

Melnea Cass Boulevard

**Community Visioning
Meeting
December 14, 2011**

presented by
**Boston Transportation
Department**

with

Howard/Stein-Hudson
Crosby | Schlessinger | Smallridge
Toole Design Group
GLC Development Resources



**MELNEA CASS
BOULEVARD
DESIGN PROJECT**

Boston Transportation Department



Agenda

Part 1 – Presentation

6:00 – 6:30 PM

Introduction/Process

Project Area History

- Inner Belt/I-695
- Southwest Corridor Development Plan
- Roxbury Strategic Master Plan
- Urban Ring
- South Bay Harbor Trail
- Parcels 9 & 10

What We Have Learned

Part 2 – Community Discussion

6:30 – 7:00 PM

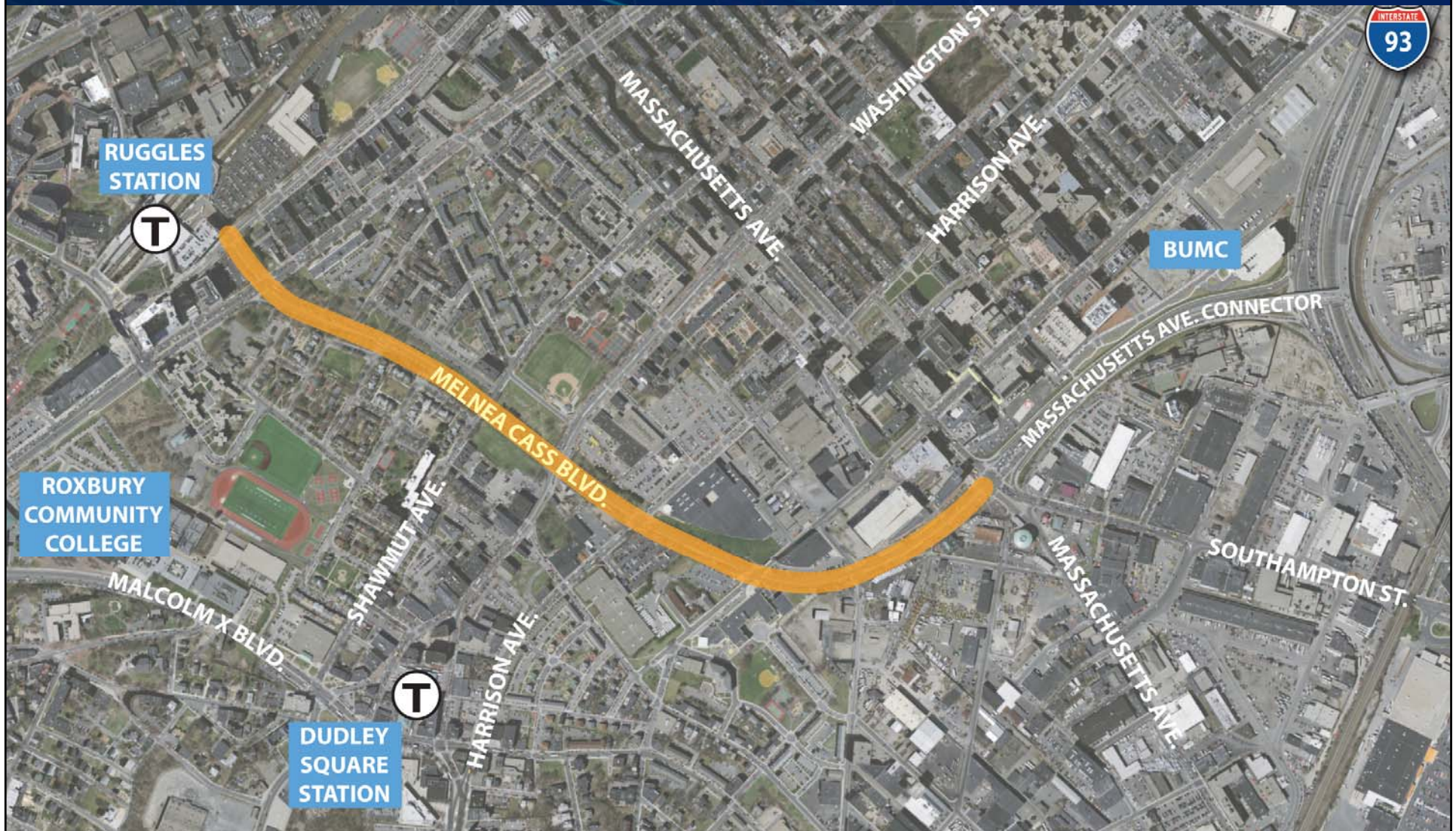
- Breakout Groups

Part 3 – Breakout Group

Reports/ Q & A – 7:00 – 8:00 PM

- Group representatives give summaries of breakout group discussion
- Questions and answers

Project Area



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Who was Melnea Cass?

- “First Lady of Roxbury”
- Community activist
- Suffragette
- Helped found the Boston chapter of Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters
- President of NAACP, 1962-64
- Chair of Mass. Advisory Committee for the Elderly, 1975-76
- Charter Member of Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)
- Board of Overseers of Public Welfare
- Founder/Charter Member of Freedom House

