

5.0 URBAN DESIGN

5.1 Urban Planning and Design of Seaport Square

Consistent with the City of Boston's Seaport Public Realm Plan (February 1999), the Seaport Square Project is committed to making the South Boston waterfront the City's next great neighborhood. The revitalization of 23 acres of underutilized parking lots into a mixed-use neighborhood in South Boston's waterfront represents a unique opportunity that will shape the way people live, work, shop and play in the City for the next century and beyond.

Currently the Project Site is occupied by parking lots, fencing, and the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Voyage. The Project will provide civic and public uses and create a sense of place along the South Boston waterfront. Where asphalt streets and parking lots now exist, the Project will provide 23 well-designed, sustainable buildings, creating a new neighborhood with wide sidewalks adjacent to new retail establishments, landscaped areas, and welcoming open spaces for residents, office workers and visitors alike.

The Seaport Square Project compliments the City's built heritage, while fostering environmentally responsible growth. Seaport Square enhances the public realm through its creation of a truly vibrant 24-hour/7-day a week urban waterfront neighborhood with open space and civic uses that infuse the waterfront with urban life. Well designed public spaces invite people to connect with each other in meaningful ways. The open spaces of Seaport Square are carefully planned in order to engage people day and night by providing new places to live, work, relax and recreate.

Unique to Seaport Square are its cultural facilities along the newly created cultural corridor, linking the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center (BCEC) and Summer Street to the Institute of Contemporary Art and the waterfront.

The Project's integrated street network ties the buildings from the Fort Point Channel District to the views and openness of the waterfront, extending the fabric of the existing historic neighborhood with complimentary yet vibrant contemporary architecture. Its lively pedestrian friendly streetscapes, green spaces, public access, view corridors, ground floor public uses and significant retail space, convenient access to public transportation and creation of new streets and connections, will make it a premier destination waterfront neighborhood.

5.2 Area Planning: - Relationship to Existing Planning Initiatives

The following sections are a recitation, summary or description of area planning studies.

Boston Seaport Developments

Master planning by the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) and the City of Boston in the 1990s established a framework for mixed-use development in the South Boston waterfront, while still preserving the needs of the working port. Mixed-use development in the area began with the development of the World Trade Center (WTC) complex. The addition of the Seaport Hotel, West Office Building and East Office Building in the late-1990s expanded the mix of uses in the area. The Moakley Federal Courthouse anchors the western end of the South Boston peninsula. More recent development includes the John Hancock (formerly Manulife) office building which was completed in 2003 and the Park Lane Seaport Apartments, one of the largest apartment projects constructed in Boston in 20 years.

The Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, among the largest convention centers in the nation, is one of the South Boston waterfront's newest and most prominent developments in the district. The BCEC is located southeast of the Project Site and opened in 2004. The opening of the Institute of Contemporary Art further diversified the mix of uses in the area by adding an important cultural component. Fan Pier, which is currently under construction, will add a mix of uses to the area, as well as new open spaces for future residents, workers, and visitors to enjoy. Additional projects, including the Congress Street Hotel, 49-63 Melcher Street, and Waterside Place have been approved by the BRA

Also, in 2006, the BRA created the Fort Point District 100 Acres Master Plan, which encourages a mix of uses and open spaces to the area adjacent to the east side of the Fort Point Channel. The Seaport Square Project recognizes the importance of linking the development of the 100 Acre plan with the development of Seaport Square and the waterfront. Incorporating Boston Wharf Road as a north-south axis strengthens its role by creating a well defined street section with Seaport Square Green situated at its end. Seaport Square Green alignment with the Fan Pier Park forms a larger continuous public green space which responds to both the Harborwalk and the 100 Acre plan by providing a strong link between them.

In addition to the planning that has been done in the area and new construction over the past several years, the state and city have also made substantial investments in public infrastructure to improve the transportation infrastructure and public amenities in the area. These improvements are fundamental to the long-term build-out of the area, and help define the development densities and types of development suitable in the South Boston waterfront. Transportation improvements to highway infrastructure are the result of careful planning and coordination between Massport, the Central Artery/Tunnel project and the City of Boston. The resulting series of highway on- and off-ramps provide direct vehicular access to I-90 and I-93 in all directions. In 2004, Massport opened the South Boston Maritime Park which celebrates Boston's rich maritime history in a waterfront setting. The

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's (MBTA) Silver Line, a rapid transit line opened in 2005, provides quick and convenient access to the South Boston waterfront area from South Station.

In the center of the existing development, new development and planned development lies Seaport Square, a property that has the greatest potential to link the disparate pieces together into the seamless, vibrant, mixed-use neighborhood envisioned by the BRA in several planning initiatives. The location provides the opportunity to connect the shorter, older buildings in the Fort Point Channel District to the taller, newer buildings that have been built over the past decade, or are planned but not yet built. The height and density are planned such that they increase as one moves east from the Fort Point Channel, and south from Boston Harbor starting at Fan Pier. The height also connects the Project Site to the BCEC, which is at a higher elevation along Summer Street. The types and uses of proposed development will connect all of the pieces - existing, under construction, and proposed - through a mixed-use program that ties together the convention uses, artist community, commercial and office employees, visitors, and residents of the South Boston waterfront.

The Seaport Public Realm Plan, 1999

In 1999, the Boston Redevelopment Authority issued a public realm plan for the South Boston waterfront called "The Seaport Public Realm Plan." This Plan established a set of principles that became the waterfront's planning framework, which was in turn the basis for the South Boston Municipal Harbor Plan as well as the Seaport Square Project. These principles include:

- ◆ Promote access to Boston Harbor as a shared natural resource to connect people, land, and water.
- ◆ Preserve and enhance the industrial port, and balance the growth of mixed-use and recreational activities along Boston Harbor with the needs of maritime commerce.
- ◆ Plan the district as a vital mixed-use neighborhood that expands the city's residential communities and provides a lively mix of open space, civic and cultural, water-transit, and commercial uses, and offers job opportunities that are mutually supportive and bring activity to the waterfront.
- ◆ Develop the district as an integral part of Boston's economy, enhancing the city's manufacturing, hotel, commercial office, retail, and visitor industries, and securing its position as an economic catalyst for the region.
- ◆ Ensure potential impacts of development on the South Boston residential community and all neighborhoods of the city are limited and that the communities share in the benefits of private investment.

