urge the BPDA to revise the Draft Zoning Amendment so that Research Laboratory, along with all office, retail, and hotel uses, remain allowed uses in the new Downtown Skyline district, as they are today.

Since NFLSRE’s formation in 2019, we have viewed Boston as a priority location for NFLSRE’s investments in life sciences properties. The Boston area’s unparalleled number of world-class research universities, hospitals, and established and early-stage life sciences companies combine to attract and retain extraordinary talent in the life sciences industry. Between 2020 and 2022, NFLSRE’s affiliates acquired four buildings in the urban core of Boston, with the goal of converting certain floors or partial floors of these buildings from office use to research space for life sciences tenants. All of those building are located in zoning districts where research laboratory use is allowed, which was a key consideration in NFLSRE’s acquisitions.

One of those four buildings, One Winthrop Square, is located in the heart of the Downtown, within the area that is the subject of PLAN: Downtown and the Draft Zoning Amendment. After purchasing One Winthrop Square in March 2020, NFLSRE commenced a renovation of certain floors of the historic five-story building, originally constructed in 1873, to allow tenancy by life sciences companies. Approximately 25,000 square feet was renovated for research laboratory use, resulting in an upper-floor use mix of research and office use. The renovation work was completed within two years, and the majority of the building is now leased by Scorpion Therapeutics, a company founded in 2020 to develop targeted cancer therapies.

Research Laboratory use is currently allowed as of right in the B-10 zoning subdistrict, where One Winthrop Square is located, pursuant to Article 8 of the Boston Zoning Code (the “Code”). Research Laboratory use is also allowed currently in the rest of the Downtown area that the BPDA proposes to re-

zone. Because Research Laboratory use was permitted under current zoning, NFLSRE was able to invest in the renovation of the building without the time, expense, and risk associated with seeking zoning relief, which facilitated Scorpion's lease and occupancy of the building.

The BPDA's Draft Zoning Amendment for the Downtown proposes to change Research Laboratory from allowed to conditional in SKY Districts (like One Winthrop Square's current location) and forbidden in SKY-LOW Districts. That change would require that life sciences projects – both new development and full or partial building conversions like One Winthrop Square – secure zoning relief from the Board of Appeal before seeking building permits. While the current research uses in One Winthrop Square would be allowed to continue under the transition rules for zoning amendments, any expansion of the research space within the building – to accommodate Scorpion or another tenant – would require zoning relief.

Securing variances or conditional use permits from the Board of Appeal generally takes a minimum of six months. The process is costly for developers and building owners, both in terms of internal resources and outside legal and consultant support. And because Board of Appeal relief is discretionary and subject to appeal, requiring zoning relief adds significant permitting risk to any project hoping to bring life sciences or related research companies to Downtown buildings. Because Research Laboratory use is allowed in the Downtown, NFLSRE was able to invest in One Winthrop Square and commit to delivering renovated space on a timeline that met Scorpion's business needs. If Research Laboratory had not been allowed by zoning, the building might now be facing the same occupancy challenges as many other buildings in the Downtown.

Life sciences research and other types of research are essential components of Boston's economy. The uses are safe, innovative, and productive. Life sciences tenants bring thousands of employees into the City each day, activating and increasing the value of existing buildings and spurring new development, and helping Boston to retain and attract talented residents. We note that the Draft Zoning Amendment, if it is adopted without modification, also changes Office – Large (50,000+ sf); Hotel – Large (50+ guestrooms or 50,000 sf); and Retail Store – Extra Large (50,000+ sf) from allowed under current zoning to conditional. Like Research Laboratory, those uses are entirely appropriate for the Downtown, and have been a part of this vibrant mixed-use district for years. For all of the reasons set forth above, all of those uses should be allowed as of right. At a time when the City is confronting high vacancy rates and falling property values in the Downtown, leading to significant property tax shortfalls, the BPDA should be encouraging a broad mix of productive uses in the Downtown, rather requiring more projects to seek relief from the Board of Appeal.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We look forward to continuing to work together with the City of Boston and the BPDA to ensure a vibrant Downtown.

Sincerely,

Matthew Powers
CEO, Nan Fung Life Sciences Real Estate

BOSTON PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

www.bostonpreservation.org

June 4, 2024

Chief Arthur Jemison
Boston Planning and Development Agency
Boston City Hall
Re: PLAN: Downtown Draft Zoning Amendment

Dear Chief Jemison,

The Boston Preservation Alliance is Boston's primary, non-profit advocacy organization that protects and promotes the use of historic buildings and landscapes in all of the city's neighborhoods. With 40 Organizational Members, over 100 Corporate Members, and a reach of over 100,000 friends and supporters we represent a diverse constituency advocating for the thoughtful evolution of the city and celebration of its unique character. We appreciate the opportunity to serve on the Advisory Group for this process and to offer comments on these important changes.

The Alliance strives to provide meaningful feedback on all proposals that impact historic resources in Boston. Unfortunately, because the City and the BPDA are advancing an unwieldy number of initiatives concurrently (various ongoing neighborhood plans, citywide zoning changes, a new City planning department, Squares & Streets, Design Vision, the Commemoration Commission, Article 80 reform, etc.) in addition to ongoing review of individual projects all across the city, it is extremely challenging to fully digest, analyze, and prepare comments for each process. It would be in the best interest of our city to approach each of these processes with more planning and forethought, taking as much time as necessary to engage the public rather than adhering to an arbitrary timeline. These decisions will impact Boston for decades to come and should not proceed in haste. After an extended delay, PLAN: Downtown has progressed rapidly, without clear answers to public concerns or adequate analysis.