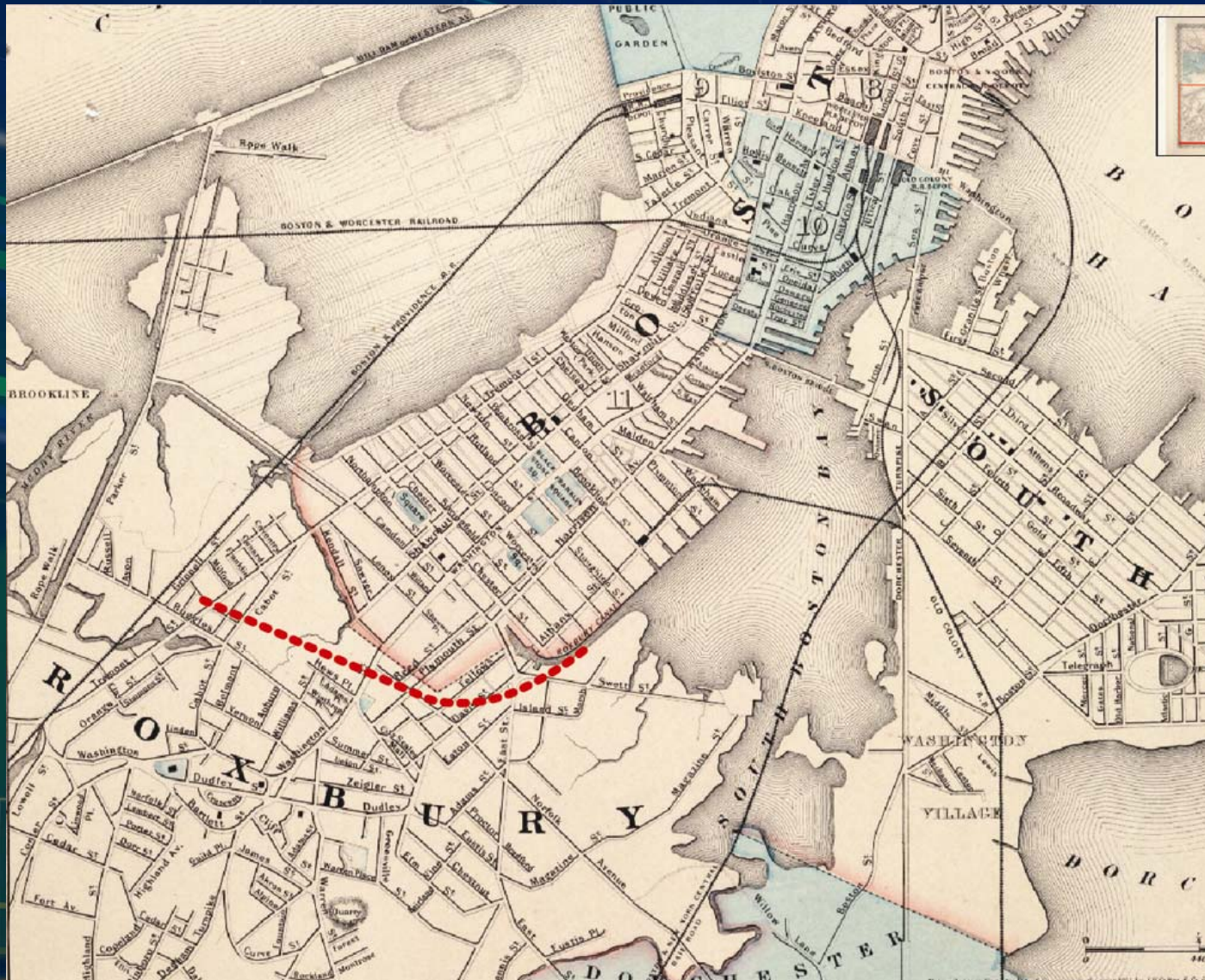


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Map of Roxbury

c. 1855



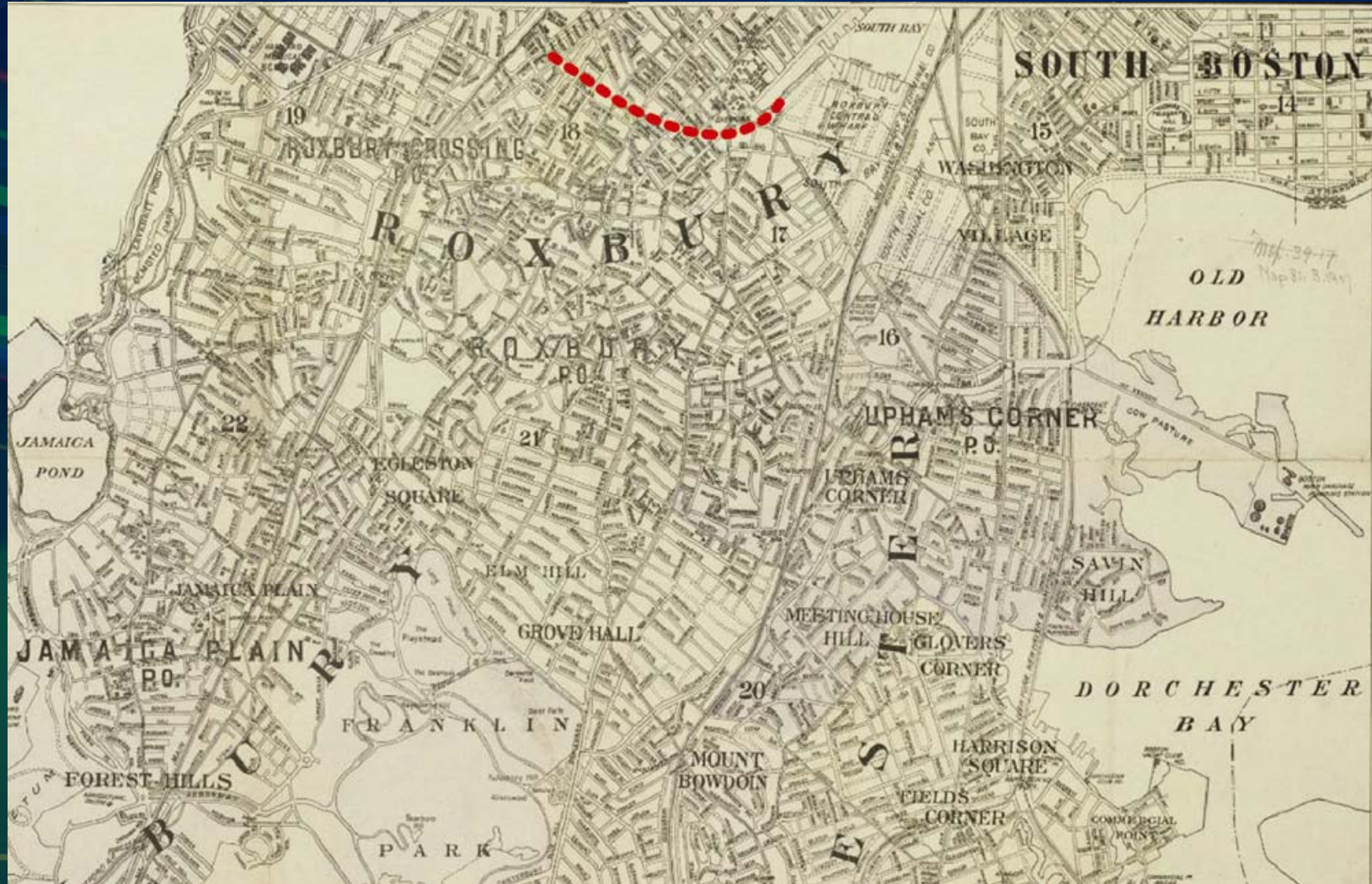
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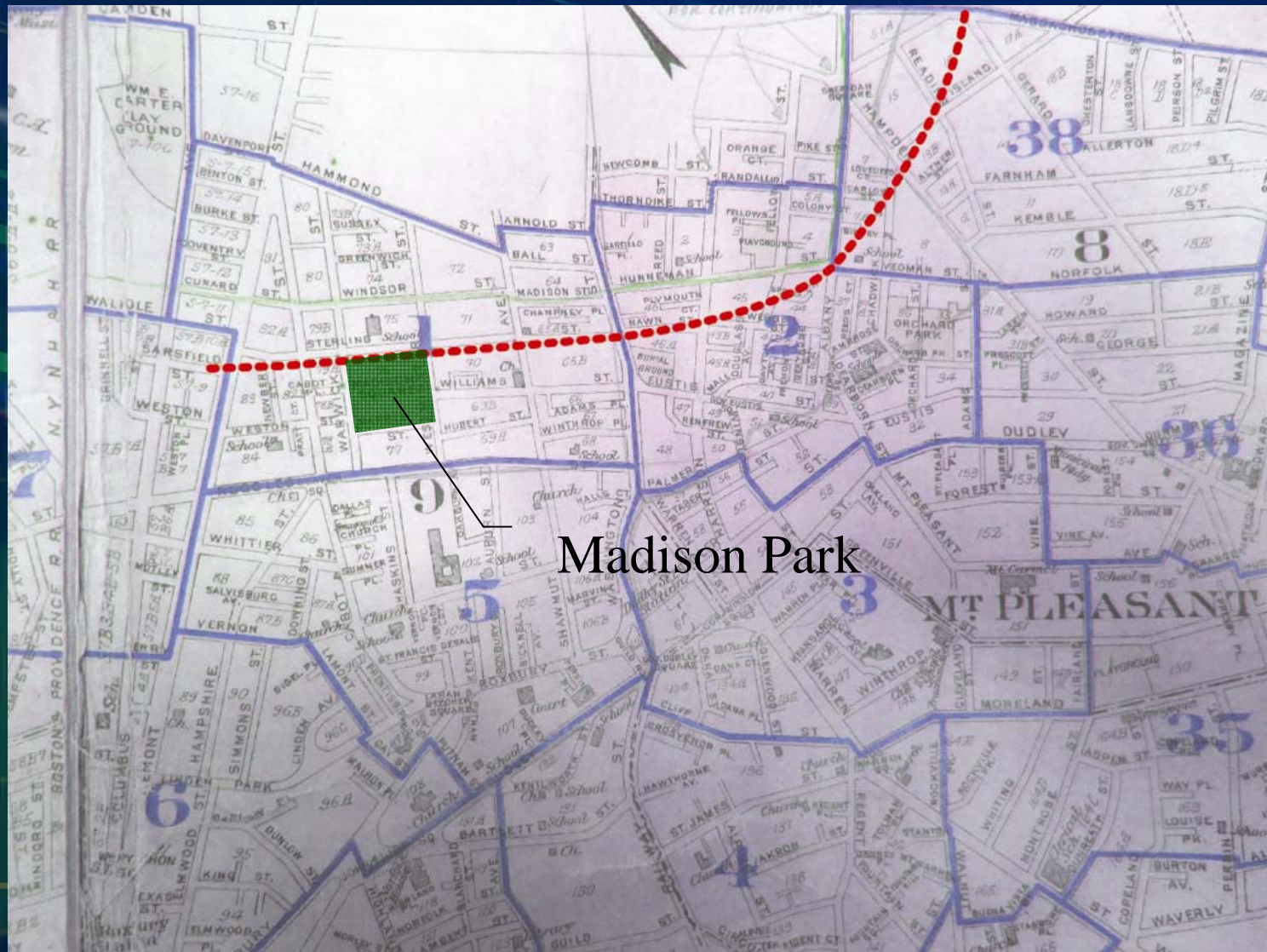


