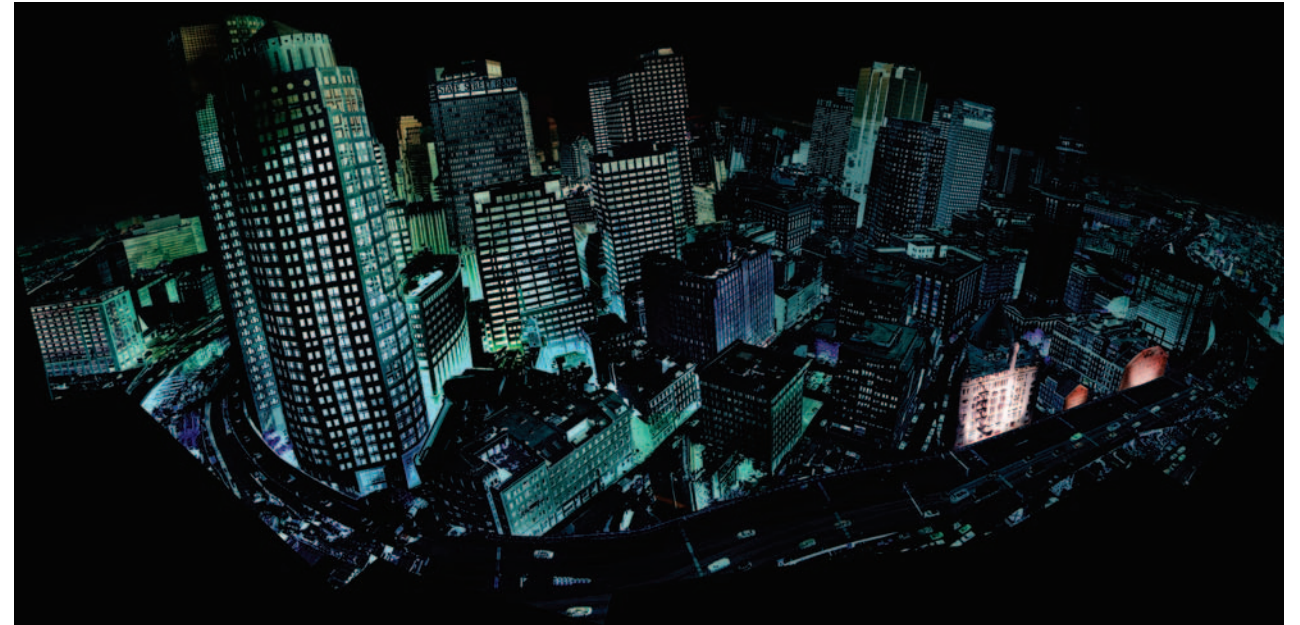


# Wharf District|Financial District EDGES STUDY

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## *Design for Urban Edges along the Rose Kennedy Greenway*

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A STUDY SPONSORED BY THE ARTERY BUSINESS COMMITTEE AND A GRANT FROM THE BOSTON FOUNDATION  
IN COOPERATION WITH THE BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY | BOSTON TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT | BOSTON DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION |  
CENTRAL ARTERY TUNNEL PROJECT | MASSACHUSETTS TURNPIKE AUTHORITY

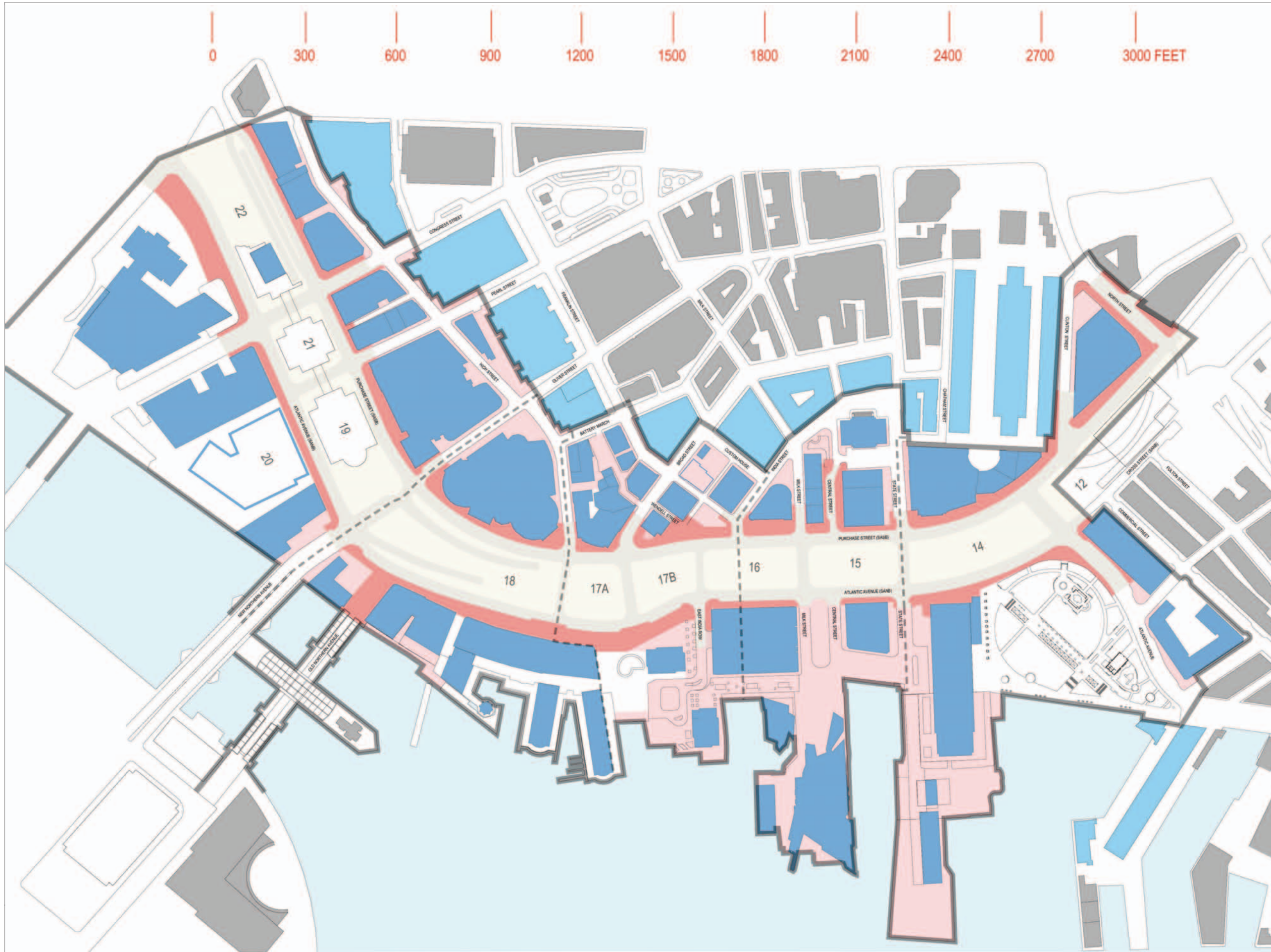
A R T E R Y   B U S I N E S S   C O M M I T T E E

B O S T O N








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HUBERT MURRAY Architect + Planner | Office of David Neilson | Jung Brannen Associates Inc | Chan Krieger Associates





**WHARF DISTRICT  
FINANCIAL DISTRICT  
EDGES STUDY AREA**

-  Study Area
-  Study Zones
-  Primary Edge Properties
-  Secondary Edge Properties
-  CA/T Surface Restoration
-  CA/T Sidewalk Improvements
-  Potential Urban Design Intervention Areas



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## PURPOSE

The impetus for a study of the urban edges of the Rose Kennedy Greenway as it passes through the Wharf and Financial districts has been driven by the conviction that the full value of the park will best be realized when complemented by programmed activities within or around the open space. This approach was enshrined in the third of the "5 Principles for Design and Programming" of the Wharf District parks, to "support and surround open space with people and activities"<sup>1</sup>. The essence of this approach is that open space is at its best when intensely used, at its worst and most bereft when empty. The critical focus in previous studies was on the vitality of this space in off-hours and out of season when the city has emptied out after the day's work and the weather is not conducive to outdoor activities.