The South Boston waterfront Public Realm Plan emphasizes three major strategies. The first is that the waterfront can be defined into three subareas, each of which relates to a body of water with its own unique character. These subareas include the Fort Point Channel District, the Piers District, and the Reserved Channel District.

Seaport Square falls within the Fort Point Channel Subdistrict. The Plan addresses the unique opportunities specifically associated with Fort Point Channel and its importance as a great public space between the Downtown and the South Boston waterfront. This Plan envisions the Fort Point Channel as an intimately-scaled, narrow channel, similar to a riverfront in the heart of an historic European city, with active edges, small boats, and an abundance of water activities, with multiple bridge crossings. The land area along the eastern edge of the Fort Point Channel is envisioned as hosting the most diverse mix of uses in the entire planning area, with public, civic, residential, retail, hotel, commercial, industrial, manufacturing, warehouse, research and development, and office uses.

The second strategy, which the Seaport Square Project follows, is to strengthen street connections that link new and existing developments to the water. The two connecting orientations include the east-west connection to downtown and the north-south connections to the South Boston community and the Harbor. These connections will be strengthened through improvements to new streets and existing streets, open space, and pedestrian links.

The third element is ensuring mixed-use neighborhoods with strong residential components throughout the waterfront area. The Plan's recommendation is not to create another downtown district dominated by office and other commercial uses that go dark after 6 o'clock in the afternoon and on the weekends. Rather, the Plan advocates an appropriate mix of retail, office, manufacturing, warehouse, research and development, hotel, residential, open space, and community facilities that will bring life to the waterfront and create an active and rich 24-hour district. The Seaport Square Project supports fully and strives to enhance this third element.

South Boston Municipal Harbor Plan, 2000

Municipal Harbor Plans allow municipalities to tailor the Waterways Regulations to the unique circumstances of that city, its economy and its harbor. In order to implement the Public Realm Plan, and to achieve a public realm more in keeping with Boston's urban character and mixed-use economy than would have resulted under the strict application of the State's Waterways Regulations, the BRA elected to develop a Municipal Harbor Plan for the South Boston waterfront. A series of substitute use and dimensional requirements was presented with corresponding offset provisions that, when implemented, will create an inviting and active public waterfront environment. All of Seaport Square Block A, and small slivers of Blocks B, G, H and M1 are within Chapter 91 jurisdiction and are compatible with and promote the goals of the South Boston MHP.

The principles on which the South Boston Municipal Harbor Plan was based include:

- ◆ Enhance and activate open space;
- ◆ Avoid privatization of the shoreline;
- ◆ Minimize adverse effects of wind and shadow;
- ◆ Identify substitutions and quantifiable offsets;
- ◆ Promote offsets that are valued by the public; and
- ◆ Ensure that development is carried out in a manner that protects public rights in tidelands

Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan, 2002

During the development of the South Boston Municipal Harbor Plan, a group of interested individuals began to focus on the Fort Point Channel, ultimately recommending that a more detailed planning effort be undertaken for this important city resource. Out of these discussions came the proposal to develop a Watersheet Activation Plan for the Fort Point Channel. This planning effort represents the collaborative efforts of the BRA, the Fort Point Channel Abutters Group, and the Fort Point Channel Working Group.

The Watersheet Activation Plan contemplates a number of public amenities designed to activate the Fort Point Channel. Among those is the construction of public access along the Channel's edges.

The Plan further contemplates certain public uses in the so-called "Seawall Basin" south of Summer Street, including rowing, canoeing, racing, water taxiing, youth programs, water festivals, lantern festivals, paddle boats, kayaks, floating islands, floating art, floating horticultural displays, an art barge, model boat racing, light festivals and displays, a floating park, fountains, an interpretive water trail, and tidal art.

These public uses will benefit from a number of improvements such as the lighting of existing bridges, a floating pavilion, a public boating facility, a landside support facility, an art barge, and fountains, as well as a pedestrian bridge designed to link the 100 acres more closely to the existing and future transit facilities (subways, trains, buses) in the vicinity of South Station. The Seaport Square Project will strengthen these goals and further activate the area through enhanced and activated open space at Old Sleeper Street immediately adjacent to proposed construction on Block A.

100 Acres Master Plan, 2006

The continuation of public realm planning in the South Boston waterfront includes the recently completed 100 Acres Master Planning process for the Fort Point District. The goal was to create a public realm plan that would guide future development of the existing surface parking lots around the Proctor & Gamble/Gillette (“P&G/Gillette”) plant, the USPS facility, and Fort Point historic structures. The Master Plan provides the framework for growth in the 100 Acres area for the next 40 years.

The Plan calls for a vibrant 24-hour, mixed-use neighborhood anchored by over 11 acres of new public open space and almost 5.9 million square feet of development. The Plan defines land use, building heights, and densities while preserving the existing industrial context. Other critical elements include the extension of the Harborwalk and the use of open space as a connection from Haul Road to the Fort Point Channel.

The overall approach for distributing land uses is based on three general principles:

- ◆ Existing industrial uses will be protected and their expansion accommodated and encouraged. Offices, research and development facilities, and artist live/work spaces as well as thoughtful physical design of roadways and landscaping will provide a good transition to the industrial use.
- ◆ Commercial uses along Summer Street will be maintained.
- ◆ New residential uses should be located near and around the Channel and around open spaces, such as the proposed open space corridors.

The overall vision of the 100 Acres Master Plan is to create an active mixed-use neighborhood that retains and encourages expansion of appropriate existing industrial uses and employment but also builds on the residential base that will support a greater diversity of uses and population. The plan calls for a 24-hour community that incorporates a variety of land uses.

Fan Pier Master Plan, 2007

Fan Pier spans nine city blocks developed by The Fallon Company and will include three million square feet of LEED Certified office space, residences, a hotel, and a six-acre marina enhanced by a public transportation dock and moorings. Fan Pier, when completed, will include 2.9 million SF of mixed-uses. The Phase one office building (Parcel F) is currently under construction, totaling 18 stories and 493,000sf. The adjacent Institute of Contemporary Art was completed in 2006.