That said, we have remained engaged with the PLAN: Downtown initiative to the best of our ability and look forward to further collaboration. These measures must not only protect historic character, fabric, and viewsheds but also welcome new development that responds to this unique, irreplaceable historic context through height, design, and materiality. While there are elements in this proposal that aid in creating that critical balance, we feel that more could be done to ensure downtown Boston does not lose the human scale and historic atmosphere that continues to attract tourists, residents, and businesses to our city. Downtown is arguably the most historic neighborhood in Boston, if not all of New England, but is dangerously under-protected. Lacking any other means of neighborhood-wide protection, it is crucial that this Plan creates those protections and expectations. While we appreciate that a historic character study is being advanced and will be added as an addendum to the design guidelines, this kind of analysis should have been done before the planning process began so that it could inform all decisions made thereafter. It is not a sufficient replacement for the degree of protection that a neighborhood of this significance warrants, such as would be provided in a local Landmark district if it were allowed.

Without meaningful protections for historic contexts, all of downtown remains vulnerable to demolition. Design guidelines can be useful, but they often lack the necessary teeth for

BOSTON PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

accountability, as we saw when the BPDA supported violation of the Greenway Guidelines immediately after they were approved. The “Sky Low” areas restrict height for new development, which can help ensure consistency of scale, but they do not prevent or discourage demolition and loss of historic fabric. In fact, upzoning often leads to disinvestment of existing buildings, resulting in demolition by neglect or demolition for a taller building. Even the messaging of these districts as “Sky Low” instead of “Historic Protection Areas” or the previous phrase, “Character Areas,” signals that the intention is to add more “skyline” height to these historic areas instead of adhering to the existing height of the streetscape.

Furthermore, by spot zoning the corner of Bromfield and Washington for additional height, the BPDA continues to communicate that exceptions will be made for projects that are preapproved by the BPDA and/or the City, regardless of the site’s sensitive historic context, the project’s damaging impacts to its surroundings, or clear and consistent opposition from the public. Decisions like this erode the public’s faith in this Plan and the efficacy of efforts within it to protect the historic center of our city. With the many planning efforts currently underway, Boston is attempting to change its reputation of spot-zoning and backroom deals with clear zoning and transparent decision-making. And yet, the Plan retains this carveout without any study, analysis, or explanation to support the decision.

We have made a lot of progress through this planning process toward our universal goal of ensuring a vibrant downtown. However, the Alliance feels that this Plan still lacks the necessary messaging and concrete zoning protections to ensure that downtown’s historic fabric will not be lost over the coming years to development. We know that continued use/adaptive reuse of our existing buildings is the most impactful climate action we can take, and that upgrading an existing building is more affordable than new construction. We know that smaller, human scale buildings create walkable neighborhoods, and avoid the wind and shadow impacts of taller buildings. We know that density and new design can be creatively woven into our existing fabric without the loss of historic buildings and streetscapes. For all of these reasons and many more, this Plan should ensure that preservation is the standard and expected course of action across all of downtown.

Future generations will point to this moment, as we do now with the Urban Renewal efforts in the West End, as a pivotal period of change for the city. We hope that in this moment we will embrace Boston’s identity as one of the most historic and architecturally rich cities in the country, and prioritize the preservation of that identity through meaningful zoning amendments and planning documents. The Plan does not yet adequately protect downtown, but we are confident that with ongoing dialogue we can reach that balance.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Frazee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alison Frazee
Executive Director



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First Vice Chair

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June 6, 2024

Andrew Nahmias, Senior Planner
BPDA
One City Hall Square
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Mr. Nahmias,

Since 1970, the Friends of the Public Garden has been an essential partner with the City of Boston in our mission to renew, care, and advocate for the Boston Common, Public Garden, and Commonwealth Avenue Mall. These parks are the neighborhood parks for over 60,000 people in five neighborhoods. But they are much more than that, serving as greenspaces for the entire City and beyond, and welcome over seven million people every year.

The Friends has had the privilege of being members of the PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group since its inception and has continued to follow the progress of this PLAN. Our primary interest continues to be the protection of sunlight that falls on the Boston Common and Public Garden, which can be impacted by new Downtown development projects. This sunlight is vital for the living landscape as well as for the people who come to enjoy these greenspaces, particularly in the cold winter months.

Since our experience with the Winthrop Center project and its exemption from the State's shadow laws, the Friends has sponsored the development a computer model by Rafi Segal, MIT architect and urbanist, that provides a powerful tool for balancing growth and protection of the Common and Garden from new shadows. This Sunshine Model provides an easy tool for planners, architects, and developers to determine how much development is possible without casting additional shadow on the parks.

While there are other issues that need to be considered in evaluating zoning for a neighborhood, the focus of our concern is the health of our parks, and therefore we looked at the implications of this proposed change for existing sunshine available to the greenspaces. We have therefore used the Model to review the proposed new Chapter 31-1 zoning. What the analysis shows is that by replacing the Midtown Cultural District's Common and Garden Protection Areas and variable heights along Tremont Street with a flat 155' limit in the Historic Overlay sections, the Common will be subject to an increased level of shadow. At the same time, the Model shows that growth can take place in other areas of the Midtown Cultural District without new shadowing on the parks. Please see the attached graphics that will visually demonstrate the above points.