This *Edges Study* documents the Greenway abutting properties in the Wharf and Financial District and their relationship to the C17A6 Contract streetscape<sup>2</sup>. The study identifies potential areas for intervention and makes recommendations for design and programming improvements for both indoor and outdoor, public and private ground floor spaces, including possible minor modifications of the C17A6 Contract design. The goal of this study is to create a comprehensive vision, maximizing and enhancing the active public use of building edges and sidewalks on both sides of the Wharf District parks, which would promote a similar effect within the new public realm in the middle.

## METHODOLOGY

The documentation of existing conditions includes a variety of data from numerous sources:

- **Mapping** - derived from the BRA's Boston Atlas<sup>3</sup>; Central Artery contract documents; individual building plans; and on-site documentation.
- **Photographic Surveys** - on site photographic documentation, mainly in summer of 2003.
- **Quantitative Data** - derived from the BRA's Boston Atlas, from the Boston Transportation Department and from individual building owners.
- **Public Policy and Regulations** - including parking and traffic policy, sidewalk regulations and zoning information - derived from the Boston Transportation Department and from the Boston Redevelopment Authority.
- **Programmatic Data** - derived primarily from interviews with neighbors and abutters.

<sup>1</sup> ABC: *Five Principles for Programming and Design*, 1999

<sup>2</sup> C17A6 contract refers to paving, planting, lighting and street furniture within the Central Artery project limits, excluding the median parcels

<sup>3</sup> [www.mapjunction.com/places/Boston\\_BRA](http://www.mapjunction.com/places/Boston_BRA)

## DEFINITION OF STUDY AREA

The boundaries of the study are defined by geography and abutter interests. On the Harbor side of the corridor the boundary is the water's edge. On the west side the boundary is, generally speaking, one block back from the edge of the corridor with reference to special conditions beyond (e.g. the Broad Street / Franklin Street neighborhood, McKinley Square and Quincy Market). The northern boundary is delimited by Parcel 12 and a line drawn from Commercial Street and Clinton Street. On the south end of the Wharf District the boundary will include the north end of Parcel 19 and the edges to Oliver Street and the Evelyn Moakley Bridge.

## URBAN CHARACTER

This survey of existing conditions touches upon three critical areas as avenues into defining the character and determining the potential of the Wharf District:

- Topography and History
- Transportation and Land Use
- Urban Fabric

Through these avenues of interpretation and research, a case is built up for defining specific identifiable places within the Wharf District, each with its own character based on topography, history, function and fabric. The outcome of this approach is indicated in the final map in this section indicating Areas of Intervention grouped into four distinct spatial clusters.

## TOPOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

The stretch of the Rose Kennedy Greenway that passes through the Wharf District from Oliver Street up to Clinton Street is distinguished from other sections of the boulevard by its proximity to the waterfront. In this crucial respect the Greenway encounters an asymmetry between one side and another, between city and harbor, more than at any other point along its run.

It is the conclusion of this study that the topographical characteristics and historical narratives are best honored not as museum pieces but as indicators for future intervention relating the city to its waterfront and by upholding the logic of a street pattern that grew out of that specific and topographically unique relationship that linked the physical activities of the waterfront to the financial institutions built on trade.

## TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE

The transportation, land use and retail development maps indicate a downtown that has a mix of uses accessible by all modes of public and private transportation

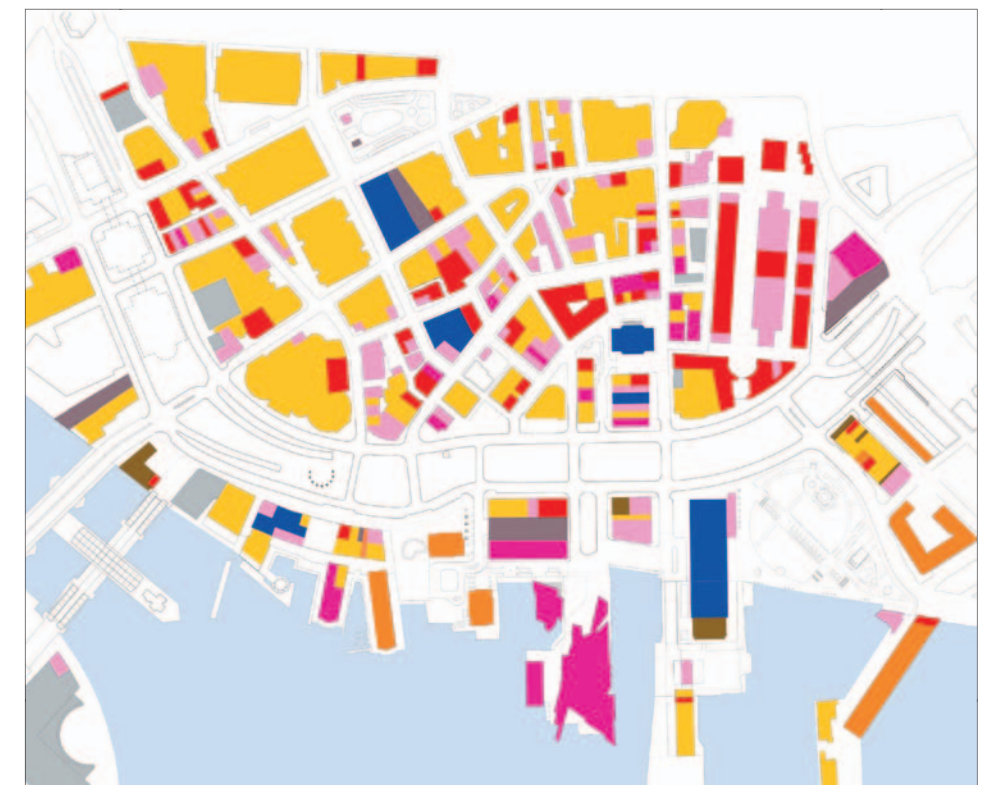
for a wide variety of purposes whether it be commuting to work, living in the area or visiting for tourism and recreation.

Critical issues arising out of the overview of transportation are firstly, the congestion and conflicts caused by various modes of tourist transportation and the need to find convenient and amenable off-site parking for several types of vehicles; and secondly, the need to provide public transportation links between the Greenway, other parts of the Wharf and Financial Districts and surrounding areas.

