



PLAN: Downtown

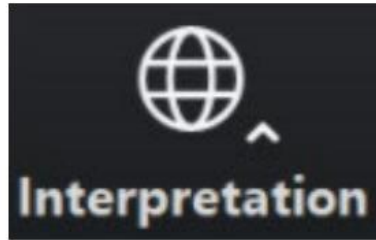
Development Scenario Update

January 17, 2023

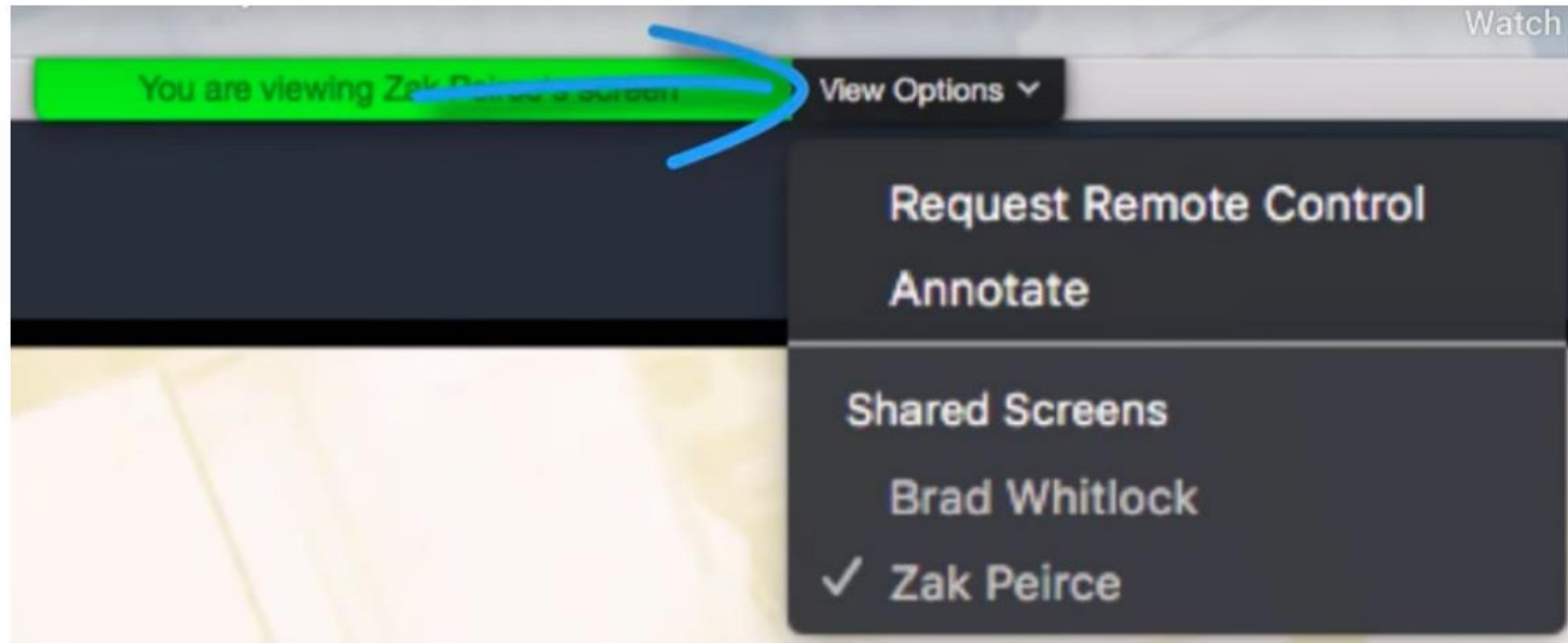


**boston planning &
development agency**

How to choose a language interpretation channel



"Mandarin"
"Cantonese"
"English"



Meeting Recording

At the request of community members, this event will be recorded and posted on the PLAN: Downtown project webpage at <http://bostonplans.org/PlanDowntown> for those who are unable to attend the zoom event live.

It is possible that participants may be recording the meeting with their phone cameras or other devices. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.

If your camera and microphone are off, you can still participate through the text chat feature at the end of the presentation.



Zoom Tips

Welcome! Here are some tips for first-time Zoom users.
Your controls are at the bottom of the screen:



Use the *chat* to type a comment or ask a question at any time –
Members of the PLAN: Downtown team will enable the chat at the end.

To *raise your hand*, click on “Participants” at the bottom of your screen, and then choose the “Raise Hand” option in the participant box, or press *9 on your phone

Mute/unmute – Participants will be muted during the presentation – the host will unmute you during discussion if you raise your hand and it is your turn to talk. To mute/unmute on your phone press *6.

Turns your *video on/off*



Zoom Etiquette

- We want to ensure that this conversation is a pleasant experience for all attendees.
- Please remain muted until called on. If you'd like to speak during this time please use the "Raise Hand" function in Zoom so a BPDA moderator can unmute attendees.
- Please be respectful of each other's time.
- We ask that participants limit their questions so that others may participate in the discussion. If you have more questions, please wait until all others attending have an opportunity to ask questions.
- If we are unable to get to your question at this meeting please put them in the Chat at the end or email plandowntown@boston.gov



Agenda

PLAN: Downtown Overview

6:10–6:20 pm

Proposed Development Process

6:20-6:50 pm

Urban Design Guidelines

6:50-7:00 pm

Next Steps

7:00-7:05 pm

Discussion

7:05-7:30 pm



PLAN: Downtown

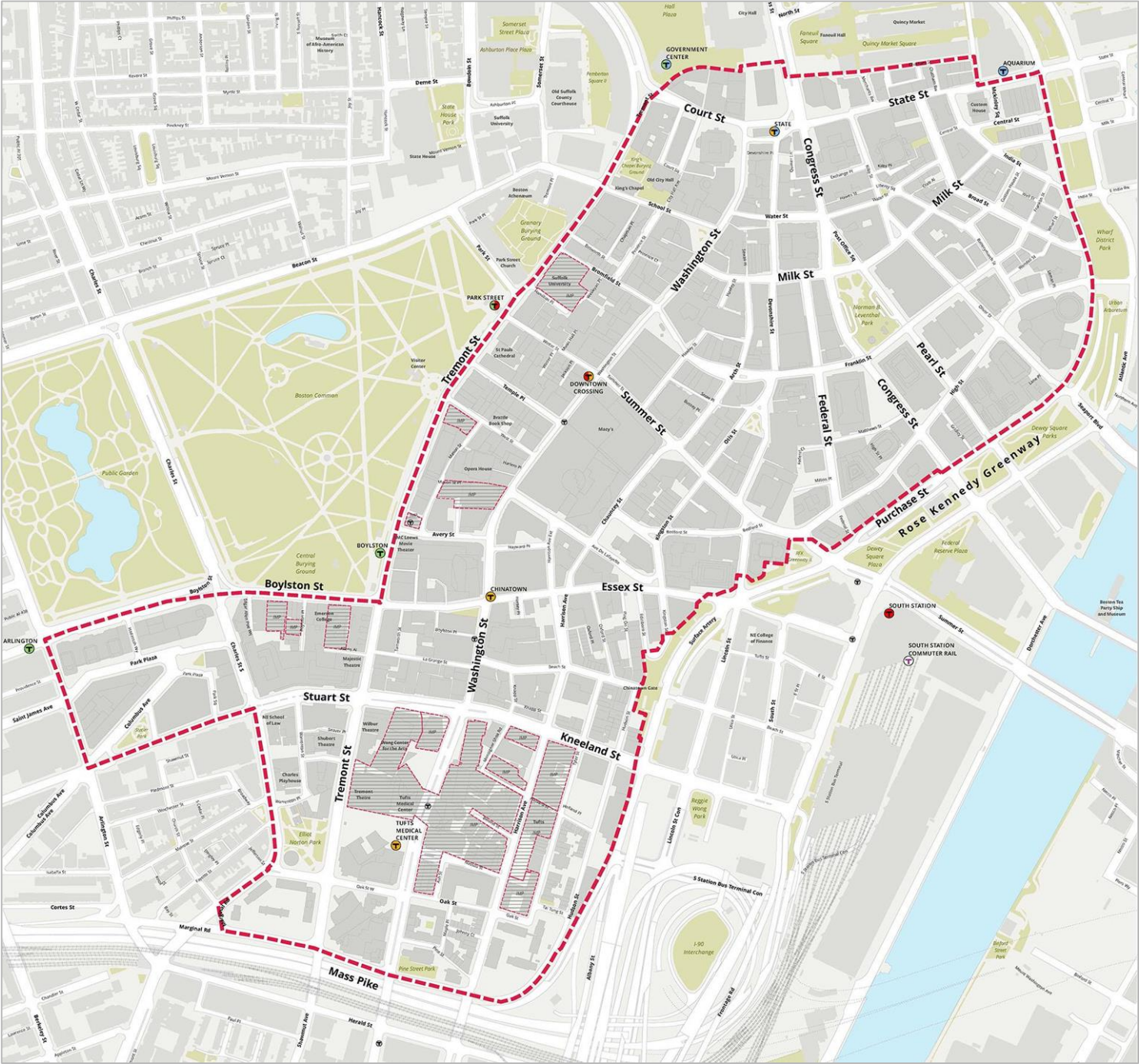
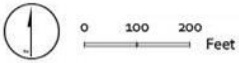
Study Area



Study Area Boundary



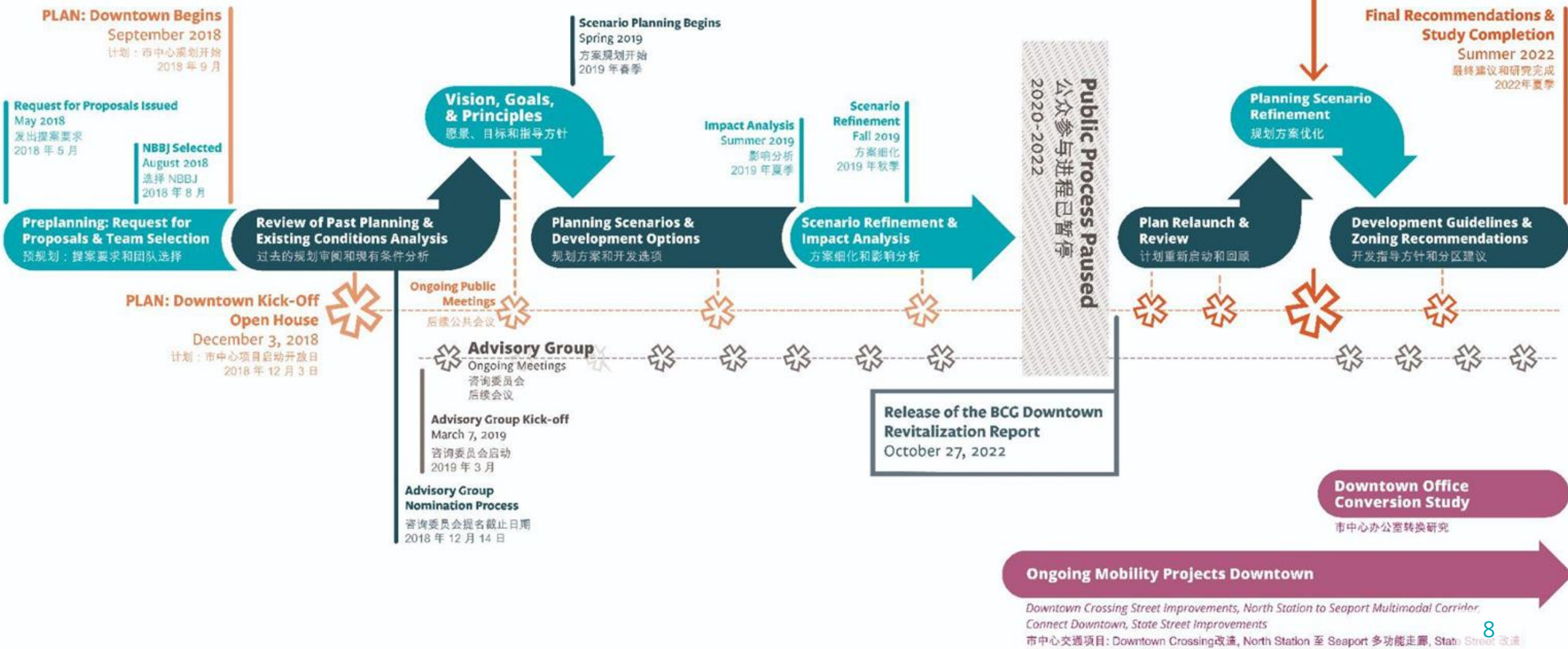
Institutional Master Plan
(IMP) *Not included in this study*



DRAFT—For Discussion Purposes

Timeline

Where we are now
我们现在进度如何



Vision Statement

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

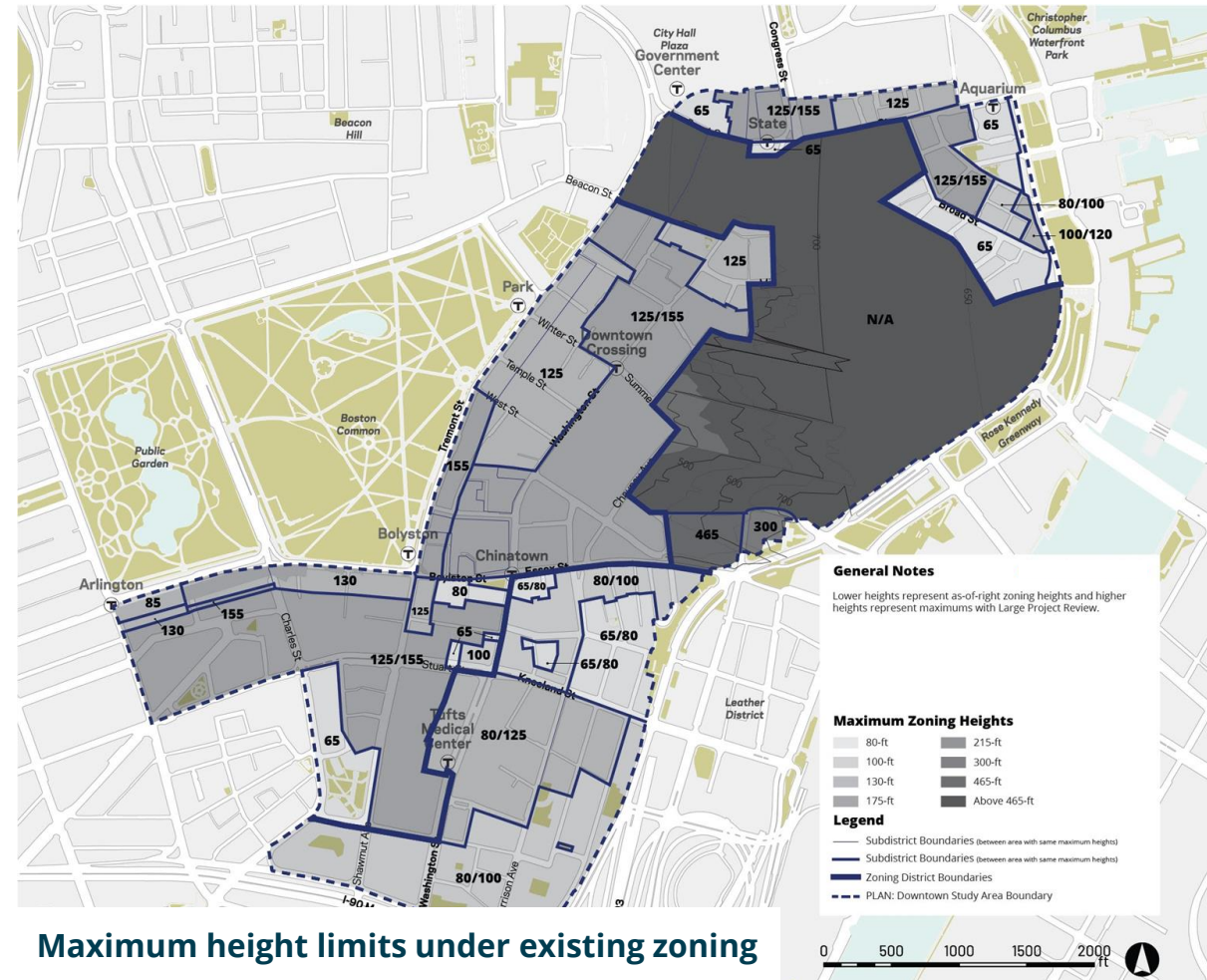


Development Framework

What are the challenges with the current development process?

