

Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Planning Advisory Committee

MEETING

Wednesday, October 22, 2014



CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh
Mayor

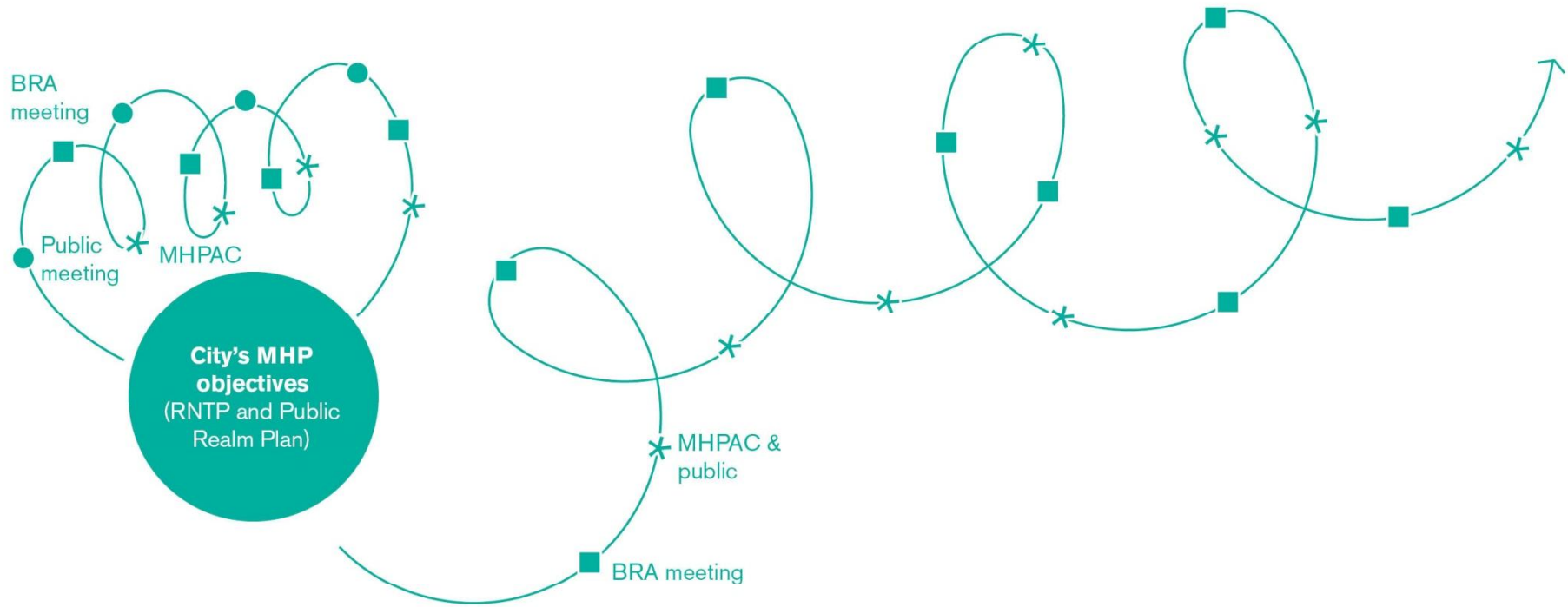


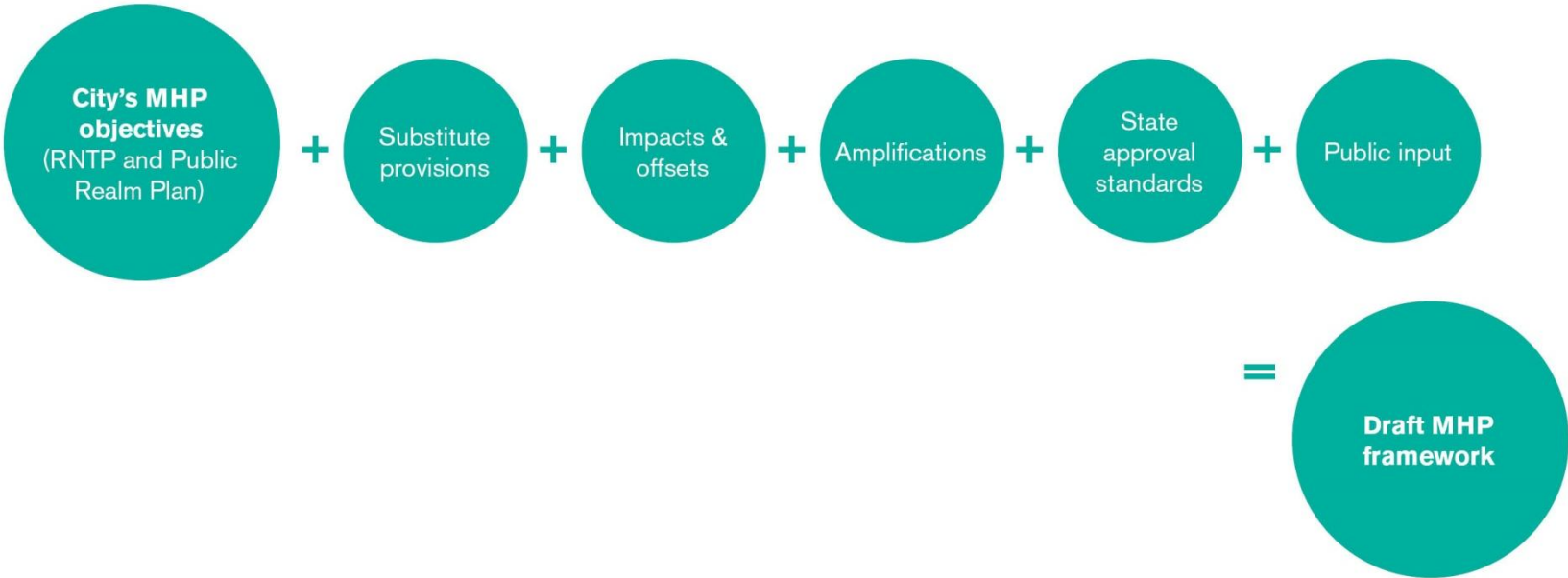
Boston
Redevelopment
Authority
Brian Golden, Acting Director