Map of Roxbury

c. 1907



c. 1931



Madison Park

Inner Belt and Expressway System

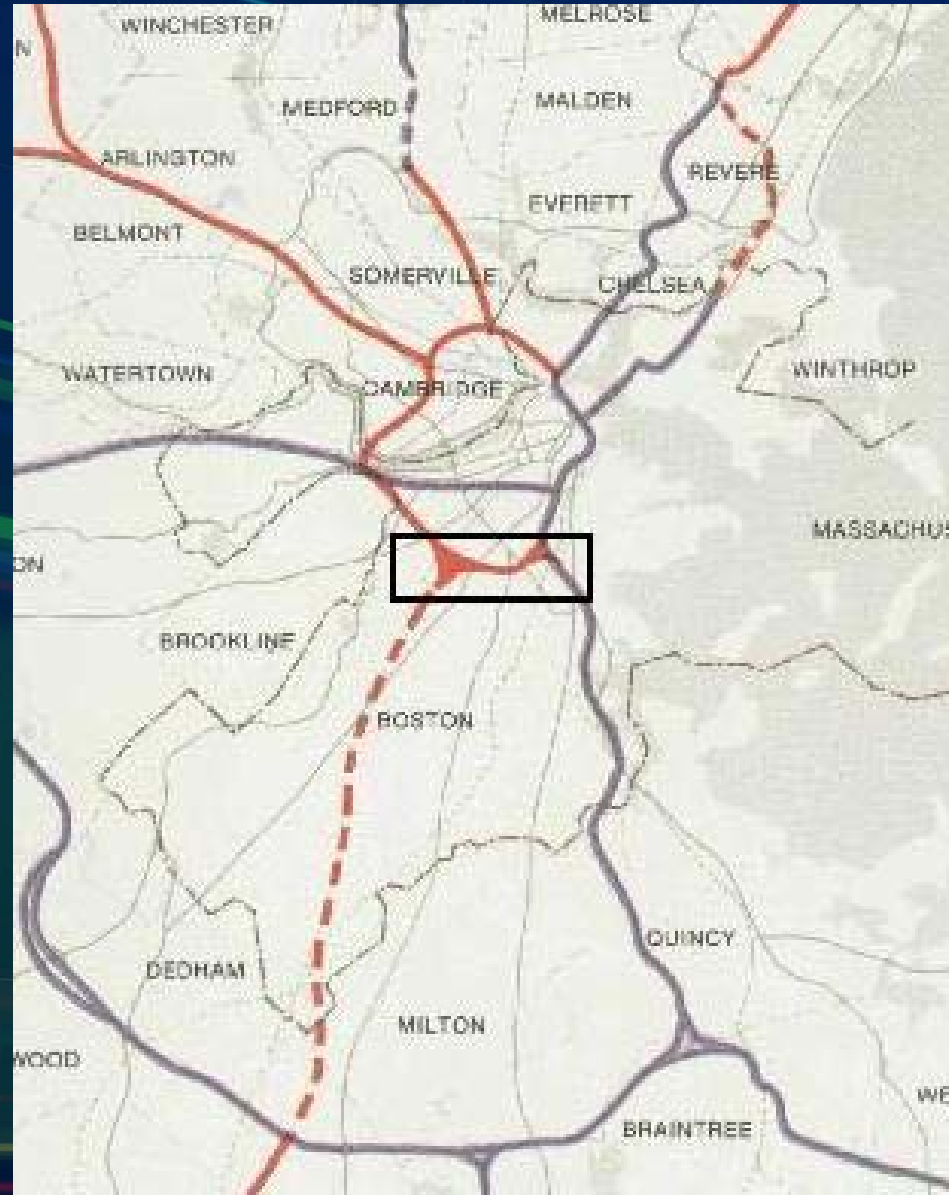
■ The Boston Inner Beltway (I-695)

- Proposed originally in 1948
- Circumferential route around Boston
- Six-lane limited access highway
- The Southeast and Southwest Expressway connection via Melnea Cass Blvd.

■ Southwest Expressway

- Proposed originally in 1948
- Connect with I-95 at Route 128 and I-695

Proposed Inner Belt



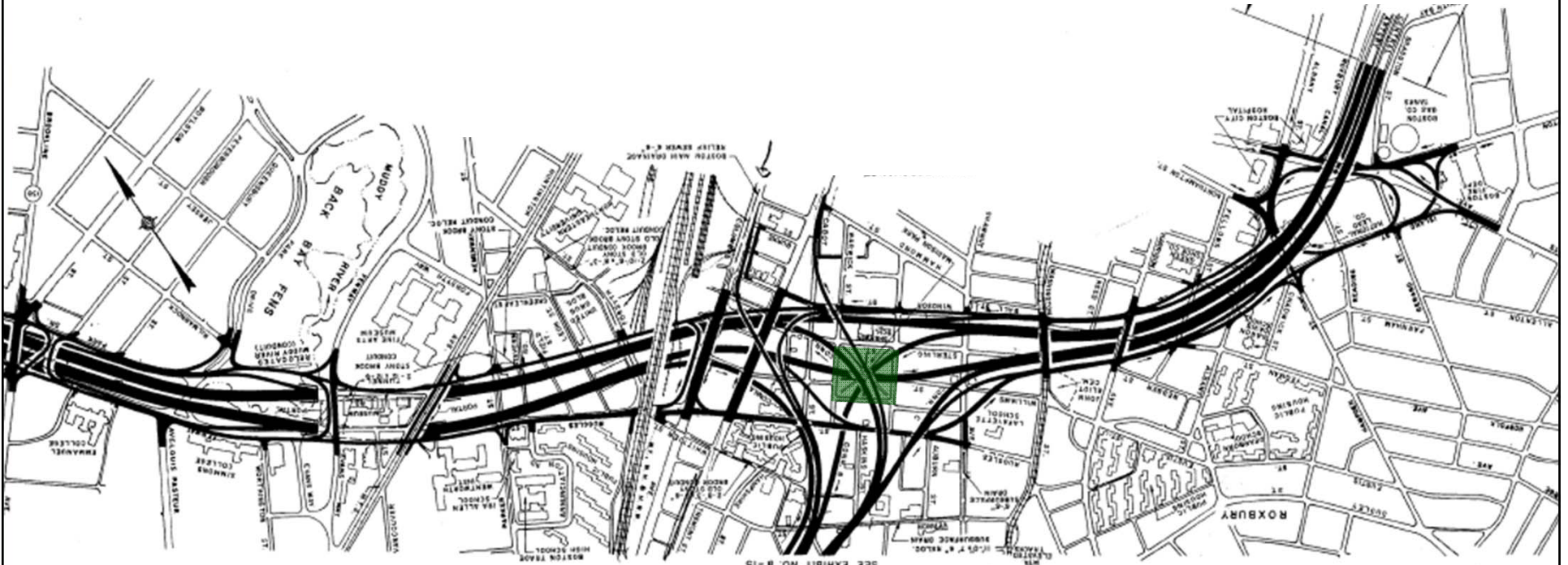
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Conceptual Layout of I-695

c. 1962



SEE EXHIBIT NO. B-15
SOUTHWEST EXPRESSWAY

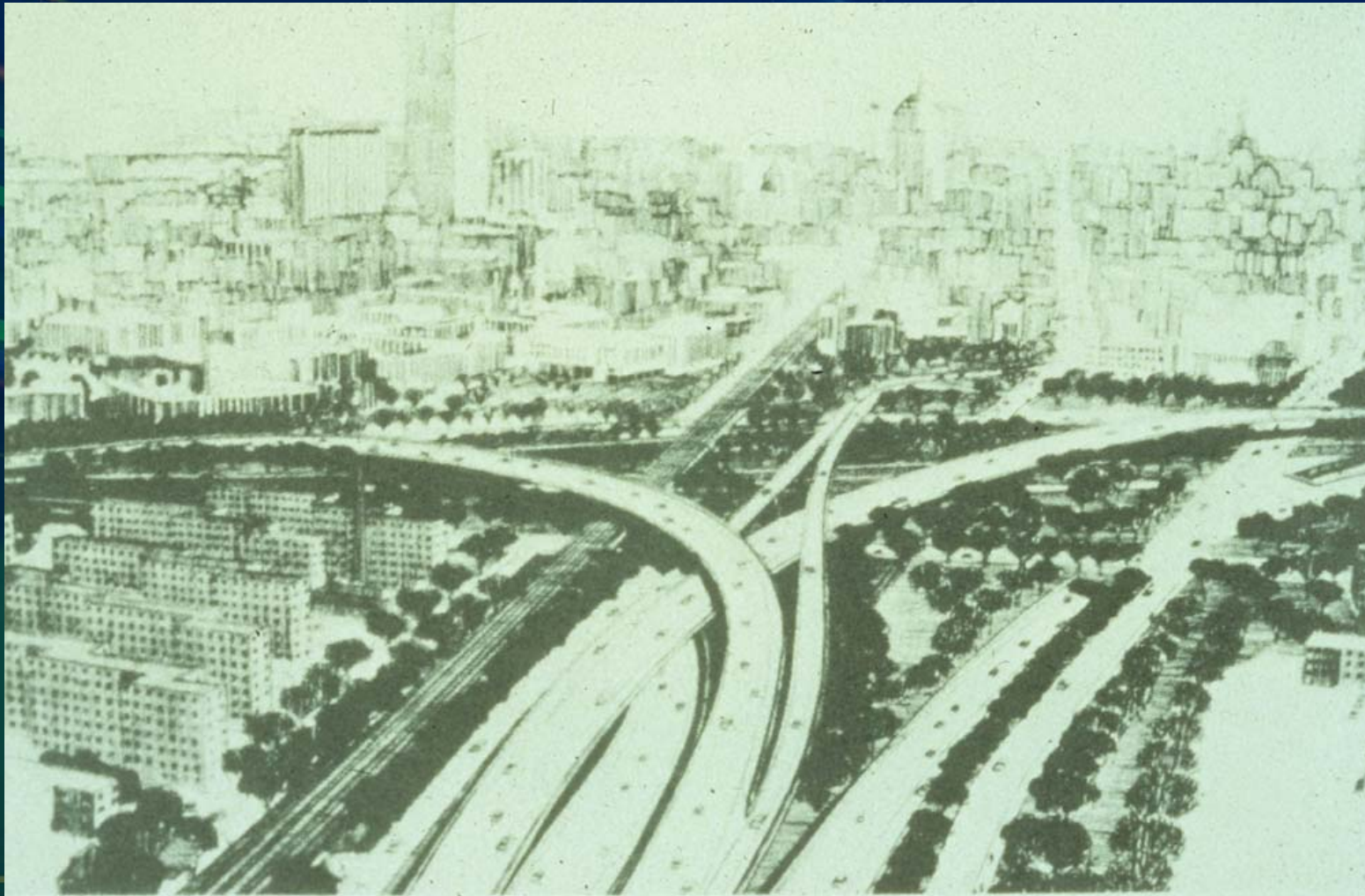
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Artist Rendering