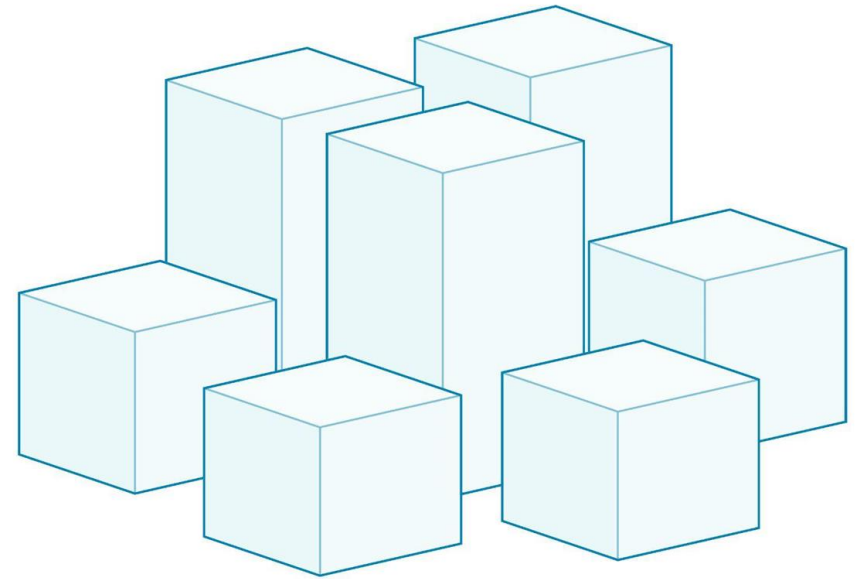
- Under current zoning development is primarily regulated by height under various zoning districts and PDAs.
- Development rarely conforms to “as-of-right” zoning and large projects and their public benefits are often negotiated on a case-by-case basis*.

**Development cannot exceed FAA height limits and State laws that prohibit new shadows on the Common and Public Garden*



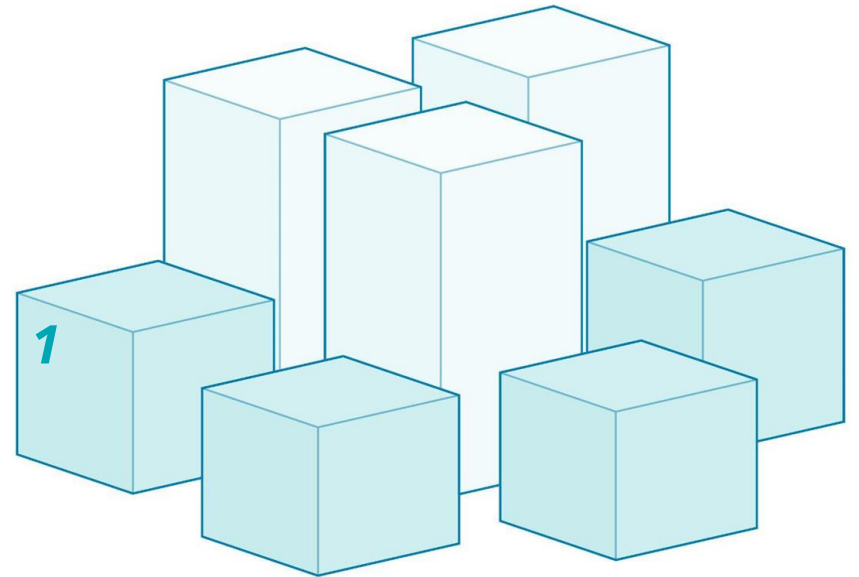
What is the goal of the proposed development process?

1. Preserve significant character areas in Downtown and Chinatown
2. Guide needed growth to the most appropriate locations for added density in a predictable development framework
3. Create a public benefit system that will address long-standing needs in Chinatown and Downtown that no one project can solve



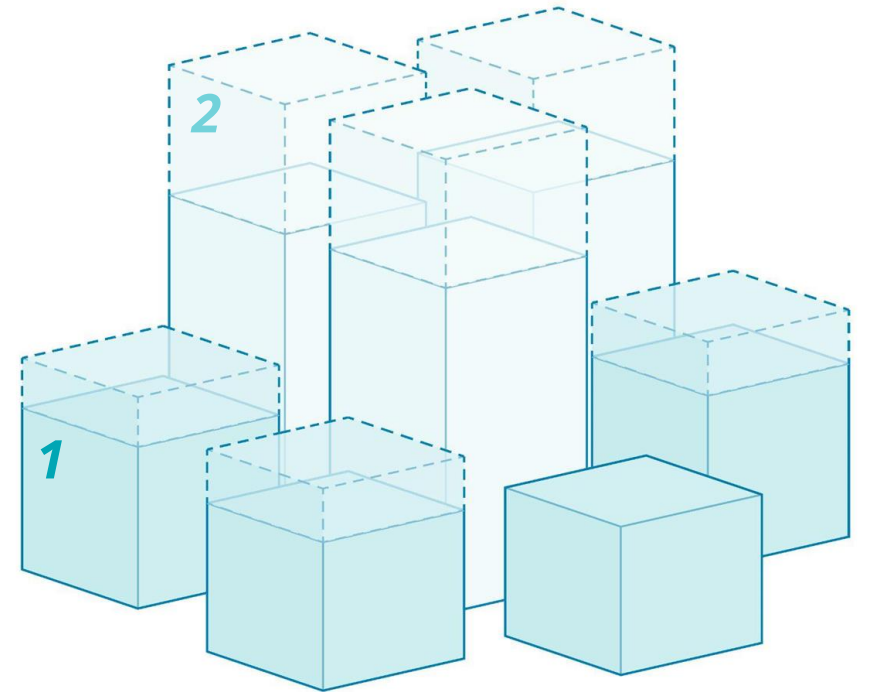
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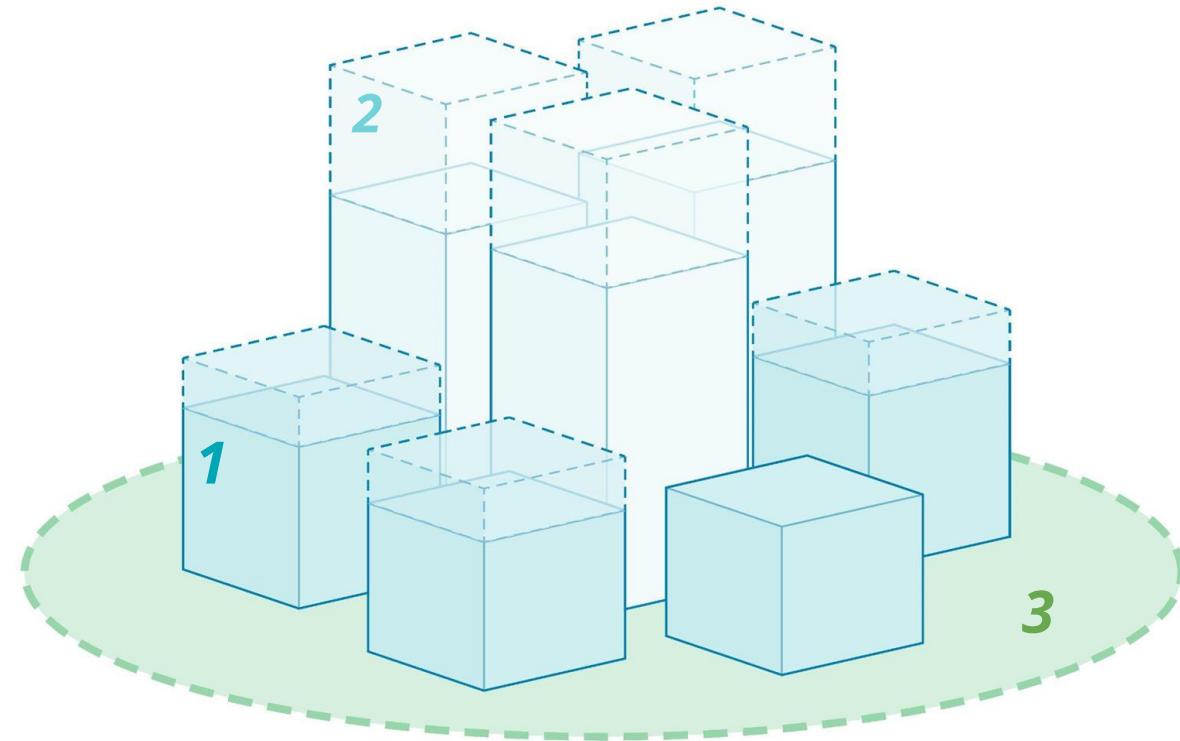
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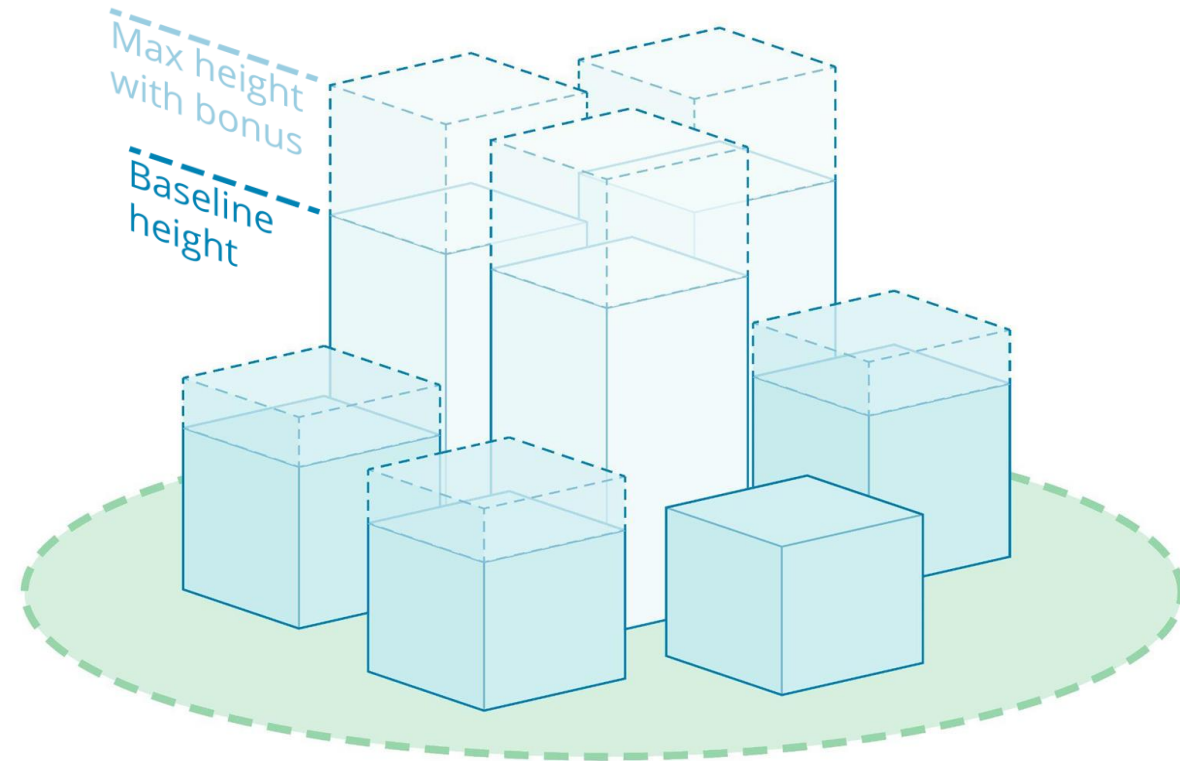
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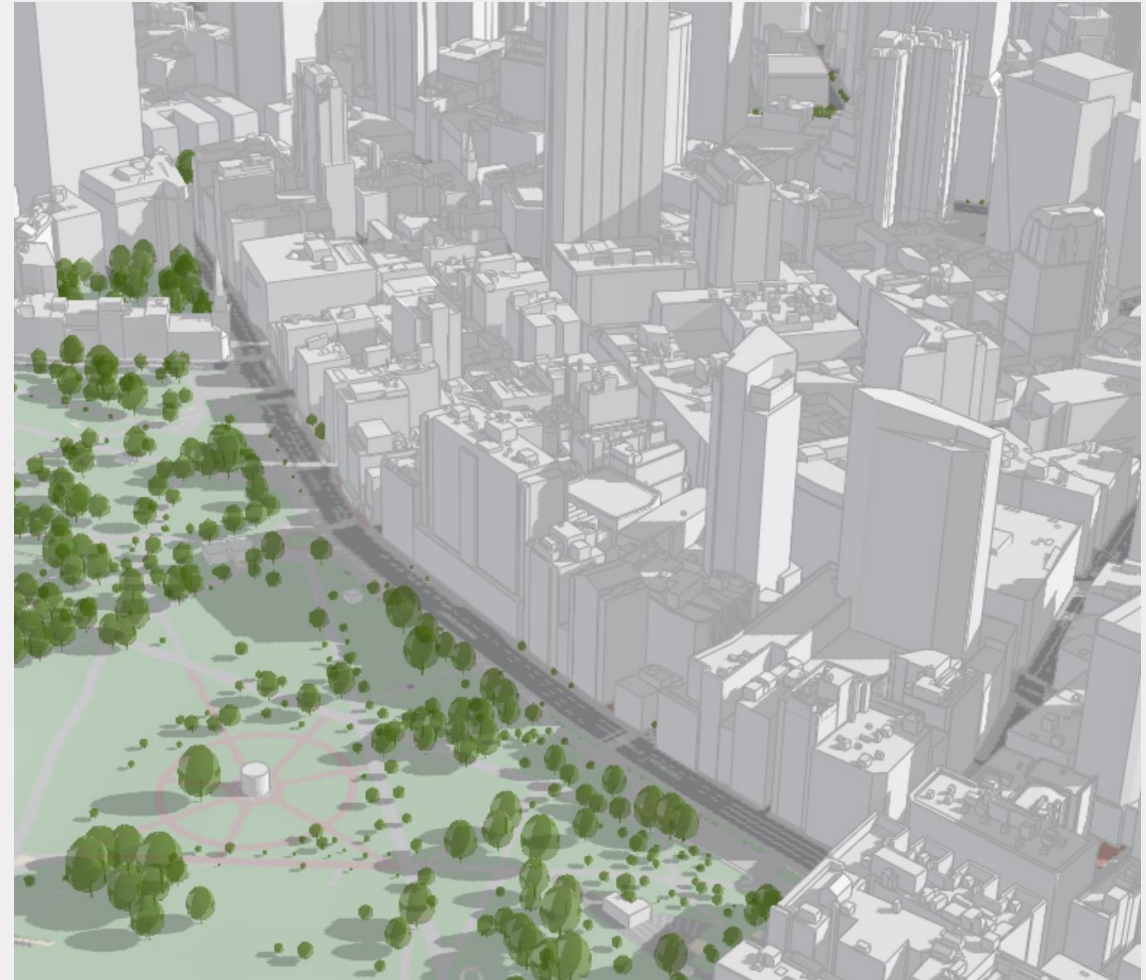
How does the proposed development process work?

1. Creates a **new baseline height** that matches the character area.
2. Developers can add **density up to an established maximum building height**, defined by character area and shadow regulations.
3. In exchange for the additional density, developers will contribute to an established **public benefit fund**.
4. The public benefit fund will directly support priority **public projects that benefit Downtown and Chinatown**.