The Friends strongly advocates that the Sunshine Model be incorporated into the new zoning initiatives, allowing more refined and controllable height guidelines instead of the flat 155' height limit in the historic overlay sections and also in the Sky District. We also advocate that the Protection Zones be maintained along Tremont Street. While these protection zones do not prevent all new shadows, they recognize the need to minimize height adjacent to the parks. Incorporation of the Sunshine Model will provide a parcel-by-parcel evaluation allowing growth and compliance with the State Shadow laws. It is a tool that provides consistent analysis of potential shadow impacts early on when considering new development, and ensures a consistent measure for assessing shadow, unlike the current condition where shadow studies can be manipulated for a desired outcome.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We look forward to continuing to work with the City to ensure that Boston can grow while protecting the irreplaceable greenspace resources that make it a desirable place to live, work, visit, and invest in.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Vizza
President

cc:

Mayor Wu

Interim Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space Chris Osgood

Chief of Climate Brian Swett

Parks Commissioner Ryan Woods

City Council President Ruthzee Louijeune

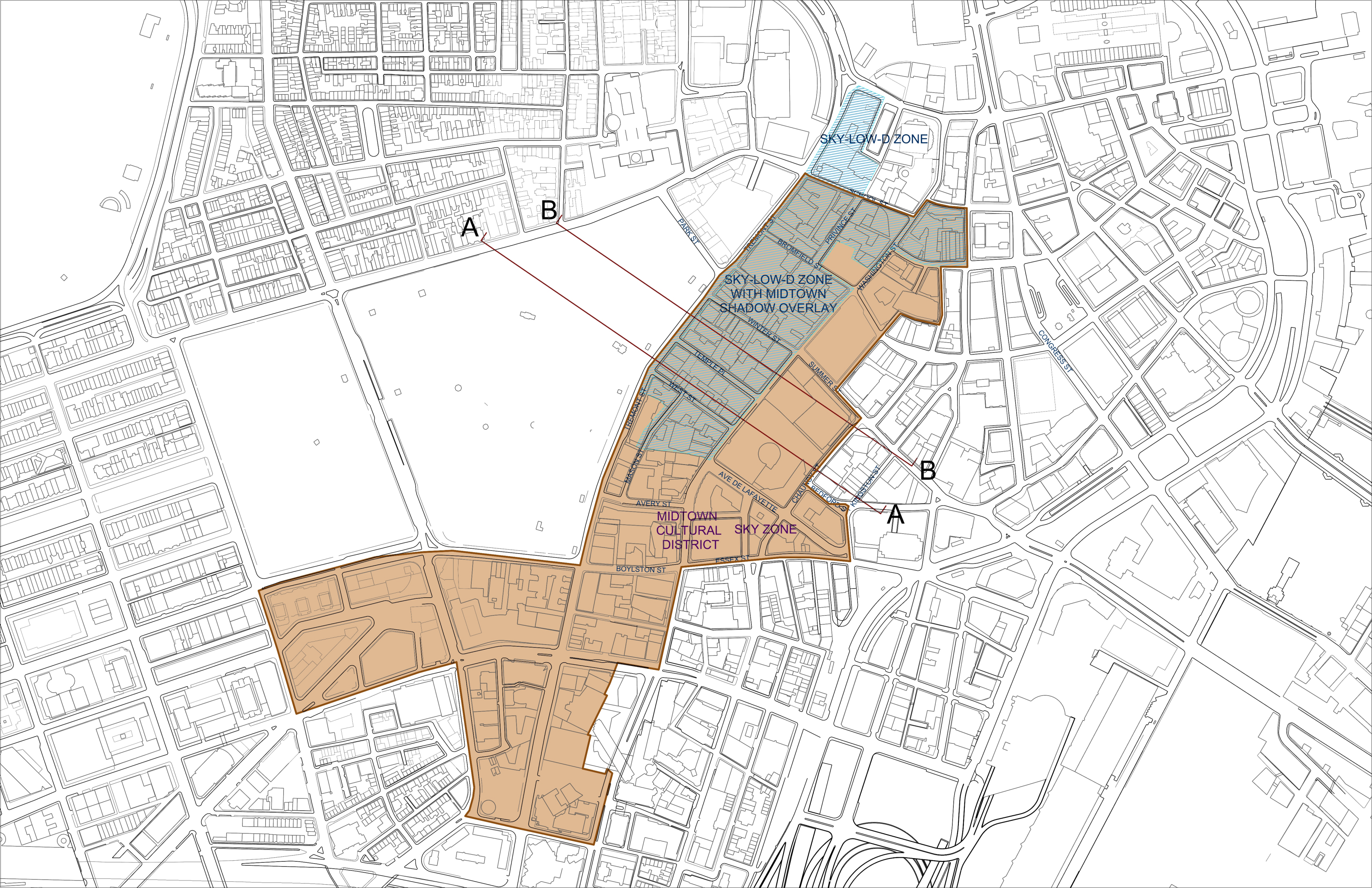
City Councilor Sharon Durkan

City Councilor Ed Flynn

Senator Lydia Edwards

Representative Aaron Michlewitz

Representative Jay Livingstone



SKY-LOW-D ZONE

SKY-LOW-D ZONE
WITH MIDTOWN
SHADOW OVERLAY

MIDTOWN
CULTURAL SKY ZONE
DISTRICT

A

B

B

A

PARK ST

BROMFIELD ST

PRINCE ST

WASHINGTON ST

CONGRESS ST

TEMPLE PL

WINTER ST

SUMMER ST

TEMPLE ST

WEST ST

AVE DE LAFAYETTE

CHURCH ST

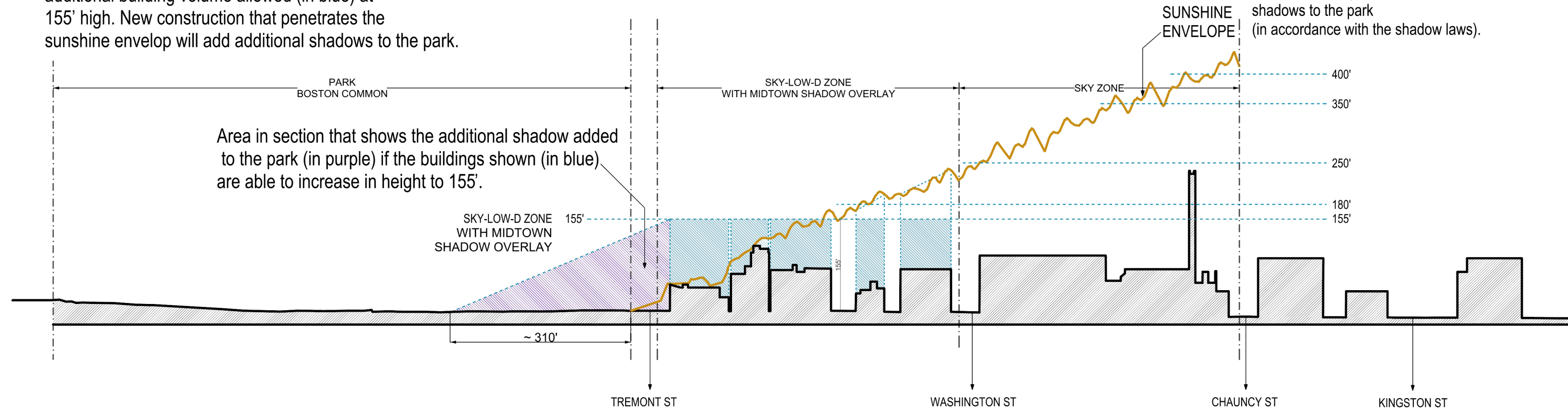
KENNEDY ST

BOYLSTON ST

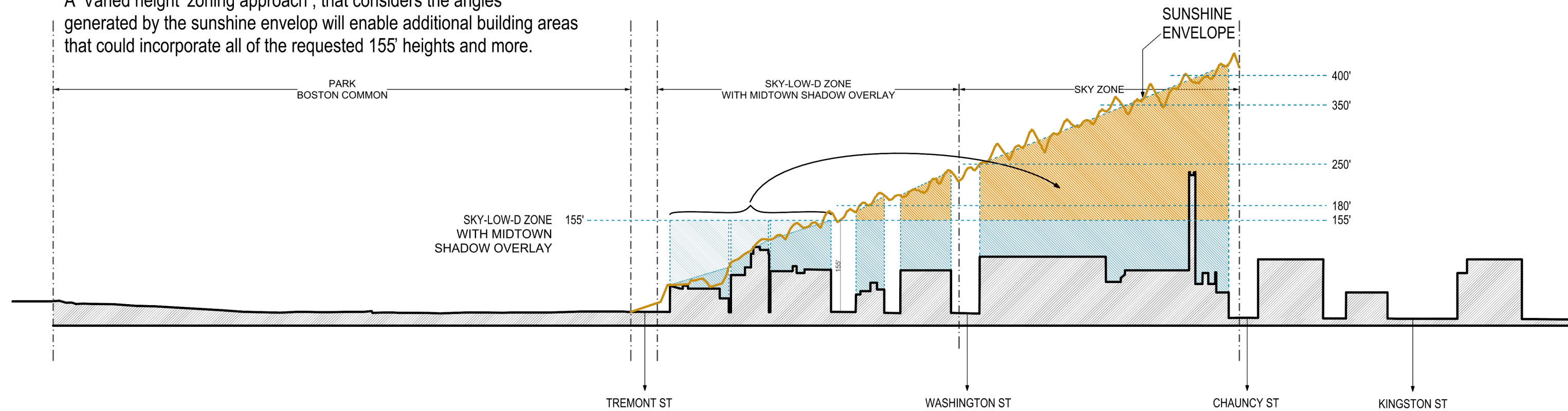
ESSEX ST

AVERY ST

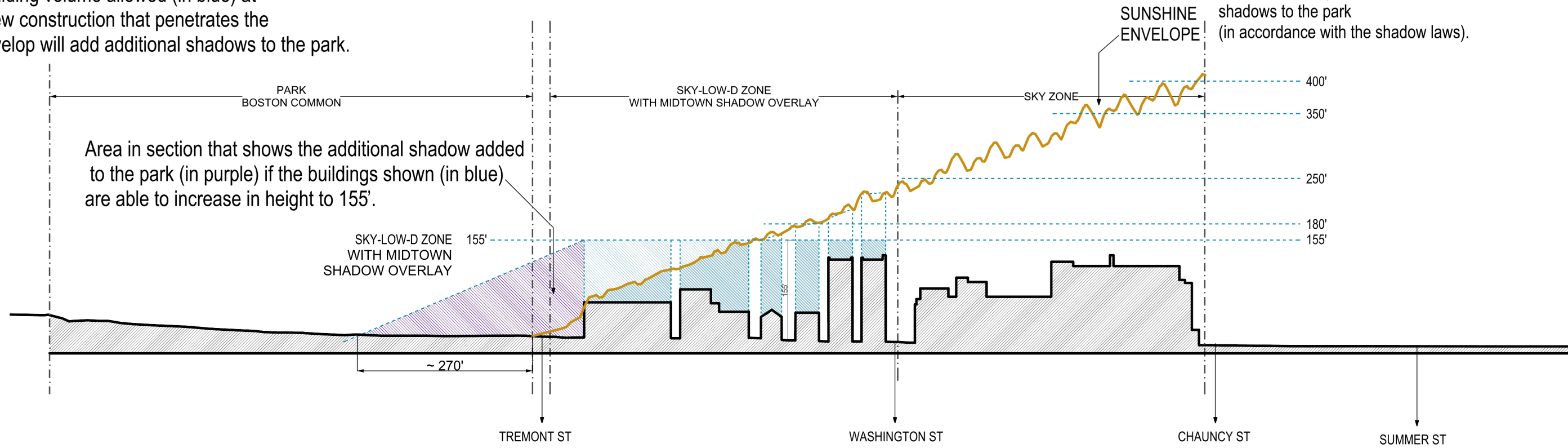
Section through **SKY** districts showing additional building volume allowed (in blue) at 155' high. New construction that penetrates the sunshine envelop will add additional shadows to the park.