c. 1962



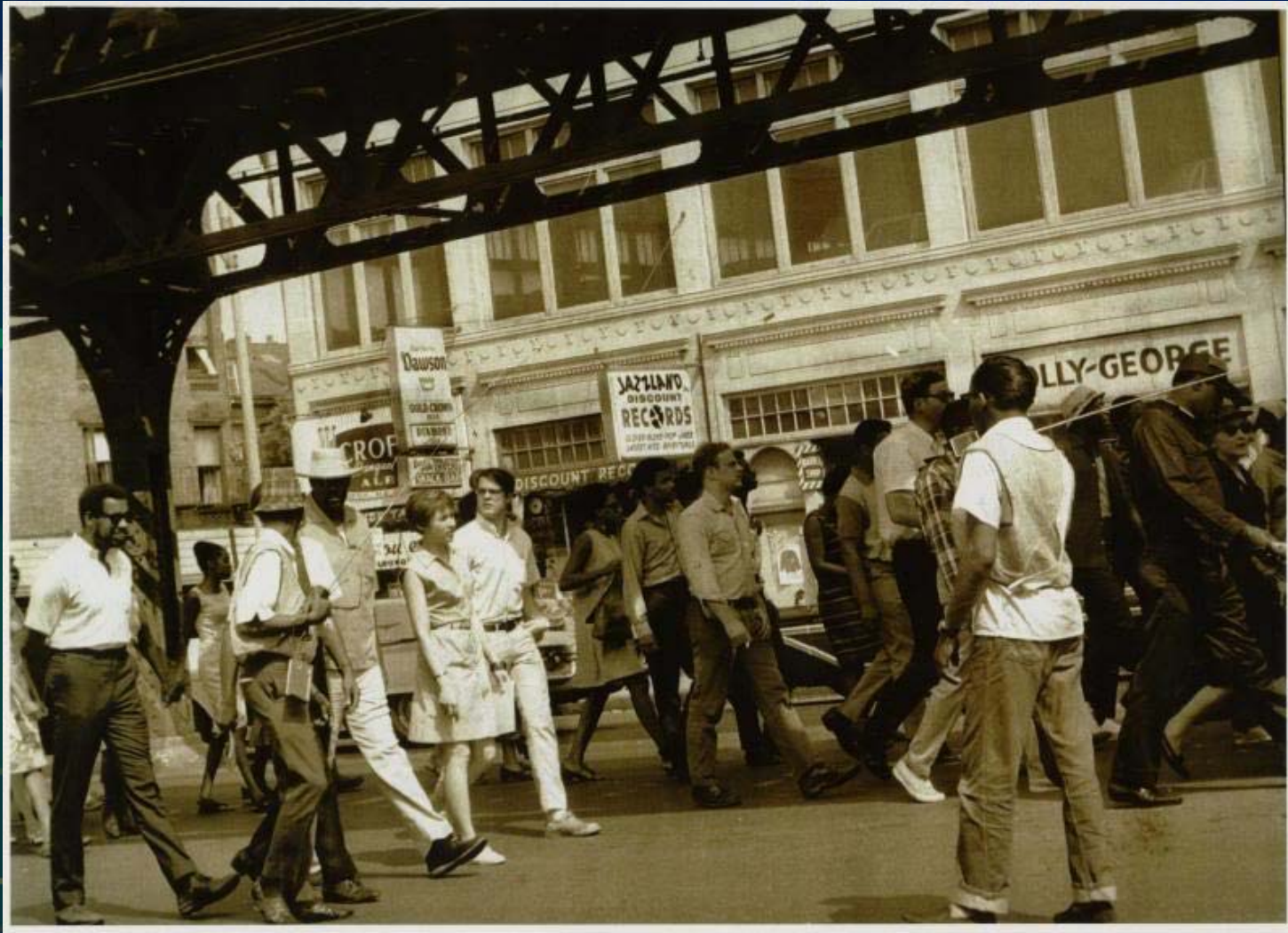
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Community Protest

People Before Highways



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Community Protest

People Before Highways



Community Protests

- Property takings to accommodate highway connections and interchanges
- Outraged communities and organizations
- Both Expressway concepts were abandoned in the early 1970's.
- Governor Francis Sargent ordered a moratorium on all new expressway construction within MA Route 128.

Proposed Alignment of Inner Belt

c. 1965



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Proposed Alignment of Inner Belt

c. 1965



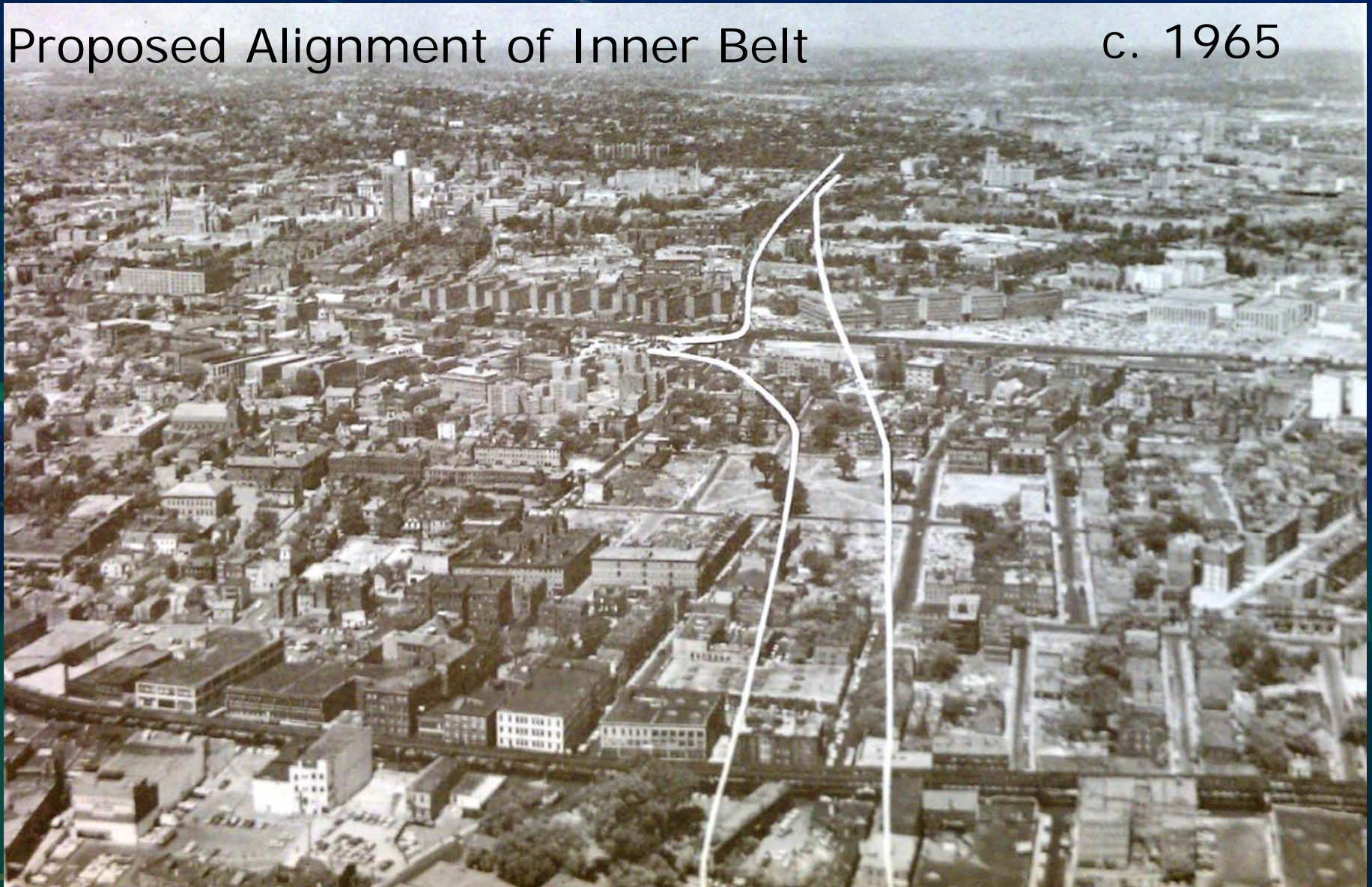
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Proposed Alignment of Inner Belt

c. 1965



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After Inner Belt is cancelled

c. 1976



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After Inner Belt is cancelled

c. 1976



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Southwest Corridor Development Plan

- Transfer of highway building funds to public transportation.
- Replacing the Orange Line along Washington Street with a rapid transit line located in the Southwest corridor
- Initiated the Southwest Corridor Development Plan in 1979