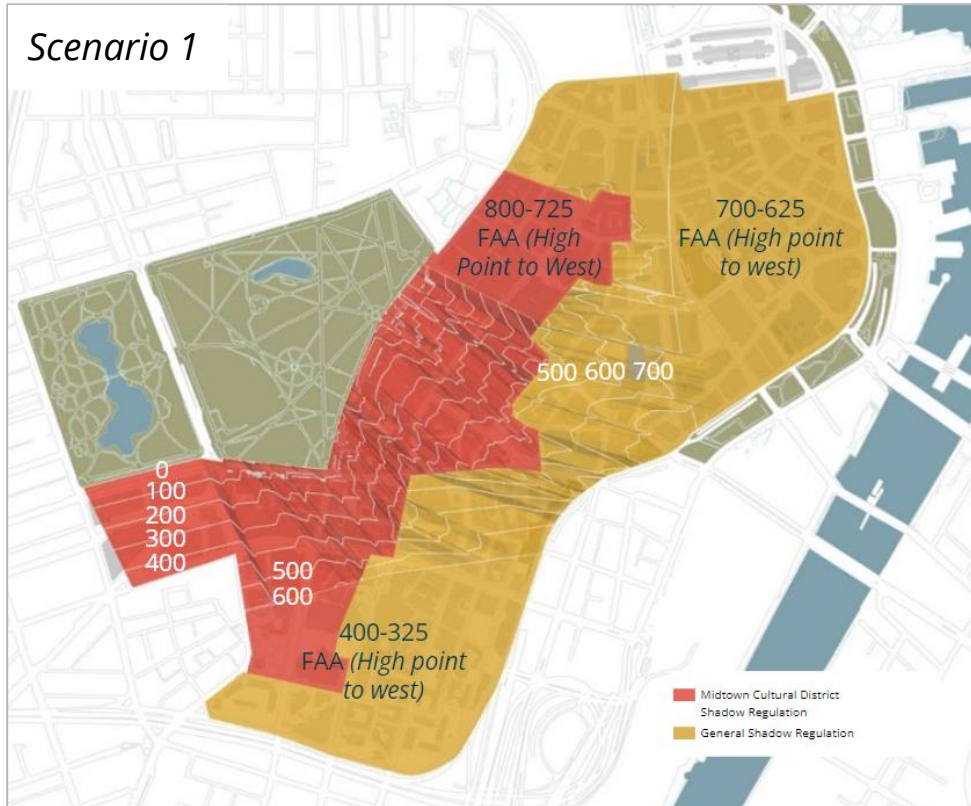


Note on State Shadow Laws:

- State laws prohibit new shadows on the Common and the Public Garden
- Projects must be tested on a site-by-site basis using **shadow studies** to ensure the height and massing of the proposed project do not cast new shadows during the hours specified by state law.

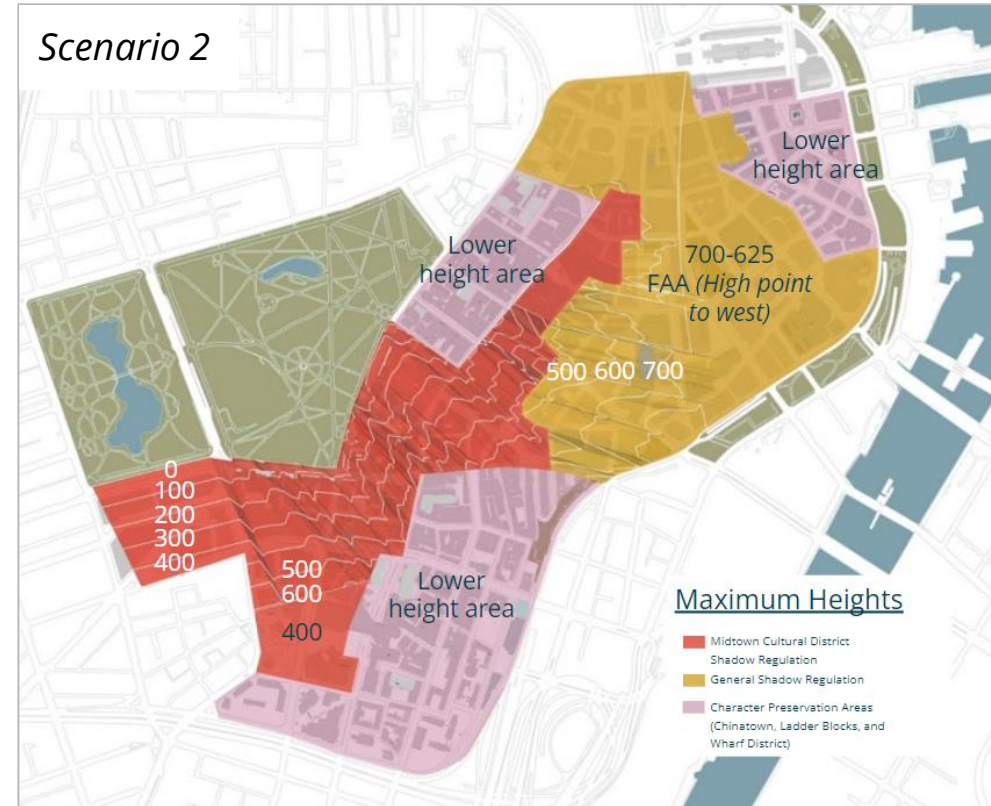


What was proposed in 2020...



Baseline heights:
General Area: 155'

Maximum heights:
Shadow Regulations / FAA limit



Baseline heights:
General Area: 155'
Character Preservation Areas: 100'/125'

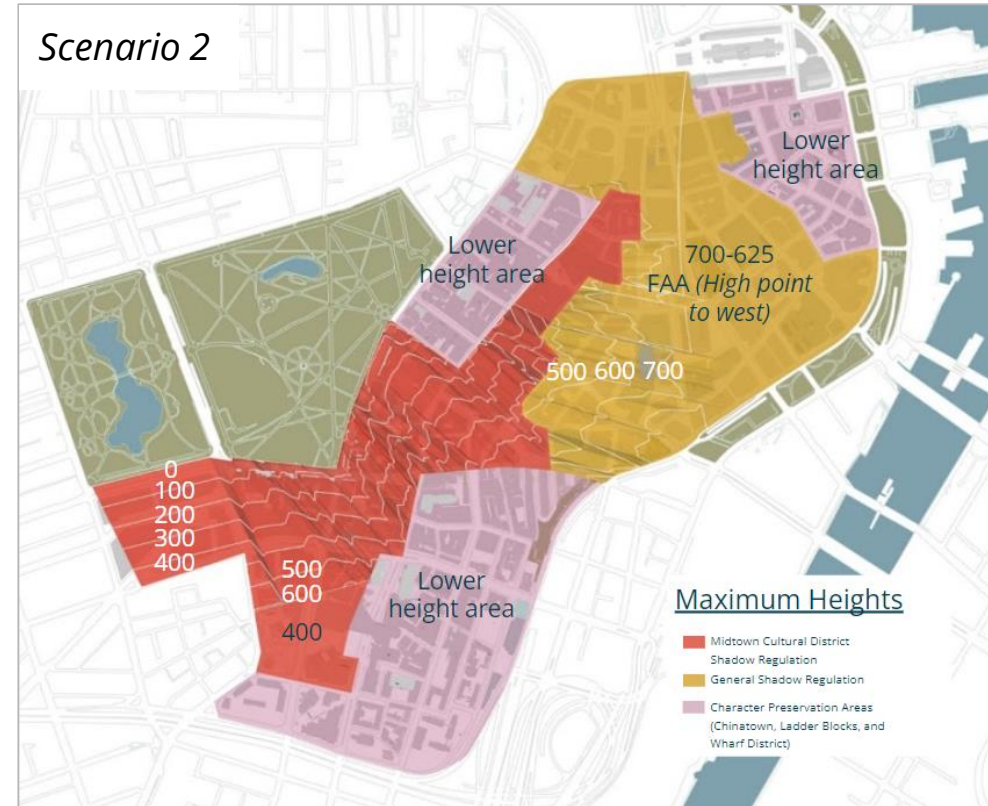
Maximum heights:
Shadow Regulations / FAA limit
Lower heights in the Character Preservation Areas



What we heard...

Overall preference for the character preservation area approach of Scenario 2, with an interest in:

- *Expanding the Ladder Blocks boundary to create a better transition in scale*
- *Fine tune the Chinatown preservation area and create more specificity around the existing fabric such as the row houses*
- *Add a preservation area next to Bay Village*



Baseline heights:

General Area:

155'

Character Preservation Areas:

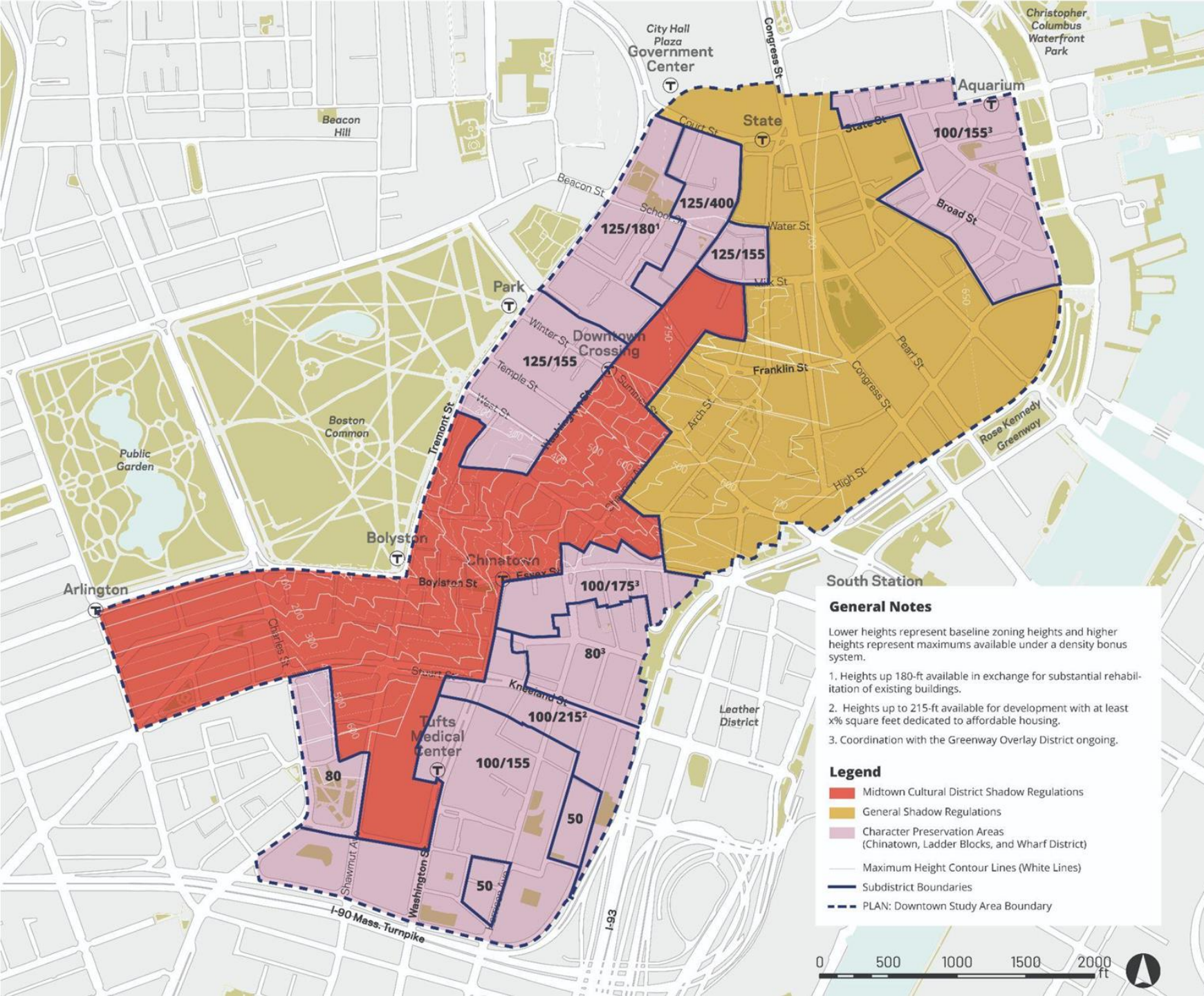
100'/125'

Maximum heights:

Shadow Regulations / FAA limit

Lower heights in the Character Preservation Areas





Revised Scenario

Preservation & Growth-Balanced Density Bonus System

Baseline zoning heights and maximum heights are based on Character Areas. A developer can add density up to a maximum building height by contributing to a public benefit fund.

Updates

- Ladder Blocks boundary expanded north and south & subdistrict broken into three subdistricts.
- Chinatown boundary expanded north & subdistrict broken into seven subdistricts.
- Character preservation area added against Bay Village

Unchanged from Scenario 2

- Height regulation of the Financial District, Theater District, and Downtown Crossing (excluding the Ladder Blocks)
- Height regulation of the Wharf District Character Preservation Area

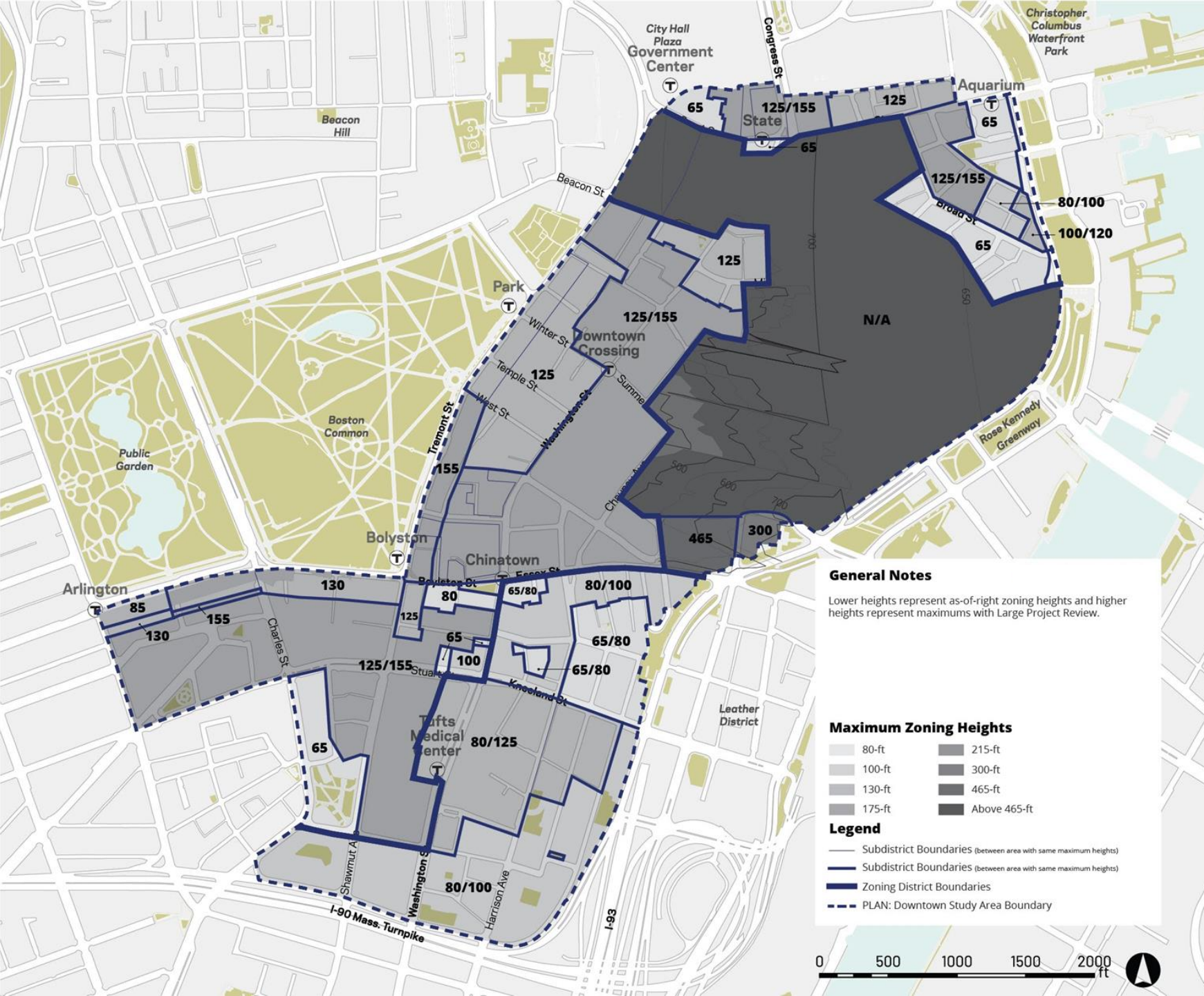


Existing Zoning

Maximum Zoning Heights

Lower heights represent as-of-right zoning heights and higher heights represent maximum heights for owners who elect into Large Project Review.

