

Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Planning Advisory Committee

Offset Recommendations and Discussion



CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh
Mayor



Boston
Redevelopment
Authority
Brian Golden, Director

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

Agenda

- **Public Realm & Offset Strategy**
 - i. Public Realm Plan
 - ii. Case Study: Fan Pier

- **Public Benefits**
 - i. Public benefits of projects themselves
 - ii. Prioritizing within the Public Realm Plan
 - i. Funds for programming and maintenance of the public realm, outside the Study Area
 - ii. Support for Water-dependent Uses
 - iii. Water-based infrastructure
 - iv. Water transportation
 - iii. Public realm offsets associated with specific projects
 - i. Long Wharf Marriott
 - ii. Harbor Garage
 - iii. Hook site

- **Discussion**

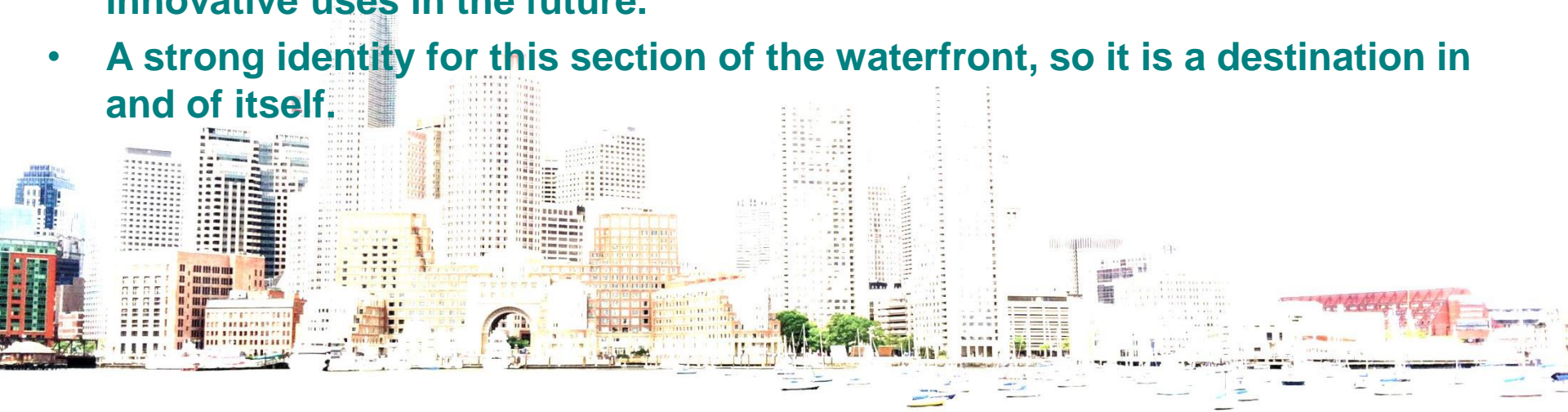
Public Realm and Offset Strategy



Vision

For the Downtown Waterfront, we envision:

- **A waterfront district accessible to all** by bike, transit, foot, or boat.
- **Clearly defined connections** to the Greenway, the harbor, Quincy Market, the North End, the Financial District, and the Innovation District.
- **A district and watersheet that are resilient to climate change**, designed and built to withstand inundation and storm surges.
- **Four-season destinations and programming** that are welcoming to Bostonians and visitors of all ages.
- **A district and watersheet that is flexible enough to accommodate innovative uses in the future.**
- **A strong identity for this section of the waterfront, so it is a destination in and of itself.**



Subdistrict Character and Goals

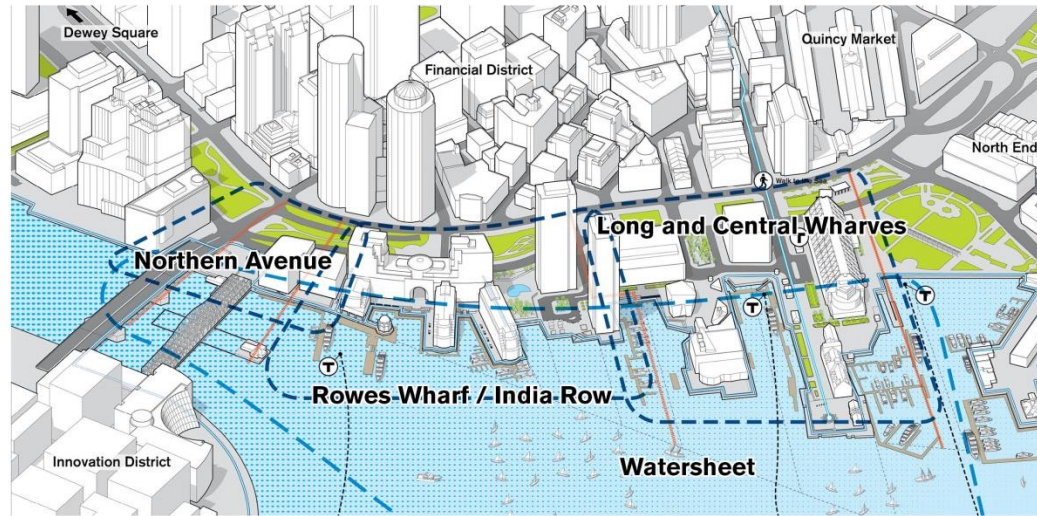


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Subdistricts

The Downtown Waterfront can broadly be understood as four distinct areas, each with its own character and potential. Each of the Downtown Waterfront's subdistricts has its own distinct features, uses, and building styles. Moreover, each of the subdistricts connects to vastly different parts of the city, from the Innovation District to the North End. The goals for each subdistrict are driven by a desire to reinforce the specific character of each subdistrict. For example, the Northern Avenue section presents the opportunity to connect to the Innovation District; the India Row / Rows Wharf area is mature and well-established and could benefit from clearer north-south connections; Long and Central wharves are where the city meets the harbor; and the watersheet offers the opportunity to experience the city and the harbor in a whole new way.

- **Northern Avenue**, spanning from the Moakley Bridge to the Coast Guard Building
- **Rows Wharf and India Row** goes from 400 Atlantic Avenue to the Harbor Towers (which was the former India Wharf)
- **Long and Central Wharves**, which includes the Harbor Garage, Aquarium, and the Long Wharf Marriott
- In addition, the **watersheet** is a highly active place, and this plan considers it as a distinct zone in itself that needs its own spatial clarity and organization, with consideration to the adjacent uses.



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. Another key challenge is creating an accessible HARBORWALK path along the waterfront at both the Moakley Bridge and the Northern Avenue Bridge.

Gateway to the Innovation District

Rows Wharf and India Row

The Rows Wharf and India Row area is a thin sliver of land between the Greenway and the water. It is home to a robust residential community and a range of restaurants and events venues at Rows Wharf. Here, the focus is on facilitating passage from north to south, and connections from the Greenway to the water. Clear pedestrian and visual connections will facilitate north-south connectivity. Drawing people from the Greenway and Downtown to the water might require improving the lateral links by adding programming, retail or restaurant uses, or signage and lighting.

Connect the North and South

Long and Central Wharves

This is the most active and programmed area of the waterfront. With the Walk to Sea, the Rings Fountain on the Greenway, and the Harbor Islands Pavilion, this is where Boston touches the water. The goal for Long and Central Wharves is to lead more people to the waterfront and fully utilize the space available, through programming, wayfinding, and management.

Touch the Water

The Watersheet

Building on decades of work and the clean-up of the Boston Harbor, the goal for the watersheet is to help more people experience the harbor. This requires a careful balance of different types of marinas and vessels, and a strong management plan to make the harbor friendly and inviting to all.