Harborwalk

One of the most important components of the City's waterfront revitalization program is the Harborwalk, a continuous public walkway along the water's edge that is, in effect, a re-established shoreline. The Harborwalk system connects the City's neighborhoods to its Harbor, leading recreational, cultural and historic attractions, and direct connections to public transit including water transportation facilities. When completed, the Harborwalk will stretch over 47 miles linking Dorchester to East Boston.

The Harborwalk program is being achieved through collaborative efforts among the BRA, other city and state agencies, private developers, residents and harbor advocacy groups such as The Boston Harbor Association. Harborwalk is constructed in segments by developers of waterfront properties pursuant to City zoning regulations that require that new development be set back from the edge of the water a certain distance and that the setback area be improved as a pedestrian path open to the public.

Harborwalk has a changing character as it winds through the City's different neighborhoods and downtown districts, stretching along the East Boston, Charlestown, North End, Downtown, South Boston and Dorchester neighborhoods from Chelsea Creek to the Neponset River. Part of the richness of Harborwalk is its variety, reflecting the various activities and urban texture of adjacent land.

South Boston Waterfront Gateways Study, 2005

With the completion of the Rose Kennedy Greenway, the major east-west streets that connect historic Downtown Boston to the emerging South Boston waterfront presents a wonderful urban design opportunity in the city. Currently, these streets - Old Northern Avenue, Seaport Boulevard, Congress and Summer Streets - represent a divide in the continuous and vital urban fabric of Boston. With appropriate improvements and future development, old Boston and new Boston can be merged into a single seamless urban environment. If the full potential of these streets is to be realized, public agencies and the abutting property owners must come together to craft a shared vision.

To this end, abutters within the study area collaborated in a series of visioning sessions in an effort to ascertain the scale and character of the various streets and their role within a redefined district. Members of the BRA's Greenway Crossroads Initiative team also participated in ongoing discussions as the streetscape design preferences unfolded. In addition, the Boston Convention Center Authority, which had already undertaken to research improvements to Summer Street, agreed to fold their own efforts into that of the South Boston Waterfront Gateways Study, completing the project mission of addressing all of the South Boston access corridors spanning the Fort Point Channel.

Improvements to the public realm in Boston rarely occur without some collaboration between public and private entities. The South Boston waterfront Gateways Study final report represents, on the one hand, a consensus between City and State agencies and participating private property owners and institutions about the qualities of the future public realm in the area. More importantly, the study serves not just as a plan for those future improvements, but as a catalyst for the multi-tiered partnerships that are needed to make them happen.

Visions for the new South Boston abound: The Fort Point Channel Watersheet Activation Plan, the Fort Point Downtown Municipal Harbor Plan Phase 2, the South Boston Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan, the 100 Acre Plan, and the Commonwealth Flats Development Area, to list a few. Among the many plans, only the South Boston Waterfront Public Realm Plan, completed in 1999, overlaps the entire focus area of this study.

Despite its proximity to the Financial District to the west, Fort Point to the South and the newly establish Commonwealth Flats developments to the east, the area remains relatively untouched by the development activity surrounding it. On the one hand, the district contains many important institutions, including the Moakley Federal Courthouse, the new Institute of Contemporary Art, the Boston Children's Museum, the Boston Fire Museum as well as several successful smaller destinations such as restaurants, retail establishments, and galleries. In addition, the district is rich with landscaped waterfront access, to both the Fort Point Channel and Boston Harbor. On the other hand, these assets are in many instances disconnected by unimproved streetscapes, inactive uses, abrupt changes in grade and a lack of north-south through streets. It is against this backdrop of unfulfilled potential that this planning initiative was conceived.

Beyond the obvious need to simply plan for improvements to the area, the study represents a unique opportunity to envision the urban realm in advance of individual development projects. The potential for those developments is great. By crafting a clear set of criteria for the vision of the public realm, these large and imminent developments will be considered in the context of a continuous streetscape rather than as stand-alone projects.

Crossroads Initiative, 2005

In early 2004, Mayor Thomas M. Menino launched the Crossroads Initiative, a comprehensive planning program that leverages the massive infrastructure investment of the Central Artery/Tunnel Project to shape and define downtown Boston following the Big Dig. The ultimate goal of Crossroads is to re-knit the fabric of Boston, reconnecting neighborhoods to the Harbor and to each other with the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway as the centerpiece.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority, working with various City departments and outside consultants, has explored the opportunities and challenges of this endeavor. The Crossroads Initiative focuses on six miles of key streets that connect neighborhoods and destinations

along the Greenway. Twelve streets have been identified that, with the creation of the Greenway, have the potential to form these vital connections between residential and business districts long separated by the elevated Central Artery. The initiative also aims to establish modern, functional and attractive connections to and from Boston Harbor, the Greenway, and downtown neighborhoods. Crossroads are intended to be Great Streets - streets of exceptional quality and vitality, with 21st Century amenities that will strengthen Boston as a world-class city. Construction of the Crossroads will mean improved pedestrian environments, enhanced elements for way finding, increased activity along sidewalks, better traffic flow, and new opportunities for art and performance. The goal is to create a convenient, comfortable, information- and activity rich environment that attracts and supports Boston residents, businesses and visitors. It will facilitate their travel - largely as pedestrians - and will promote their enjoyment of and appreciation for our downtown's many wonderful neighborhoods and abundance of historic, cultural and retail destinations.

5.3 Urban Design Principles

The overall principles of the Seaport Square Project are:

- ◆ Extending the existing urban fabric;
 - ◆ Urban connections and circulation;
 - ◆ New Urban Places; Open Space Network and Public Spaces
- ◆ Public art /cultural corridor
- ◆ 24/7 mix of uses
- ◆ Vibrant public space – activating the street level (ground floor plan)
- ◆ Massing variety and design diversity
- ◆ Sustainable design: green strategies

One of Seaport Square's many attributes is the fact that the proposed Project will enliven Seaport Boulevard, a primary artery in the South Boston waterfront district and the district's most important link to the Financial District and Downtown Boston. By shaping the physical environment that defines this street and its connections, Seaport Square will realize Seaport Boulevard's potential as a world class promenade full of activity.

Another goal of the Seaport Public Realm Plan was to "make the Silver Line MBTA stop the nucleus of high density development with visual connections inbound to development and outbound to the water". The massing and proposed heights of Blocks B, C, D, G, H, J, K and L 1 and L2 are consistent with this vision.