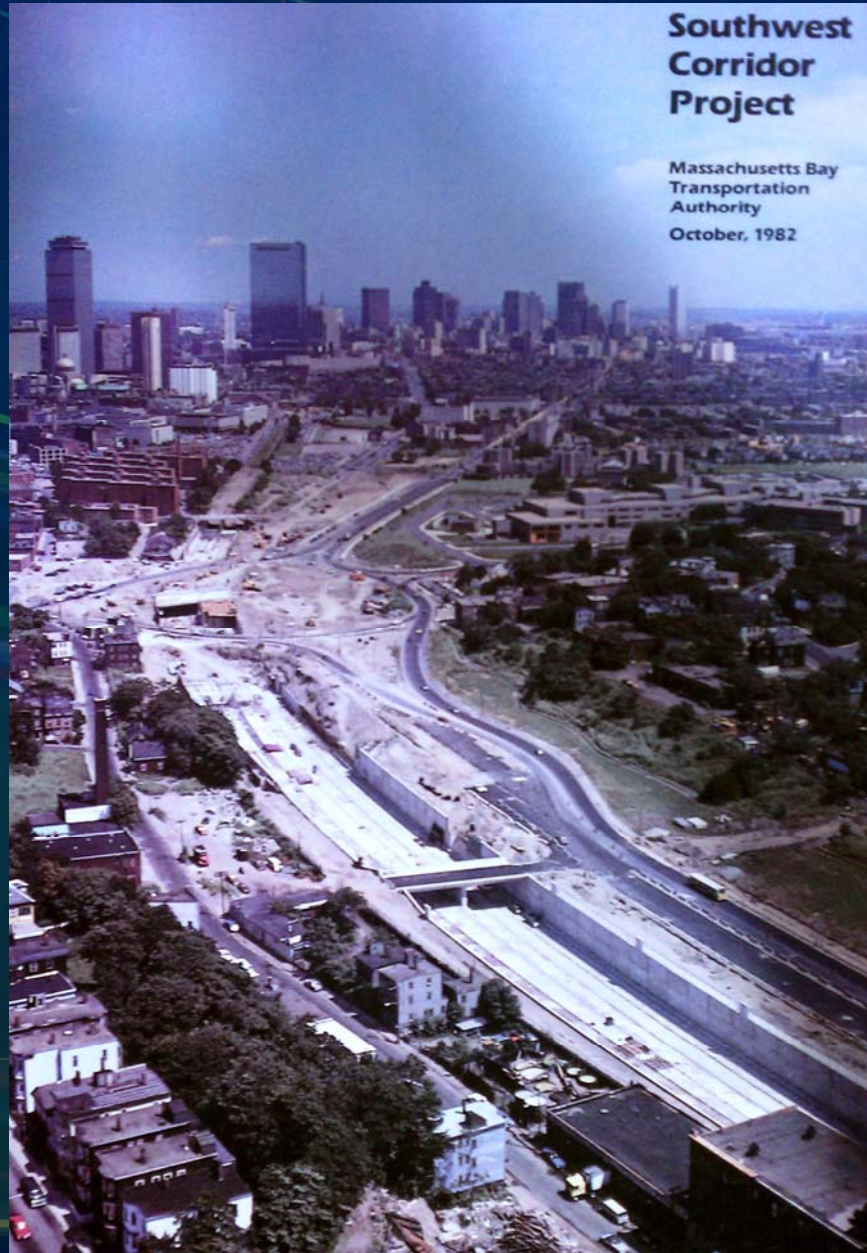


Southwest Corridor Development Plan

- The 1979 plan outlined the development plans for a “Crosstown Street”
 - Parcel-by-parcel development opportunities
 - Planned transit improvements
 - Housing, Supermarkets, offices, community facilities, etc.
 - The “Crosstown Street” was later named Melnea Cass Boulevard.

Southwest Corridor Project

Massachusetts Bay
Transportation
Authority
October, 1982



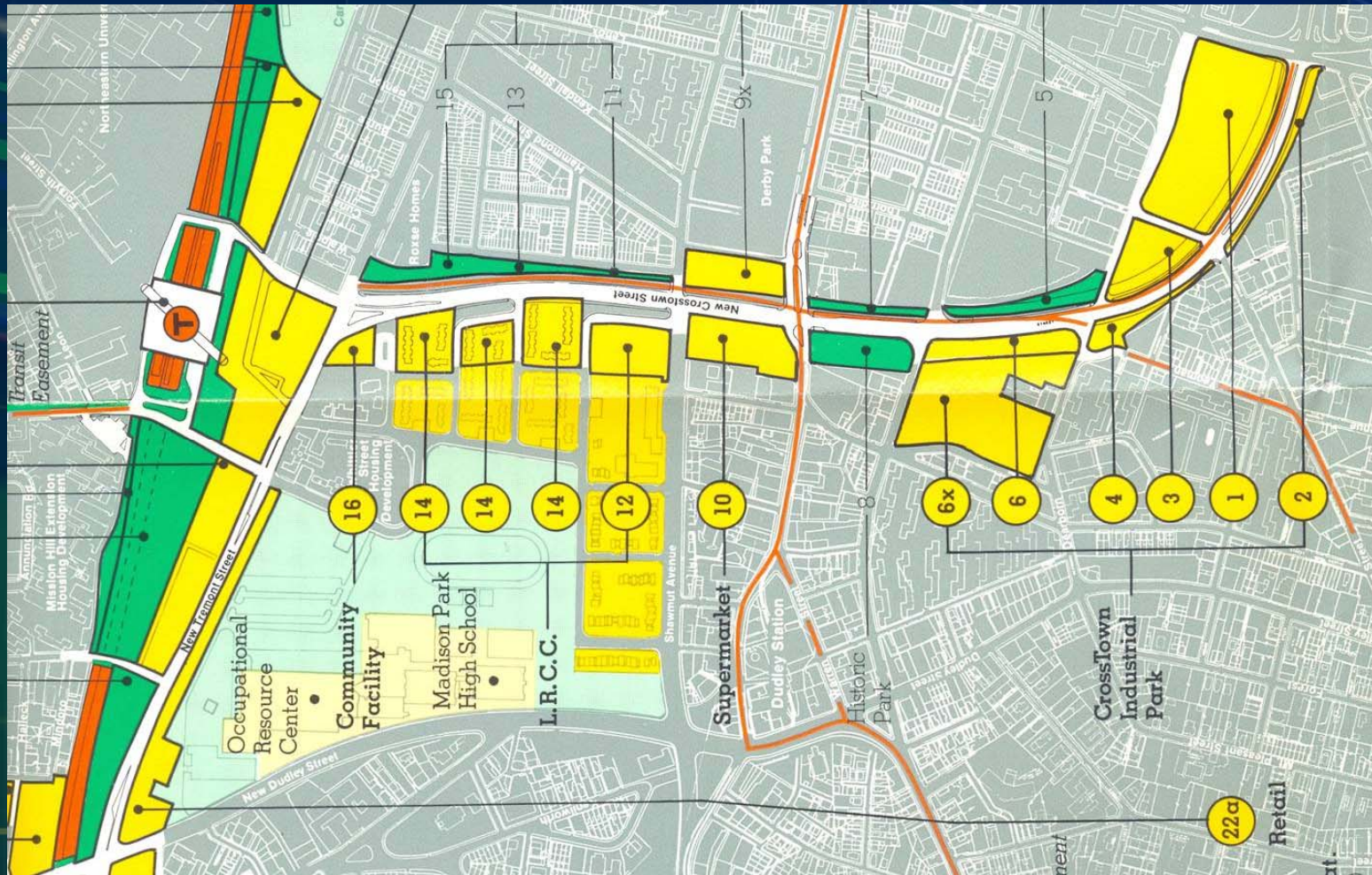
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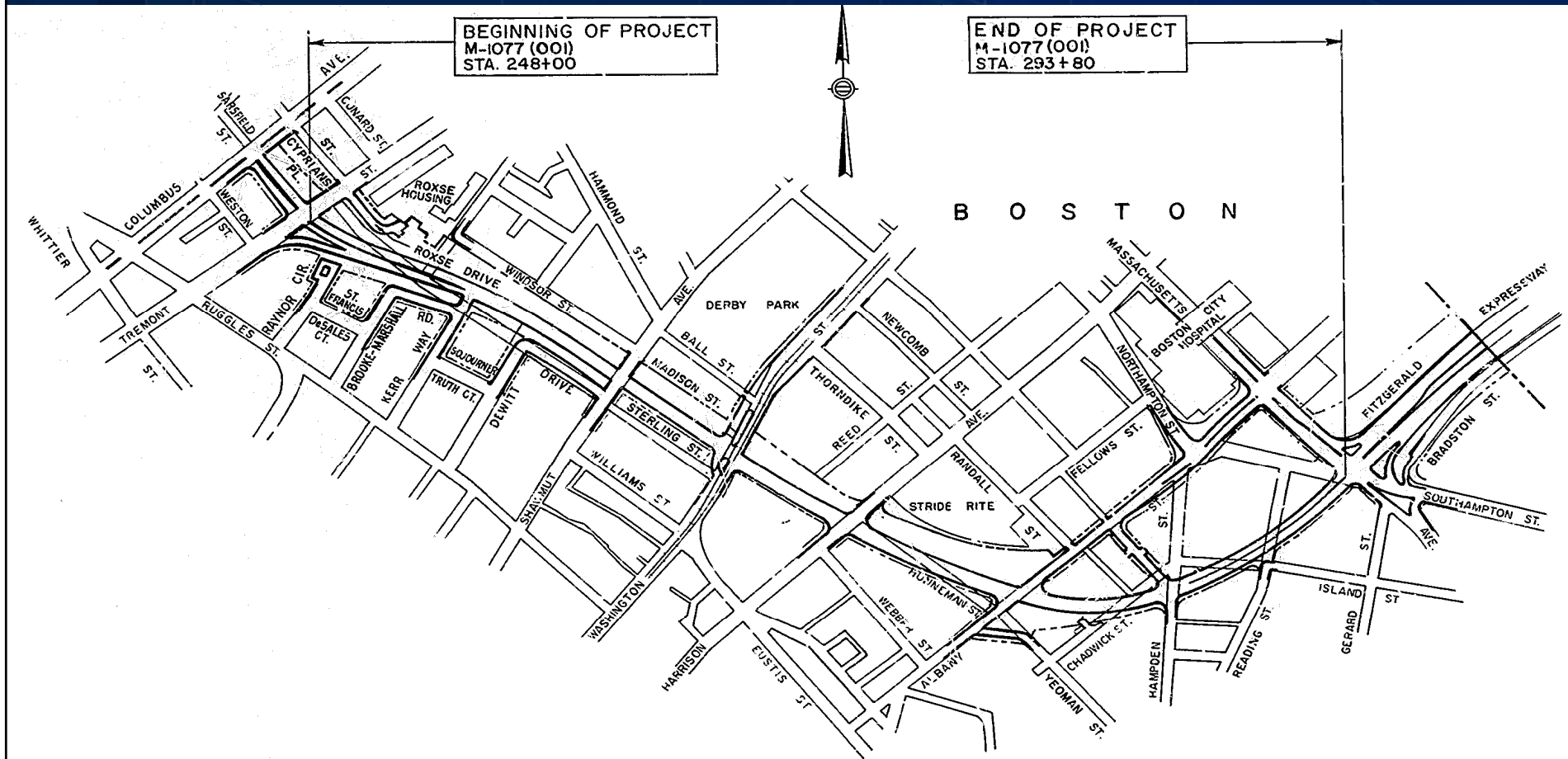