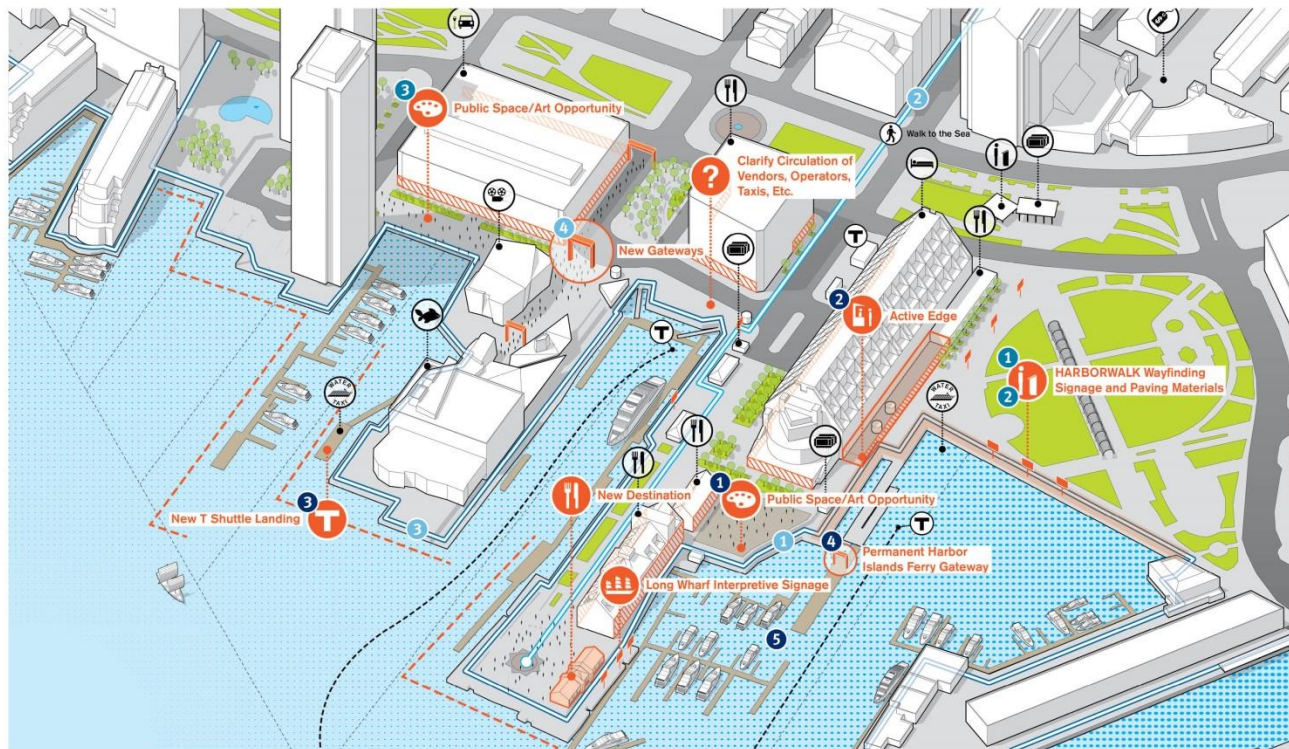
Experience the Harbor

Revisions Long and Central Wharves

Touch the
Water



Boston Redevelopment Authority



Connectivity

- 1 Strengthening the connection to the North End is critical. This can happen through encouraging passing through the Marriott lobby, and improving the quality of the paths around the Marriott.
- 2 The Walk to the Sea should be strengthened and promoted. Encouraging more to travel to the end of the wharf could relieve some of the pedestrian congestion during peak tourist season, and lead to a greater appreciation of the harbor and Boston's maritime history.
- 3 The HARBORWALK should be strengthened to encourage north-south movement through the study area and to draw visitors to the ends of the wharves.
- 4 Gateway moments should be designed, such as one approaches the NEAq.

Legibility

- 1 Signage should make clear both the HARBORWALK as well as HARBORWALK "shortcuts," such as around the Marriott. Overall maps of the HARBORWALK and the general district should be considered.
- 2 Coordinated signage can also make clear the ferry locations and schedules. This will alleviate confusion in the area. The overall area can be improved through coordinating paving materials, signage, etc. This will help clarify the public realm and direct people to the key amenities and open spaces.
- 3 Key landmarks, such as public art, large-scale signs, and digital displays, should be considered as navigation and wayfinding devices.

Activation and Programming

- 1 Improving underutilized spaces, such as the hardscaped plaza between the Harbor Garage and the water, and parking lot and the end of Long Wharf, is a priority. Each should have a different character, ranging from quiet contemplative spots to very active.
- 2 Activating the edges of buildings is key to drawing people to this area and distributing foot traffic.
- 3 Expanding the water transit options, both in terms of destinations and regularity of service, is a key priority. Water transit can connect the Downtown Waterfront to other Boston neighborhoods, such as East Boston, as well as neighboring waterfront communities.
- 4 The Harbor Islands would benefit from a permanent gateway on the wharf.
- 5 The reconstruction of T Wharf and a reconfiguration of waterside on uses should be considered on the north side of Long Wharf.

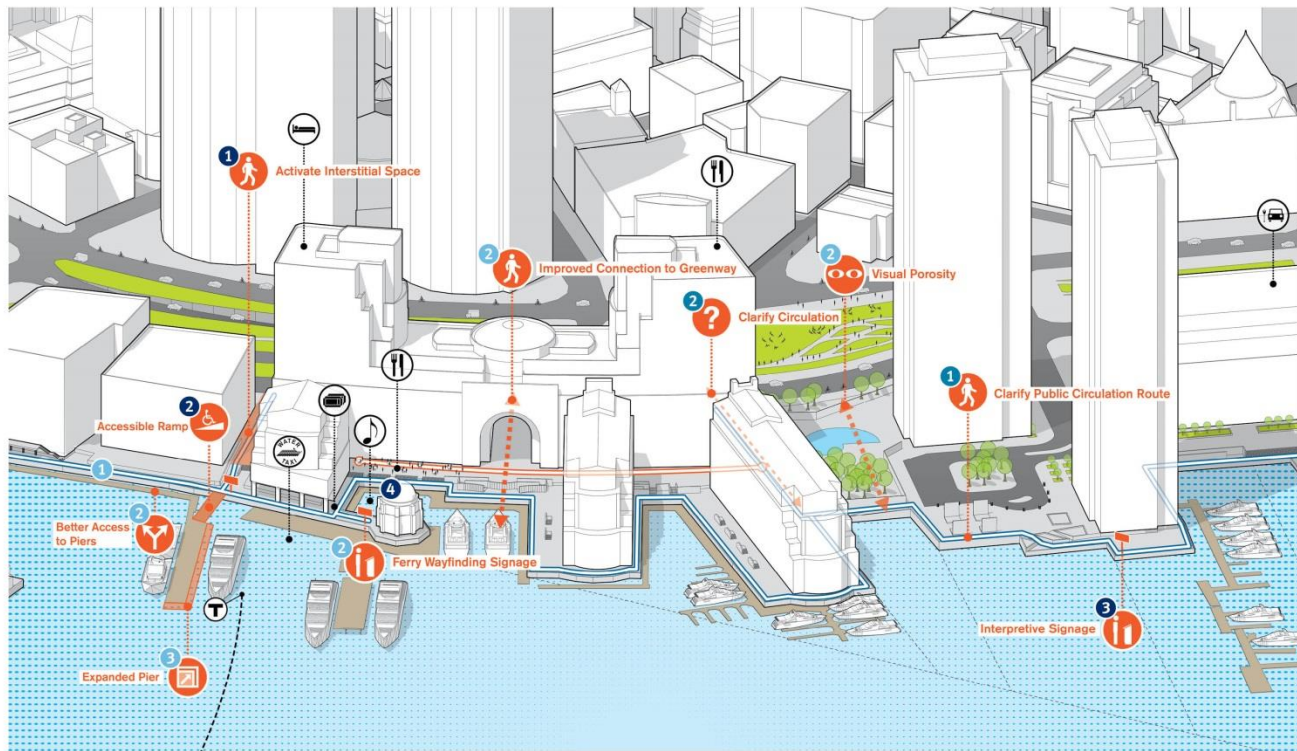
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Revisions Rowes Wharf and India Row

Link the
North to
South, and
East to
West



Boston Redevelopment Authority



Connectivity

- 1 Strengthen the north-south connections along the HARBORWALK and Atlantic Avenue. Improving pedestrian connections between the south and the north of the downtown will relieve congestion on the roads and on public transportation, and relieve pedestrian bottlenecks.
- 2 Visual connections from the Greenway to the waterfront should be enhanced and preserved wherever possible.
- 3 Enhanced access to piers and water transit would enable more commuters and visitors to visit the area. This includes accessible ramps, better access to side piers, expanded transit piers, and better signage.