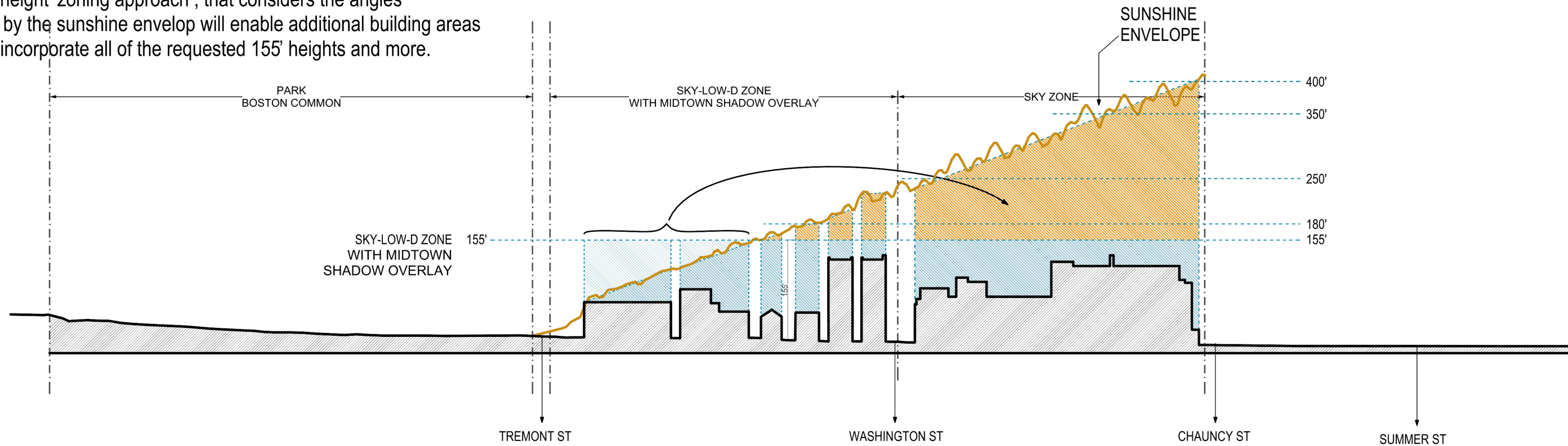
Built volume potential (in orange) shows areas where additional building heights **would not** add any shadows to the park. A 'Varied height' zoning approach, that considers the angles generated by the sunshine envelop will enable additional building areas that could incorporate all of the requested 155' heights and more.