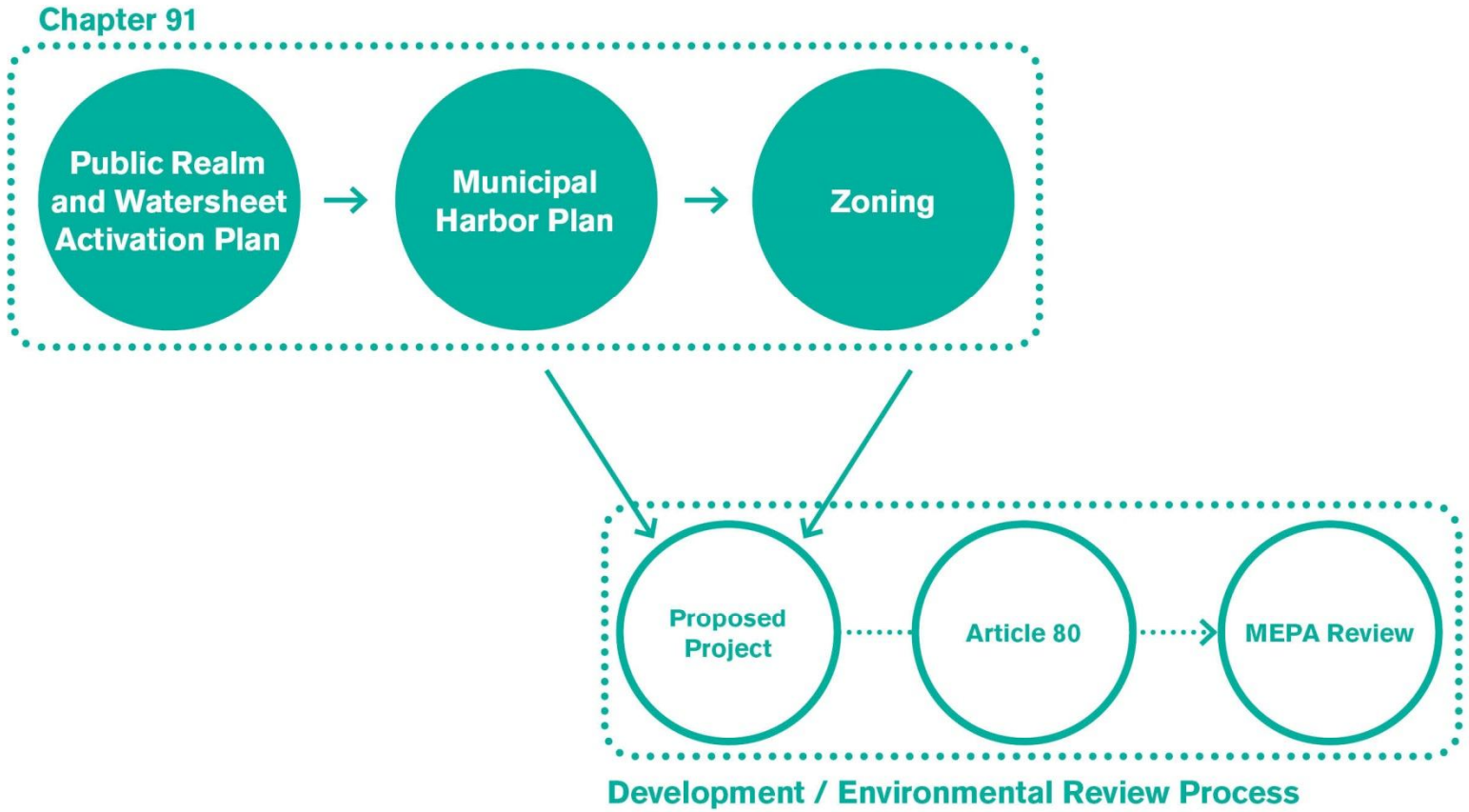
Consultants:
Utile, Inc.
Durand & Anastas
Noble & Wickersham

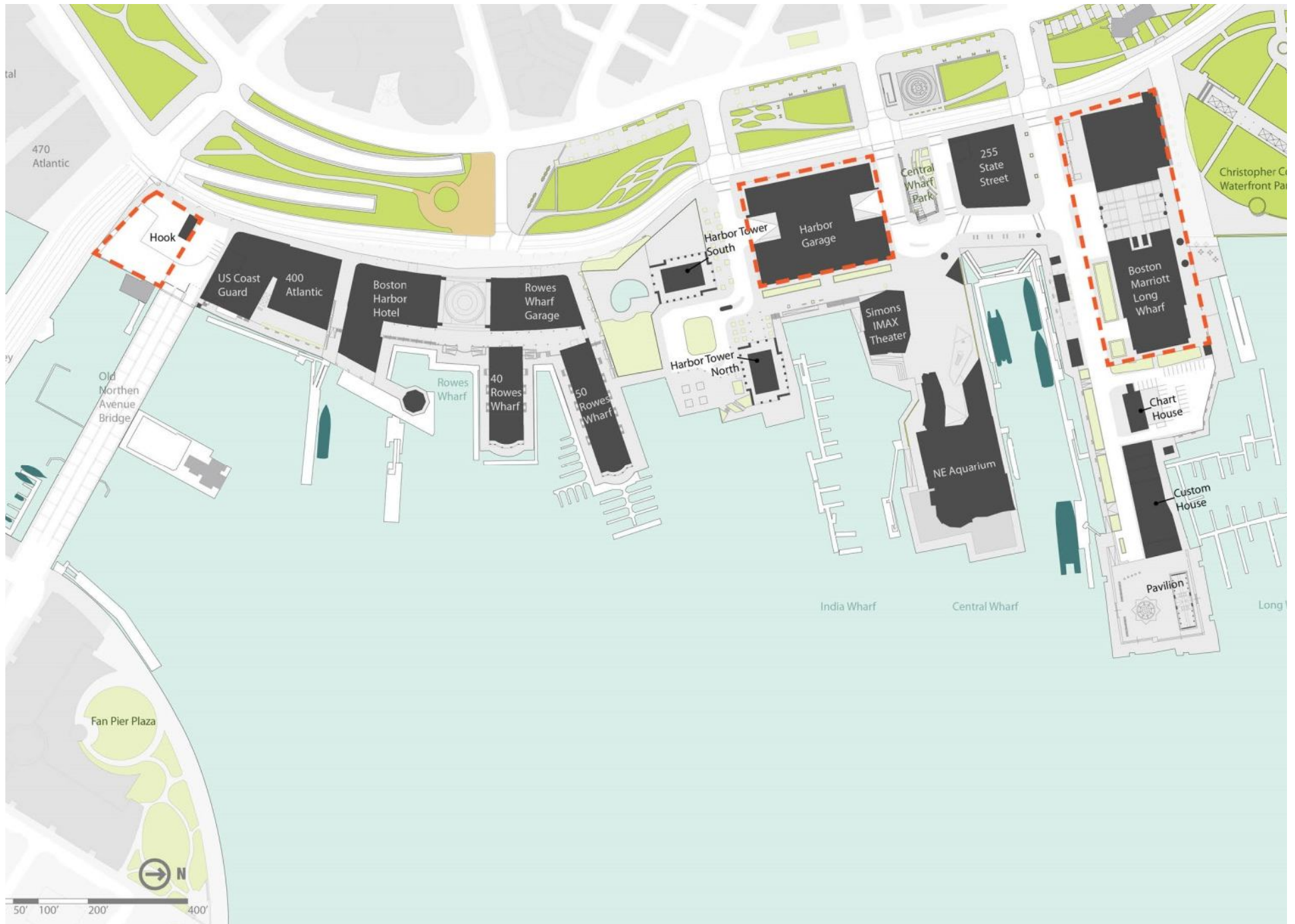
Agenda

- I. Review the planning for the Hook Wharf site
 - I. Greenway District Planning Guidelines
 - II. Downtown Waterfront Public Realm and Watersheet Activation Plan
- II. MHP Framework for Hook Wharf
 - I. MHP-related site characteristics
 - II. Chapter 91 Standards for Potential Substitute Provisions
- III. Presentation by the Hook development team
- IV. MHPAC and Public Comments