Legibility

- 1 Clarifying the pedestrian path through the Harbor Towers property is a priority for this area. The HARBORWALK is confusing and poorly marked. Proper signage will help, as will upgrades to the paving materials. If the Harbor Towers rethinks East India Row and the entryway to the Harbor Towers, it should consider how the landscape and streetscape can make clear the public path through this parcel.
- 2 Signage should make clear both the HARBORWALK as well as HARBORWALK "shortcuts," such as through Rowes Wharf. Overall maps of the HARBORWALK and the general district should be considered.

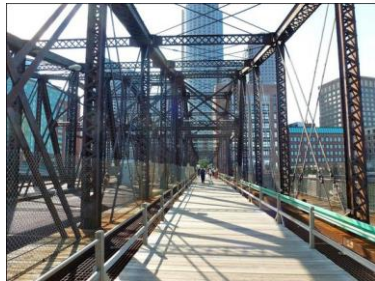
Activation and Programming

- 1 The interstitial spaces in this area could benefit from programming, such as restaurant seating or benches. Adding programming to these areas could increase pedestrian activity between the water's edge and the Greenway.
- 2 Improving access to the water transportation centers, with accessible ramps and better access to piers will greatly increase activity at the water's edge.
- 3 Interpretive signage or symbols (e.g., public art) about the history of the waterfront would add to the experience of visitors or passersby.
- 4 Underutilized spaces, such as the pavilion at Rowes Wharf, should be programmed or made available for public use.

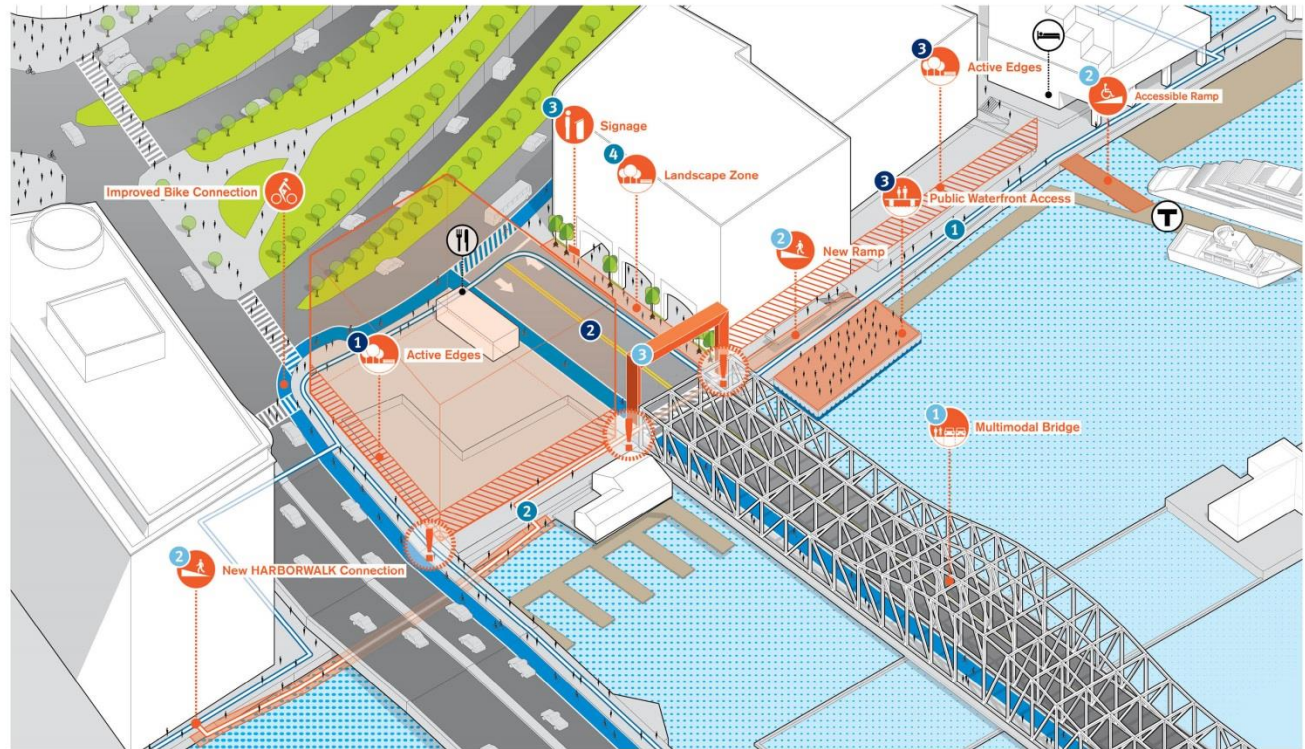
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Revisions Northern Ave.

Gateway
to the
Innovation
District



Boston Redevelopment Authority



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 waterfront access are critical to making the public realm 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 to the street level, or below the bridges, in both locations would add to HARBORWALK continuity and legibility. With any new development in this area, these should be priority public realm improvements.
- 3 Preserving and enhancing view corridors from the city to the harbor and along the HARBORWALK are key elements.

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.

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.
- 3 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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Case Study: Fan Pier

At Fan Pier, the project on its own merits improved the public realm and waterfront access, and combined with the offsets, it improved the waterfront overall.

Baseline

- Harborwalk
- Water infrastructure (Fan Pier Cove & floating wave attenuator) transportation subsidy (\$5.487 million)
- Public infrastructure

Offsets

- Fan Pier Park & Green
- Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) and 47,000 SF of other civic/cultural space
- Public realm improvements