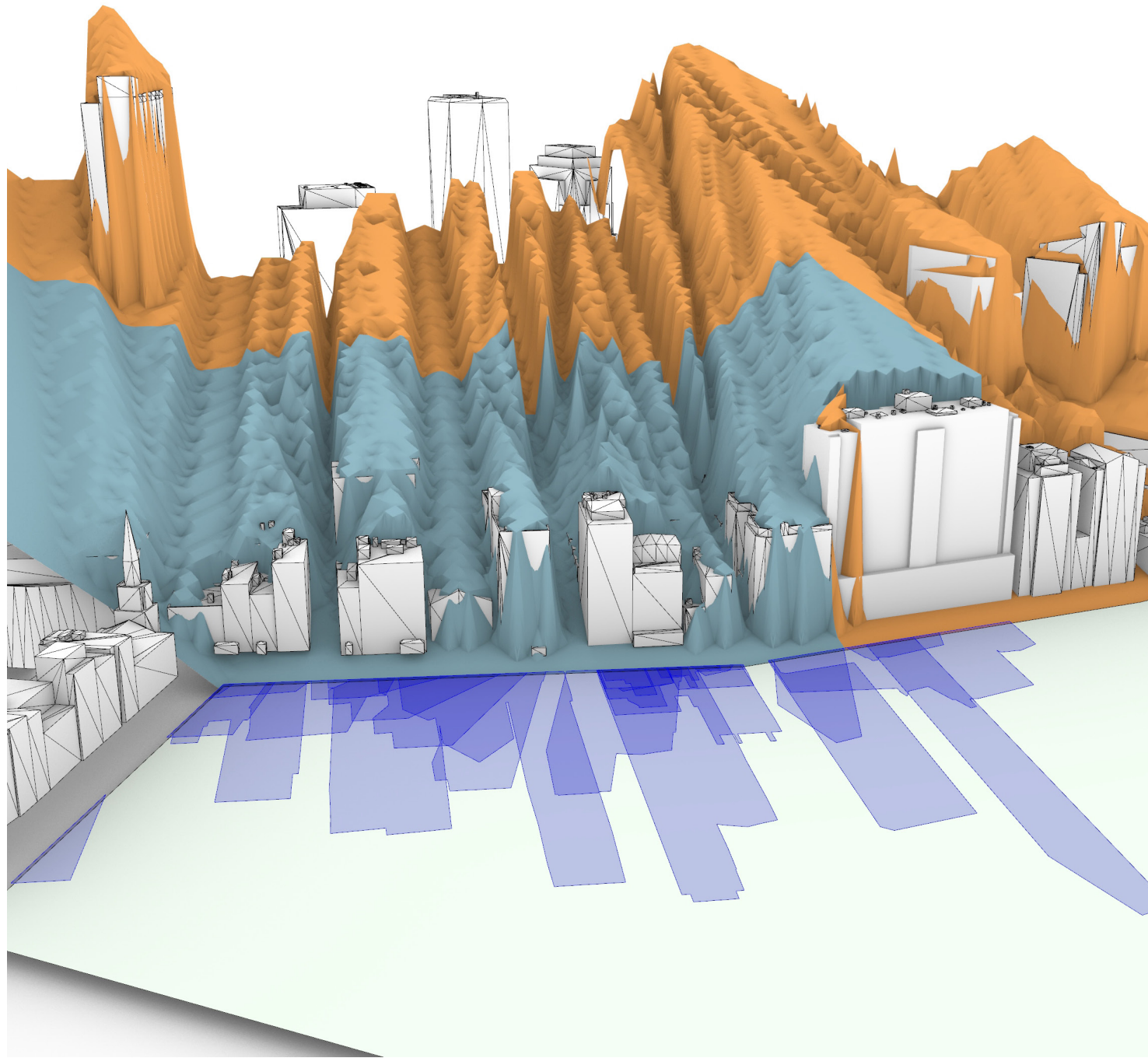


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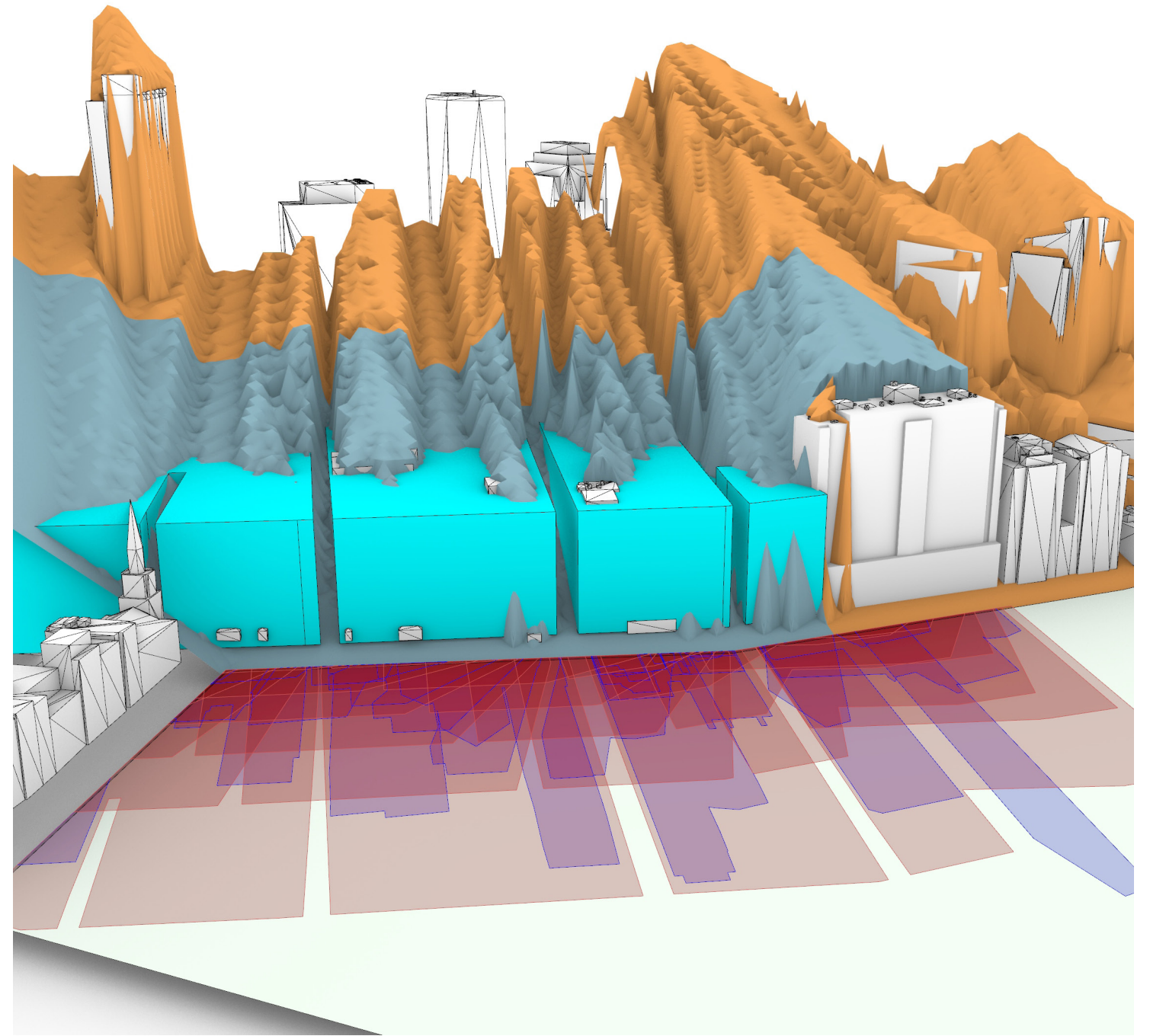