The main findings from the ground floor land use documentation are threefold:

1. In response to the interruption of the city streets crossing Atlantic Avenue by railroad tracks and, latterly, by the elevated highway, many of the buildings along that corridor have accommodated themselves to that interruption by either blocking off those edges or by neglect. In addition, that edge condition

below: *GROUND FLOOR LAND USE PLAN - showing commercial, restaurant, entertainment, retail, residential, hotel, institutional, structured parking and mechanical rooms*





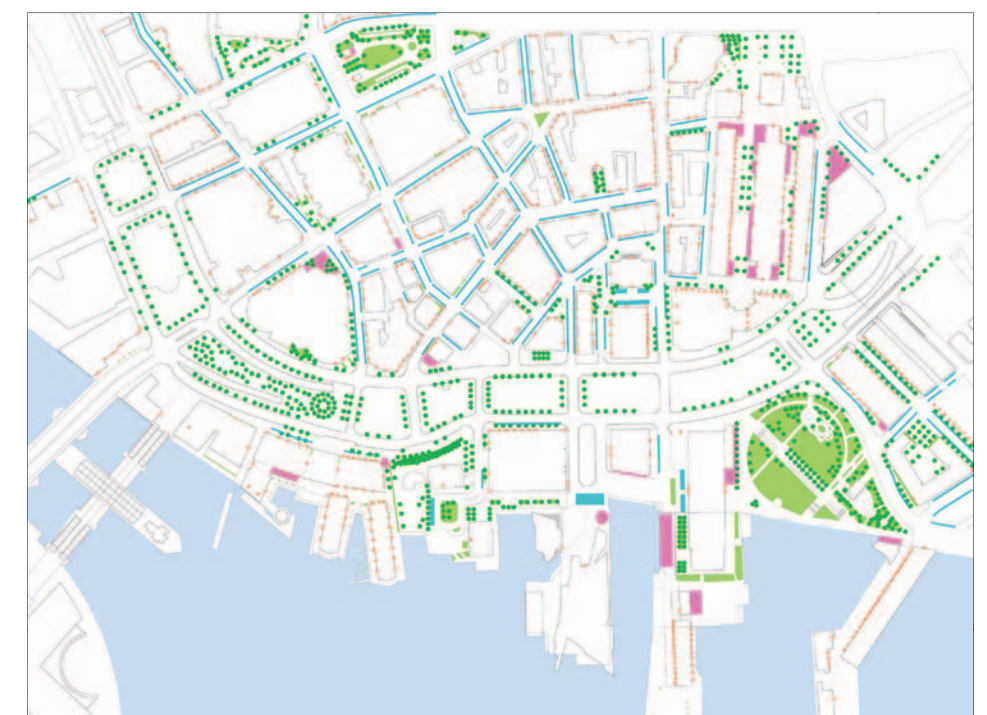
has provided an opportunity for locating parking structures and service entrances. The removal of the elevated highway provides a challenging opportunity to reverse and redress those conditions.

2. While there is a good mix of uses in the area, the Boston Redevelopment Authority initiative in providing incentives for more residential development in the area needs to be complemented with the provision of an infrastructure of smaller scale retail and service outlets to support the residential population.
3. The retail sector overview emphasizes the potential for improving the quality of downtown living and animating the sidewalks. Zoning policy in favor of this direction would have to be supported by a consideration of the economic viability of small-scale retail investment in a relatively high rent district.

lower left: *PAVEMENT MATERIALS - showing brick, concrete, asphalt, granite paving and wood decking*

lower center: *UNINVITING PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT - showing blank walls, service entrances, loading docks, garbage dumpsters and mechanical rooms*

lower right: *INVITING PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT - showing pedestrian entrances, sidewalk cafes, curbside parking, trees and planted landscape*



## URBAN FABRIC

Maps depicting aspects of the urban fabric document specific physical characteristics (the variety of paving materials) and the environmental quality engendered by combinations of materials and physical conditions (Inviting and Uninviting Pedestrian Streetscapes). The range of elements documented in these drawings does however lay out a palette of urban design elements that can be worked with to upgrade the public realm.

## PRINCIPLES FOR URBAN DESIGN IN THE WHARF DISTRICT

Four planning principles inform many of the considerations incorporated in the individual design studies and the proposed interventions

- 1 TO CREATE ATTRACTIVE SUSTAINABLE URBAN ROOMS - a principle embracing a broad view of sustainability to include historic preservation, accessible economic activity and efficient public transportation as well as environmentally responsible landscaping and development;
- 2 TO CREATE A VIBRANT MIX OF USES FOR URBAN ACTIVITY - a principle for creating a successful mix of land uses in an effort to provide all-day, all-week, all-season levels of activity that make the city and the open space lively and attractive;
- 3 TO CREATE A SAFE AND INVITING PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT - a principle for creating pedestrian space surrounding and leading to the Greenway; and,
- 4 TO CREATE A DISTRICT EASY TO GET TO AND THROUGH - principles for managing traffic, parking and the servicing of buildings within this congested area.



## AREAS OF INTERVENTION

A map showing Areas of Intervention immediately adjacent to the Greenway addresses the original challenge posed by the transformation of the elevated highway into public open space. While this study is limited to describing the potential for design interventions in and around the abutting buildings, it is to be hoped that these proposals will provoke a reciprocal response in the design of the Greenway and in the network of adjoining streets.

The areas of intervention are differentiated by place, sub-districts defined by topography, history, function and physical fabric. By defining these sub-districts as distinct 'places' in themselves, it is the intent of this study to stimulate initiatives in the public realm by the City and to initiate a rapport between property owners so that they work together to create improvements in concert with one another, thereby enhancing the quality and identity of their shared environment.

The areas of intervention delineated on the map have been determined by two primary considerations. Firstly, there are those properties adjoining the Greenway whose owners are taking the initiative to respond to the opening up of their buildings to the public open space and to adjust and improve their properties accordingly. Cases in point include International Place, Hook Lobster, Rowes Wharf, Harbor Towers, the Harbor Garage, Marketplace Center and the Marriott Long Wharf Hotel.

Secondly, there are those areas adjoining the Greenway that are extensions of the public realm where the quality and purpose of the street can be improved as a result of the Greenway development. Instances of this type of public realm improvement include the Oliver Street / Fort Point Plaza; the potential opening up of a pedestrian walkway along Wharf and Wendell Streets linking Broad Street to East India Row; and the development of a more functional and attractive public space on Parcel A3N in front of the Aquarium. In the latter cases, while there are no direct client advocates, the proposal will serve as a vision for action around a common interest involving public / private cooperation.

## PLACEMAKING

Following the principles laid out in earlier sections, the proposed interventions are grouped with the aim of creating distinct places, each with their own character.

The assessment of the neighborhoods is based on the premise that the strongest design interventions will be based on a thorough understanding and definition of place and site. This approach to site analysis is based on an understanding



of **natural topography** (e.g. the Fort Hill area being the original edge of the Shawmut peninsula drumlin); the **historical development of urban form** (e.g. the development of State Street and Long Wharf as coextensive phenomena); and the identification of **significant architectural forms** that create places within the urban matrix (e.g. the Custom House Tower and the Rowes Wharf Arch).

Based on these categories, the following four sub-districts are delineated in the map on the preceding page and summarized below:

- Fort Hill / Rowes Wharf
- Broad Street / India Wharf
- Custom House / Central Wharf
- Quincy Market / Long Wharf

These brief descriptions of characteristic 'places' within the Wharf District are followed by detailed studies of properties and places within each sub-district.