Seaport Square also balances density sufficiently to create a vibrant sense of place with the Project's own unique 21st century identity, while at the same time seamlessly interconnecting to the late 19th and early 20th century architectural vocabulary. Seaport Boulevard's streetwalls are designed to mediate these two distinct urban fabrics: the northern side of the boulevard proposes a series of higher buildings, matching the block size and height of the adjacent Fan Pier buildings; while the southern side of the boulevard continues the scale, massing and height of the industrial brick warehouse fabric of the Fort Point Channel District. The transition in scale and massing of these two distinct urban edges will be further articulated in the buildings' architecture.

Seaport Square not only fills an urban void, but also links together separate clusters of diverse activity and urban fabric. The plan establishes a series of connections between the downtown Financial District, the waterfront area, the existing Boston Wharf buildings and the Fan Pier project. These connections stitch together isolated entities such as the ICA, the Seaport World Trade Center, the BCEC, and the planned future development of Waterside Place.

5.3.1 Extending the Existing Urban Fabrics

The Seaport Square Project mediates between distinct and currently isolated urban fabrics surrounding it; Fan Pier to the north, Fort Point Channel District to the west, and a collection of individual large scale modern structures to the south-east. Each of these areas has a particular character defined by scale, material, street width, and use, which are related to the dimensions of their blocks as well as to their period of construction.

The Fan Pier development is characterized by a grid pattern with blocks of approximately 200 by 200 feet with dense build out that transitions from higher (approximately 20 stories) to lower buildings (approximately 12 stories) toward the water's edge.

The Fort Point Channel Landmark District has a cohesive and recognizable identity due to its use of materials, continuous streetwalls, massing and alignment. This area is characterized by ornamental brick warehouse buildings of similar height (generally six to eight stories), rhythm of window openings, and architectural language. As part of the landmark designation of Fort Point Channel Landmark District, two "Protection Areas" were also adopted: the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area, and the A Street Protection Area. Blocks H, J, K and Q of the Project Site are located within the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area. The goals of the Seaport Boulevard/Boston Wharf Road Protection Area is to protect view corridors into and out of the adjacent landmark district and to ensure that the massing, land coverage, and height of new construction on adjacent lots is compatible with that of the landmark district.

The area between the BCEC, the adjacent hotel, the Seaport World Trade Center, the Central Artery Vent Structure, and newly created off-ramps and tunnels to Logan International Airport includes buildings of varied programs, heights, architectural style and materials, which create larger blocks, and less friendly pedestrian streets and connections.

The massing strategy of the Project responds to these different fabrics by extending, intersecting and combining them, at times separated by an urban space and at times overlaid one on top of or within the other. Figures 5-1 and 5-2 provide views indicating how the Project will extend adjacent urban fabric into the Project Site. The strategy accomplishes two very important objectives: 1) It links the Seaport Square development to the scale and grain of its neighbors at all the edges where they meet, and 2) It produces a mixture of block sizes within the Project, which in turn supports a diverse mix of programs and massing options.

5.3.2 *Urban Connections and Circulation*

Seaport Square serves as a crossroads between Boston’s central business district and the redeveloping Seaport District. This Project connects vital commercial, cultural, and civic activities by establishing critical nodes and links between them. Figure 5-3 shows urban connections and street character. The integrated network of streets and open spaces is made up of two street systems: the east-west connectors which are the main urban streets connecting the Seaport District to Downtown Boston, and the local smaller north-south streets that lead to the waterfront. Of the north-south streets, the new Harbor Street is the vital new link which not only operates on the local neighborhood scale but also fulfills a larger urban function as a connector between the elevated Summer Street and the waterfront.

5.3.2.1 *The Public Nature of Major East-West Arterial City Scale Streets*

Consistent with the Seaport Public Realm Plan, the Project takes into consideration the urban role of four critical east-west streets and one pedestrian bridge which connects the Project area and Downtown Boston.

Three main streets tie the Seaport to downtown and the rest of the city-Seaport Boulevard, Summer Street, and Congress Street.

Seaport Boulevard is the easternmost extension of a network of streets that begins in Charlestown, comes along Atlantic Avenue, crosses over Fort Point Channel and concludes near the industrial port/ Fish Pier subdistrict. The challenge is to develop strategies to connect Seaport Boulevard as much as possible to the water. Summer Street is the Seaport’s front door and address, the main civic street for the City, which starts at the Boston Common, passes through the Seaport and South Boston, ending at the L Street Beach. An additional challenge is to connect the elevated Summer Street to other nearby streets and to the water as well. Congress Street is the in-between street, coming from the Fleet Center, behind City Hall, through Post Office Square and across Fort Point Channel through the Boston Wharf District. It is a narrow, winding pedestrian –oriented street for most of its length, but in the Seaport becomes part of the tunnel and highway access network and takes on a major change of scale and character.

For the most part, the existing street pattern has little to do with the waterfront setting, nor is it comparable to the street grid of a typical Boston neighborhood: the blocks are too big, the north-south streets are discontinuous, and most do not reach the water. The area could benefit from being subdivided into smaller chunks organized around a finer grain of street blocks. The Seaport Square Project seeks to do just that.

Seaport Boulevard (Figures 5-4 – 5-6)

Seaport Boulevard is the main urban axis of the Seaport District. It is the new gateway to the South Boston waterfront from Downtown via the Evelyn Moakley Bridge, and provides a welcoming entrance into the city. It is designed as a more formal, grand boulevard, landscaped with trees in its median and along its wide sidewalks. This vibrant urban connection celebrates and focuses attention on the City's skyline with a grand entrance framed by the proposed Project.

This Boulevard will be the premier retail promenade of Seaport Square, favoring the pedestrian experience, but also including bicycle, vehicular and truck circulation. With access over the Moakley Bridge or from the Harborwalk along the Fort Point Channel, it will provide a pronounced entrance into the South Boston waterfront. In the tradition of urban boulevards, it establishes a presence as a destination in itself. Sidewalks on Seaport Boulevard have been increased to 35 feet on the northern side and 25 feet on the southern side. The northern side of the street widens to increase space for winter sun (coming from the south). Destination shops and restaurants will engage pedestrians day and night. Seaport Boulevard will provide numerous opportunities for people to sit, relax, meet friends, people watch, or enjoy the waterfront.