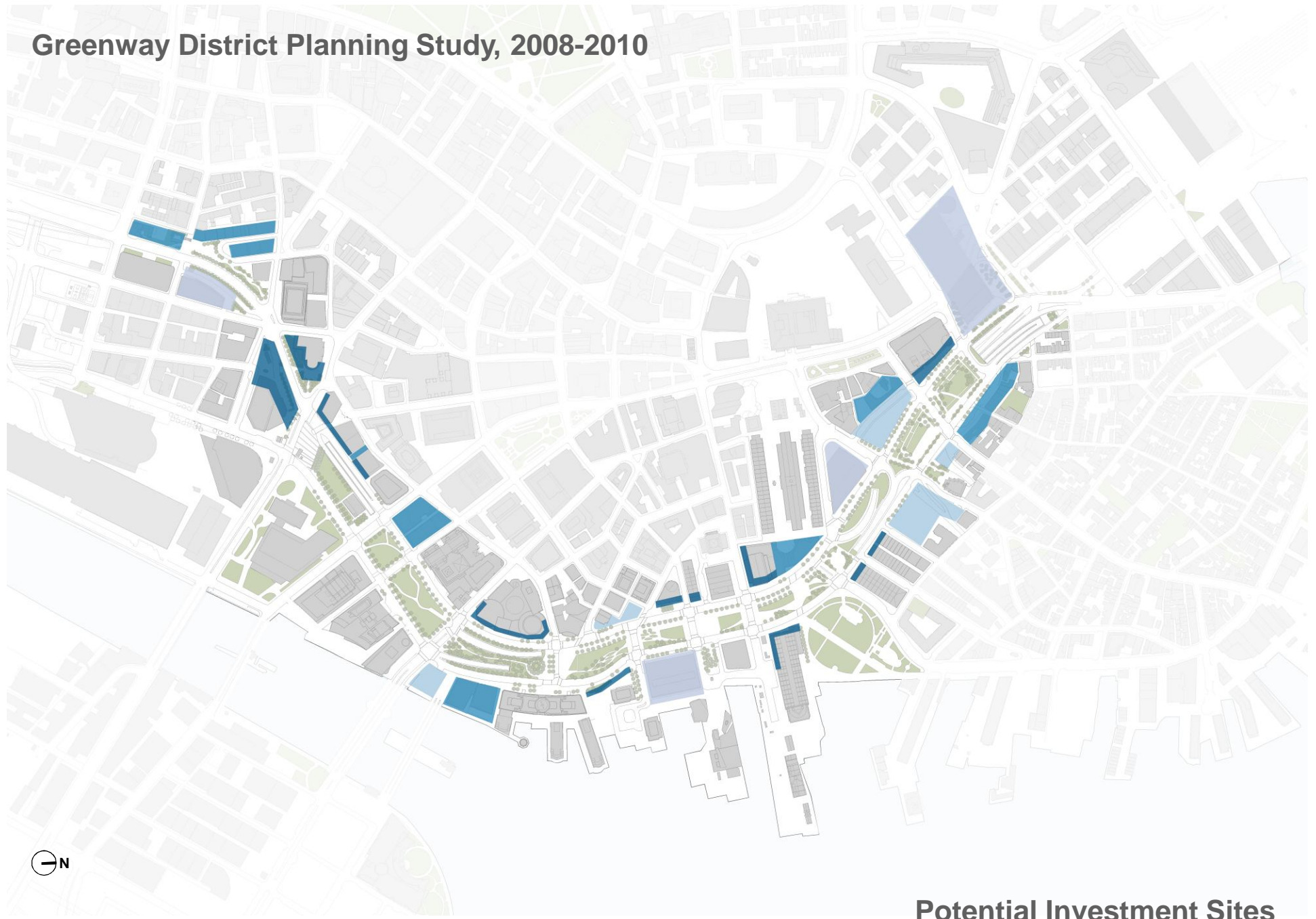






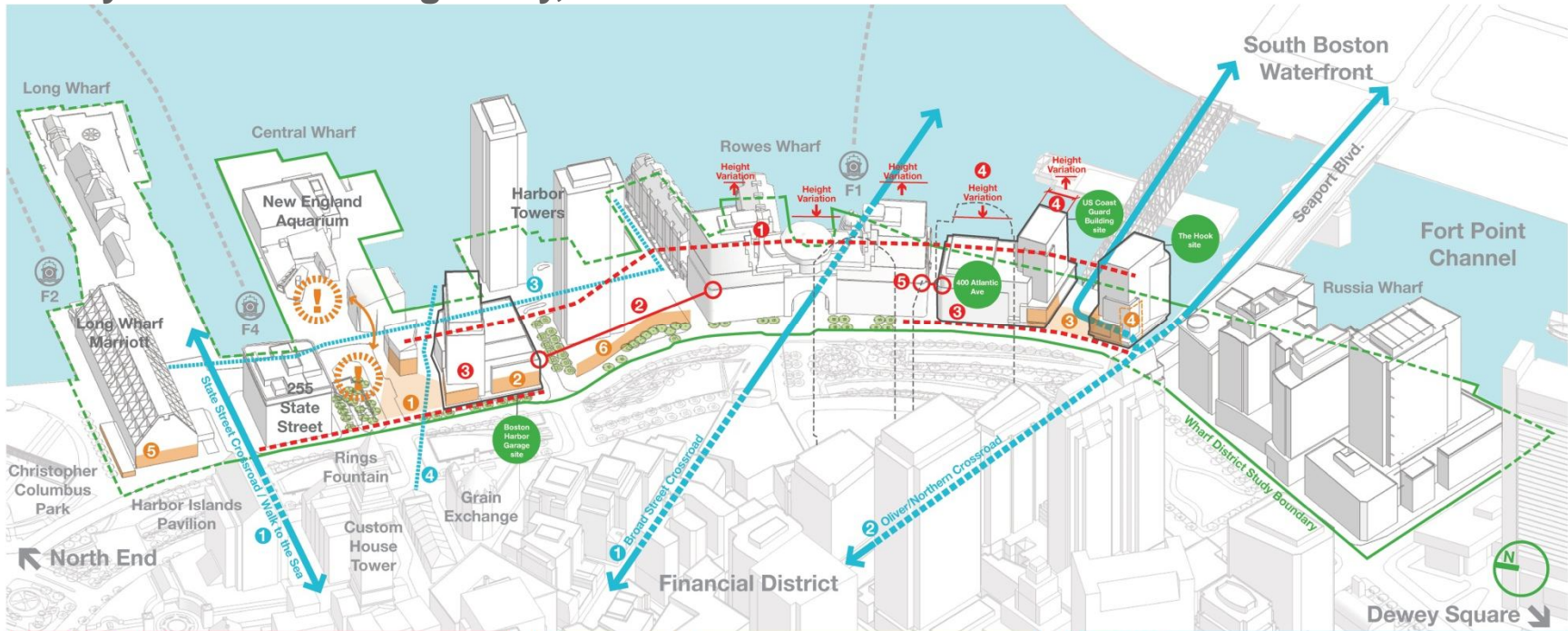
Review of planning studies for Hook Wharf