#### 1. FORT HILL / ROWES WHARF

- This neighborhood is clearly marked by the signature landmarks of the towers of International Place, the Old Northern Avenue Bridge and the great arch at Rowes Wharf. Historically, the rise in elevation at the location of International Place was Fort Hill, from colonial times the site of battery emplacements protecting the inner harbor.
- A significant characteristic of the buildings facing the Greenway is the preponderance of service and parking access ramps as well as mechanical rooms. If the natural limits of this neighborhood are viewed as a triangle defined by High Street, Oliver Street and the waterfront there is a strong suggestion that the buildings present their most accessible frontages facing 'outwards' (towards the city one side, Fort Point Channel on the other) and their service areas 'inwards', towards Parcel 18 and the surface artery. These 'outer' faces are therefore more disposed to pedestrian traffic (particularly the outstanding length of accessible waterfront), and the inward looking elevations more towards vehicular traffic, especially around Oliver Street and the highway access ramps.
- There are four 'gateways' into the triangle: at Fort Hill Square leading down either Oliver or High Street into the Greenway and the waterfront; at the Northern Avenue and Old Northern Avenue bridges that act as gateways between the Seaport and the Financial District; and at Rowes Wharf where the arch serves as the gateway between the harbor and the city proper.

- One route for pedestrians, often highlighted as being particularly hazardous, is the sidewalk on the north side of Oliver Street linking Fort Hill and the Channel. This route brings pedestrians into immediate conflict with vehicles coming out of the southbound off-ramp or turning into the northbound access ramp to the highway tunnel. For this reason alone, the Oliver Street south side sidewalk should be designed as the major cross route for pedestrians.

#### 2. BROAD STREET / INDIA WHARF

- The conjunctions of smaller scale buildings clustered around the Broad Street and Franklin Street crossroads are firstly, a reminder of the fine street scale of eighteenth and nineteenth century Boston and secondly, an opportunity to encourage a pattern of small and medium scale mixed use within an otherwise high rise neighborhood.
- While the natural 'gateway' between the city and the Greenway is at the crossroads of Broad and Franklin, the 'signature place' is the narrow and serpentine Wendell Street, presently a back alley but potentially a pedestrian place of outstanding charm.
- While the charm of the small scale brick buildings and the grace of the aptly named Broad Street present opportunities for residential and small-scale retail and commercial development, the economic viability of such projections needs to be determined.
- As constituted, the two Harbor Towers are signature buildings in themselves, a landmark on the harbor's edge but in both architectural form and use, isolated from the water's edge and the city. Although the adjacent retail stores in the Garage structure provide some services of interest to the residents and the Harbor Walk provides a recreational trail, the 'neighborhood' is in effect within each tower structure.
- The physical isolation of the residents from their urban surroundings is articulated in the architecture of the two towers and their grounds. The blank wall to the Greenway and the exclusion of the public from the most direct route across the property are both significant issues to address in the reengagement of this residential community with the Greenway and the city on the other side. In this respect, the potential for the development of small scale retail in the Broad and Franklin Street neighborhood signifies the greatest prospect for re-establishing walkable links to the city.

#### 3. CUSTOM HOUSE / CENTRAL WHARF

- This matrix of streets and buildings constitutes the most archetypal of the lateral connections across the Greenway. State Street and Central Street each form strong functional and historic links between the wharves and the city, signified in the landmark of the Custom House tower. Both streets are, at almost any point, a gateway into the city or out to the harbor.
- There is an outstanding opportunity for drawing the ends of these lateral axes in to a center established within the Greenway engaging the street frontages of the existing buildings to establish pedestrian circulation and activity throughout the length.
- As the principal focus of tourism, the critical issue in this area is parking for the tour buses and the trolleys as well as taxis. In the summer months in particular, the frontage to the Aquarium, the outside dining to 255 State Street, the entrance to the Marriott Hotel and the pedestrian access to the boats are all rendered chaotic and dysfunctional by the logjam of vehicles in the area, either parked or attempting to circulate.

#### 4. QUINCY MARKET / LONG WHARF

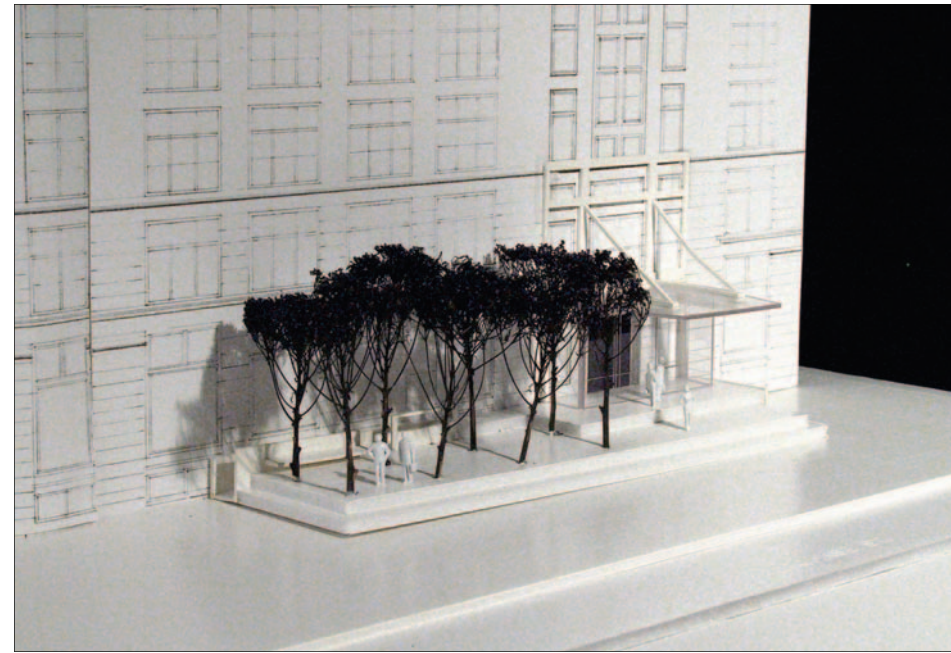
- The two major existing landmarks of Quincy Market and Christopher Columbus Park are both well established and both on the tourist trail, linked, at least conceptually, by the Walk to the Sea.
- The street frontages of both Marketplace Center and the Marriott Hotel constitute the main areas of interest for design intervention. Both buildings have the potential for storefront development. Both buildings also present design challenges in the form of mechanical rooms and garbage dumpsters fronting the sidewalk.