Public Benefits

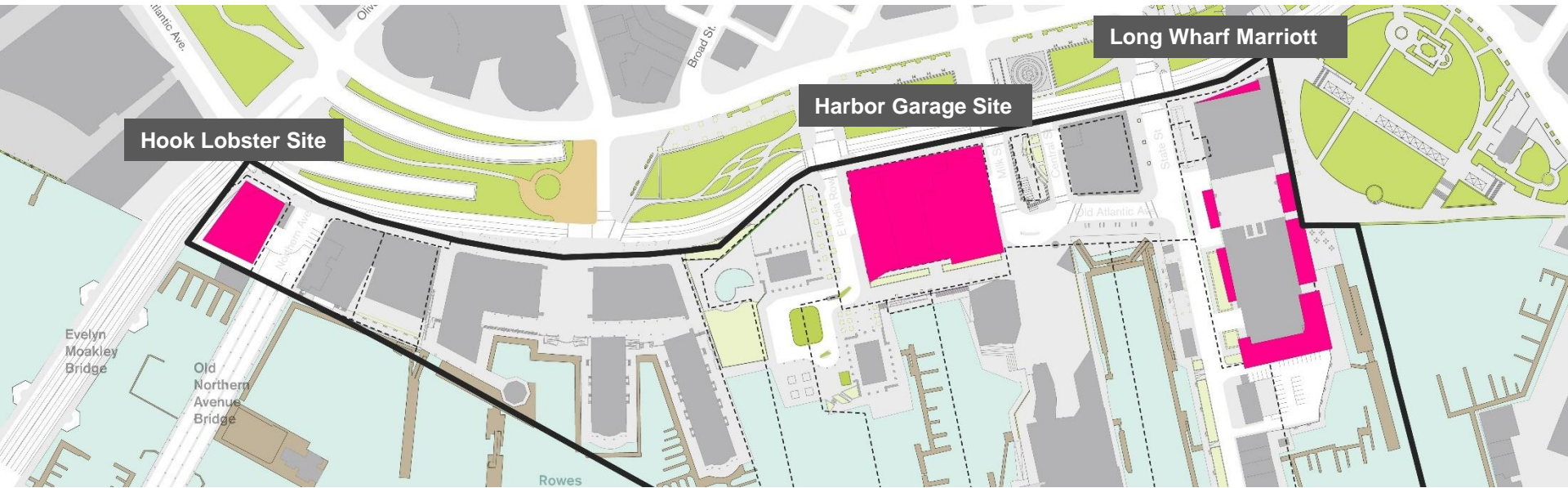
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MHPs ensure proposed projects have “baseline” public realm benefits

- Incorporation of public realm plan framework to guide decisions
- Amplifications for comprehensive public amenities and fully activated exterior & interior areas
- Large-scale qualitative design, to ensure optimum public space and building orientation, view corridors, and mixed uses
- Implementation of other City priorities, such as climate resiliency and water transportation

Proposed projects also have inherent public realm benefits



Hook redevelopment

- Revitalizes the property
- Reconnects the water's edge to the public realm
- Connects South Boston Waterfront and Fort Point to Downtown; advances the Crossroads Initiative

Harbor Garage redevelopment

- Activates edges
- Removes "wall" of the garage
- Provides new open space and views to Harbor and NEAq

Long Wharf Marriott Expansion

- Activates edges

Hook Lobster Site



What to preserve or enhance? Views of the water.



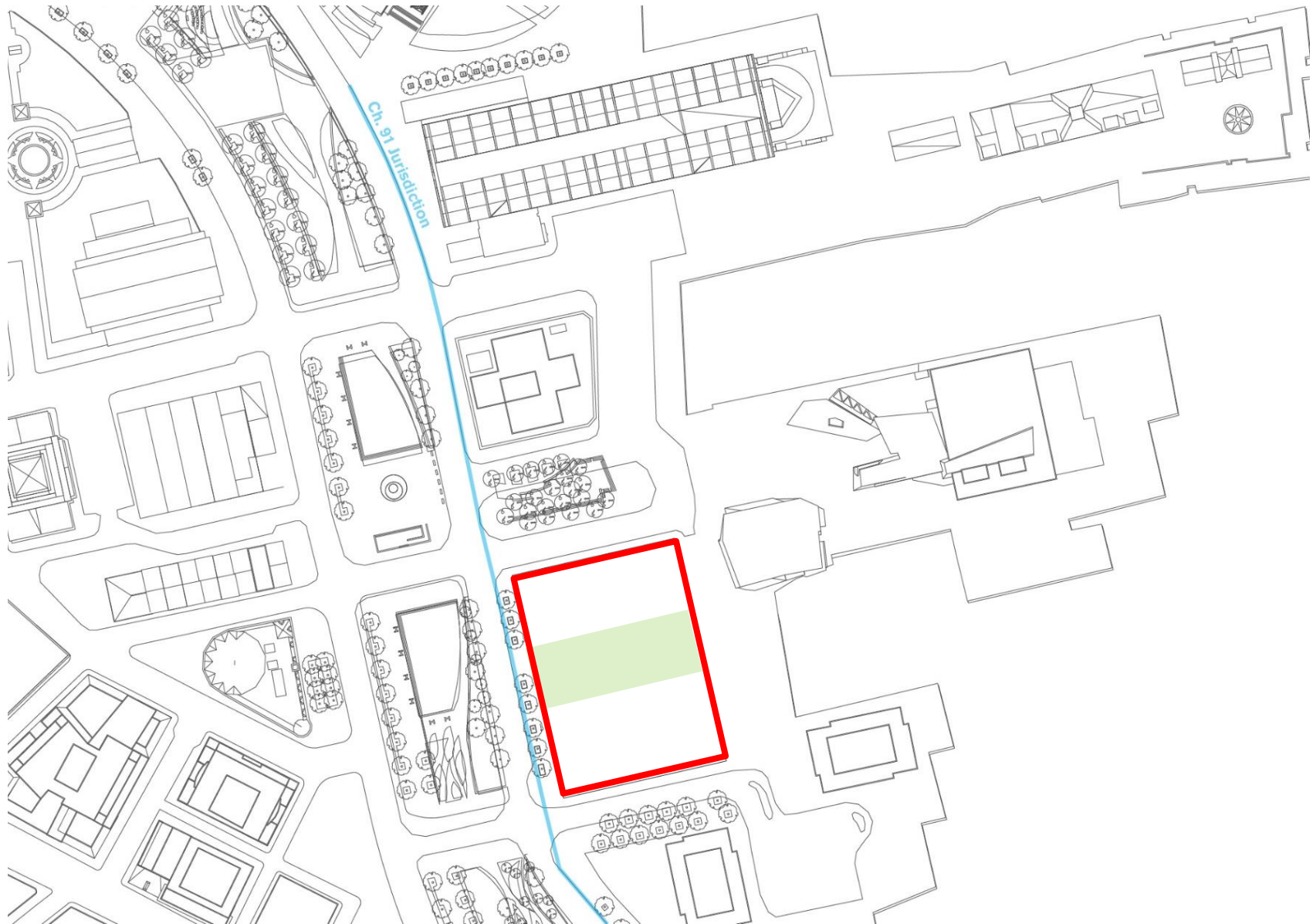
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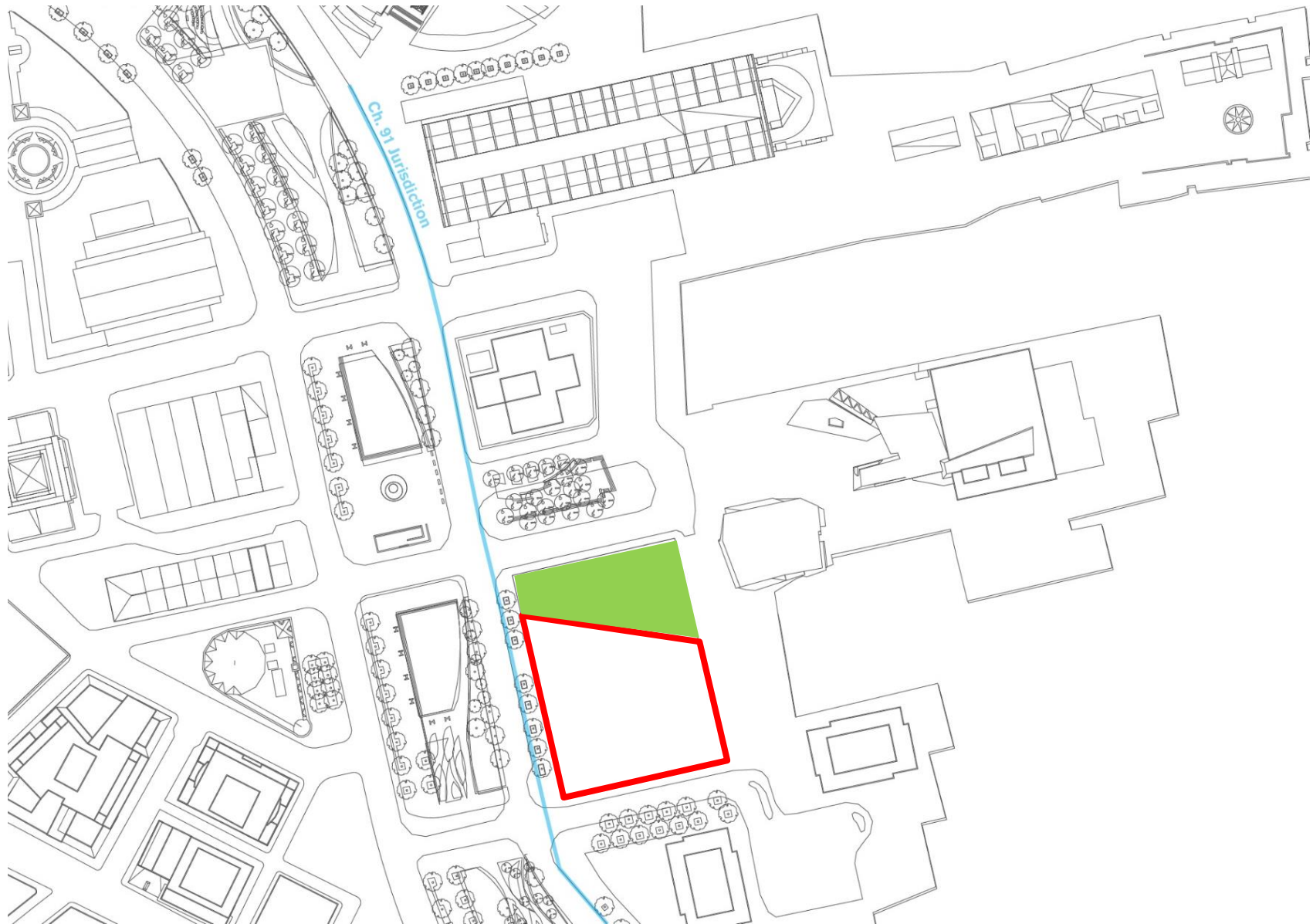