Crosstown Street

Development parcels - Southwest Corridor, c. 1979



Construction of Melnea Cass Blvd.



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Transportation Easement



Summary of Early Planning Efforts

- 1960's: Community stopped Inner Belt/I-695 (Operation Stop)
- 1960's-70's: Southwest Corridor Development Plan and Crosstown Street – community creates Southwest Corridor Coalition
- 1981: Melnea Cass Boulevard construction completed
- 1980's: Southwest Corridor construction

YOUTH

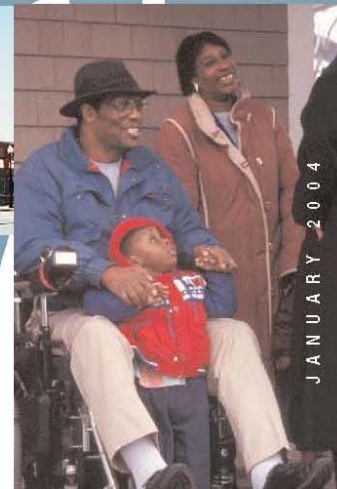
THE ROXBURY STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN

BUILDING A 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY

THOMAS M. MENINO, MAYOR, CITY OF BOSTON / MARK MALONEY, DIRECTOR, BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



CULTURE



DIVERSITY

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MELNEA CASS BOULEVARD

The pedestrian environment on Melnea Cass Boulevard and the intersecting streets should be made more inviting. While it will continue to provide crosstown regional connections, its layout should take on more of the characteristics of a true boulevard. Appropriate urban design interventions may include the following:

- Wider sidewalks, neck-downs and crosswalks at key intersections
- Regularly spaced trees and light fixtures to define the boulevard
- Lower scaled, pedestrian oriented and ornamental lighting and banners
- A planted median
- Wherever possible, building entries oriented onto Melnea Cass Boulevard
- Service entries should generally be located at the rear of parcels. If they are placed next to housing, then delivery hours should be limited to hours that least interfere with neighboring housing
- Building setbacks for new and renovated buildings should reinforce the street wall along Melnea Cass Boulevard.

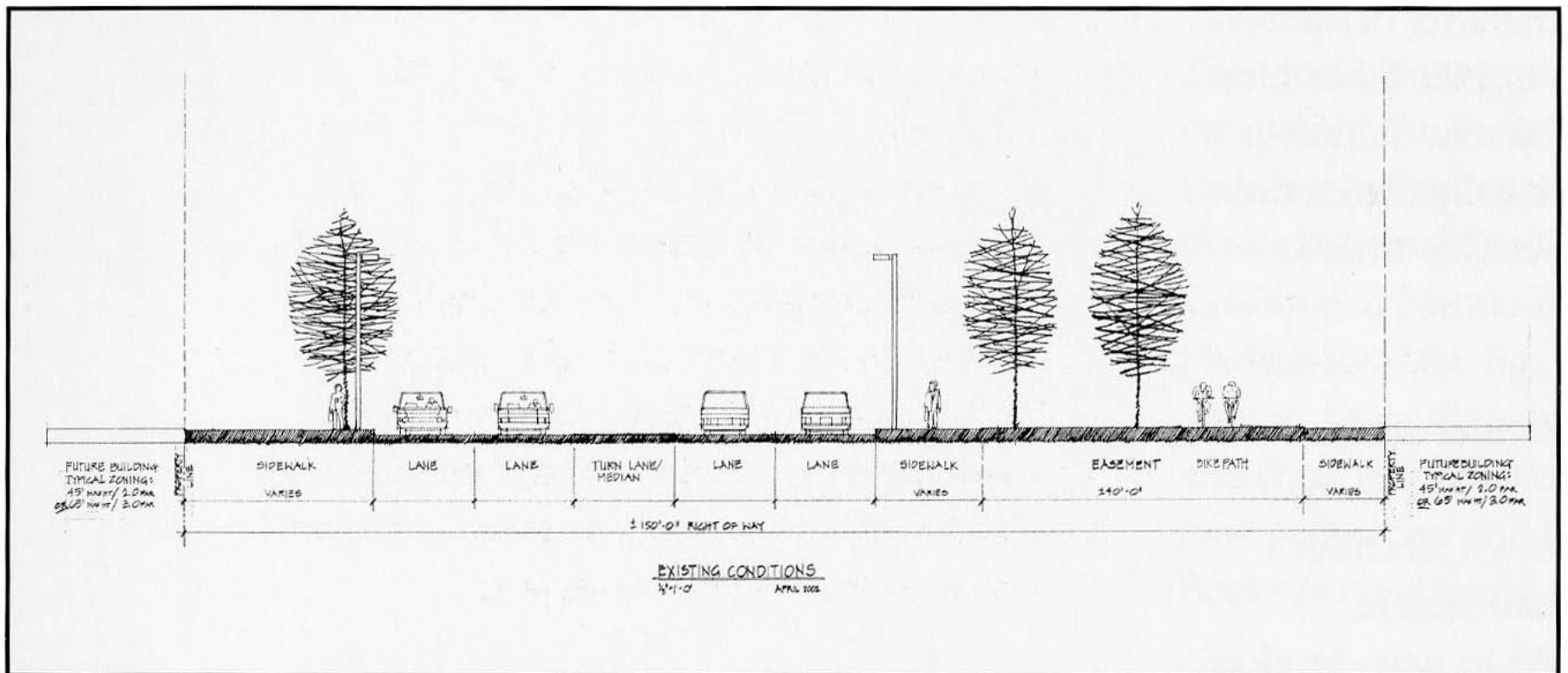
- Surface and structured parking should generally be discouraged directly on the Boulevard, should be required to include active ground floor uses. Surface parking should be buffered with attractive fencing and generous landscaping. Structured parking on the Boulevard should be required to include active ground floor uses.

- Melnea Cass Boulevard must be multi-modal and any reconstruction must incorporate both transit and bicycle facilities into its design. The Urban Ring and South Bay Harbor Trail projects will each enhance its character and contribute to the importance of Melnea Cass Boulevard. In addition to the dedicated path for the South Bay Harbor Trail, the roadway cross-section should provide sufficient width for bicycles to travel, without occupying an entire travel lane.