*opposite: PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS*

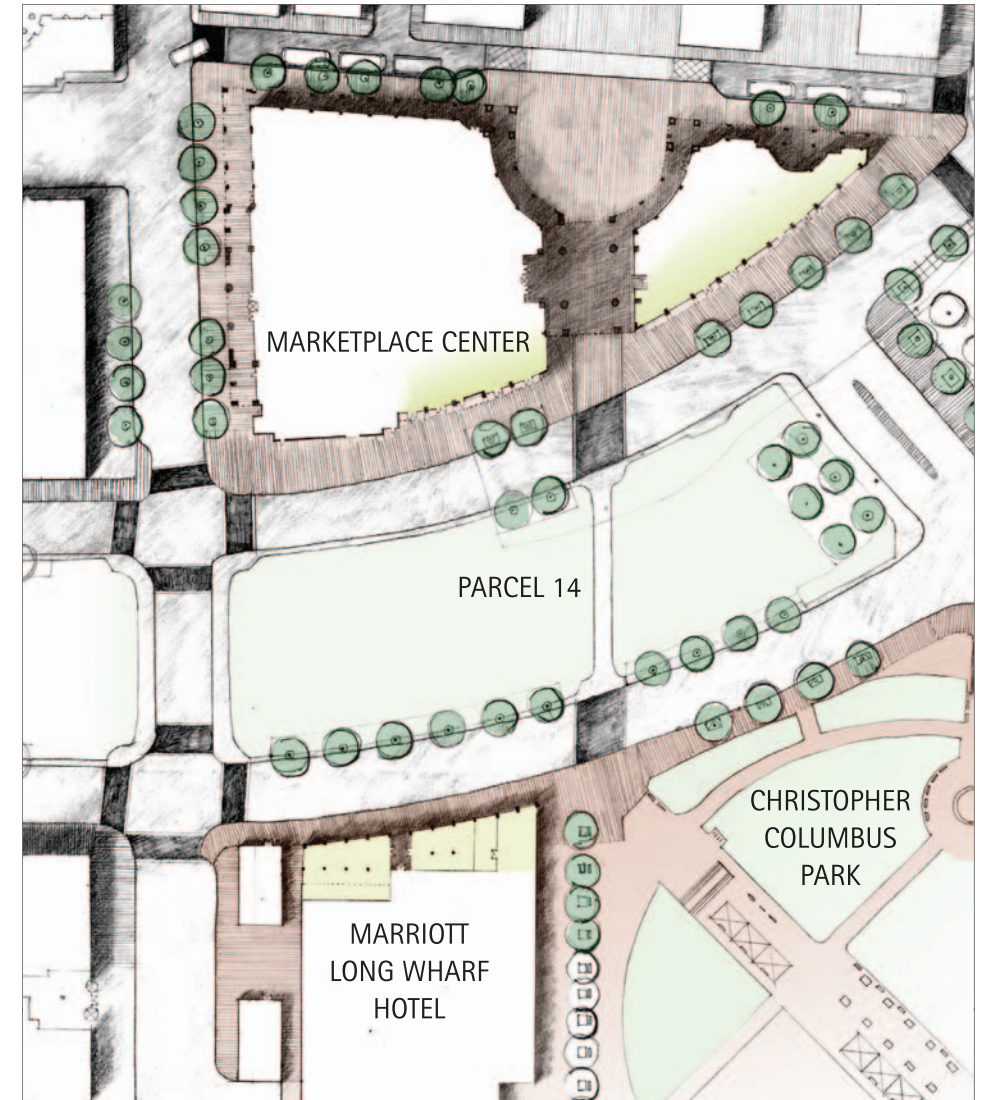




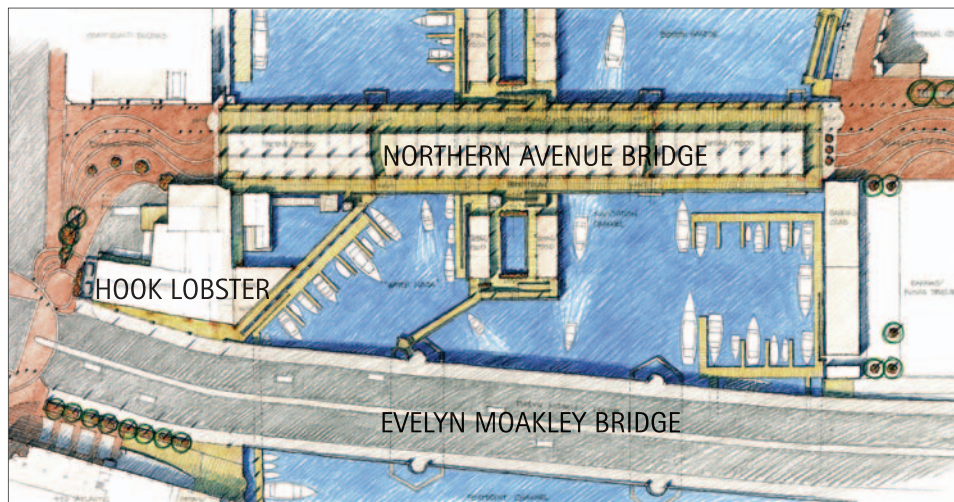
International Place



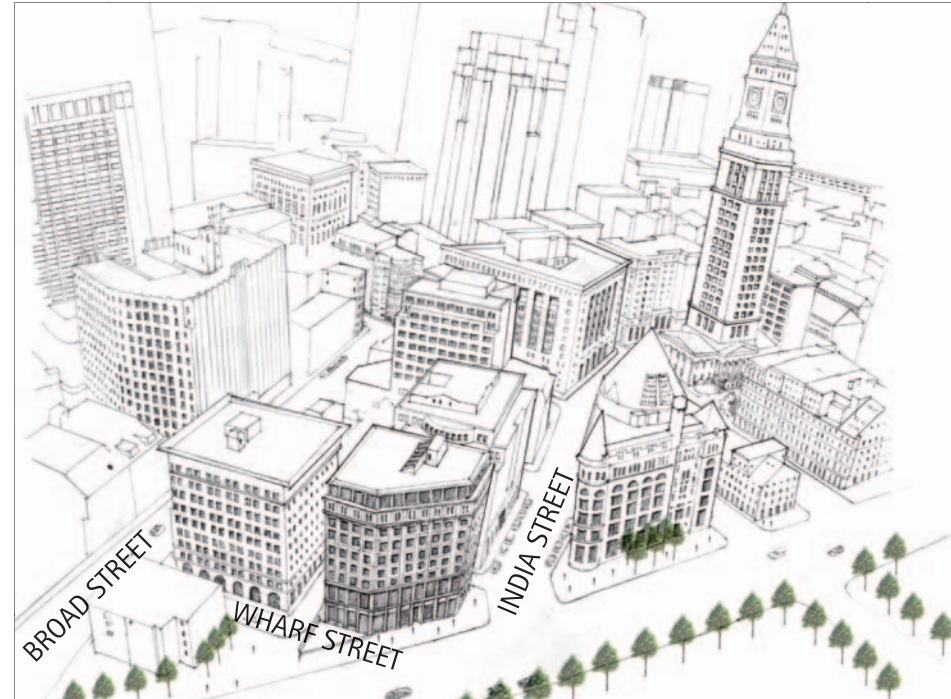
The Grain Exchange



Marketplace Center / Marriott Long Wharf



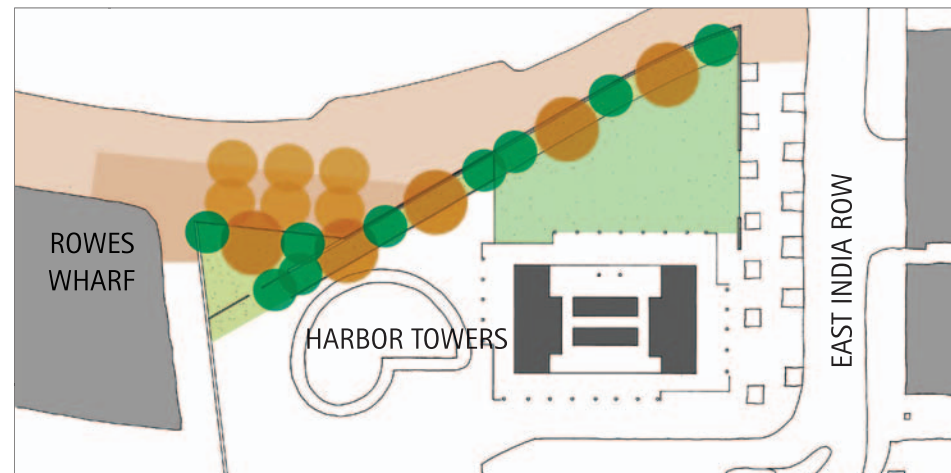
Northern Avenue Bridge / Hook Lobster



Wharf and Wendell Streets



Rowes Wharf



Harbor Towers



Central Wharf



# Implementation

## PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INITIATIVES

This study has documented a wide range of potential projects in the Wharf District responding to the prospect of the new parks, varying in status from conceptual to imminently real. Most of the project proposals described here are on private property and are therefore subject to individual property owner's initiative and decisions to invest. Some proposals are being developed to a level of detail sufficient for pricing, if not actual construction. Others rely on agreements between groups of private owners or on possible public-private partnerships to be realized.