Lot Coverage – Proposed 100% + “winter garden”



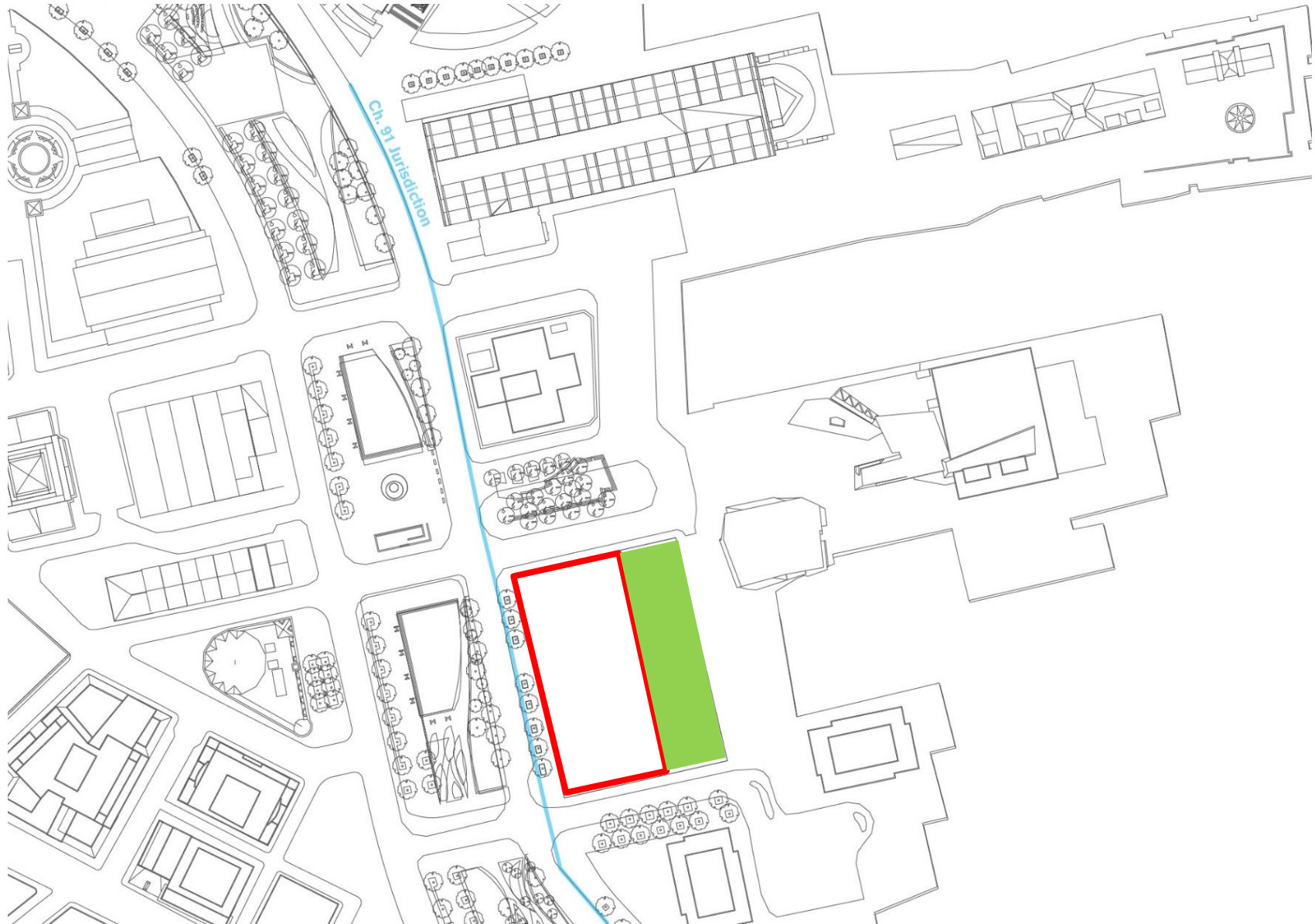
Downtown Waterfront: Harbor Garage Site

Lot Coverage – 70%



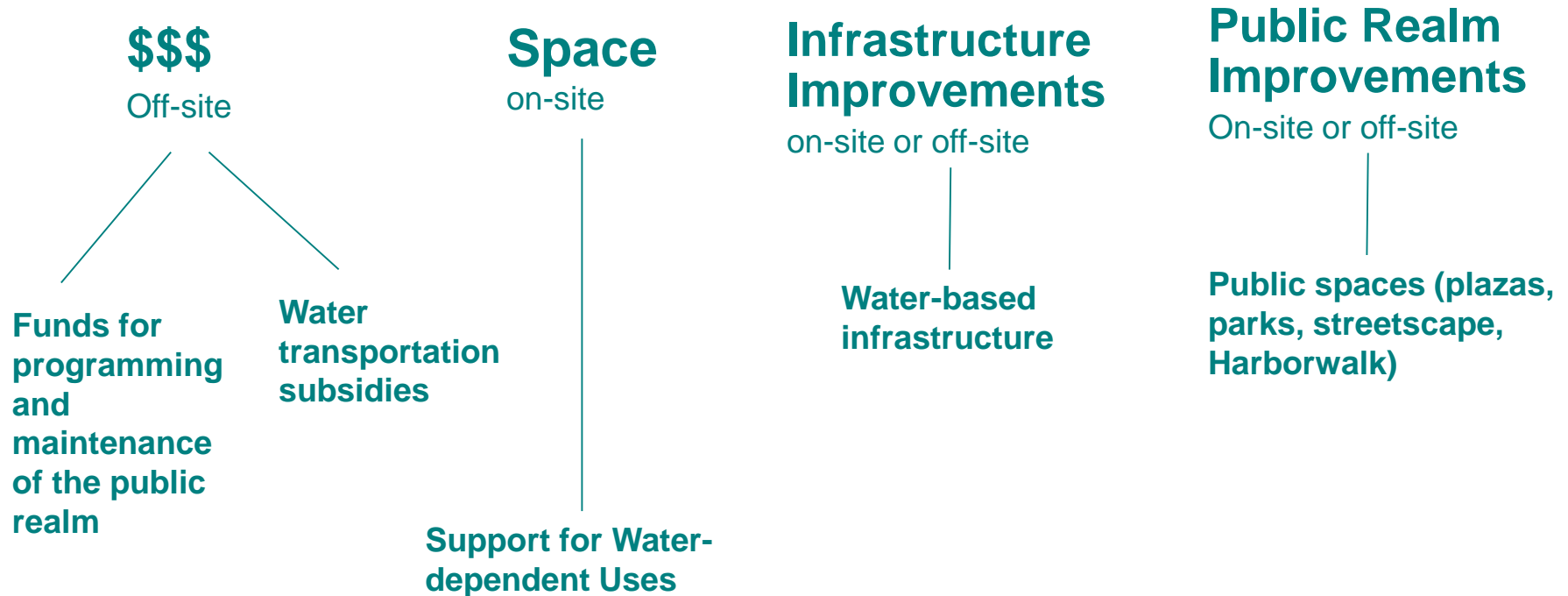
Downtown Waterfront: Harbor Garage Site

Lot Coverage – 70%



Offsets should maximize additional public realm benefits.

“Equal or greater benefit” standard



Prioritizing within the Public Realm Plan

Funds for programming and maintenance of the public realm, outside the Study Area