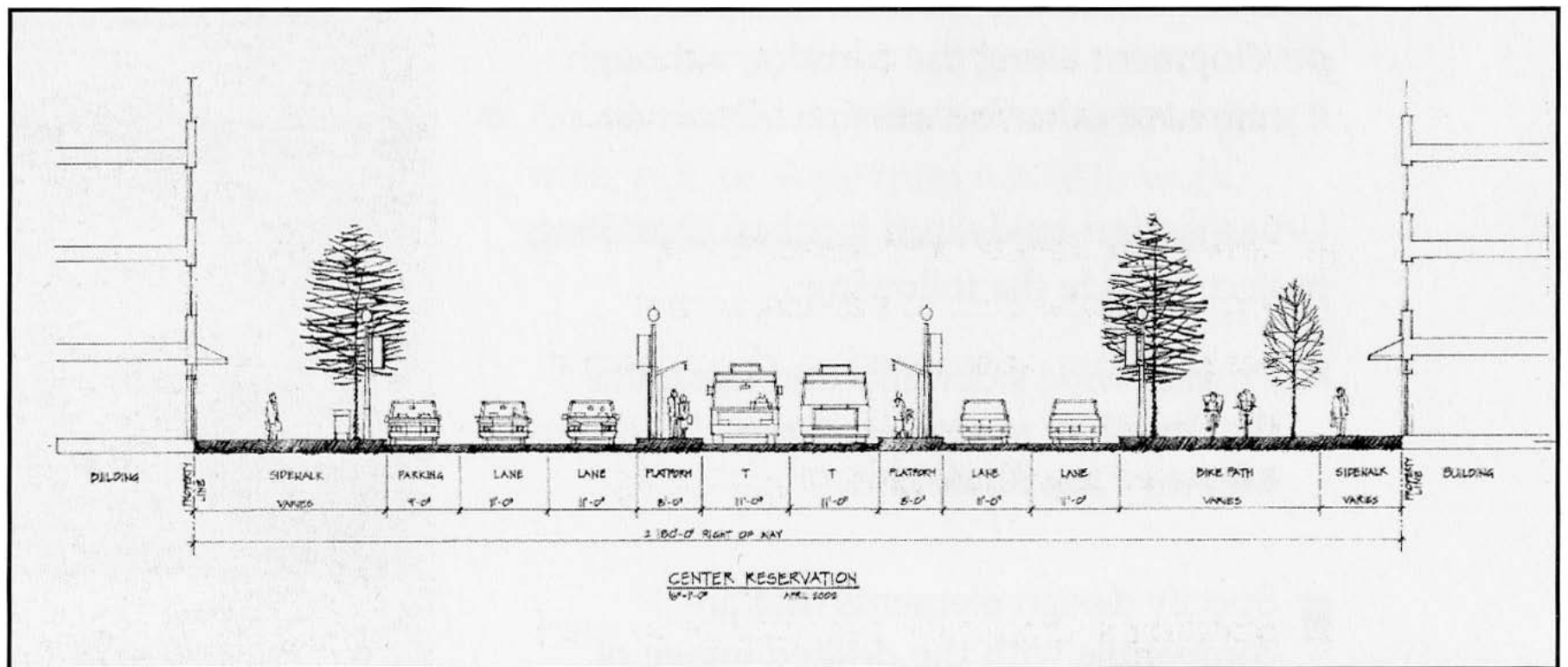
Melnea Cass Boulevard Plan

RSMP – Melnea Cass Existing Conditions



Existing conditions

RSMP – Melnea Cass Center BRT



Center median busing option

Summary of RSMP Decisions

- Melnea Cass Boulevard
 - *Inviting pedestrian environment*
 - *Multimodal – incorporate transit and bicycling*
- Urban Ring
 - *BRT design consistent with urban design guidelines*
 - *Wide sidewalks, minimize crossing distances*
 - *Safe, visually distinctive stations*
 - *Integrate stations into ground floor of new development?*

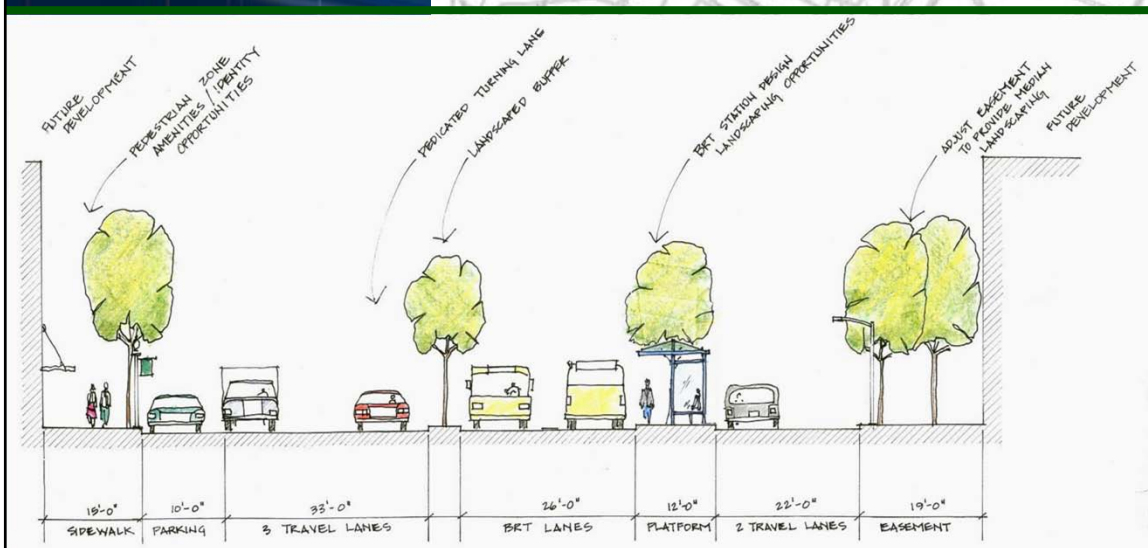
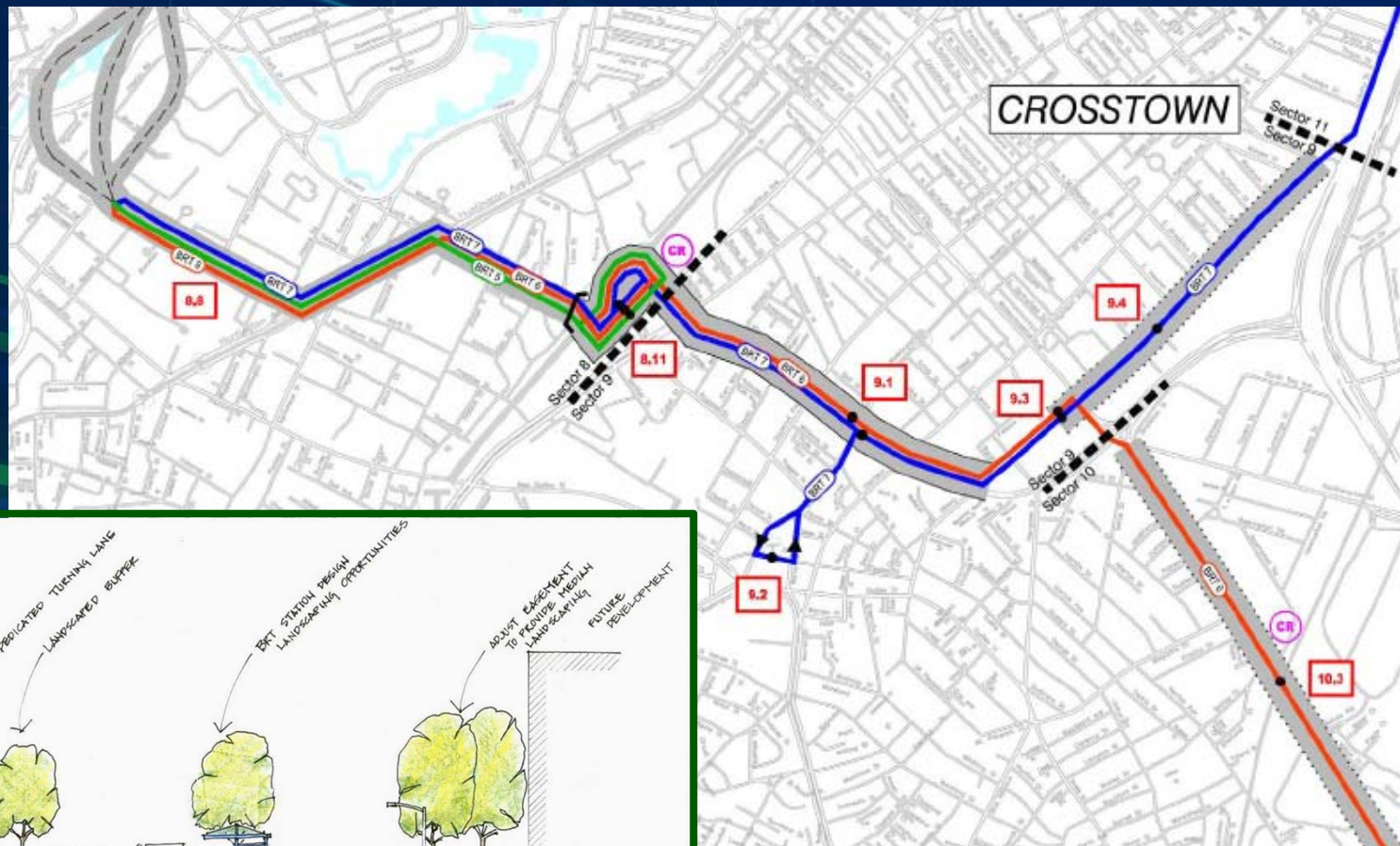


What is the Urban Ring?