One of the benefits of the study process has been the catalytic effect of bringing together individual parties to address matters of common concern. It is to be hoped that this document will act as the basis for further collaboration to improve the physical fabric and the maintenance of both private property and the public realm on the edges of the Greenway.

## CONCURRENT PLANS

In addition to the private initiatives documented here, there are ongoing public projects that immediately affect the Wharf District. The Central Artery contracts ongoing at the time of writing are:

- C17A6 Surface Restoration Contract. Currently in construction, due for final completion in 2006.
- D032B Wharf District Parks. Currently in design, the construction start is scheduled for Spring 2005, completion in 2006.
- Parcel 18 Request for Proposals (submissions due June 2004)

The City of Boston has completed and is currently undertaking major studies that will affect this area:

- BRA Crossroads Initiative (in progress)
- BRA Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan (complete)
- BRA Northern Avenue Bridge Restoration (in progress)
- BTB Access Boston 2000-2010 (complete)

The varying status of these continuing initiatives and their potential for implementation is summarized in the table (adjacent) and, for the 17A6 contract, in Appendix One

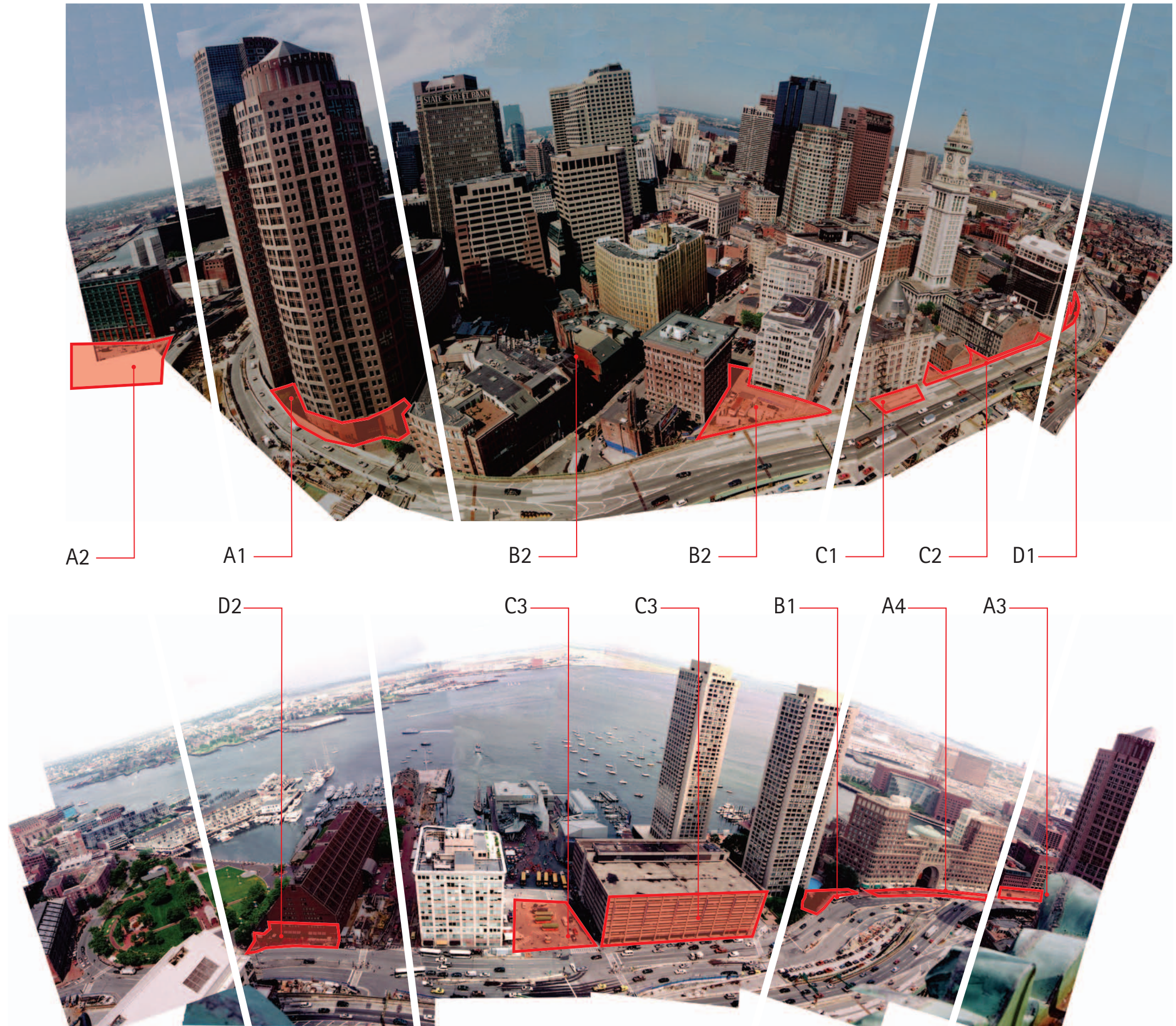
PROJECT	PROPONENT / OWNER	PUBLIC / PRIVATE	STATUS	FURTHER ACTION / IMPLEMENTATION
A1 International Place restaurant / cafe	Fort Hill Associates	Private	Feasibility Study	Continuing
A2 Independence Wharf frontage upgrade	Independence Wharf LLC	Private	In construction	
A2 Hook Lobster Outdoor Cafeteria	James Hook and Co.	Private	Feasibility Study	Continuing - proposal due Spring 2004
A3 400 Atlantic Avenue facelift	Atlantic Avenue LPS	Private	Feasibility Study	CA/T to replace brick sidewalk
A4 Rowes Wharf / Harbor Hotel / Rowes Wharf Residence frontage	Equity Office Properties / Rowes Wharf Condominiums	Private	Feasibility Study	Continuing
B1 Harbor Towers Atlantic Avenue edge	Trustees of Harbor Towers	Private	Feasibility Study	Collaboration with CA/T project re. sidewalk and wall
B2 Battery March Street condominiums	Robt C Nordblom TRST	Private	Concept	Presentation to owner
B2 India Street commercial / retail	Robins Realty / Ray C Johnson	Private	Concept	Presentation to owners
C1 The Grain Exchange new entrance and upgrade	Bruce A Beal	Private	Concept / Feasibility	Collaboration with CA/T project re. front entrance ramp and public plaza
C2 Custom House / Milk Street / Central Street	numerous	Public / Private (group)	Concept	Further study required
C3 Central Wharf upgrade, including Parcel A3N	NE Aquarium / InterPark / 255 State / Marriott Long Wharf	Public / Private (group)	Feasibility Study	Further study required including traffic movements. Parcel A3N (Frog Pond Trust) alternatives to integrate Central Wharf / Parcels 15 and 16.
D1 Marketplace Center opening up storefront	Sullivan Properties	Private	Concept	Implementation as required
D2 Marriott Long Wharf storefront extensions	Edward H Linde Trusts / Marriott	Private	Concept	Implementation as required
Northern Avenue Bridge Plaza / Hook Lobster	City of Boston / Hook Lobster	Public / Private	Concept	Further study required with bridge refurbishment
Broad Street / Wendell / Wharf Street facelift	City of Boston / individual owners	Public / Private	Concept	Broad Street area study required.
McKinley Square / India / Milk / Central / State	City of Boston / individual owners	Public / Private	Concept	Study linkage to Central and Long Wharves.
Harbor Islands Gateway Information Center	Boston Harbor Islands Partnership	Public / Private	Concept	Feasibility Study ongoing for location on Parcel 14

## ARTS PROGRAM

An additional initiative, not treated in this study, would be the introduction of an arts program for the Wharf District, to be coordinated and integrated with the Artery Arts program to provide a coherent theme for the District. On the waterfront, opportunities for art installations are presented in the

plaza in front of Northern Avenue Bridge; India Wharf; Central Wharf and Long Wharf. On the city side of the Artery, similar opportunities exist in Fort Hill Square and McKinley Square and at the frontage of the Dock Square Garage on Clinton Street.