Greenway District Planning Study, 2008-2010



Potential Investment Sites

Greenway District Planning Study, 2010



Dimensional Criteria

- 1 All new buildings will have a maximum height of 200' (with the exception of the Hook site, at 175'), equivalent to the taller portions of Rows Wharf. Buildings should combine both low-rise and mid-rise elements in a way that takes cues from the existing context. Individual massing alternatives will be evaluated for how the shadows they create will impact the actively used portions of the park.
- 2 New buildings should establish a datum at the property's edge facing the Greenway. Ideally, the datum corresponds to and reinforces the heights in the immediate context, including the lower portions of Rows Wharf, the parapet of 255 State Street, or the tallest portion of Long Wharf, at about 125'. Taller portions of any new building should be set back by 10'-15' at this datum on the Greenway-facing sides of the building.
- 3 New development at the Boston Harbor Garage, 400 Atlantic Avenue, and the U.S. Coast Guard Building should reinforce the Atlantic Avenue street edge by building to it along a majority of its frontage. Significant breaks in that alignment should be in the service of opening connections to the waterfront.
- 4 All sites in the Wharf District, including 400 Atlantic Avenue, should vary in height like Rows Wharf, where taller masses alternate with lower masses of approximately 125' to allow for intermittent exposure to the sky plane, and to maintain visual access to the water. The lengths of any upper portion of a building over 125' should be limited to 125' on the Greenway-facing portions of the building.
- 5 The lower portions of 400 Atlantic Avenue should align with those of Rows Wharf.

Programmatic Goals

- 1 The lively occupation of the forecourt to the New England Aquarium should be extended as close the Greenway as possible. An additional ticket kiosk or similar related programming venue might facilitate this goal. New development on the Boston Harbor Garage site should feature active uses at the northwest corner that help anchor this node of activity and enhance enjoyment of the harbor.
- 2 New or replaced uses for the Atlantic Avenue edge of the Boston Harbor Garage should offer as many uses as possible that are complementary to the adjacent parks—restaurants, cafes, retail.
- 3 The ground floor uses at 400 Atlantic Avenue and the Hook site should reinforce the presence of the Oliver Street/Northern Avenue Crossroad with complementary active uses. Concentrations of small cafes will help mark the space between them as an important link over the bridges between the Greenway and South Boston.
- 4 The southwest corner of the Hook site should acknowledge in its architectural form the importance of the Moakley Bridge "gateway" to the South Boston waterfront. The form and orientation of the building should reflect the important urban morphologies that have created the site and that announce the grid of the adjacent emerging neighborhood.
- 5 The edges of the Long Wharf Marriott site have the opportunity to offer expanded ground level uses complementary to the adjacent Greenway and Christopher Columbus Park.
- 6 The base edge of Harbor Towers is currently defined by a perimeter fence. This location would benefit from an increased residential presence and openness at the ground level.

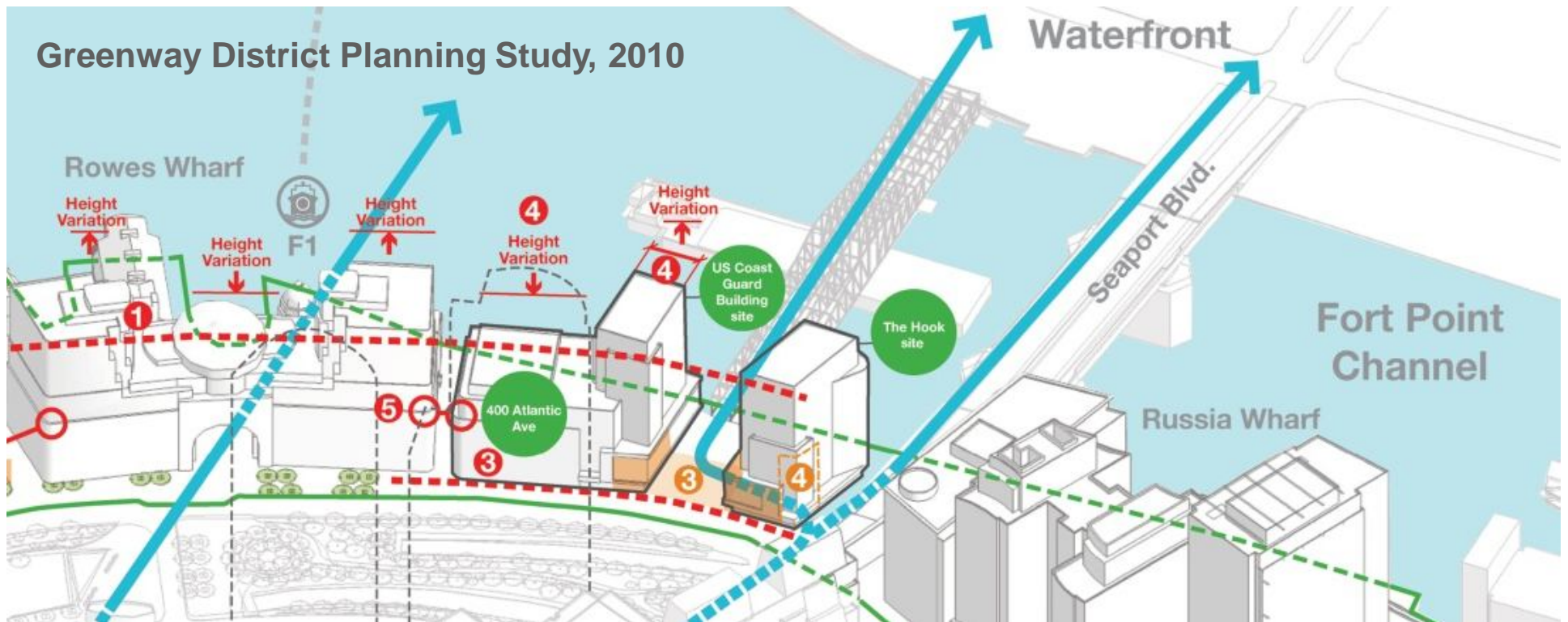
Connectivity

- 1 State and Broad Streets are two important Crossroads, the only two that terminate at the water's edge. Future development along these axes should enhance these rare direct views to the water from the Financial District, such as those through the arch at Rows Wharf.
- 2 Development at the Hook site and 400 Atlantic Avenue should enhance the ground plane in such a way as render this most fragile Crossroad connection more legible. Ground floor uses and special attention to landscape design will help in this regard.
- 3 All developments in the Wharf District should enhance the continuity and accessibility of the Harborwalk by providing additional points of connection from the Greenway and by "repairing" breaks in the community caused by grade changes and buildings or other obstructions.
- 4 All developments in the Wharf District, and the Boston Harbor Garage site in particular, should increase visual access to the waterfront, either at the building edges or through-building connections.