Boston Proper does not have a maximum height under current zoning.



Revised Scenario

Preservation & Growth-Balanced Density Bonus System

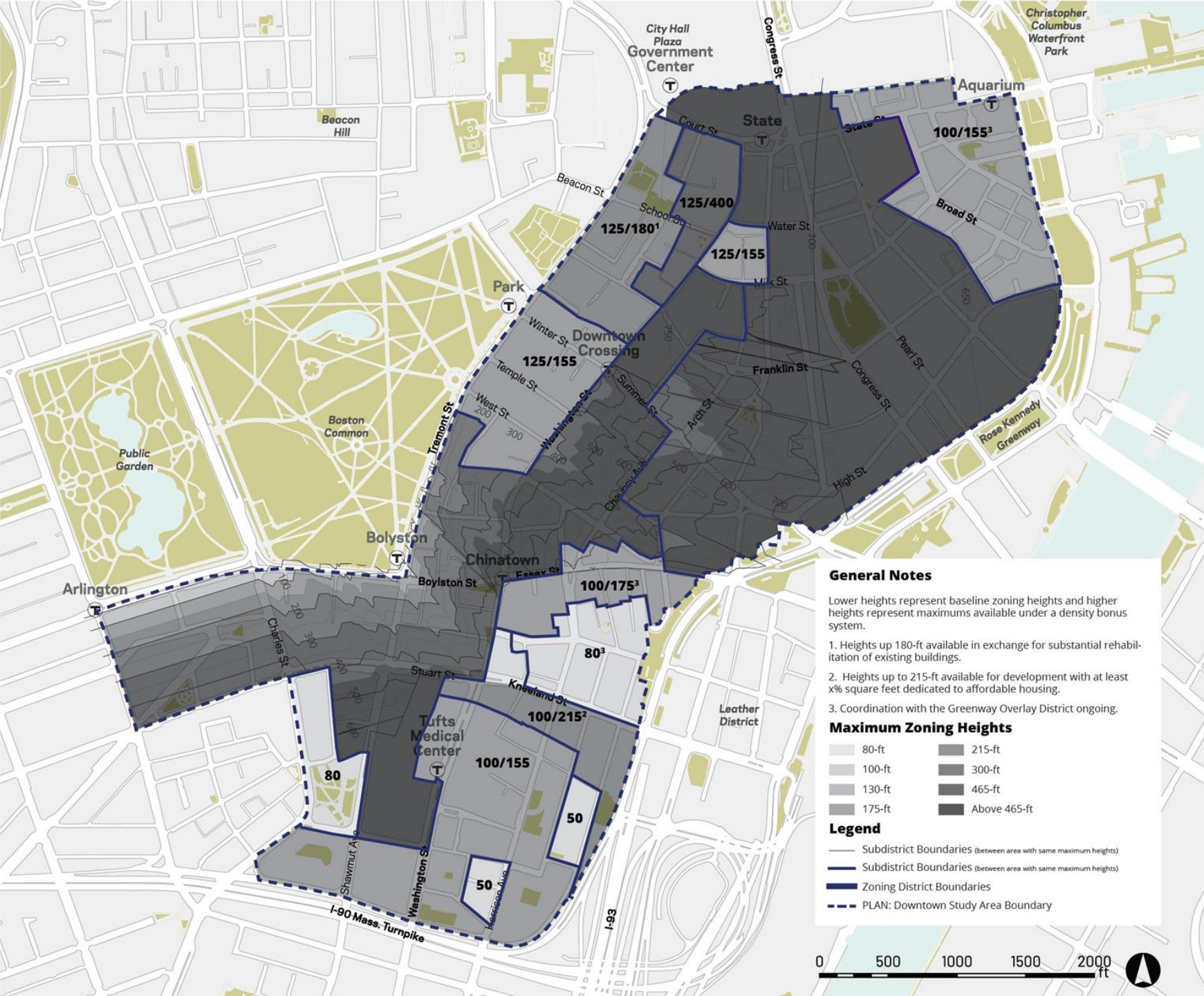
Baseline zoning starting points and maximum heights are based on Character Area baseline and Developer can contribute to a public-benefit fund to add capacity through density bonus system.

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- Chinatown boundary expanded north & subdistrict broken into seven subdistricts.
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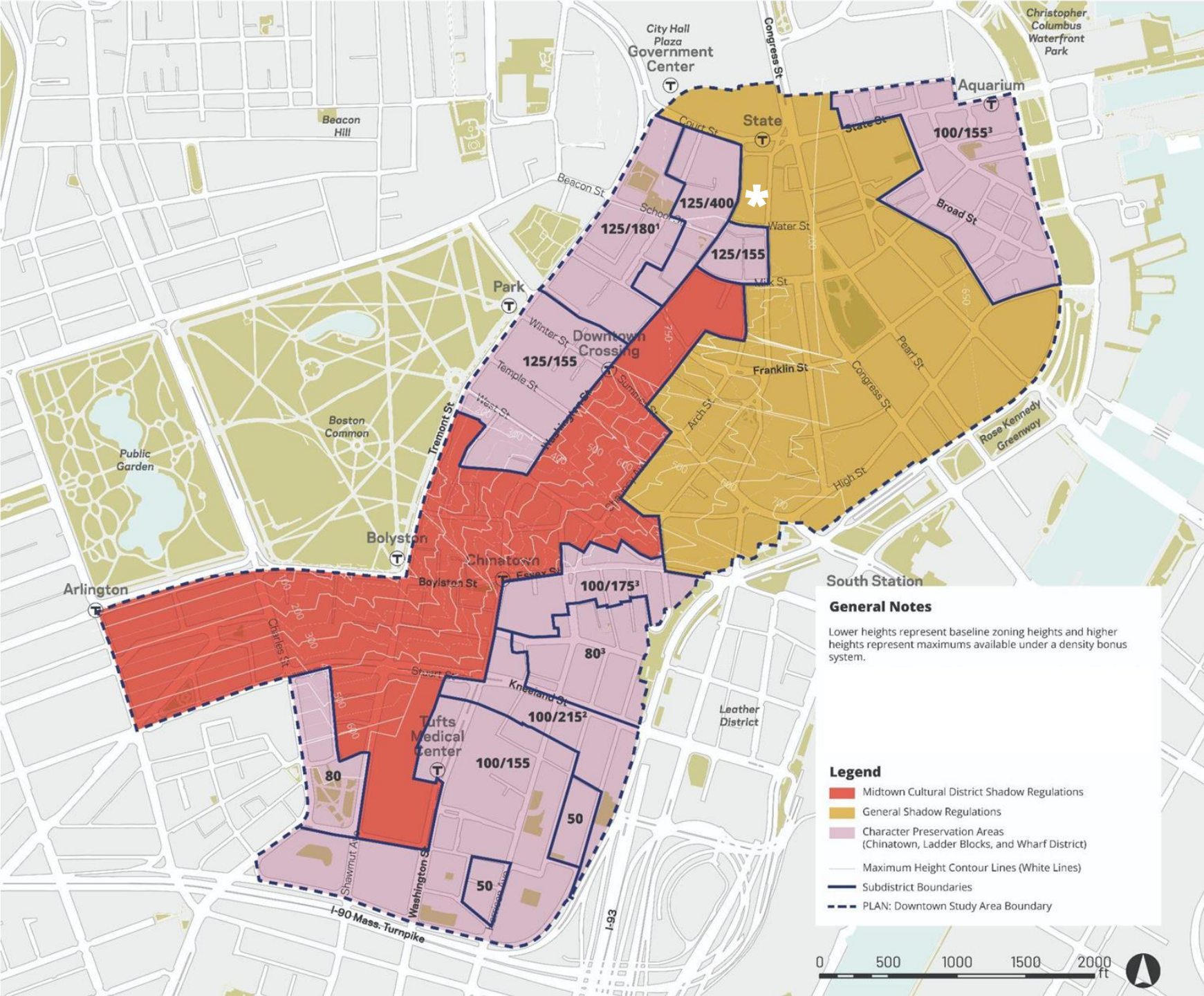
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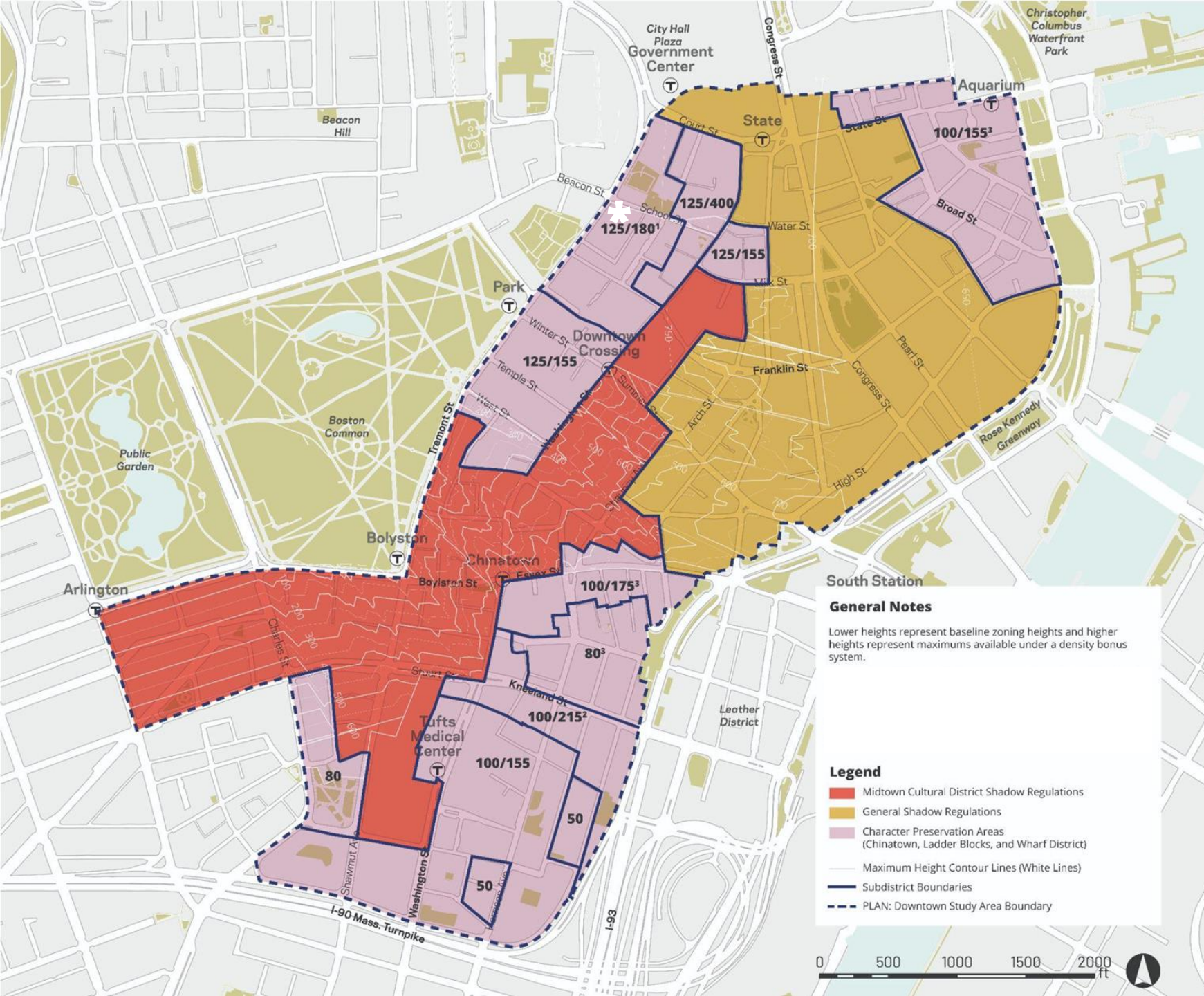
Revised Scenario