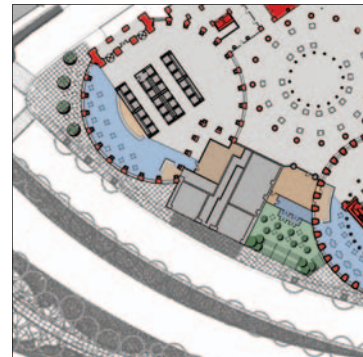






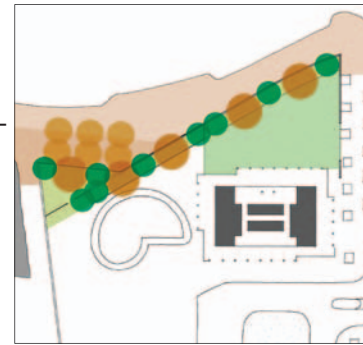
# CA/T Wharf District Contracts and Edges Coordination

The Wharf District | Financial District Edges report has been in preparation simultaneously with the design process for the future parks of Parcels 14 through 17 (the EDAW / Copley Wolff Wharf District Parks plan) and as the surface restoration plan for the 'outboard' paving and planting has been finalized for construction (the C17A6 contract). This section aims to correlate those Edge Study proposals affecting public streets and sidewalks with the two ongoing CA/T contracts.



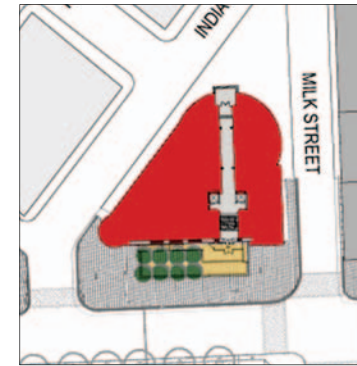
## A1 INTERNATIONAL PLACE

Additional tree planting and new entrance could be implemented as private initiative



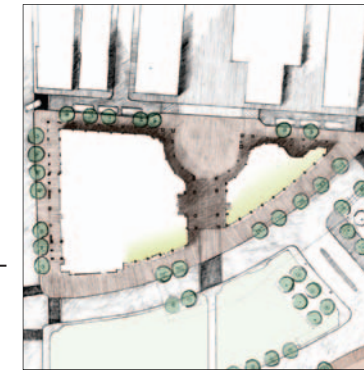
## B1 HARBOR TOWERS

Realigned wall, new paving and tree planting may be undertaken as private initiative coordinated with C17A6



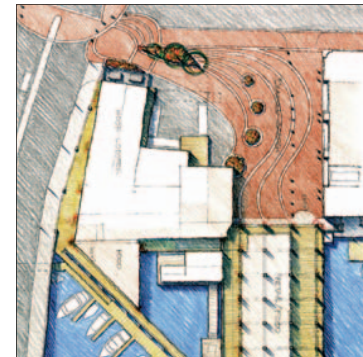
## C1 GRAIN EXCHANGE

Raised planter transformed into public plaza could be implemented in public / private partnership coordinating with C17A6 contract. This feature has not been addressed in the Wharf District Parks plan.



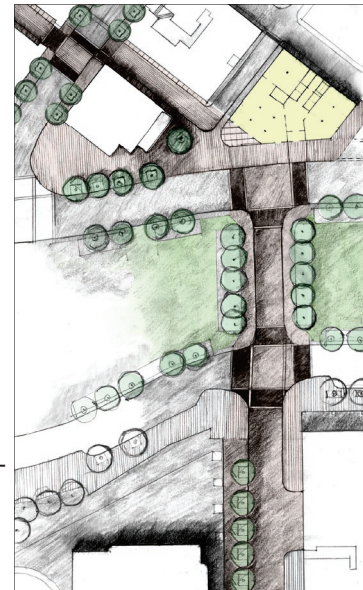
## D1 MARKETPLACE CENTER

Tree relocation could be incorporated in C17A6 contract.



## A2 INDEPENDENCE WHARF MOAKLEY BRIDGE HOOK LOBSTER

Special paving could be implemented in public / private partnership



## B2 EAST INDIA ROW WHARF STREET WENDELL STREET

Special paving could be implemented as a public / private initiative. The special paving linking East India Row and Wharf Street (between parcels 16 and 17) is acknowledged in the Wharf District Parks plan.



## C2 195 STATE STREET

Special paving on State, Central and Milk streets, as acknowledged in CA/T Wharf District Parks plan, could be implemented as a public initiative in coordination with C17A6 contract.



## D2 MARRIOTT LONG WHARF

Extension of building frontage to property line and potential repaving could be implemented as a private initiative.