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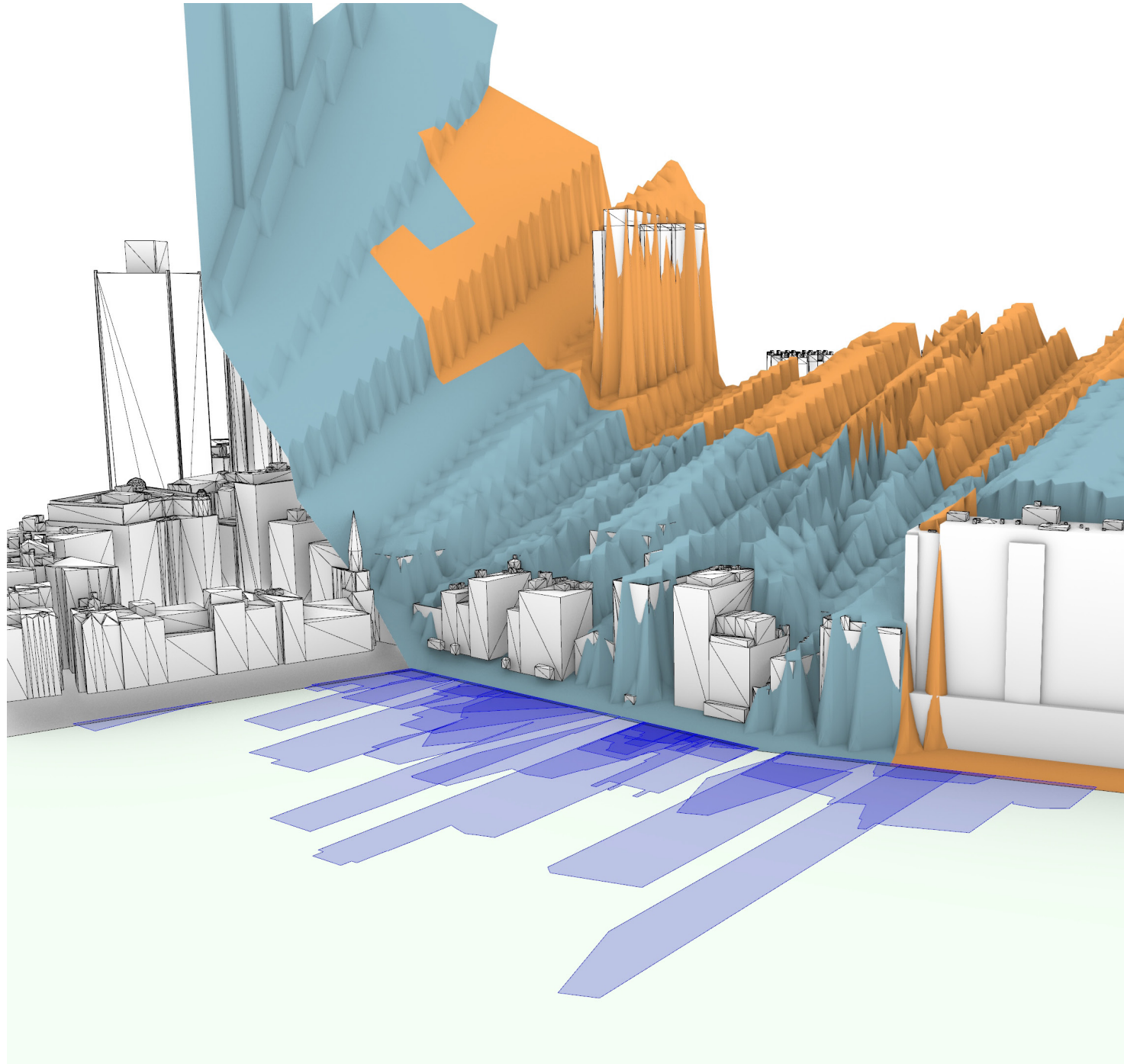




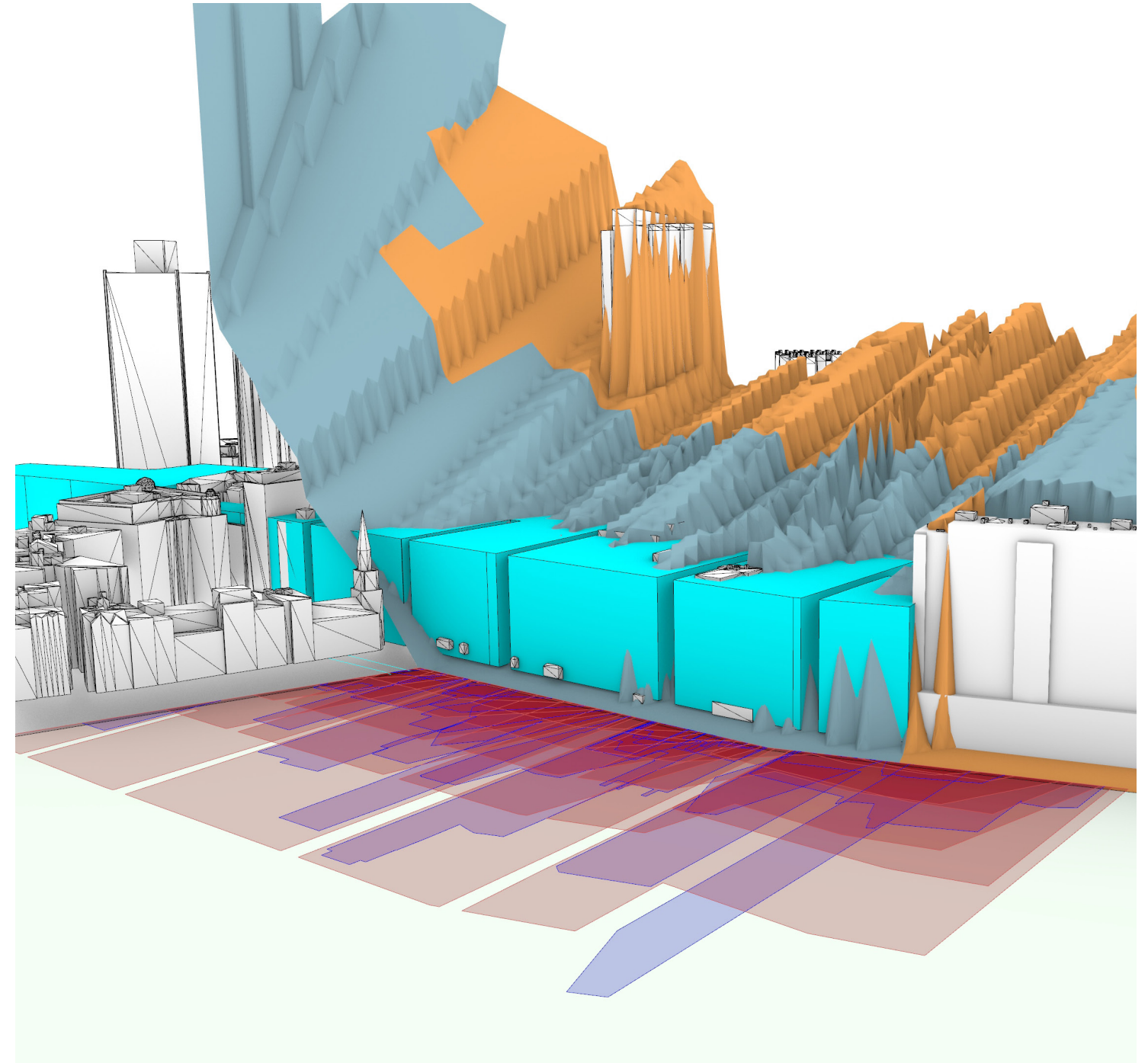
Existing shadows (in purple) between 8 am and 2:30 pm (March 21st to October 21st) that are created by existing buildings in the designated SKY-LOW-D district (New SKY-LOW-D district indicated by gray-blue sunshine envelop). Each purple layer indicates one hour of existing shadow.