One Devonshire Place
400-ft



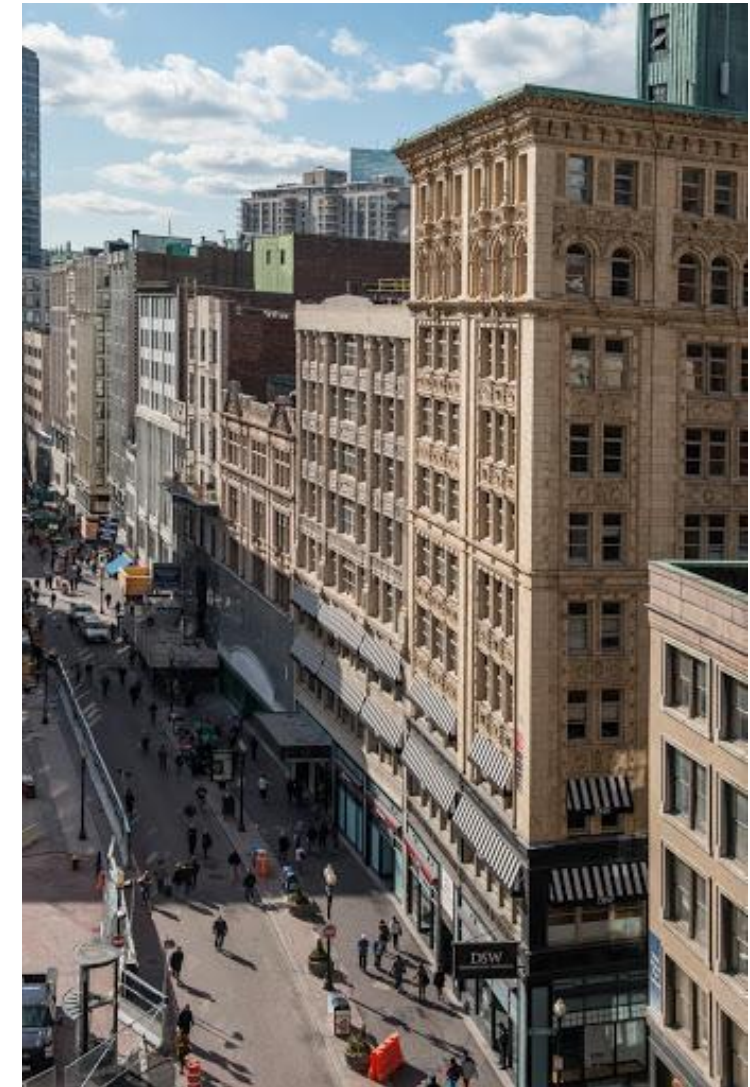
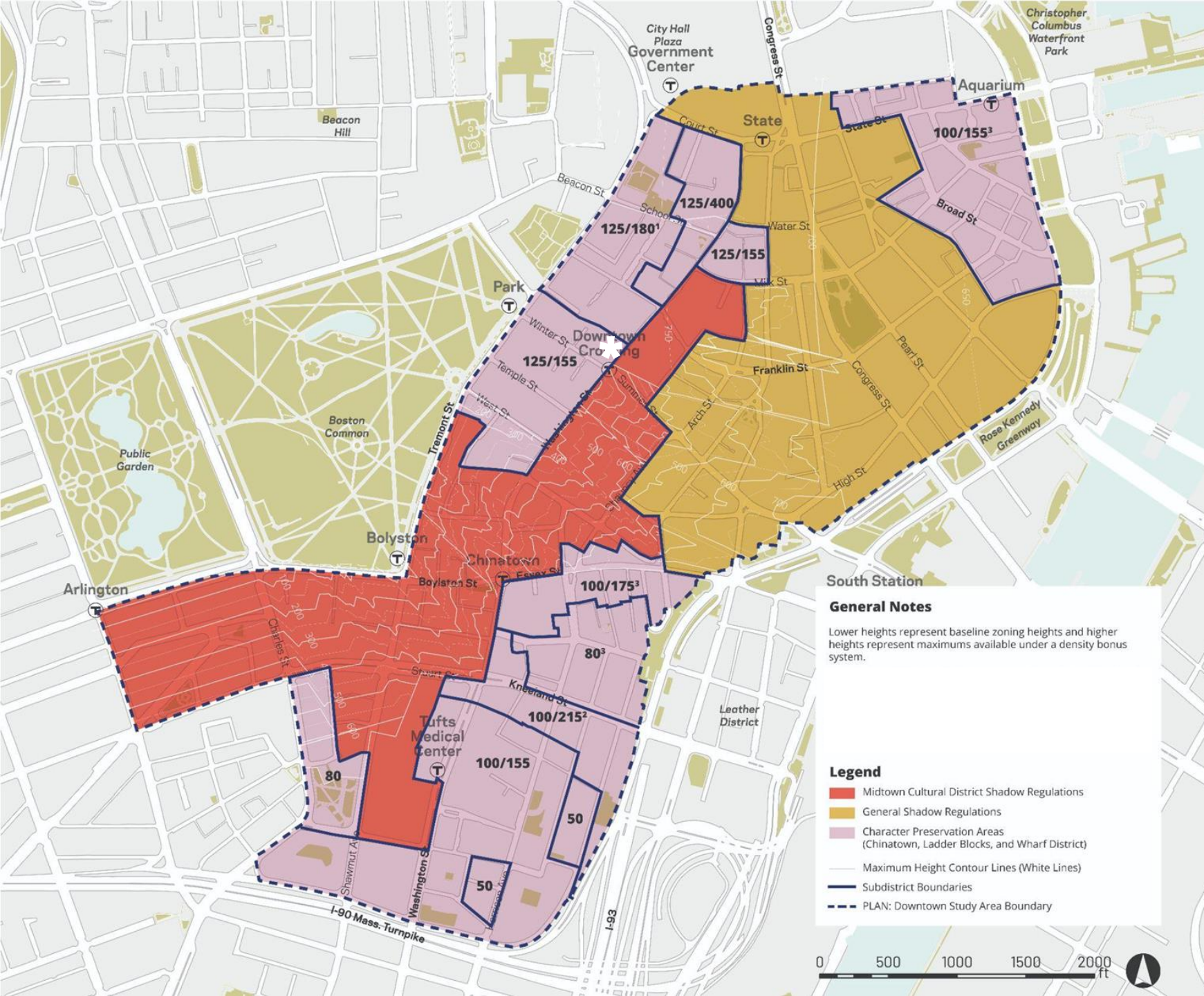
Revised Scenario

Omni Parker House
170-ft



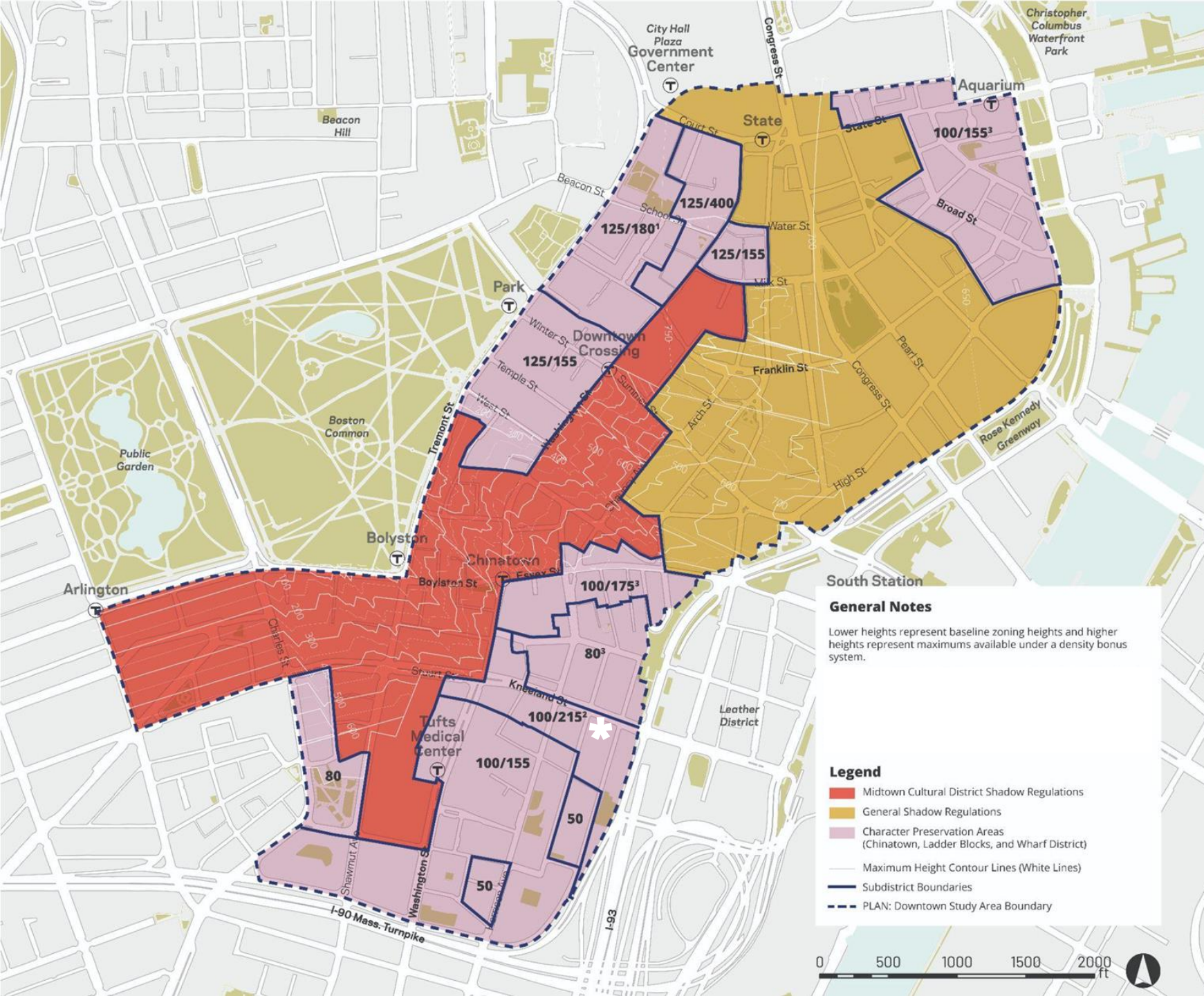
Revised Scenario

4-10 Bromfield Street
127-ft



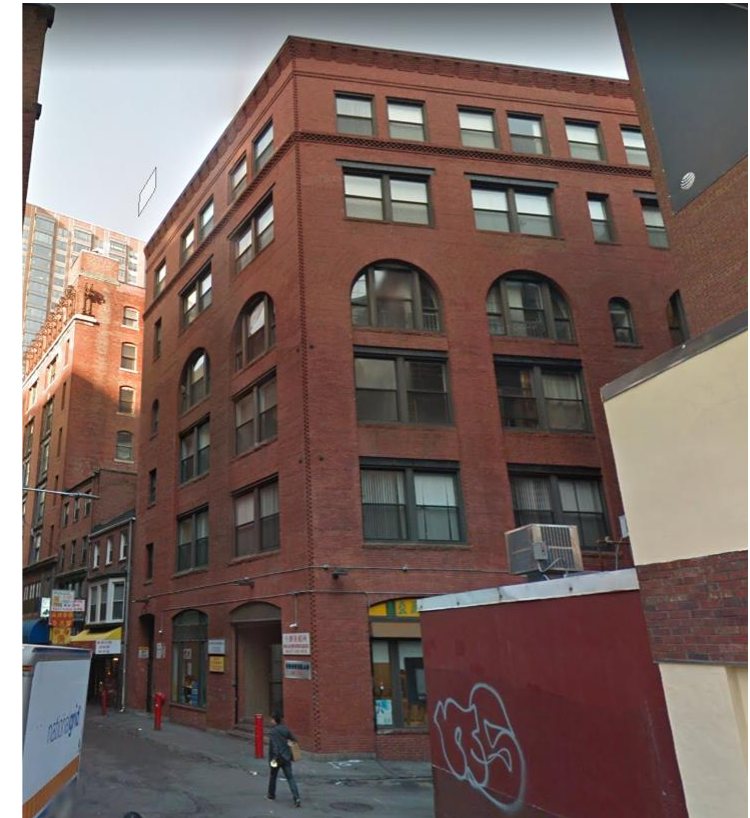
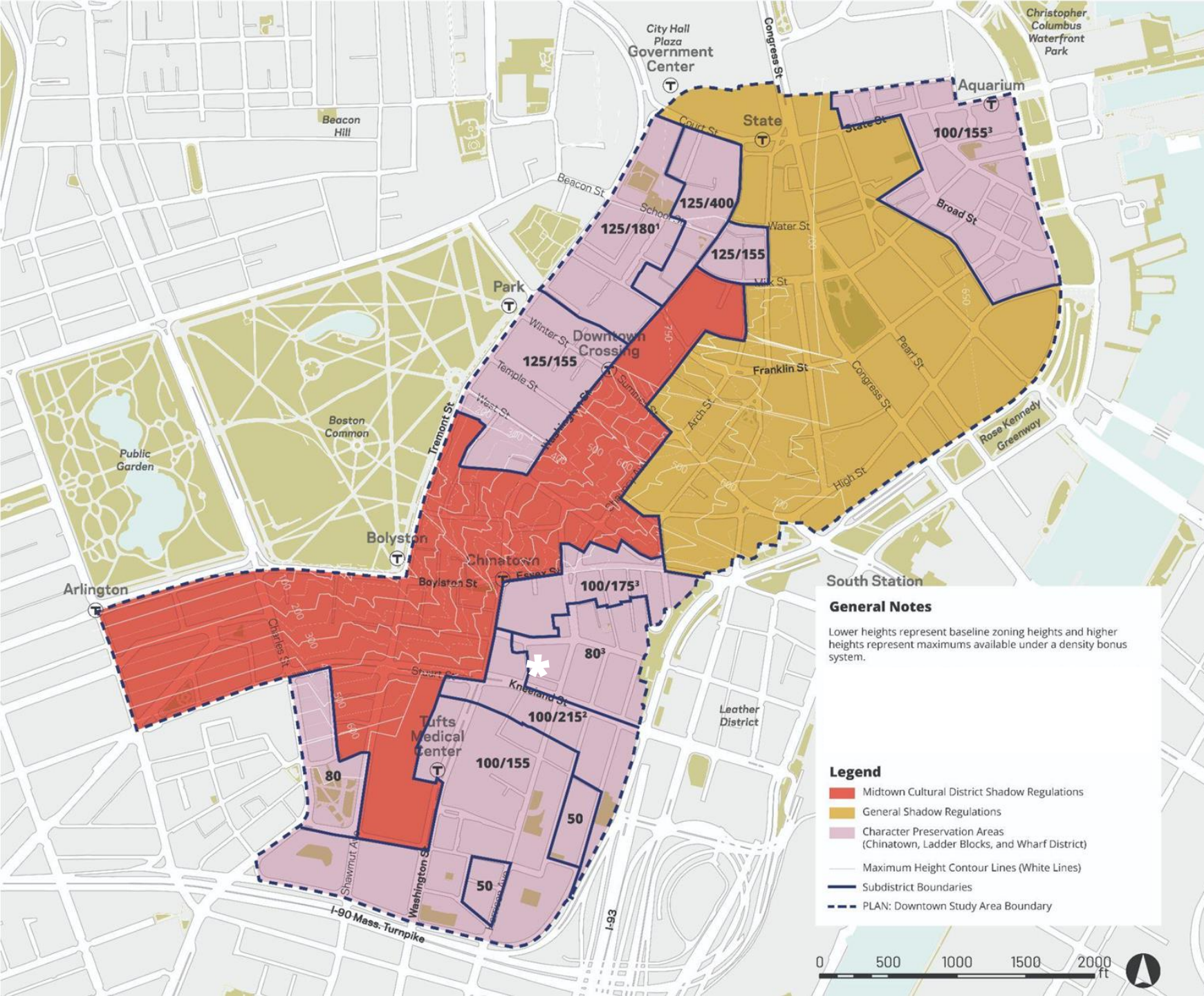
Revised Scenario