Congress Street (Figures 5-7 – 5-11)

Congress Street, a crossroad through Downtown Boston, is a meandering street which connects several important urban spaces. Its curved form creates segmented views when moving or walking along it, and gives a distinct visual experience. Much different than a straight street which highlights a static one-point perspective view, moving along Congress Street creates a changing focal point which corresponds to its curvilinear nature. Every turn highlights a building situated at the end of the established view corridor and gives prominence to that building as an urban reference for the street's continued path.

Congress Street is read as a series of amenities and destinations, from its important presence in Downtown; connecting Government Center, Faneuil Hall, Post Office Square, Boston Tea Party Museum, the Children's Museum, to its future role in the Seaport District.

The intent is to preserve Congress Street's unique character of continuity while highlighting its 'end of corridor view' buildings, which city planner Kevin Lynch would dub "urban landmarks". In keeping with the context of Congress Street, the proposed buildings on

Blocks N and P are located similarly on the curved segments. People approaching from Downtown Boston along Congress Street, will encounter these two “urban landmarks” buildings at the end of their view corridor; a focus as they arrive in Seaport Square. Buildings on Blocks N and P will be prominent not only as urban landmarks along Congress Street but also as architecture which strategically engages Congress Street as part of the new entrance to the Seaport Square neighborhood. Respecting the historical and material context of Congress Street, the intention is to extend the presence of masonry. The use of brick will strengthen this sense of continuity with the Fort Point Channel District.

Summer Street (Figures 5-12 – 5-15)

Summer Street, at the southern edge of the Project Site, is an important connector for the Seaport Square Project as it provides the main east-west access to South Station and the major connection between Downtown and South Boston. Its elevated condition, which was a result of bridging over the historic railways, created a disconnect between movement along Summer Street and the waterfront. Even though Summer Street crosses through the Fort Point Channel District it does not connect to any of the District streets (with the exception of Melcher Street right off the Summer Street bridge).

As a spatial experience, Summer Street presents two extreme conditions where it meets the N and P Blocks. Within the Fort Point Channel Landmark District, Summer Street is defined by a pedestrian-scale continuous streetwall of the uniform brick facades of the warehouse buildings. On the eastern edge, the elevated highway and pedestrian zone with vast vacant space meets with larger structures such as the Central Artery ventilation building, the BCEC, and proposed Waterside Place shopping area.

Blocks N and P are situated at the meeting of these two distinct experiences. With the creation of Harbor Street between Blocks N and P connecting Summer Street to the waterfront, the new buildings will now define an urban edge, creating both a continuation of the streetwall, and a new gateway condition. This public realm benefit knits the neighborhood together along Harbor Street and provides a pedestrian friendly and natural transition between the Fort Point Channel District and the BCEC.

Northern Avenue (Figures 5-16 – 5-18)

Northern Avenue is currently a street between parking lots serving the Moakley Federal Courthouse and the ICA. Constrained by water on either edge, it is the only localized east-west street within the site, and provides a smaller scaled, neighborhood atmosphere. On its western edge along the Fort Point Channel, Northern Avenue extends into Old Northern Avenue Bridge, a pedestrian bridge linking the Fort Point District to Downtown, while on its eastern edge it currently bends away from the Harbor and is absorbed into Seaport Boulevard.

Northern Avenue will connect the Northern Avenue Bridge into the Seaport District, and by its adjacencies, to exhibition space, entertainment uses, and the public open space of Courthouse Square. Northern Avenue will also be a vital and important pedestrian-friendly street linked with a sequence of amenities and public spaces, including Fan Pier Park and the Seaport Square Green. Northern Avenue will be a distinctly active and lively pedestrian street with waterfront views parallel to the grand promenade of Seaport Boulevard. New streetscape elements, trees and plantings, public art, and signage will convey the street's unique personality. On its eastern end Northern Avenue meets the waterfront as a pedestrian connection. On its western end Northern Avenue continues across the Old Northern Avenue Bridge across Fort Point Channel connecting to the Rose Kennedy Greenway.

5.3.2.2 North-South Local Streets (Figures 5-19 – 5-21)

In the north-south direction, connections are established by extending pedestrian Farnsworth Streets and vehicular Thomson Place across Seaport Boulevard from the Fort Point Channel District to Northern Avenue, creating small scaled, walkable city streets. Boston Wharf Road and East Service Road also participate in this north-south movement but are more active and wider streets. They run through the site providing links between the residents of Seaport Square and the Harbor. The pedestrian character and predominance of the north-south local street is further enforced by three pedestrian only open spaces created as continuations of existing and proposed streets. These spaces include: Courthouse Way between Blocks B and C, an extension of Farnsworth Street that provides a connection to Courthouse Way and the Harborwalk; Harbor Way, a wide pedestrian passage between Blocks L1 and L2, extends Harbor Street and allows vistas to the water; and M Way, between Blocks M1 and M2, connects the Congress Street and B Street intersection with Autumn Lane which moves towards the water front.

5.3.2.3 Harbor Street

A striking aspect of the Seaport Square Project is the construction of Harbor Street. Harbor Street, sloping up to Seaport Hill, creates a vital new connection for pedestrians to walk from South Station, BCEC and Summer Street down toward Seaport Boulevard and the waterfront. Harbor Street connects to Summer Street through a 'gateway' condition (Harbor Way open space at the base) and slopes towards the waterfront, crossing through the residential Seaport Hill green space and connecting to both Boston Wharf Road and East Service Street. Figure 5-22 shows Harbor Street as an important design element for the Seaport Square Project and a crucial improvement to the public realm.

5.3.2.4 Site Circulation and Street Hierarchy – Figure 5-23

Pedestrian Network and Strategies

Pedestrian amenities and accessibility have been built into all streets in Seaport Square: the boulevards, local streets, connectors, and pedestrian ways (see Figure 5-24). Four pedestrian ways are planned, including:

- ◆ Enhancement along Old Sleeper Street between the Barking Crab and Block A, creating a pedestrian link to existing Harborwalk segments.
- ◆ Courthouse Way (as an extension of Farnsworth Street) between Block B and Block C (Courthouse Square);
- ◆ Harbor Way between Block L1 and Block L2 as a continuation of Harbor Street,
- ◆ Autumn Lane between Block M1 and Block M2. (M Way)

These connections will enhance pedestrian travel between Seaport Square and other important destinations such as the Courthouse, the Children’s Museum, the ICA, South Station, and the waterfront. They will also serve as “traffic-calming” measures that discourage through-trips.