- i. Rose Kennedy Greenway
- ii. Boston Harbor Islands
- iii. Christopher Columbus Park



Prioritizing within the Public Realm Plan

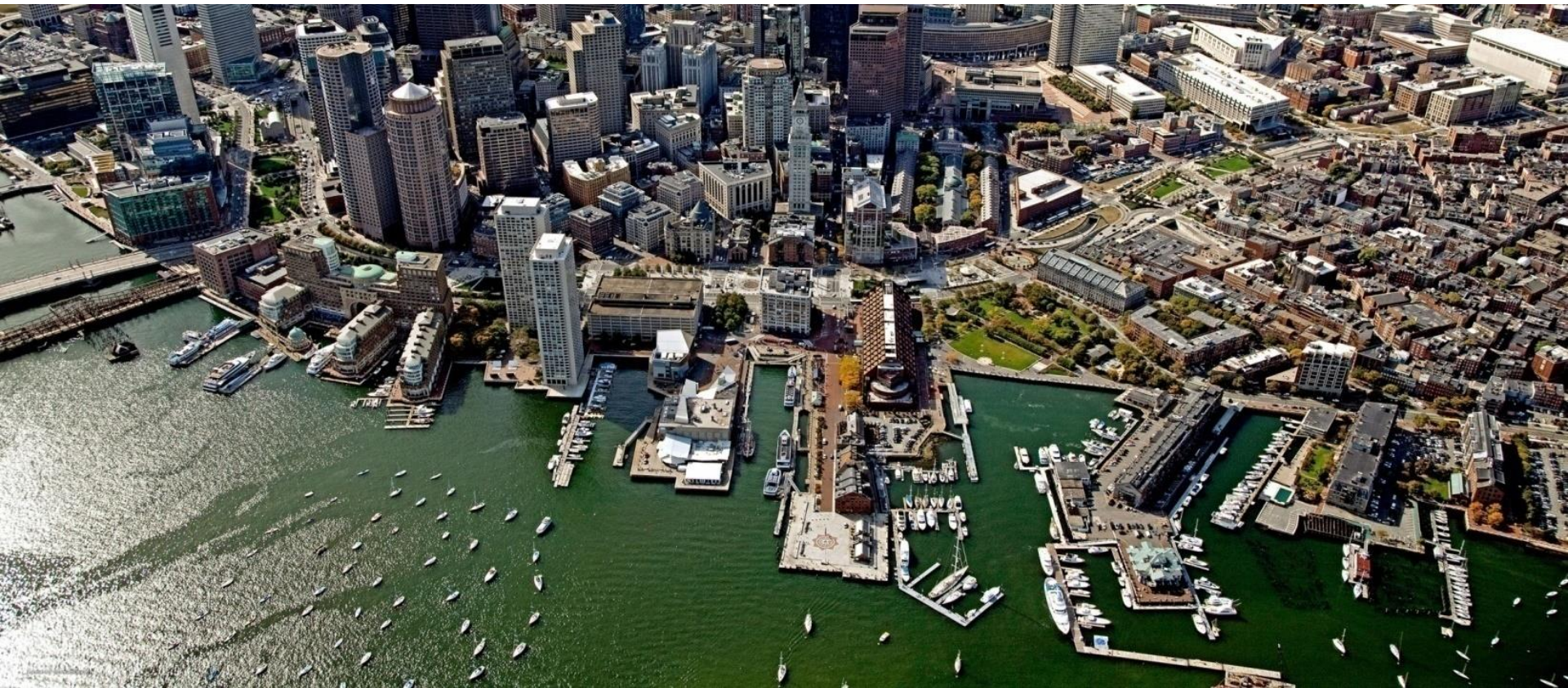
Support for Water-dependent Uses (on site)

- i. Parking
- ii. Office Space
- iii. Storage Space

Prioritizing within the Public Realm Plan

Water-based infrastructure (on site or off site)

- i. Docks
- ii. Seawalls
- iii. Piers



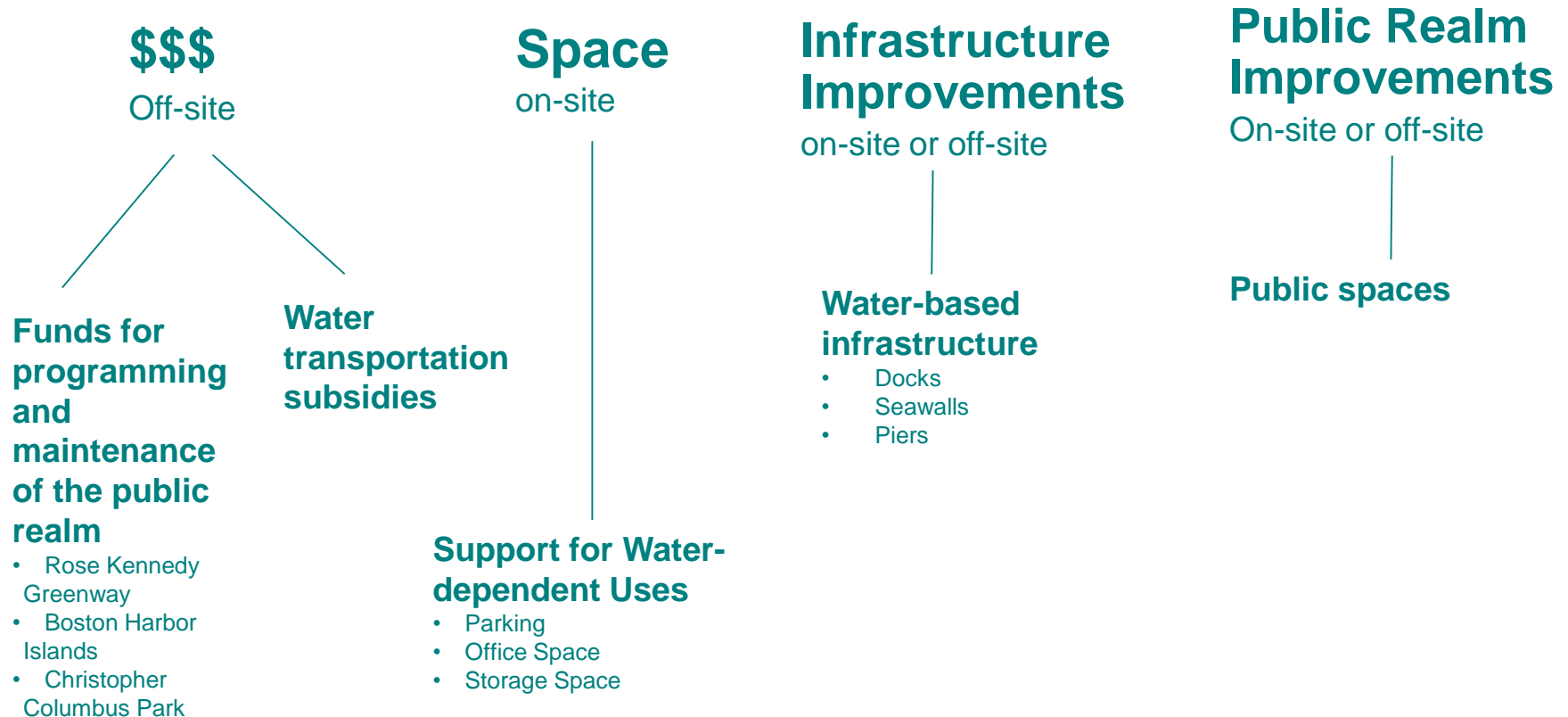
Prioritizing within the Public Realm Plan