75 Kneeland Street
154-ft



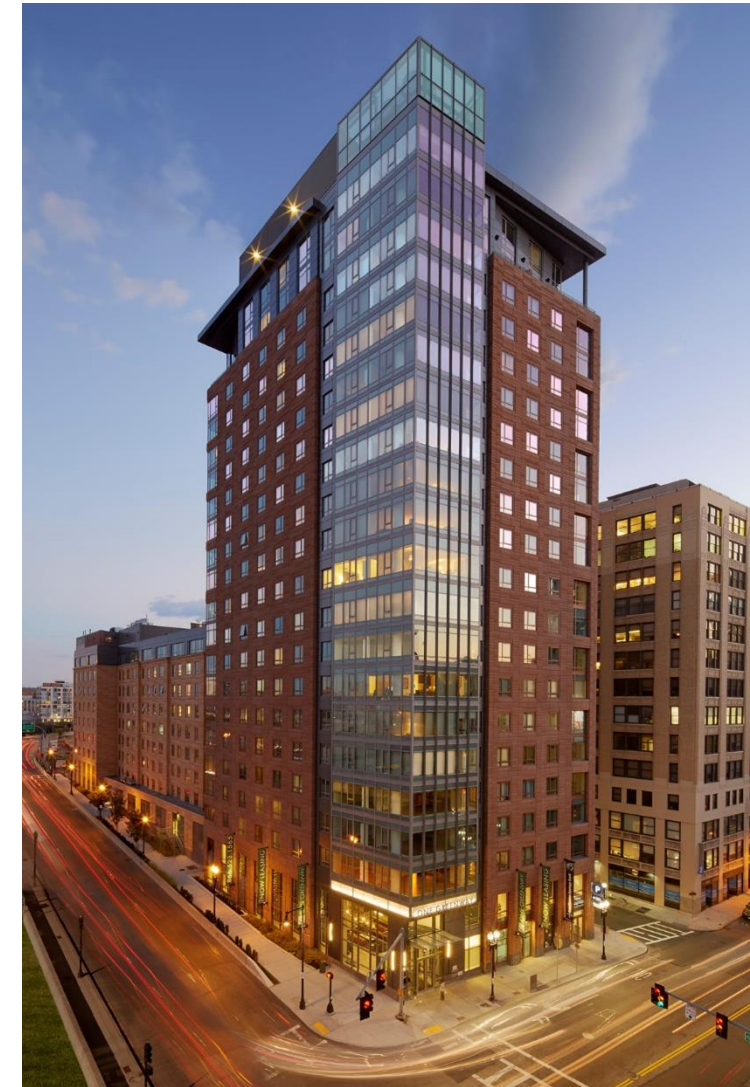
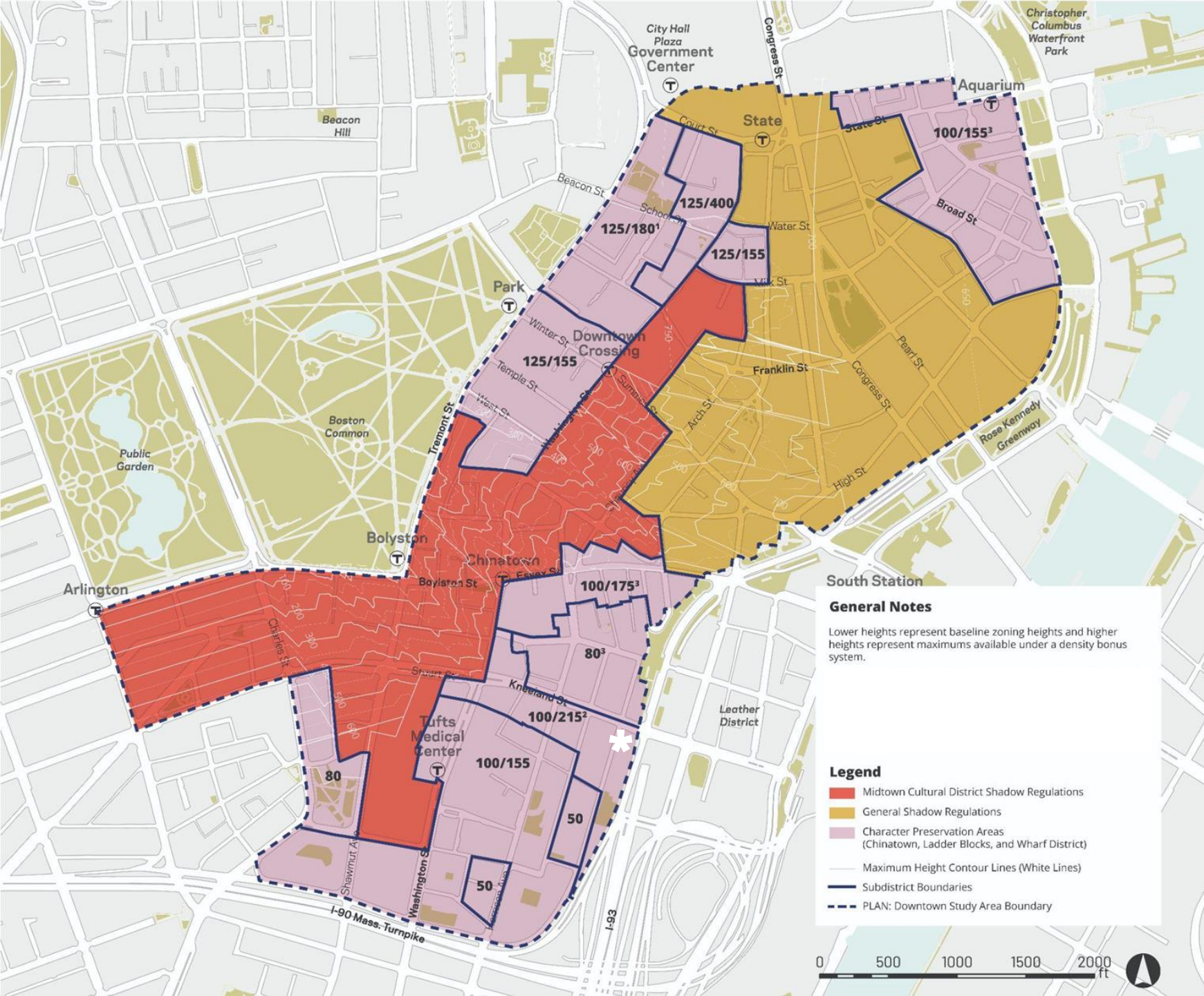
Revised Scenario

9 Knapp Street
77-ft



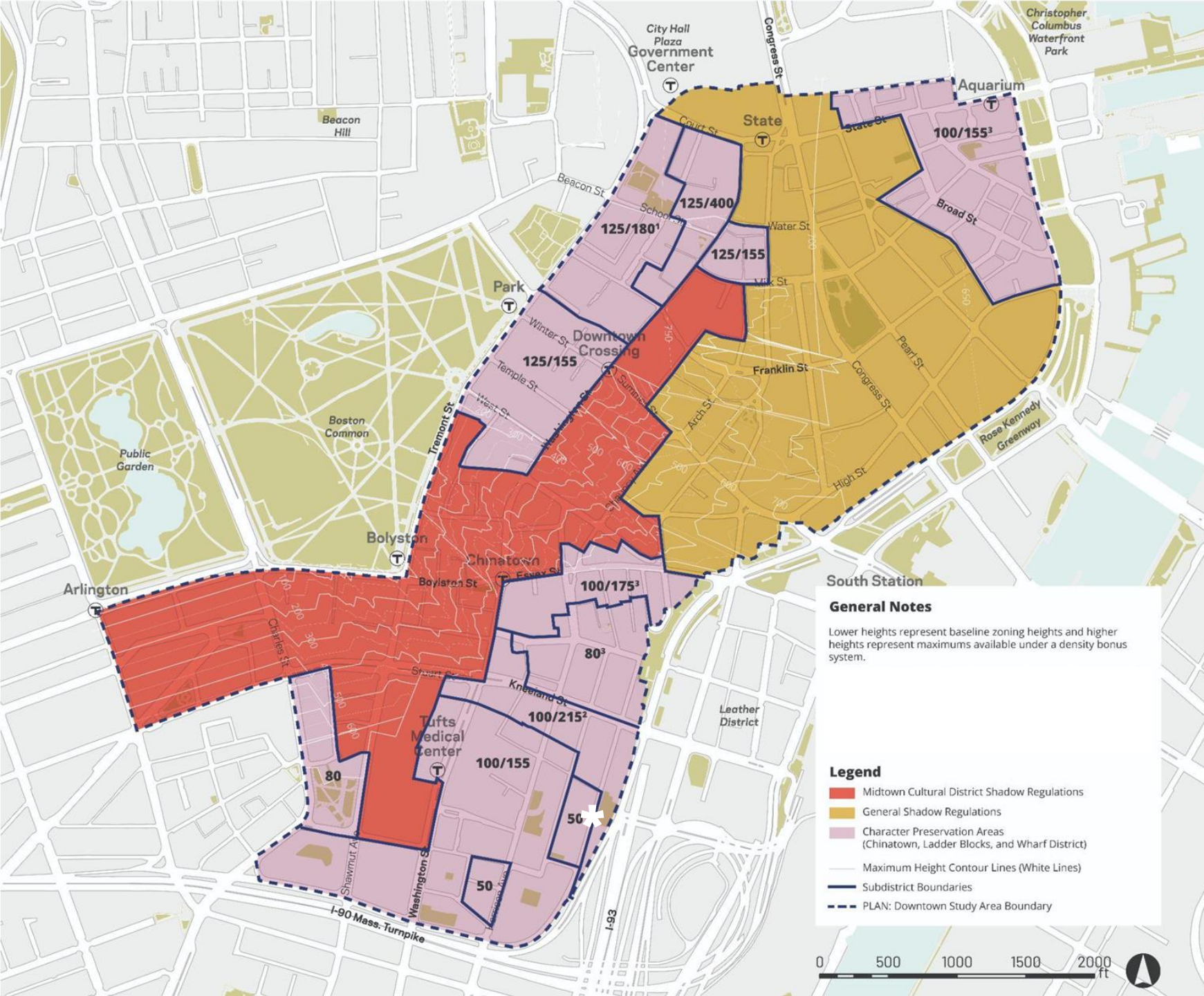
Revised Scenario

One Greenway
215-ft



Revised Scenario

Hudson Street
35-55-ft

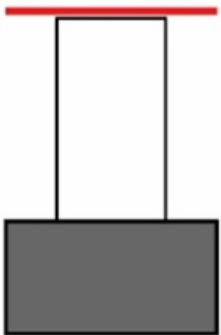


Urban Design Guidelines

Role of the Boston Zoning Code

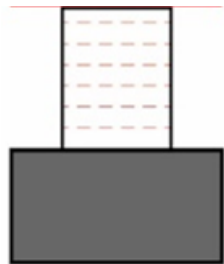
Height

(Max. height or number of floors)



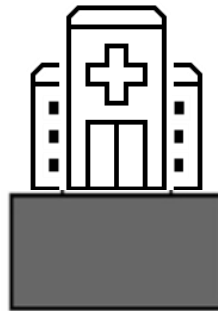
Density

(Floor Area Ratio)



Use

(Allowed, Conditional, or Forbidden)

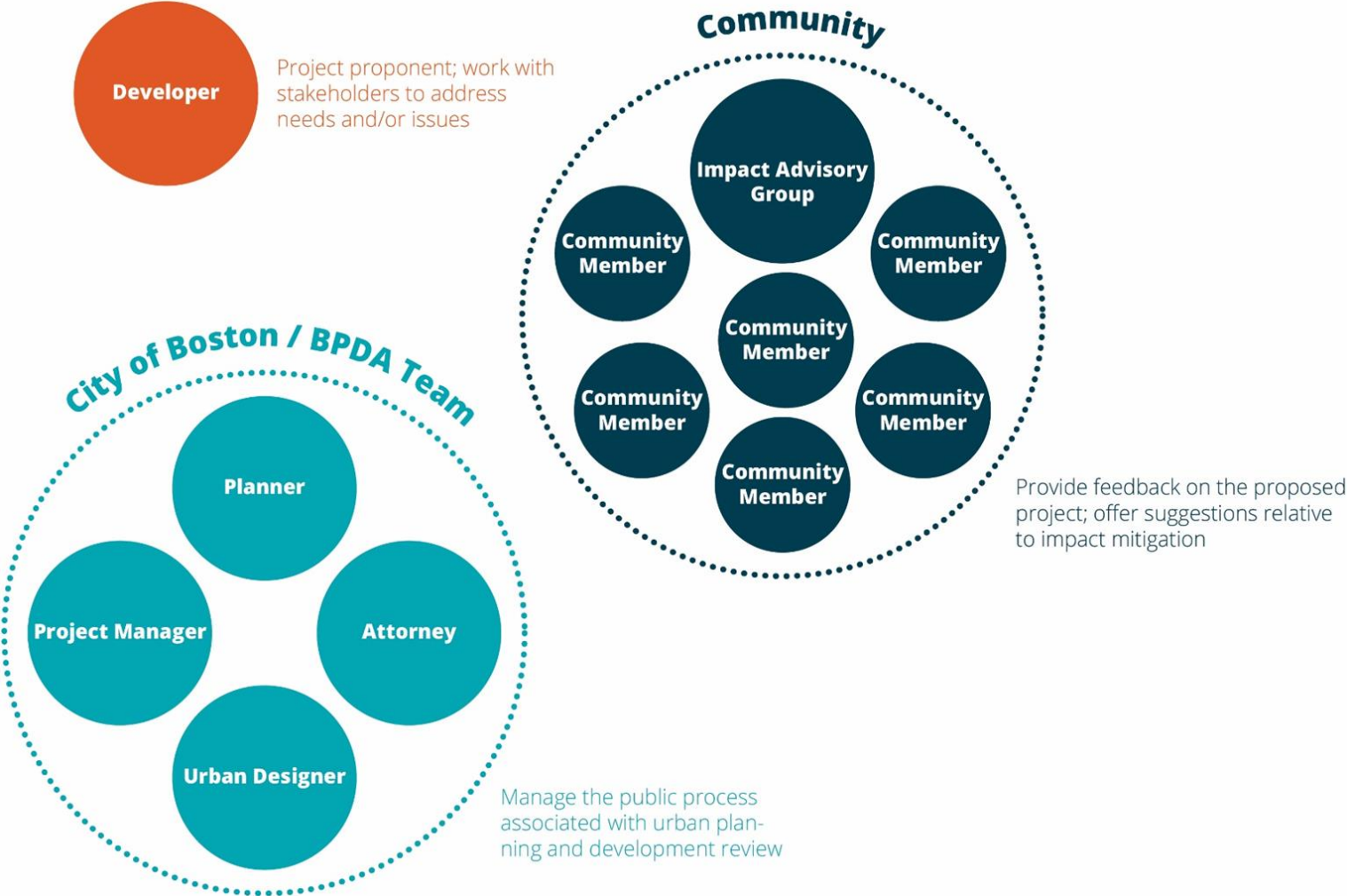


- **Dictates the allowed shape, density, and use of development** in a given area
- Protects Boston's distinct neighborhoods from the development of buildings or uses that do not harmonize with their surrounding context



Role of Article 80

Adopted by the Boston Zoning Commission in 1996



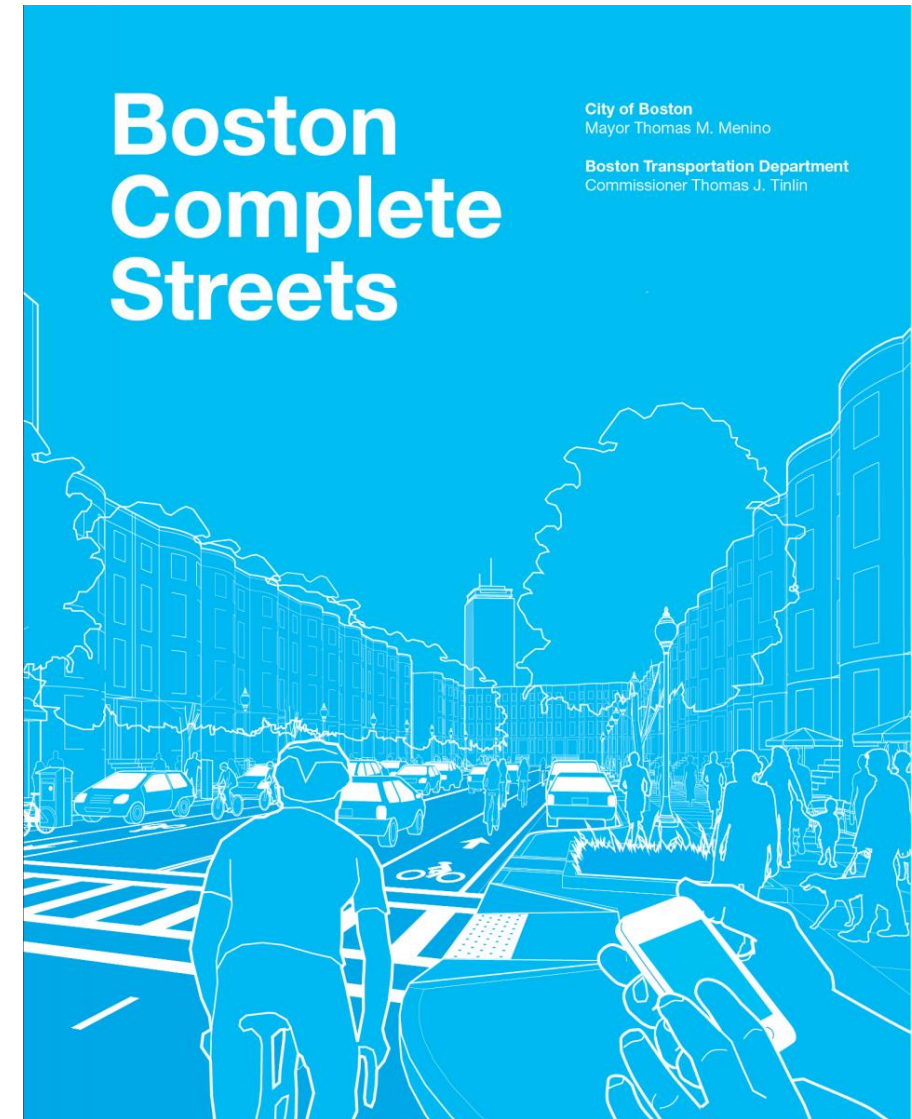
- **Provides specific requirements for the review of certain development projects** in all of the neighborhoods of Boston
- **Provides important opportunities for community involvement and feedback**



Role of Complete Streets

Adopted by the City of Boston in 2013

- **Provides policy and design guidance** to governmental agencies, consultants, private developers, and community groups on the planning, design, and operation of roadways and sidewalks in Boston
- **Ensures that Boston's streets are safe for all users**, and to foster an efficient project development and review process
- **Improves the quality of life in Boston** by creating streets that are both great places to live and sustainable transportation networks



Role of Urban Design Guidelines

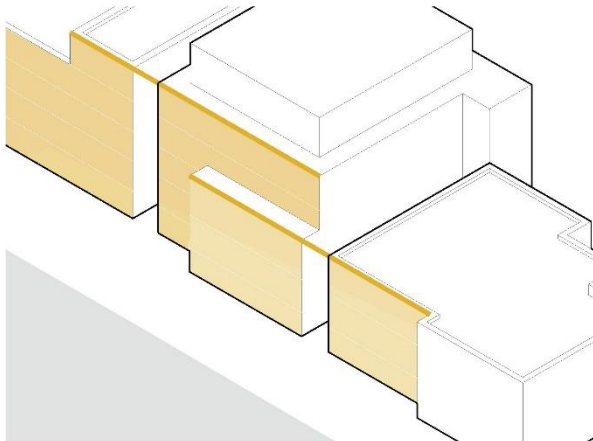
1 | Site Design 1.1 | Scale and Massing

1.1.1

The general expectation is that infill projects will consider the height, massing, and architectural lines of abutting buildings.