Major corridors such as Seaport Boulevard, Congress Street, and Summer Street will be designed to provide gracious sidewalks and medians. Sidewalks will be designed to enhance the retail environment and will be wide enough to accommodate outdoor seating and sidewalk entertainment.

Bicycle Routes (Figure 5-25)

Seaport Square is well served by the bicycle routes through South Boston. Summer Street, Congress Street, and Seaport Boulevard are all designated as east–west bicycle connections. A Street, D Street, and L Street are all designated as prime north–south connections. The new Harbor Street/Autumn Lane connections to be provided by Seaport Square will enable cyclists to negotiate the grade change between Summer Street and Congress Street more easily.

Street Sections (Figure 5-26 Street Sections Key Plan and Figures 5-27 – 5-38 for Street Sections)

5.3.3 *New Urban Places: Open Space Network and Public Spaces*

5.3.3.1 *Open Space Network*

The network of streets and open spaces created by the plan are shown in Figures 5-39.

Benefits of Tree-Lined Streets

Tree-lined streets contribute in many ways to the quality of life in an urban setting. Aside from providing shaded places for people to socialize, trees filter harmful pollutants produced by vehicular traffic, bring a human scale element to the sidewalk and streetscape and to enhance the pedestrian experience. They also help to protect the environment by reducing stormwater runoff and the “heat island” effect.

Benefits of Urban Open Spaces

Urban open spaces provide a range of tangible benefits to the community; they provide opportunities for relaxation and recreation and are perceived as areas of calm that foster cohesive community activities. As such they can be seen to attract businesses to the area, stimulate economic growth, and enhance property values. As part of a broader urban plan, investing in open space can serve as an anchor for revitalizing neighborhoods and building healthy communities.

Open Space as an Armature

The Seaport Square Project consists of four major interconnected open spaces, as shown in Figure 5-6, which act both as connectors and as urban destinations in themselves: Seaport Square Green, an urban open space that both anchors the Project to the site and connects it to the larger-scale public space network; Seaport Hill, a residential neighborhood along the newly created Harbor Street that sits in close proximity to numerous amenities of urban living, including the waterfront, Downtown Boston, and the new Seaport Hill open space; Seaport Boulevard, the major artery designed to accommodate and invite urban commerce of every scale; and Courthouse Square, which connects Seaport Boulevard to Northern Avenue between Blocks B and C.

5.3.3.2 *Public Spaces*

Seaport Square Green (Figures 5-40 – 5-44)

At approximately 1.25 acre, Seaport Square Green is a multi-functional urban open space, similar in size to Boston's famous Copley Square. It stands at the intersection of the major urban axes of the area and acts as a focal point to adjacent developments. Parallel to Seaport Boulevard on one side, it connects to the Fan Pier Park on its other side, creating a continuous public space that reaches the waterfront and connects to the Harborwalk.

This open space is designed to host a range of activities in each of the four seasons, such as spring art shows, summer theater, fall farmer's markets, and winter displays such as ice sculptures and holiday lights. Envisioned as a grand civic lawn large enough to support active recreation and concerts, the Green is gently sloping toward the waterfront. Steps cascade down the eastern and western sides of the Green, and a paved pedestrian pathway crosses the Square under a bower of shade trees, connecting the crosswalk at Boston Wharf Road with Fan Pier Park.

At the edge of the lawn along Northern Avenue, a reflecting pool and water feature is proposed. A retail pavilion and a new Silver Line MBTA headhouse activate the southern side of the Square, resulting in a constant flow of pedestrian traffic, and adding separation between the green space and Seaport Boulevard. Surrounded by commercial, hotel, entertainment, retail, and residential uses, as well as cultural uses in adjacent buildings, Seaport Square Green has active edges that provide life to the open space.

Seaport Square Green offers a space for relaxation and recreation, fosters cohesive community activities, and will attract businesses, visitors and residents to the South Boston waterfront.

Harbor Way and Seaport Hill (Figures 5-45 – 5-51)

Seaport Hill forms the center of a diverse new residential neighborhood. As in many of Boston's most beloved neighborhoods, housing will be the predominant use. Atop Seaport Hill will be a new open space of approximately 0.75 acres surrounded by residential buildings with active ground floor retail shops. The open space features an expansive green lawn bordered by trees, benches, flower beds, public art, a dog park and a children's playground. At the far edges of the open space, landscaped areas provide a buffer for the ground floor residential units at the sidewalk.

Seaport Hill is also an important part of a linked series of spaces connecting the elevated Summer Street down to Seaport Boulevard and the waterfront area via the new Harbor Street. Harbor Street links Summer Street to the neighborhood with pedestrian connections at Seaport Hill to both Boston Wharf Road and East Service Road.

Harbor Way, located at the base of Seaport Hill, provides an approximately 15,500 sf open space area welcoming pedestrians into the site from Seaport Boulevard, and creating a sense of place and contemplation in an urban setting.

Courthouse Square (Figures 5-52 – 5-55)

Courthouse Square is an outdoor public space along Northern Avenue and across from the Moakley Federal Courthouse. It also includes a public pedestrian passage connecting Seaport Boulevard and Northern Avenue between Blocks B and C, culminating with the Square at its northern end.

In the everyday, Courthouse Square will serve as a small gathering place for dining and sitting outdoors; an urban space of repose, a place to pause in between different walking routes. On occasions this space could also be used for public gatherings, in the tradition of democratic societies of which courthouse and other public buildings are complemented by an exterior open space to highlight their public presence and role. Courthouse Square will function in that manner for the Federal Courthouse across the street. It therefore will serve both visitors and users of the Courthouse, the adjacent office buildings and the local neighborhood residents. The Square will act as an urban room for the neighborhood, lined with retail spaces, including restaurants and cafes, and surrounded by a mix of uses. Its continuation through the whole block, connecting Northern Avenue and Seaport Boulevard, will allow greater visual and physical connectivity between the historic Fort Point Channel District and the waterfront.