Water transportation (off site)

i. Subsidies



Prioritizing within the Public Realm Plan

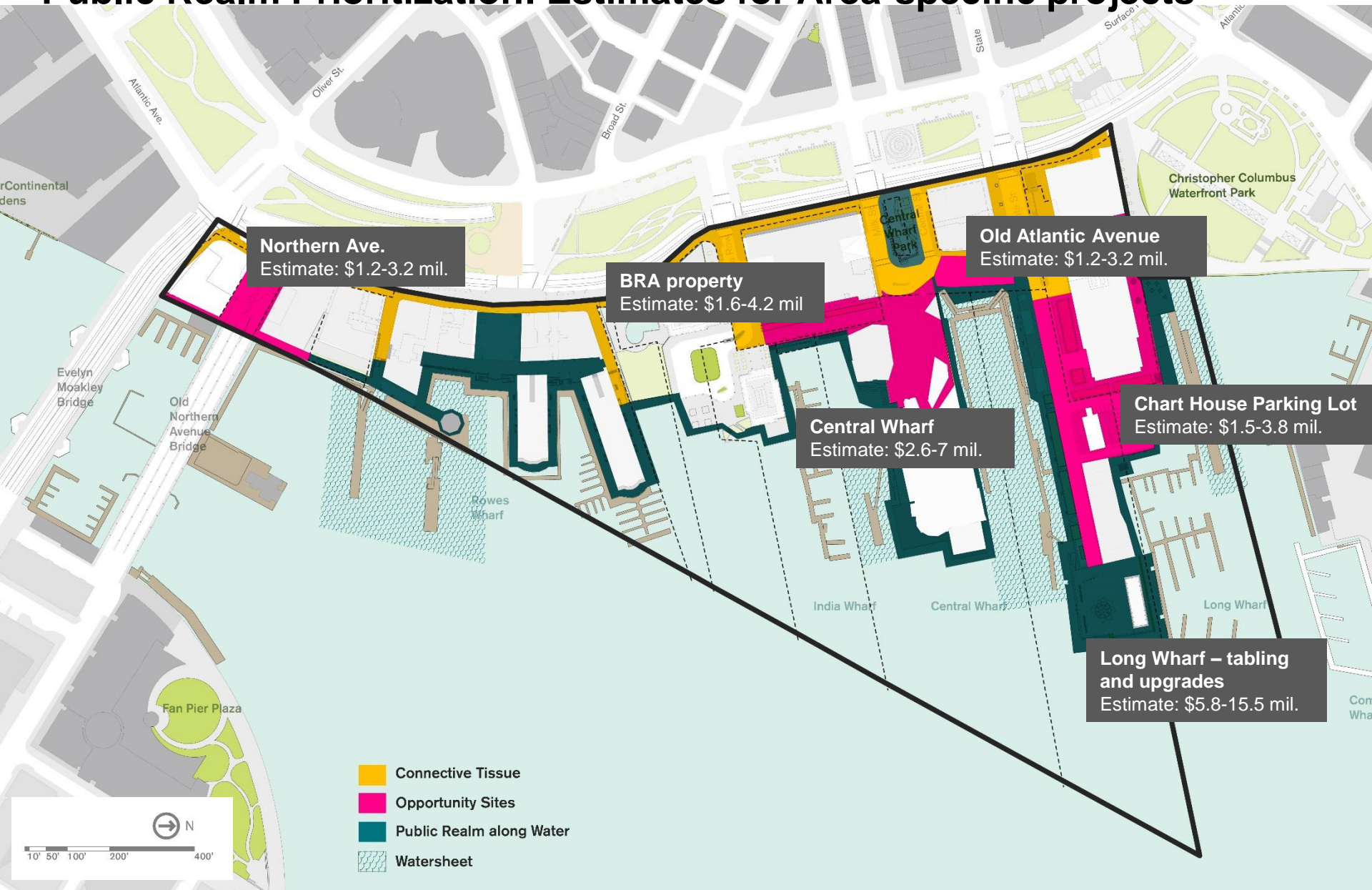


District-wide Urban Design Issues

Public Realm Prioritization



Public Realm Prioritization: Estimates for Area-specific projects



Public Realm Prioritization: Estimates for Area-specific projects

Location	Area (SF)	Low cost estimate (in millions)	High cost estimate (in millions)	Assumptions
Chart House Parking Lot	15,860	\$1.5	\$3.8	Greenscape
Long Wharf – upgrades and tabling	64,460	\$5.8	\$15.5	Hardscape, including integrated lighting
Old Atlantic Ave	13,350	\$1.2	\$3.2	Hardscape
Central Wharf (NEAq)	29,430	\$2.6	\$7.0	Hardscape
BRA property in front of Harbor Garage	17,880	\$1.6	\$4.3	Hardscape
Northern Avenue Terminus	13,320	\$1.2	\$3.2	Hardscape
		\$13.9 million	\$37.0 million	

Note on estimates

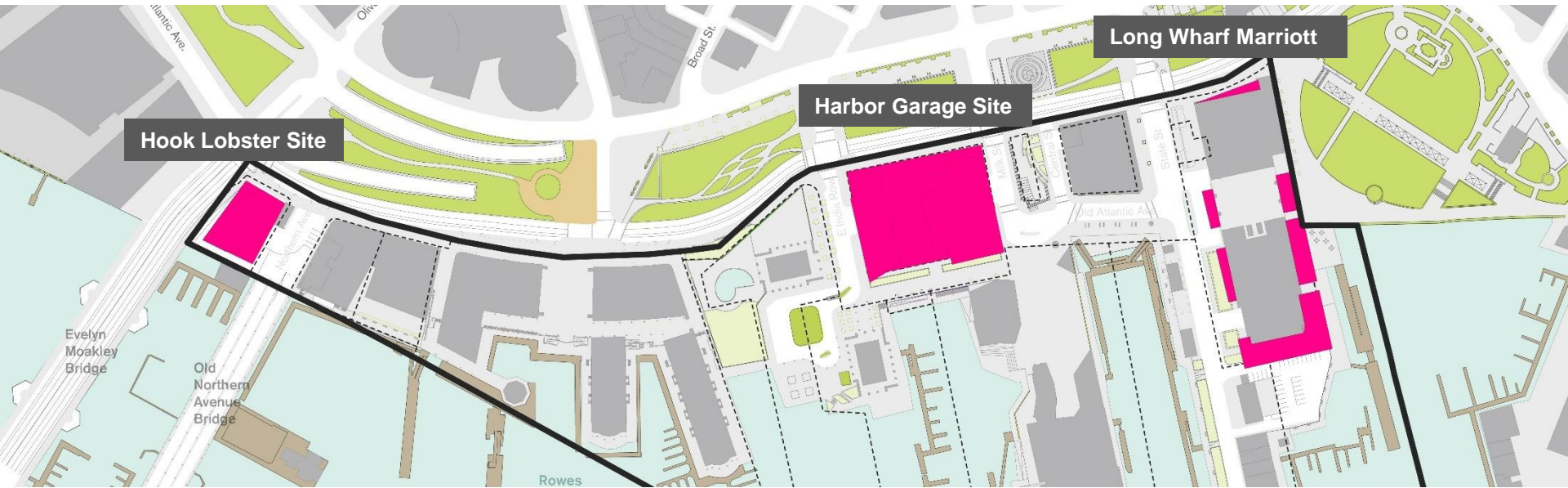
Estimated combine hard costs and soft costs (design, etc.).