Wharf District

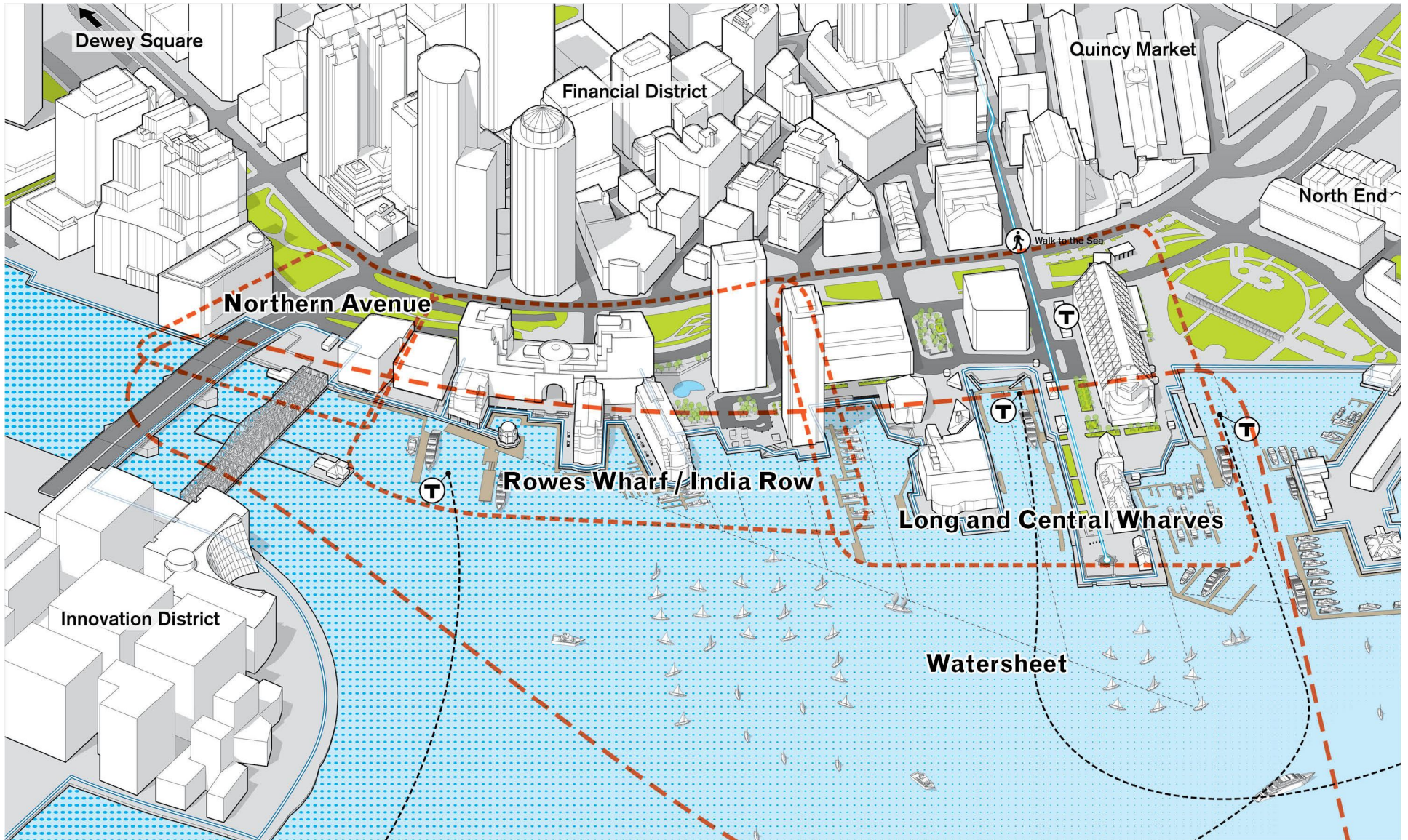


Greenway District Planning Study, 2010

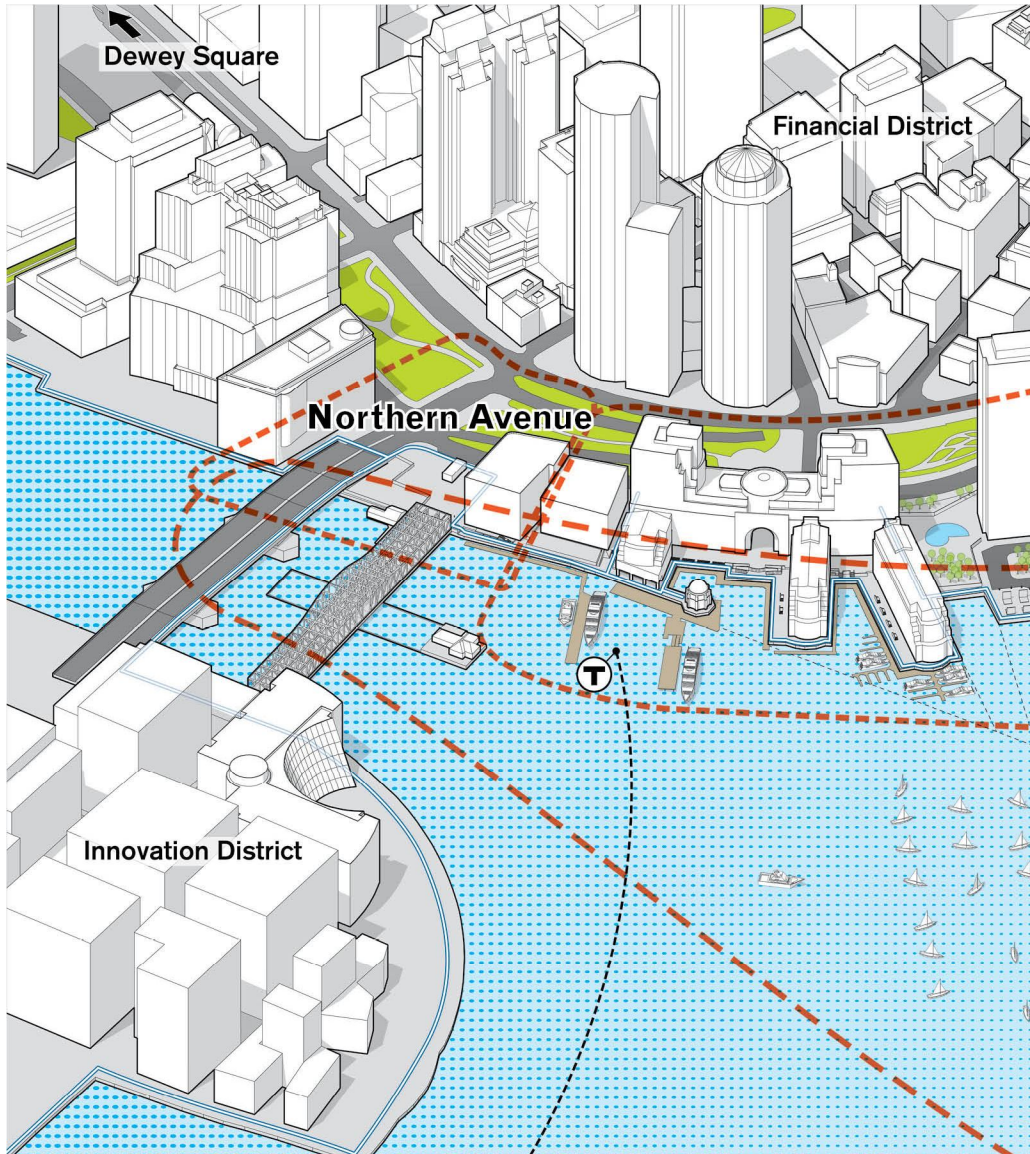


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Hook Wharf – Northern Avenue Subdistrict



Hook Wharf – Northern Avenue Subdistrict



Northern Avenue

The Northern Avenue section is a key gateway between the historic center of the city and the city's newest destination neighborhood, the burgeoning Innovation District. This area, bounded by the Northern Avenue Bridge and the Moakley Bridge, is the gateway between these destinations.

The challenges—and opportunities—here lie with how to facilitate passage between these neighborhoods, and create a sense of entrance or arrival. The planned renovation of the Old Northern Avenue Bridge offers the chance to strengthen pedestrian and bike links to the Innovation District and South Boston and create a model Complete Street. Creating an accessible HARBORWALK path along the waterfront at both the Moakley Bridge and the Northern Avenue Bridge will allow more people to enjoy the waterfront. In addition, these accessible connections might present an opportunity to expand the public space along the waterfront, which is very narrow in this area.

Hook Wharf – Northern Avenue Subdistrict

Northern Avenue Gateway to the Innovation District

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The Northern Avenue area of the Downtown Waterfront is geographically small but has immense potential for change with development and investment in the area. It includes the Hook development site, the Coast Guard Building, and the terminus of Northern Avenue and the Northern Avenue Bridge. Recent nearby developments such as Independence Wharf, Atlantic Wharf, the Intercontinental, and the Fan Pier developments have increased pedestrian connectivity to the area, improved the HARBORWALK, and brought new residents and workers to the area. Because of the aforementioned developments, as well as the completion of the Greenway, the area is full of new activity and street life. And because of these recent developments, this part of the Downtown Waterfront is a **key hinge between the burgeoning Innovation District and the Downtown and Financial Districts.**