Seaport Boulevard (See Figures 5-56 – 5-60)

Unifying the different urban fabrics to its north and south, Seaport Boulevard is the main axis connecting the Seaport District to Downtown Boston. This link will encourage future urban development eastward and provide a clear urban edge for the office towers of Fan Pier on one side and the historic buildings of the Fort Point Channel District on the other.

The office towers proposed for sites along the boulevard are situated on a multistory podium, occupied by shops, restaurants, small courtyards, and offices. The location of these spaces are coordinated with the commercial and recreational uses (entertainment venues, museums, and open spaces) being created within the adjacent Fan Pier development. Seaport Boulevard acts as a connector to Seaport Square Green, other parts of the waterfront and the Financial District, and as a destination, activated by ground level retail, civic programs and a variety of uses (office, residential, hospitality). The Boulevard's streetwalls are designed to mediate two distinct urban fabrics: the northern side of the Boulevard is defined by a series of higher buildings, matching the height of the Fan Pier buildings and providing a clear urban edge to Fan Pier, while the southern side of the Boulevard continues the scale, massing and height of the industrial brick warehouse fabric of the Fort Point Channel District.

5.3.4 Public Art and Cultural Corridor

5.3.4.1 Cultural Corridor (Figures 5-61 – 5-65)

Throughout Boston, cultural institutions contribute to the rich tapestry of urban life and serve as important centers of the neighborhood in which they reside. For residents and visitors alike, the Museum of Fine Arts, Symphony Hall, Boston Center for the Arts, and the Theater District are familiar destinations, integral to civic life and vital to the economic well-being of the city.

With this in mind, the physical link created from Summer Street to Seaport Boulevard by Harbor Street, a critical component of the Seaport Square Project, is conceived as a “Cultural Corridor” connecting the Institute of Contemporary Art to the BCEC. The intent of this corridor is to imbue Seaport Square with arts and culture, establishing the district as a new cultural destination for the city, activating the South Boston waterfront and contributing to its economic success.

Anchoring the waterfront end of this corridor is the ICA’s visionary new building, a globally recognized icon of contemporary culture and catalyst for the arts in Boston. Garnering worldwide acclaim, the physically isolated ICA will soon be tied into the fabric of the city by Seaport Square and Fan Pier developments.

At the opposite end of this corridor, where Harbor Street meets the elevated Summer Street, a new landmark performing arts and education complex will occupy Blocks P and N. Poised to further stimulate the cultural life of the city, the performing arts center will build on the arts identity of the neighboring Fort Point Channel District and leverage its proximity to the ICA and the waterfront, the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, and the numerous adjacent hotels.

The Project further designates sites along Harbor Street for a series of cultural venues. These include the outdoor sculpture gardens within the open space at Seaport Hill, exhibit and gallery spaces at Blocks L1 and G, public art and performance venues on Seaport Square Green, and a branch library or similar public use at Block D. Together these will create a strong cultural component for the area and will activate and provide year-round use to the Project.

This Cultural Corridor is a key organizing principle for Seaport Square, and by creating and promoting its identity as a cultural destination, the economic vitality of the new neighborhood’s mix of residential, office, and retail uses is further enhanced. Seaport Square’s physical connection to the South Boston waterfront and to the city at large is reinforced by developing this Cultural Corridor to contribute to the evolution of civic, cultural, and economic life in Boston.

5.3.5 *24-Hour /7-Day a Week Fully Activated Site*

Seaport Square, a mixed-use development, will fully activate its site year-round. The new neighborhood will provide a variety of activity throughout the day and night, with multiple uses such as restaurants, retail and cultural attractions that will draw people to the site. Residential, retail, office, hotel and cultural uses are planned throughout Seaport Square, as further detailed below. The percentages of square footages per use are approximations.

Residential – Approximately 42%

Like many of Boston's best-known neighborhoods, housing will be the primary use in Seaport Square. A diverse selection of housing will be available in several types of buildings, with rental and ownership opportunities as well as a mix of affordable, workforce, and market-rate housing totaling approximately 2.8 million square feet. Workforce housing is intended for people who do not qualify for standard affordable housing units, but who are often priced out of the housing market, such as fire fighters, police officers, teachers, and the like. Residents will be able to choose from low-rise garden to high-rise city views in a range of sizes. Residential uses are concentrated around Seaport Hill which is designed as a neighborhood combining three different housing types: 21-story towers, 8- to 10-story buildings, and four-story townhouses arranged around a central open space. The organization and combination of these typologies relates to the varied urban fabrics surrounding the site, differing in height, density, views, sun exposure, street division, and massing. The mix of housing types also accommodates residents from a range of socio-economic conditions and diverse family structures, promoting a more heterogeneous urban community.

Office and Research – Approximately 20%

The office buildings of Seaport Square are located on Blocks B, L1, L2, and Q. Buildings on B, L1, and L2 which have the largest office areas (between approximately 340,000 and 420,000 sf) are located along Seaport Boulevard.. Having these office buildings face Seaport Boulevard takes advantage of their scale and multi-use function to activate the street. These three buildings also include podium and street level retail at their base and direct access to a pedestrian way and public open space. Block Q is an office building (150,000 sf) similar in height and character to the adjacent building in the Fort Point Channel District.

Retail/Entertainment – Approximately 20%

Storefront retail, entertainment and restaurant use is proposed at ground level for all of Seaport Square (except the Chapel and portions of Blocks L, N and P), activating the streets and pedestrian areas. Some buildings will also have second and third story retail/entertainment uses. Retail will include local and regional stores and boutiques mixed with larger national retailers.

Civic and Educational Uses – Approximately 10%

Seaport Square includes a great diversity of civic functions, strategically located along a larger civic trail: Boston's Harborwalk. Roughly 600,000 square feet of civic uses, will include exhibition space in proximity to Seaport Square Green, a public library branch, new Visitor's Center, and the new building for the Chapel of Our Lady of Good Voyage. These spaces are located as natural extensions of Boston's public realm.

A privately funded Pre-K -1 public pilot educational facility for 200 children will be located within the Project. A second educational facility, a new K-12 educational facility, will provide substantial annual scholarships for City residents. After school hours, this space may be used for adult education programs or other continuing education programs to meet the needs of City residents.