## A3 400 ATLANTIC AVENUE

Brick paving in front of building to be replaced as part of C17A6 contract



## A4 ROWES WHARF

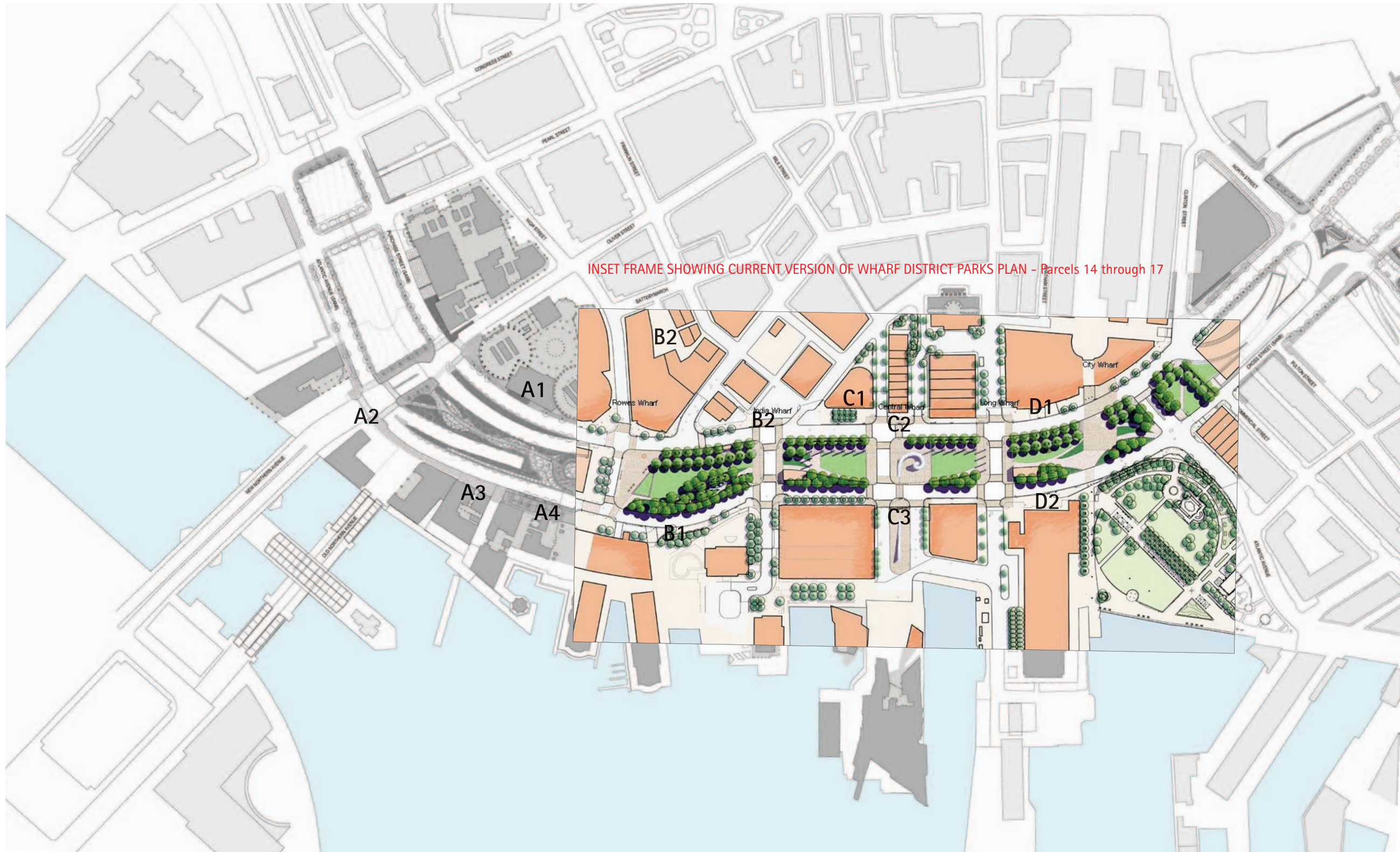
Relocated hotel entrance, realigned trees, paving and bollards could be implemented in public / private partnership in coordination with C17A6 contract.



## C3 PARCEL A3N 255 STATE STREET CENTRAL WHARF HARBOR GARAGE

Special paving on Central Wharf could be implemented as a public / private initiative. Acknowledged in the Wharf District Parks plan





INSET FRAME SHOWING CURRENT VERSION OF WHARF DISTRICT PARKS PLAN - Parcels 14 through 17

Frame inset drawing courtesy of Central Artery Tunnel Project / EDAW and Copley Wolff Associates

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# Wharf District | Financial District EDGES STUDY

## Acknowledgements

This study was funded by contributions from ABC members and by a generous grant from the Boston Foundation

### WHARF / FINANCIAL DISTRICT EDGE STUDY ABUTTERS' GROUP

<i>Chair</i>	Edwin Sidman	The Beacon Companies
<i>Vice-Chair</i>	Thomas N. O'Brien	Tishman Speyer Properties
	Robert Beal	The Beal Companies
	Jeffrey Beale	Eaton Vance Management
	Michael Cantalupa	Boston Properties
	Skip Coppola	Rowes Wharf Associates
	Ed Charlebois	InterPark / Harbor Garage
	Jonathan Davis	The Davis Companies / Broad Street Property Owners
	Robert DeLaney	Trammell Crow Company
<i>ABC Chair</i>	John Drew	World Trade Center / Seaport Hotel
	Stephen Faber	The Beal Companies
	Brian Fallon	Intell
	Chris Fincham	Harbor Towers
	Shawn Ford	Olde Towne Trolley
	Robert Gordon	Harbor Towers Board of Trustees
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	Michael Grill	Fairlane Properties
	Cristi Hollidge	GMO
	Thomas Holt III	Intell
	James Hook	Hook Lobster Company
	Doug Husid	Goulston and Storrs PC
	Paul Jacques	Boston Harbor Hotel
	Edward Johnson IV	Pembroke Real Estate
	Konstantine Krekis	Pembroke Real Estate
	Susanne Lavoie	Harbor Towers Board of Trustees
	Norman Leventhal	The Beacon Companies
	William McDonough	The Federal Reserve Bank
	Tom McShane	Dewey Square Group
	Sy Mintz	The Residences at Rowes Wharf
	Ted Oatis	The Chiofaro Company
	Jonathan Peabody	Peabody Furniture
	Chuck Redmon	ABC Design Committee / Cambridge Seven Associates
	Ed Reynolds	Custom House Tower
	Paul Saperstein	The Residences at Rowes Wharf, Board of Managers
	Jon Seward	Community Design Partnership / Hook Lobster
	J. P. Shadley	J.P. Shadley Associates / Broad Street Property Owners
	Peter Shields	Equity Office Properties Trust
	Nicho Skiadas	Tishman Speyer Properties
	James Sullivan	The Sullivan Properties
	Deirdre Tierney	Legal Seafoods
	Ed Toomey	The New England Aquarium
	Terry Worden	Boston Marriott Long Wharf
	Justin Wyner	The Residences at Rowes Wharf, Board of Managers

### PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

<b>Boston Redevelopment Authority</b>	
Mark Maloney	Executive Director
Rebecca Barnes	Chief Planner
Richard Garver	Deputy Director
Robert Kroin	Chief Architect
<b>Boston Parks and Recreation Department</b>	
Sue Brown	Project Manager, CA/T Landscape Issues
<b>Boston Transportation Department</b>	
James Gillooly	Deputy Commissioner, Planning and Engineering
Vineet Gupta	Director, Policy and Planning
<b>Boston Public Works Department</b>	
Joseph Casazza	Commissioner
Para Jayasinghe	City Engineer
<b>Central Artery Tunnel Project / Massachusetts Turnpike Authority</b>	
Fred Yalouris	Director, Architecture and Urban Design
Stephen Brewer	Project Manager, Wharf District Parks
<b>The Boston Foundation</b>	
Paul Grogan	President and CEO
Mary Jo Meisner	Vice President, Communications
Angel Bermudez	Co-Director for Program / Director of Grantmaking
Ann McQueen	Program Officer
<b>Boston Harbor Islands Partnership</b>	
Sarah Peskin	National Park Service, Northeast Region
George Price	National Park Service, Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Katherine Abbott	The Island Alliance
Doug Welsh	The Island Alliance
Doug McGarrah	The Island Alliance Board
Ed Toomey	New England Aquarium

### FUNDING CONTRIBUTORS

Artery Business Committee
The Boston Foundation
Boston Properties / Boston Marriott Long Wharf
Equity Office Properties / Rowes Wharf Board of Managers
Harbor Towers I and II
New England Aquarium
Pembroke Real Estate
Sullivan Properties
The Beal Companies
The Chiofaro Company
Urban Growth Property Trust / Interpark

### PROJECT TEAM

<b>Artery Business Committee</b>
Rick Dimino
Biss Antikarov
John Heffernan
Tom Nally
Betty Sullivan
<b>Hubert Murray Architect + Planner</b>
Hubert Murray
Justin Crane
Noah Resnick
Sarah Roszler
<b>Chan Krieger and Associates</b>
Alex Krieger
Patrick Tedesco
Radhika Bagai
Alice Carey
David Gamble
Michael Noll
<b>Jung Brannen Associates</b>
Robert Hsiung
<b>The Office of David Neilson</b>
David Neilson
<b>Todreas Hanley Associates</b>
Carol Todreas
Jivan Colabawalla
Mark Older