Priorities for this area include improving Northern Avenue between the Coast Guard Building and Hook, as a multimodal street with appropriate greenscape; creating a fully accessible HARBORWALK on both sides of the Northern Avenue Bridge (whether this means going below the renovated bridge or on it); and creating an accessible HARBORWALK path across the Moakley Bridge (again, this may mean going below the bridge). Combined these improvements will increase pedestrian use of the HARBORWALK and pedestrian and bicyclist connections from Downtown to the Innovation District. With the Barking Crab across the Channel and water taxi stands nearby, this site—if it continues to house a water-dependent use—can add to Boston's long and rich history as a city connected to its harbor.

DRAFT – APRIL 9, 2014

The plan for this area has the following goals:

- **Strengthen the connection to the Innovation District** across both the Northern Avenue Bridge, which will soon be renovated, and the Moakley Bridge.
- **Create a gateway** to the City and to the Innovation District at Northern Avenue. This may be through the design of the Hook site, as well as the streetscape design of Northern Avenue.
- **Redesign the Northern Avenue terminus as a gateway and as Complete Street.** This may include robust public horticulture on the street edges.
- **Create accessible HARBORWALK connections** at both the Northern Avenue Bridge and across the Moakley Bridge.
- **Expand the public zone** along the waterfront (this can be coordinated with the accessible HARBORWALK connections, the Hook redevelopment, and the Northern Avenue Bridge renovation).
- **Activate the edges** around the Hook development parcel and the Coast Guard Building. The Northern Avenue edges of these buildings faces special challenges because of its narrow width and the location of loading docks.

Key Development Site

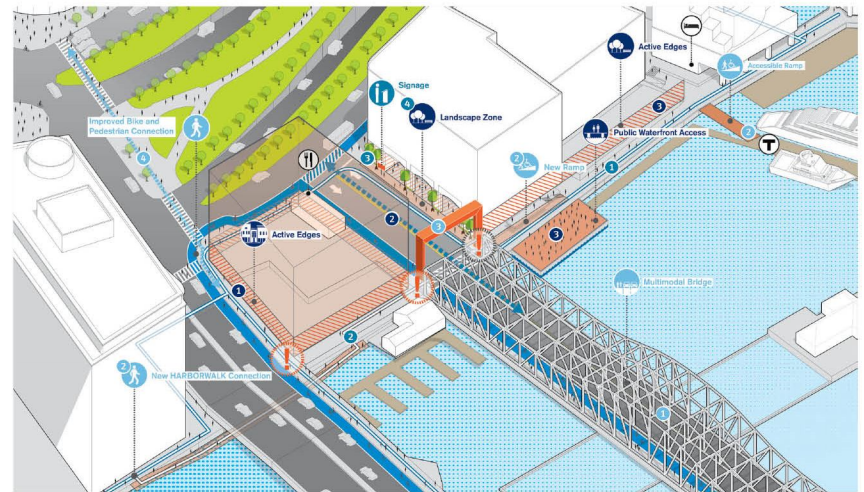
Hook Site
The Hook site, coupled with the planned renovation of Northern Avenue Bridge, will serve as a critical link between the Innovation District and Downtown. The design of the Hook redevelopment will frame views to and from downtown along both the Moakley Bridge and the Northern Avenue Bridge. In addition, the facades along the waterfront and the Rose Kennedy Greenway face two of the city's most important open space resources. These facades should be designed with consideration to these factors. Principal building entrances should be considered along both Seaport Boulevard and the Greenway to strengthen connections along Seaport Boulevard to Oliver Street and along the Greenway. Careful placement and design of loading docks and service entrances is critical on such a tight site, and should be designed with consideration to both the future Northern Avenue and the Greenway.