Downtown/Wharf District: Particular attention should be paid to the height, massing, and architectural lines of abutting buildings in the Ladder District /Wharf District. The focus should be on the first 5 to 6 stories of the building.

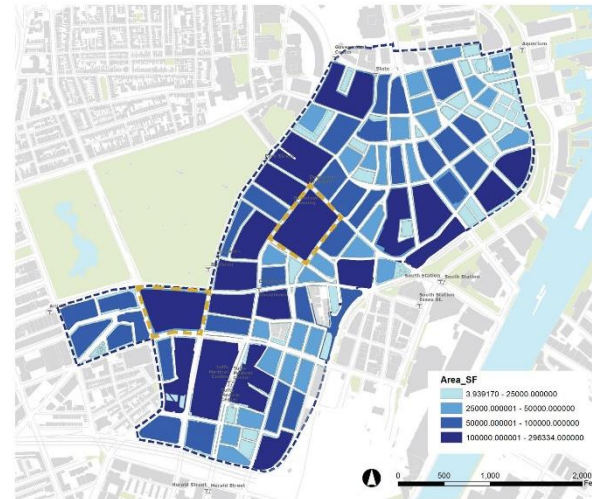
Chinatown: Particular attention should be paid to the height and massing of abutting buildings in Chinatown. The focus should be on the first 5 to 6 stories of the building.



1.1.2

Minimize the scale of blocks wherever possible by providing new streets, mid-block alleys, pedestrian paths, courtyards, and plazas that connect with other streets and public or common open spaces.

Downtown/Theater District: In the case of re-development, find long-term opportunities for new exterior pedestrian routes with respect to Lafayette Place/ Massachusetts Transportation building.



- Establishes the quality and character of architecture and open space
- Provides a framework for design review
- Ensures private development aligns with PLAN: Downtown



Role of Urban Design Guidelines

Guidelines for new construction, additions to existing buildings, and redevelopment/renovation.



What will the guidelines include?

Draft PLAN: Downtown Urban Design Guidelines

Site & Building Design

- Scale & Massing
- Vertical Building Additions
- Frontages, Setbacks, Entrances
- Servicing & Curb Cuts
- Architectural Expression

Public Realm

- Open Space
- Lighting
- Planting & Sustainability
- View Sheds and Corridors

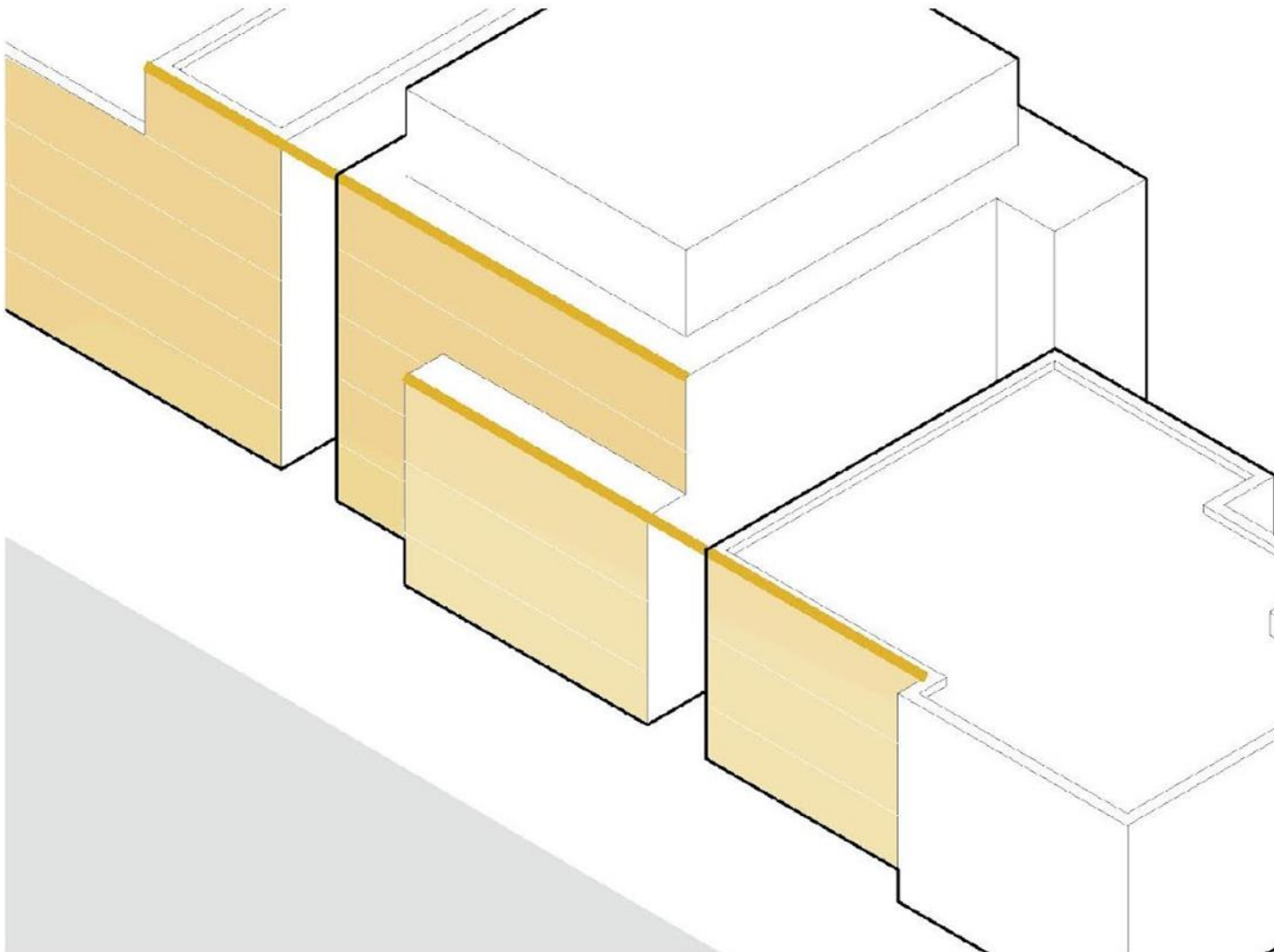


Shoppers' Plaza & Millennium Tower



Scale & Massing

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



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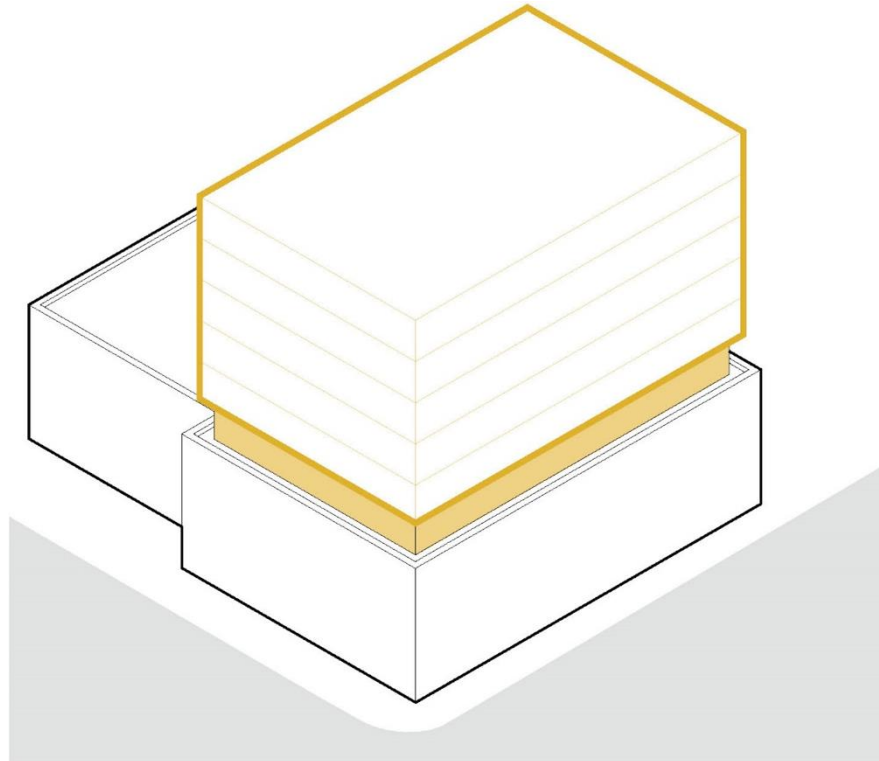
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Chinatown: Particular attention should be paid to the height and massing of abutting buildings in Chinatown. The focus should be on the first 5 to 6 stories of the building.



Vertical Building Additions

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



1.2.1

Create a distinct horizontal or vertical break in the façade between the new and existing portions of the building.

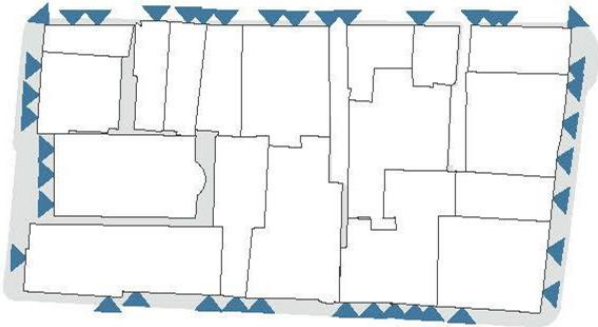


Frontages, Setbacks, Entrances

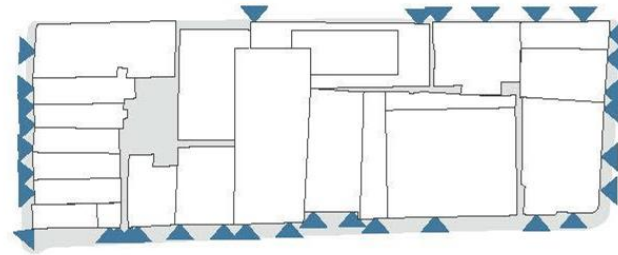
PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines

1.3.15

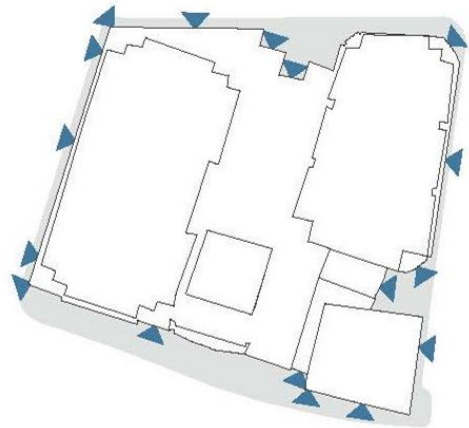
Avoid long frontages without active entries. Distance between entrances should fit a common neighborhood pattern.



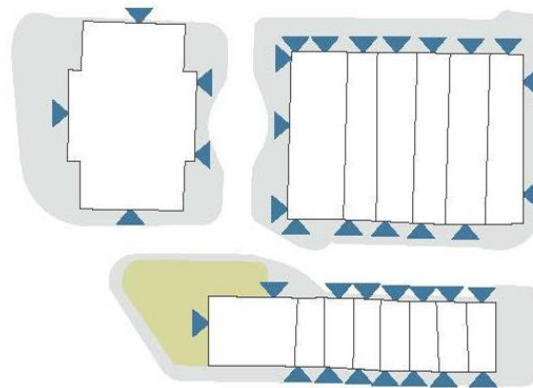
Downtown



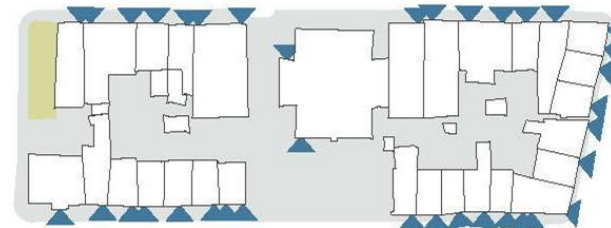
Theater District



Financial District



Wharf District

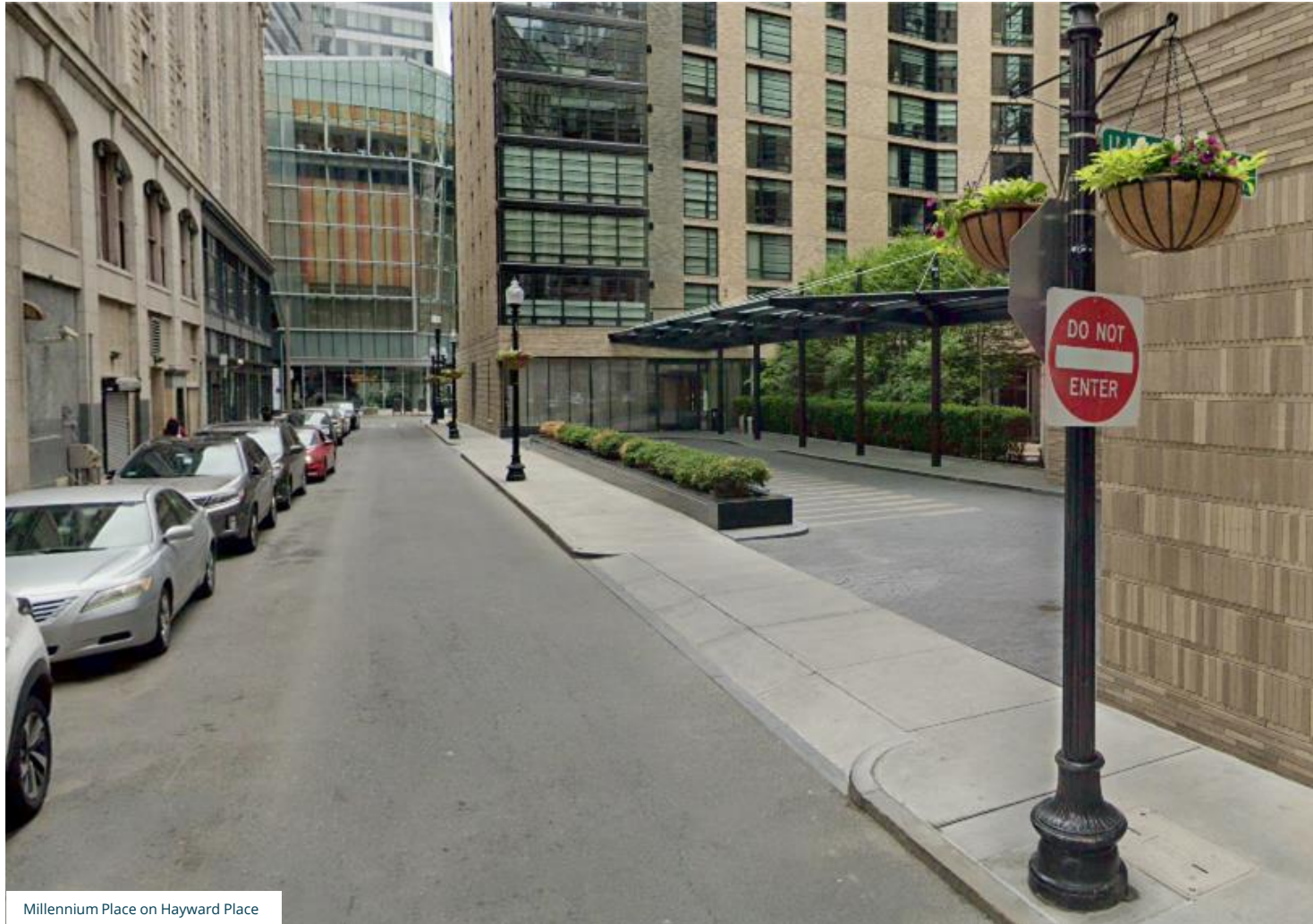


Chinatown



Servicing & Curb Cuts

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



Millennium Place on Hayward Place

1.4.2

Minimize the location, size, and number of curb cuts and locate parking access to minimize impacts on transit, bicycles, and pedestrian circulation. Where possible, loading should be planned for within the parking area and utilize the same curb cut as other vehicles.