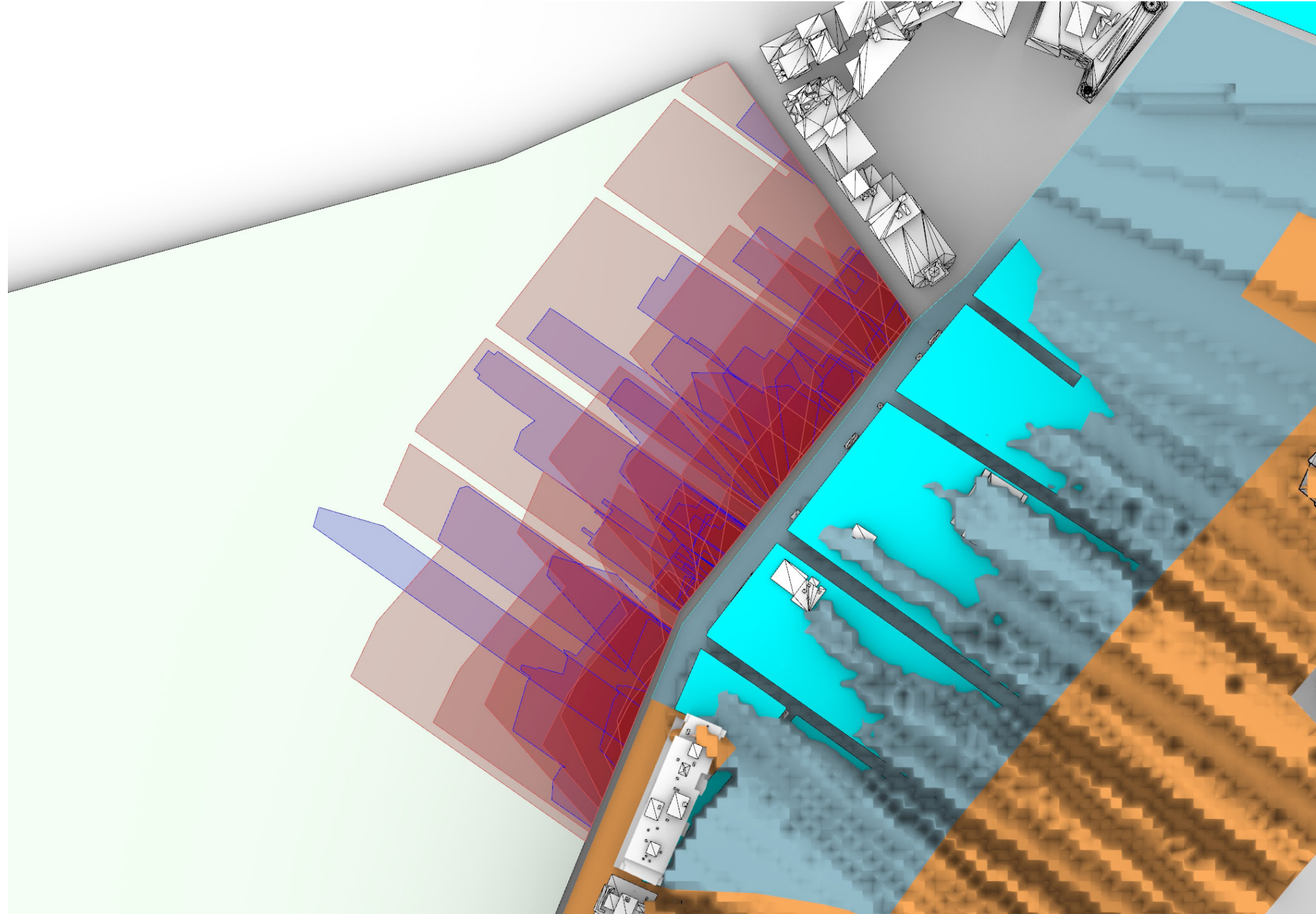
New shadow (in red) between 8 am and 2:30 pm (March 21st to October 21st) that will be created by buildings at 155' height in the SKY-LOW-D district (rendered in light blue). Each red layer indicates one hour of new shadow added.



Existing shadows (in purple) between 8 am and 2:30 pm (March 21st to October 21st) that are created by existing buildings in the designated SKY-LOW-D district (New SKY-LOW-D district indicated by gray-blue sunshine envelop). Each purple layer indicates one hour of existing shadow.



New shadow (in red) between 8 am and 2:30 pm (March 21st to October 21st) that will be created by buildings at 155' height in the SKY-LOW-D district (rendered in light blue). Each red layer indicated one hour of new shadow added.



Existing shadows shown in blue, every layer equals one hour.
New shadows shown in red, every layer equals one hour.
When two shades of color are overlaid, it equates to 2 hours of shadow.