- Targeted Area for Improvements
- Area of Proposed Active Edge
- Important Node
- Significant Connections
- Pedestrian Connections
- Wayfinding Location
- Existing Amenity
- Harborwalk

Downtown Waterfront Public Realm and Watersheet Activation Plan

Boston Redevelopment Authority



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Connectivity

- 1 The Northern Avenue Bridge has the potential to become a model Complete Street. The renovation of this bridge could alleviate traffic congestion in South Boston and increase pedestrian and bicyclist connections to the Innovation District.
- 2 Accessible paths and continuous waterfront access are critical to making the public realm and waterfront a place for all people. Currently, the HARBORWALK jogs around the Moakley Bridge, and has an inaccessible area near the Northern Avenue Bridge. Creating ramps in both locations would add to HARBORWALK continuity and legibility.
- 3 Preserving and enhancing view corridors from the city to the harbor and along the HARBORWALK are key elements.
- 4 Connections to the Financial District through Oliver Street should be strengthened.

Legibility

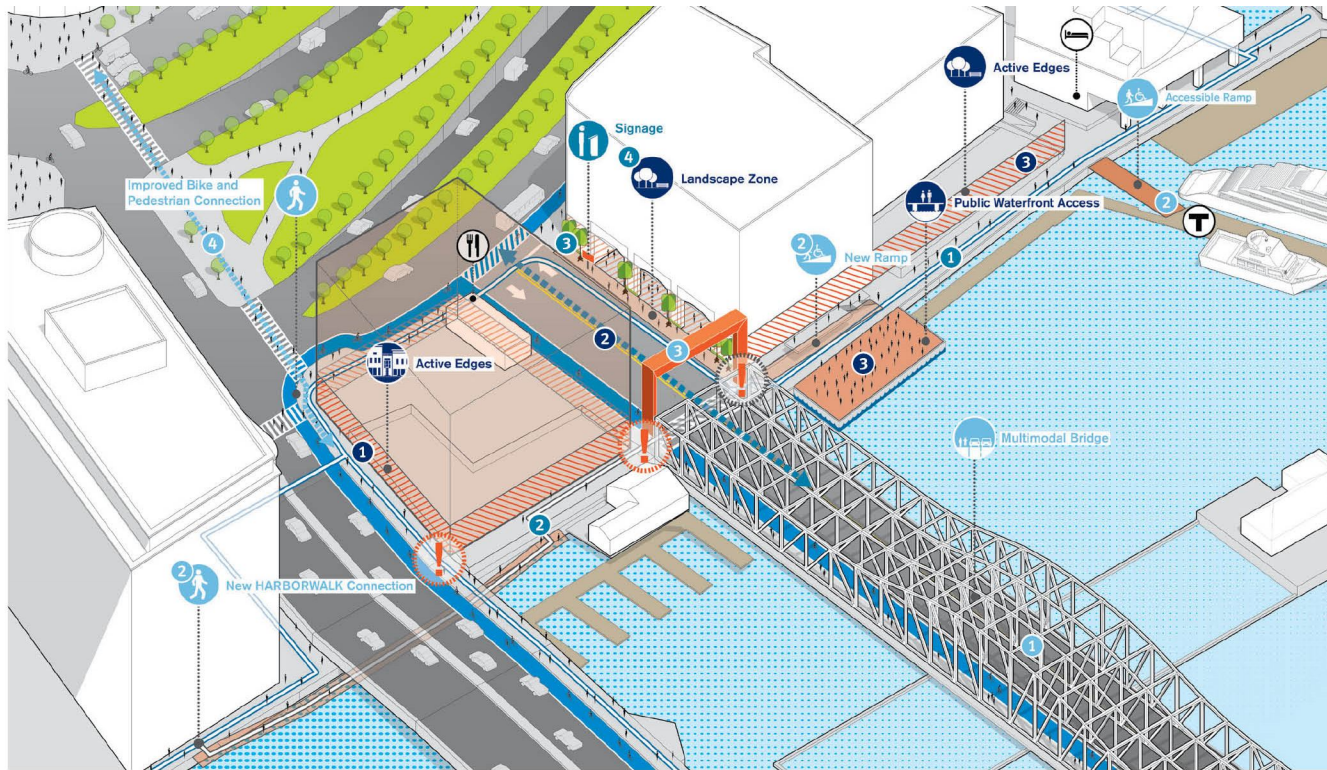
- 1 The HARBORWALK in this area is poorly marked, narrow, and inaccessible. New lighting and paving materials should be considered in this area. These would increase the sense of safety and the understanding of this as a public path.
- 2 The redevelopment of the Hook site should include a HARBORWALK connection along the waterfront.
- 3 Signage could direct pedestrians to the nearby attractions, such as the Aquarium, the Children's Museum, and the BSA Space, and offer interpretive information about the history of the area.
- 4 The renovation of the Northern Avenue Bridge will turn what now seems like an alley into a public thoroughfare. The renovation of the streetscape will contribute to the legibility of this as a street for all modes of transportation. Robust street trees should be considered.

Activation and Programming

- 1 New developments should activate the public realm with retail and restaurant uses along the ground level. The Hook site in particular presents the opportunity to activate all four sides of the parcel. The Coast Guard Building contains a cafeteria that is open to the public but little known. Encouraging awareness of this amenity can add to the activity along Northern Avenue.
- 2 Designing Northern Avenue as a welcoming thoroughfare poses a challenge because it is faced with loading docks and service areas. Design of this street should focus on making it welcoming to pedestrians with visible entrances to these buildings on Northern Avenue. Unwelcoming edges facing the HARBORWALK should be redesigned to open up to the waterfront, and an expanded public realm should be considered in "bottleneck" areas.

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Hook Wharf – Northern Avenue Subdistrict