Architectural Expression

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



Downtown



Theater District



Financial District



Chinatown



Wharf District



1.5.14

New development should consider the prevailing materiality of the character areas existing buildings.



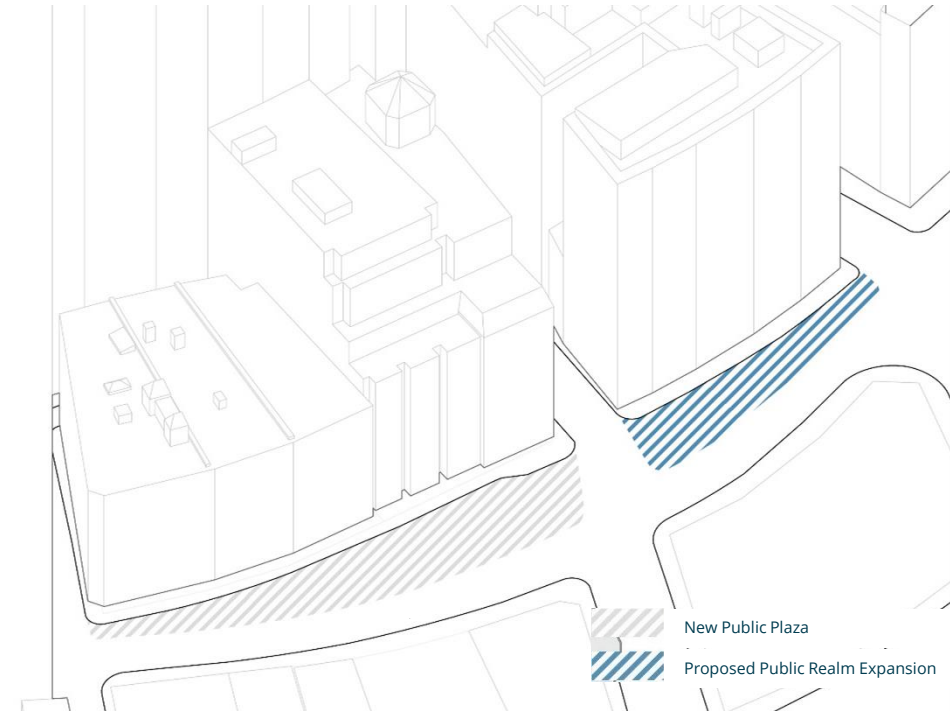
Open Space

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



2.1.2

Find opportunities to reconfigure roadways in order to create a new public space.



Lighting

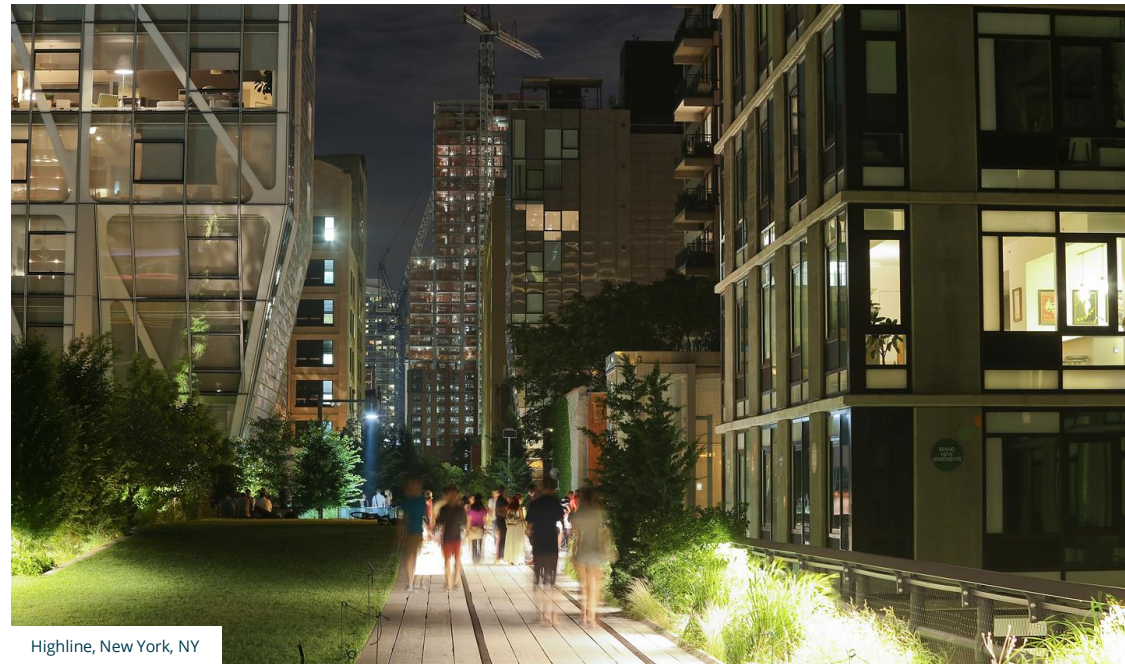
PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines

2.2.4

Design lighting to reinforce pedestrian comfort at the ground level; avoid high contrasts in light levels; avoid glare.



16th Street, Denver, CO



Highline, New York, NY



Planting & Sustainability

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



Broad Street

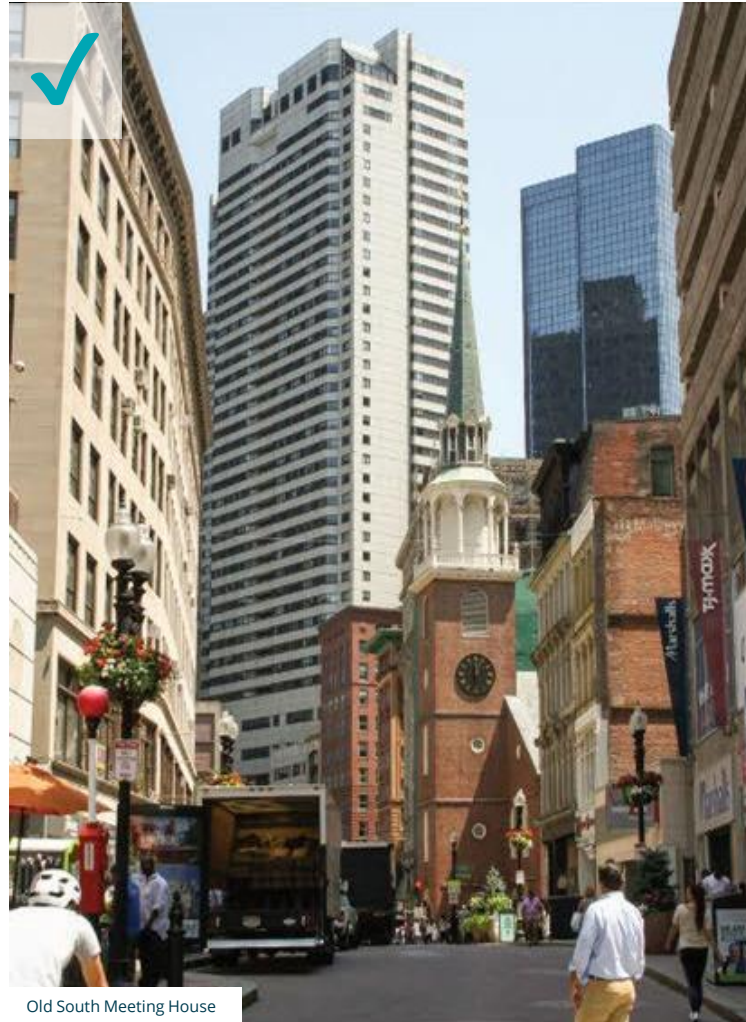
2.3.2

Consider using recycled permeable and/or concrete paving for curbs or benches to contain new planting. Reuse site or construction materials wherever possible, especially in the case of tactical urbanism.



View Sheds & Corridors

PLAN: Downtown Sample Urban Design Guidelines



2.4.1

Respect existing view corridors towards designated historic assets and create new viewpoints from public streets and spaces where feasible; Step back or shape street walls to organize or frame long-range views.

Downtown: Old South Meeting House, the Granary Cemetery, Old City Hall
Theater District: Columbus Avenue to the Edgar Allan Poe Statue and Boston Common

Chinatown: historical main façade of the Don Bosco Technical High School

Financial District: The State House, Boston Massacre Site; maintain the view towards the United Shoe Machinery Corporation Building, especially from the route to the east of the Fiduciary Trust Building

Wharf District: Custom House Tower, the Grain Exchange; State Street towards Faneuil Hall



Next Steps



Upcoming Engagement Events

- **Public Meeting: Public Realm and Scenario Refinement**
January 11, 2023
- **Advisory Group Meeting*: Post-Pandemic Goals and Plan Objectives**
February, 2023
- **Advisory Group Meeting*: Working session**
February, 2023
- **Public Meeting: Urban Design and Zoning Recommendations**
March, 2023
- **Advisory Group Meeting*: Working session- Bring together planning and urban design recommendations and development scenarios**
April, 2023
- **Advisory Group Meeting*: PLAN: Downtown Draft Review**
May, 2023

Get Involved with PLAN: Downtown:
<http://bit.ly/plandowntownboston>

Questions and Comments:
plandowntown@boston.gov

Release PLAN: Downtown Draft:
June 2023

Board Downtown Adoption:
August target

Zoning implementation:
Fall

*All Advisory Group meetings are open to the public.



Discussion



Current Shadow Regulations

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

...without exceeding the shadow limits set by existing shadow legislation and zoning.

Boston Common Shadow Law (Ch. 362, Acts of 1990; Ch. 384, Acts of 1993; Ch. 57, Acts of 2017)

- This State law restricts new shadows on the **Common** to the first hour after sunrise or 7:00 a.m. (whichever is later) or the last hour before sunset, with different exemptions for buildings in the Midtown Cultural District, which lies east and south of the Common and Garden.

Public Garden Shadow Law (Ch. 384, Acts of 1993; CH. 57, Acts of 2017)

- This law restricts new shadows on the **Public Garden** to the first hour after sunrise or 7:00 a.m. (whichever is later) or the last hour before sunset.

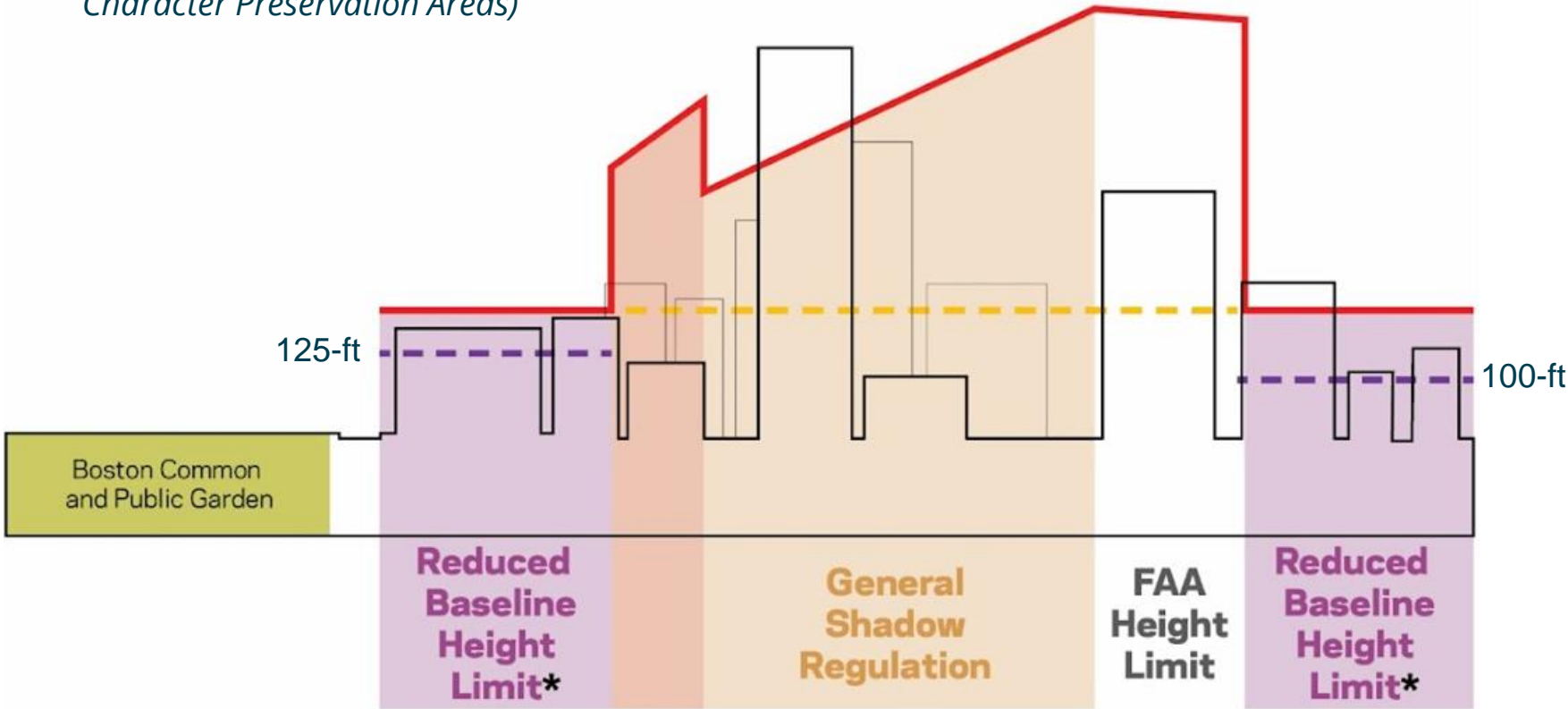
- For buildings in the **Midtown Cultural District**, new shadows are allowed for no more than two hours between the hours of 8:00 am and 2:30 pm from March 21 to October 21. Any new shadow lasting two hours or more during these times is not allowed.

- For buildings in the **Midtown Cultural District**, new shadows are allowed before 10:00 a.m. during the period between March 21 and October 21.



Maximum Heights

- Baseline Zoning Height
- Reduced Baseline Zoning Height
- Incentivized Maximum Height
(Shadow Regulations, FAA, Character Preservation Areas)



Preservation & Growth-Balanced Density Bonus System

Baseline zoning starting points and maximum heights are based on Character Area baseline and Developer can contribute to a public-benefit fund to add capacity through density bonus system.

Downtown Crossing General Area, Theater District, Financial District

- Baseline: 155-ft
- Maximum: Up to Midtown Cultural District Shadow Regulation, Shadow Regulation, and FAA height limit

Three Character Preservation Areas

- Chinatown Baseline: 100-ft
- Wharf District Baseline: 100-ft
- Ladder Blocks Baseline: 125-ft
- Maximum: Lower Height Area

*In this context "contribute" is used as an analogy for public benefits and project mitigation that is negotiated through the Article 80 process. Development opportunity is not purchased from the BPDA, City or Community.