Hospitality – Approximately 8%

Two hotels are proposed overlooking Seaport Square with immediate access to and views of the waterfront. A third hotel is proposed at the southern end of the site to be more conveniently located to the BCEC. These hotels, totaling an area of 500,000 sf, will support conference and ballroom functions as well as retail, restaurants, a health club and spas.

Parking

Six new underground parking garages will be constructed as part of the full build out of Seaport Square. The Project will provide approximately 6,500 underground parking spaces when complete; approximately 4,000 will be commercial public for fee spaces and 2,500 will be residential. The Proponent currently has Air Pollution Control Commission permits for 3,647 commercial spaces. The Project will maintain these public for-fee spaces and will request another approximately 353 commercial spaces from the South Boston Parking Freeze bank. A car sharing hub will be located on the Project site to reduce parking demand and car ownership on the site. Car sharing will provide those working, living, or visiting Seaport Square with an alternative to car ownership. The Proponent will also continue a low-cost bicycle rental program; and investigate the feasibility of launching a shared-bike program similar to Smartbike at an appropriate location within the Project area.

5.3.6 Vibrant Public Space – Activating the Street Level

Vibrant Public Realm

Unique to Seaport Square are its cultural facilities, and the newly created cultural corridor with an integrated street network which ties the City and buildings from the Fort Point Channel to the views and openness of the waterfront. In addition, Seaport Square truly reknits the fabric of the existing neighborhood with its complimentary yet contemporary vibrant architecture. Its lively pedestrian friendly streetscapes, green spaces, public access, view corridors, ground floor public uses, convenient access to public transportation and creation of new streets and connections, will make it a premier destination waterfront neighborhood.

Boston is one of the most pedestrian-friendly cities in America. As such, the urban open spaces and tree-lined shopping streets of Seaport Square marry it to the tradition of Boston's 'Main Streets' and green squares, creating a vibrant, ever-changing pedestrian experience

for all seasons. The Seaport Square open space plan fills the gaps between the existing pedestrian paths of the Harborwalk, as well as linking the entire site to the larger open space networks of the City of Boston.

The goals of Seaport Square's public realm are defined at three scales:

- ◆ at the City Scale - to join Boston's collection of identifiable neighborhoods;
- ◆ at the Neighborhood Scale - to connect surrounding areas to each other and to the waterfront; and
- ◆ at the Pedestrian Scale - to create an active, attractive, well-lit, comfortable, accessible, and varied experience for all who live in, work, and visit Seaport Square.

The public realm is developed using six strategies:

1. Sensitive, Collaborative Design – The Seaport Square District has been the subject of many BRA plans (see Section 1.6 as well as 5.1 above). These plans have been reviewed and referenced in order to begin the implementation of street types, sidewalk design, medians, watershed activation, and bicycle routes. Seaport Square seeks to incorporate these initiatives as well as continue to learn from ongoing planning.
2. Ample Open Space – Building footprints cover approximately 46% of the Project Area (as defined in Section 1.4) leaving the remaining 34% open for streets, sidewalks, pedestrian ways, and green space. Open space (excluding streets) accounts for over 25% of the total Proponent owned Project Site, including the 1.25 acre Seaport Square, and the 0.75 acre Seaport Hill, and 15,000 sf Courthouse Square. (See Figure 1-6 in Chapter 1.
3. Active Ground and Second Floor Uses – On the first floor, storefront retail, cultural uses, and lobbies for the residential, office and research, and hotel uses energize the street with display windows, doorways, canopies, signage, and sidewalk seating.
4. Pedestrian-Friendly Scale Buildings – As mentioned earlier in the section on Massing Diversity, the buildings' massing and façade design create a pedestrian scale.
5. Descent to the Waterfront – A striking aspect of Seaport Square is the construction of the sloping Harbor Street and Seaport Hill, which creates a new way for pedestrians to walk from South Station, the BCEC, and Summer Street down toward Seaport Boulevard and the waterfront. Streets, sidewalks, open spaces, and pedestrian ways are designed to facilitate that movement to and through this new public realm.
6. Sustainable Design - The project will become a world-class example of a sustainably designed, mixed use urban infill development, as evidenced by its commitment to pursuing LEED-Silver certification on all major buildings as well as

LEED-ND Silver or higher for the entire project site. Energy-efficient buildings, pedestrian-oriented activation of the streetscape and utilization of alternative transportation modes to facilitate a lifestyle that is less dependent on automobile-based transportation are fundamental to the design of the Project. Guidance will be provided both to design and construction teams as well as future office tenants and residents to minimize energy consumption, reduce waste generation, and optimize sustainable property management practices. More information on the Project's sustainability efforts can be found in Section 4.13.

5.3.7 *Massing Variety and Design Diversity*

Because of Seaport Square's combination of block sizes and shapes, mix of uses and open space, and commitment to a rich pedestrian-scaled experience, the Project provides a great deal of variety in building massing.

The Project will provide two and three story retail bases and mid- and high-rise elements interwoven throughout the Project Site. The lower and mid-rise portions help to relate the new development to the scale of the Fort Point Channel neighborhood, the ICA, the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center, and the Seaport World Trade Center. The high-rise portions, while providing urban density and city views, complement the existing towers of the Seaport World Trade Center and the proposed Fan Pier buildings.

The Proponent is committed to varying the scale, material, use, and character of buildings and landscapes throughout the Seaport Square plan. Buildings will undergo future design development and review as the Project progresses.

The Seaport Square plan incorporates and anticipates the work of a large team of local and national landscape and architectural firms, providing for different stylistic approaches to the build-out of the Seaport Square neighborhood. The goal is to achieve an appropriate balance of neighborhood cohesion and design diversity that is imperative to the successful development of a site this size.

5.3.8 *Sustainable Design: Green Strategies*

The project will become a world-class example of a sustainably designed, mixed use urban infill development, as evidenced by its commitment to pursuing LEED-Silver certification on all major buildings as well as LEED-ND Silver or higher for the entire project site. Energy-efficient buildings, pedestrian-oriented activation of the streetscape and utilization of alternative transportation modes to facilitate a lifestyle that is less dependent on automobile-based transportation are fundamental to the design of the Project. Guidance will be provided both to design and construction teams as well as future office tenants and residents to minimize energy consumption, reduce waste generation, and optimize sustainable property management practices.