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Northern Avenue

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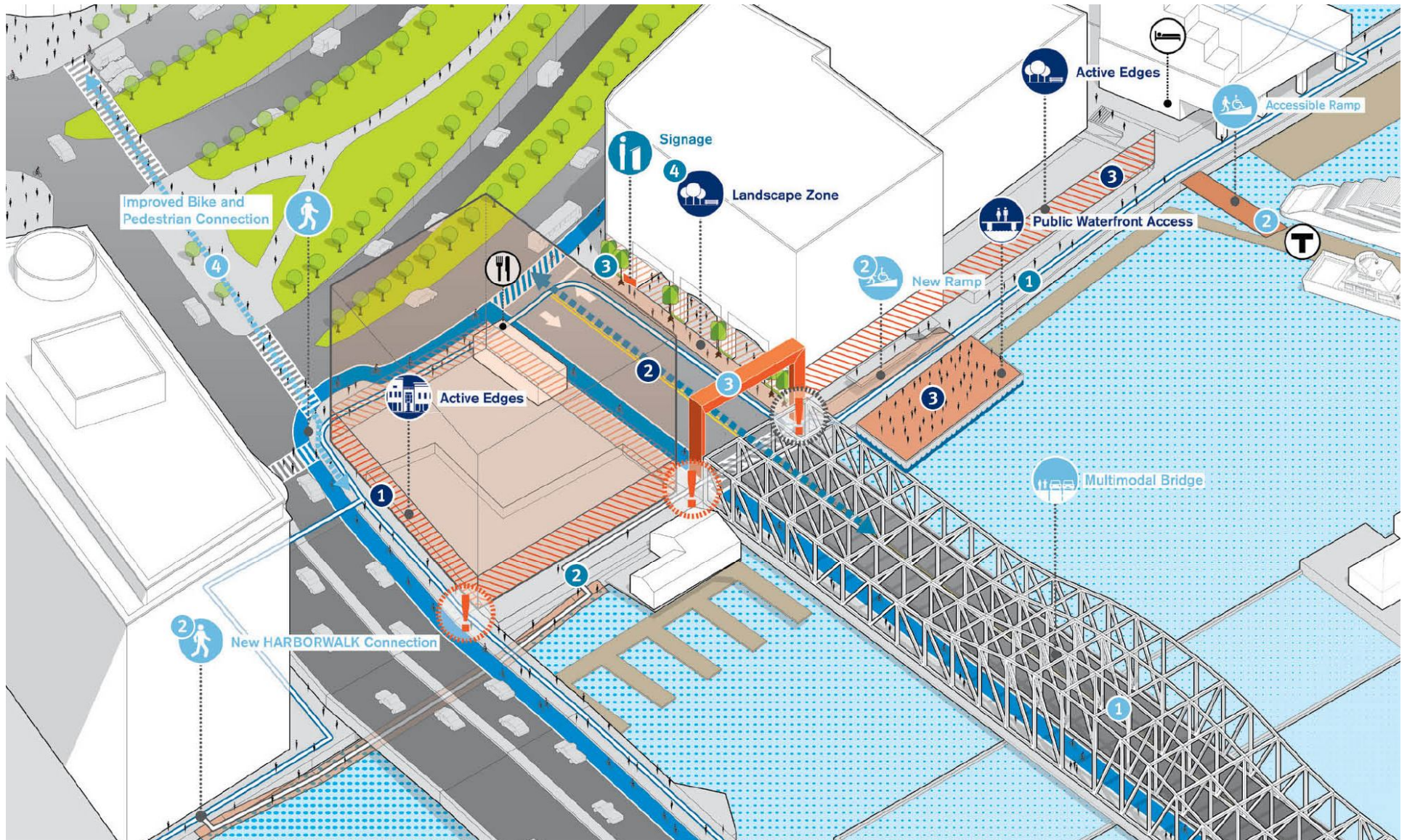
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Hook Wharf – Northern Avenue Subdistrict



Northern Avenue Subdistrict – Coast Guard Bldg



Northern Avenue Subdistrict – Hook Wharf



Northern Avenue



Hook site

Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan



North Washington Street Bridge



Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan



Moakley Bridge

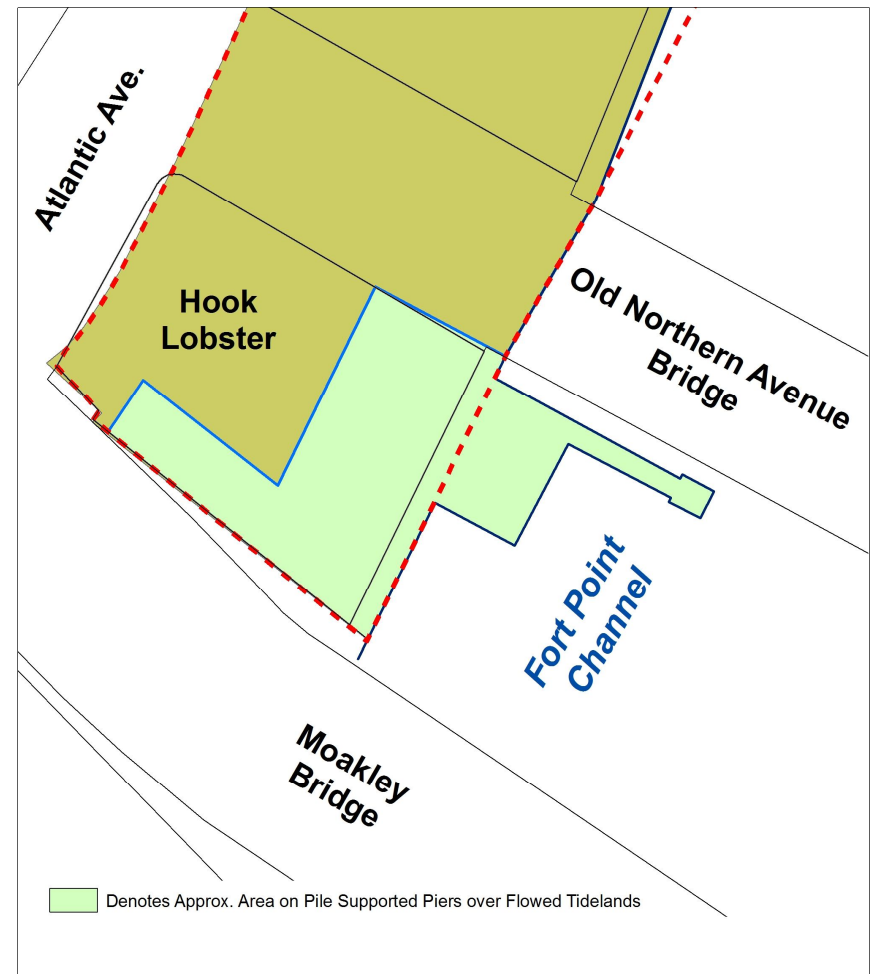


MHP Framework for the Hook Wharf

Hook Wharf – MHP Framework

MHP-Related Site Characteristics

- **Landward portion of the parcel is on filled Private tidelands**
- **Seaward portion of the parcel is on pile-supported piers**
Over flowed Commonwealth tidelands, so higher standard of activation for interior & exterior space
- **Thin wedge of watershed between the parcel and Moakley Bridge**
Implications for HarborWalk & Water Dependent Use Zone



Hook Wharf – MHP Framework

Chapter 91 Standards for Potential MHP Substitute Provisions

- **Building Footprint:** Chapter 91-compliant maximum building footprint is approx. 10,000 SF & a minimum open space requirement of 10,000 SF
- **Building Height:** Chapter 91-compliant maximum building height is 55 feet
- **Facilities of Private Tenancy (FPTs) over Flowed Tidelands:** FPTs shall not be located on any pile-supported structures on flowed tidelands
- **Water Dependent Use Zone:** Minimum setbacks (approx. 12 – 25 feet) from the water’s edge devoted exclusively to water dependent use and public access