- **Hard costs:** based on per square foot calculations (low estimate = \$75/sq ft; high estimate= \$200 / sq ft)
- **Soft costs:** estimated at 20% of hard costs

Public Realm Offsets of Particular Projects



Project-specific offsets recommendations



Hook redevelopment

- Harborwalk connection

Harbor Garage redevelopment

- Chart House Parking Lot
- Old Atlantic Avenue
- Central Wharf Plaza
- BRA Property Harborwalk
- Parking for Water-dependent uses (NEAQ, Harbor Islands)

These four areas could transform the Downtown Waterfront and may also allow opportunities for resilience to flooding

Long Wharf Marriott Expansion

- Islands ticketing and waiting area
- Funds for maintenance

Public Realm Prioritization: Area-specific projects that could be funded through the Harbor Garage Redevelopment

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\$6.9 million

\$18.3 million

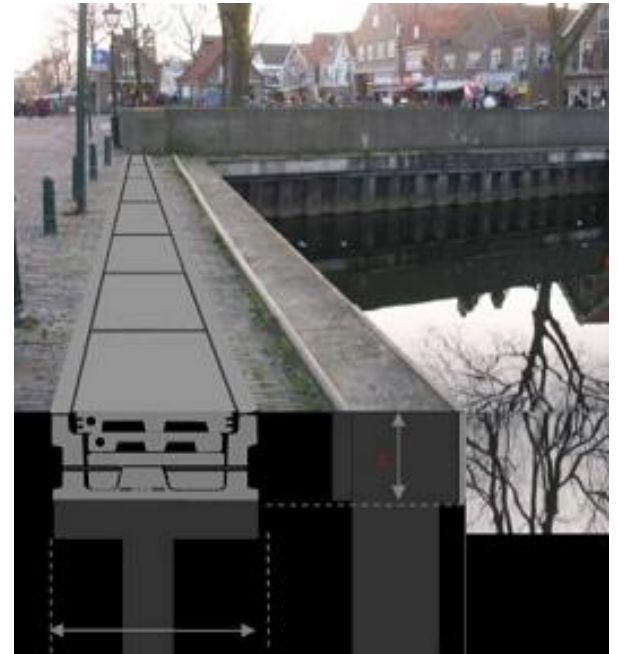
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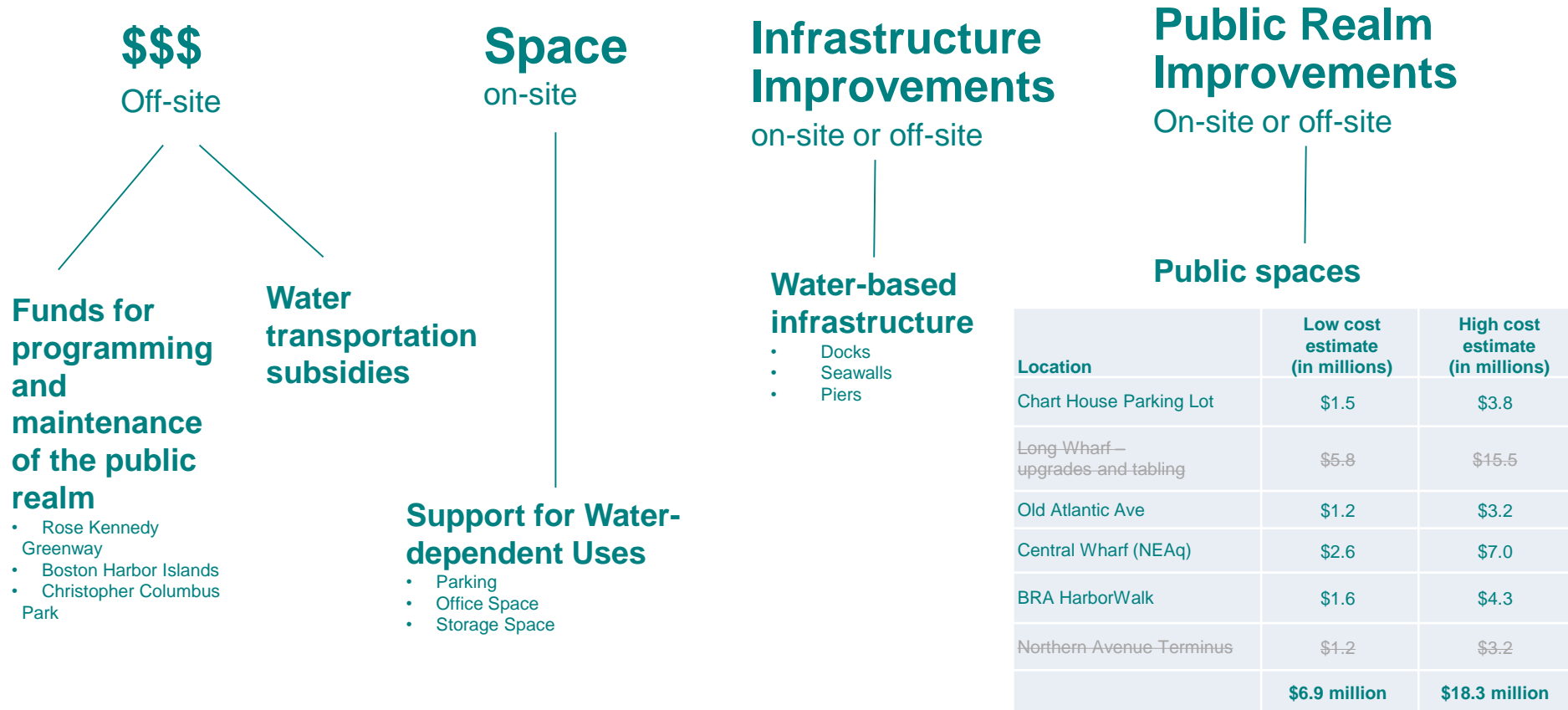
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Examples of water barriers to protect public realm

A mix of these offsets can be directed to maximize the positive benefit on the public realm.



Guiding Questions

When considered in combination with the benefits associated with “baseline” project development as well as amplifications, are the proposed offsets sufficiently transformative for the district? Do they support the broader vision of the Watersheet Activation Plan?

What is the desired balance between hard, off-site offsets (such as constructing a publicly accessible open space in the Chart House Parking Lot) and longer term support for ongoing programs (such as water transportation) which might be collected annually through licensing fees?

Downtown Waterfront

Next Meeting

Wednesday, May 25, 3-5 pm