- Proposed circumferential – “RING” – transit line
- Connects the “spokes” of the MBTA’s radial system
- Passes through fast-growing neighborhoods outside downtown
- Reaches areas lacking transit service



The Urban Ring in Roxbury



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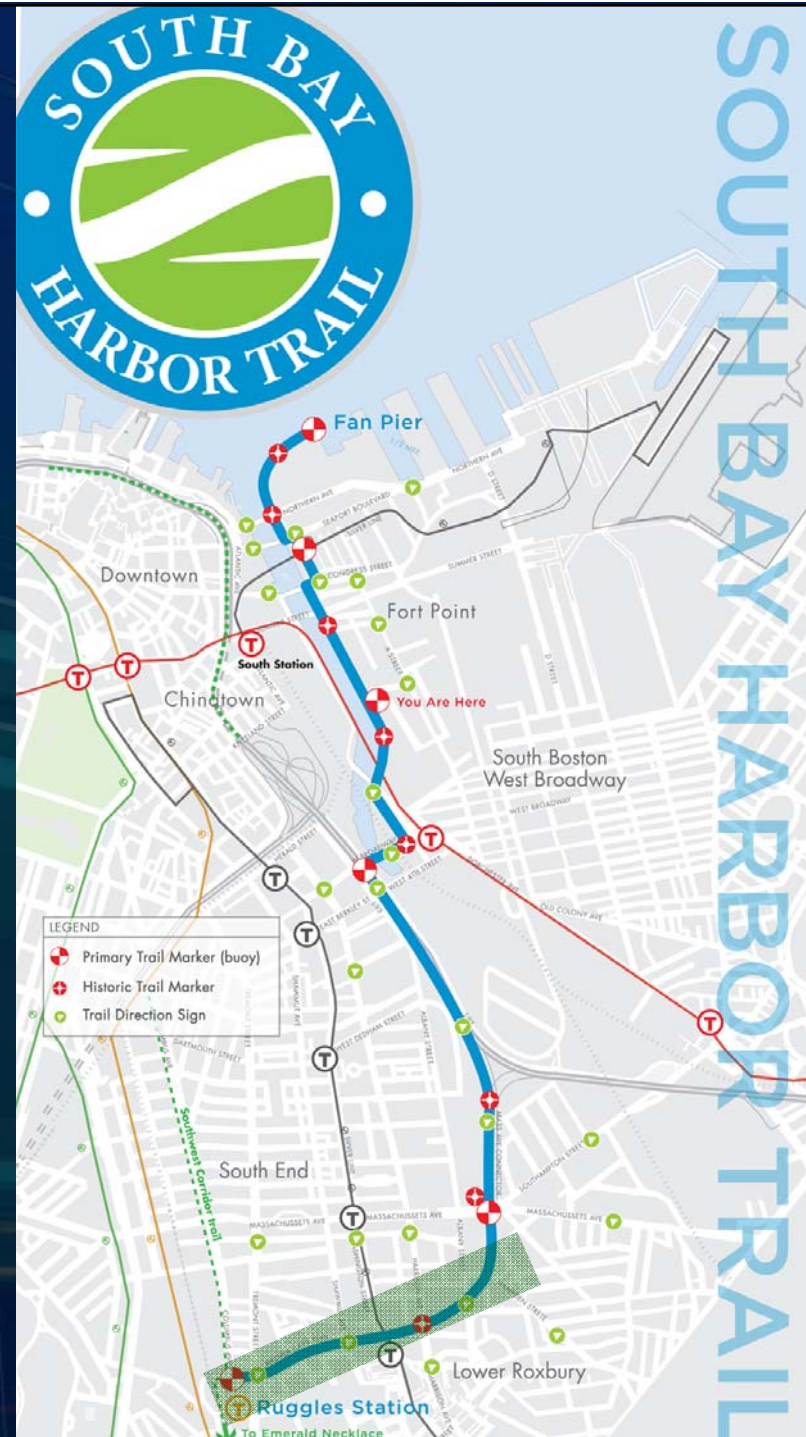
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Urban Ring – Current Status

- RDEIR/S for \$2.3B project complete in 2008
- Urban Ring dropped from Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) in 2007
- MassDOT suspended environmental review in 2010
- Secretary Mullan outlined MassDOT commitments, including Melnea Cass Boulevard project
- Near term: Existing MBTA service will utilize BRT improvements on Melnea Cass Boulevard
- Long-term: Introduction of new service

South Bay Harbor Trail - Overview



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South Bay Harbor Trail

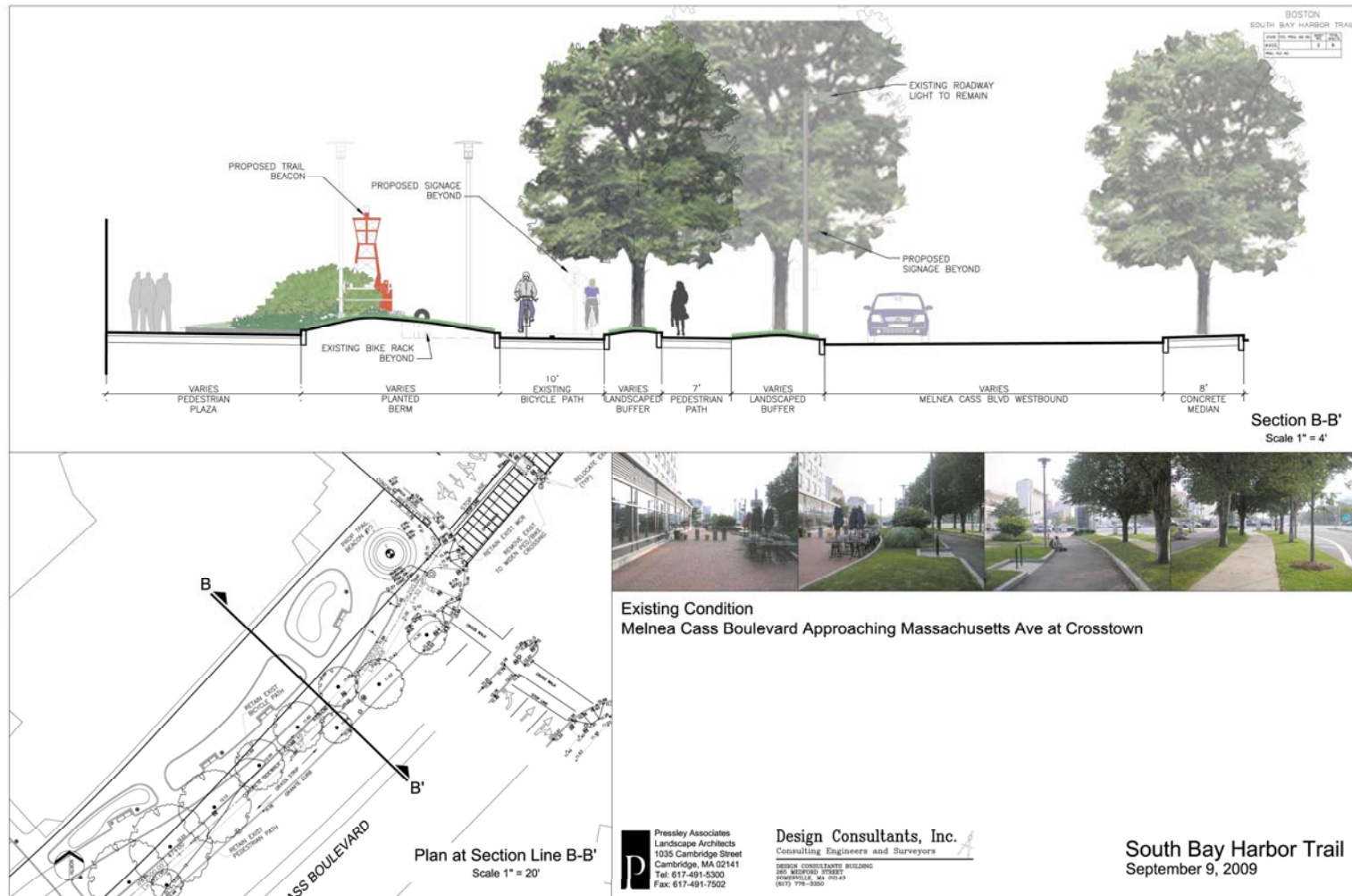


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South Bay Harbor Trail



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South Bay Harbor Trail

PRIMARY ID



SIGN TYPES – DIRECTION

BIKEWAY



- FUNCTION**
- direction & distance marker
- FEATURES**
- trail direction and distance
- LOCATIONS**
- intersection
 - adjacent neighborhoods leading to trail

TRAIL DIRECTION



- FUNCTION**
- movement/directional information for bicyclists
- FEATURES**
- color-coded in directional orientation element
 - blue sign in the direction of Bay Park and green sign in the direction of Riggins
- LOCATIONS**
- improved on pavement

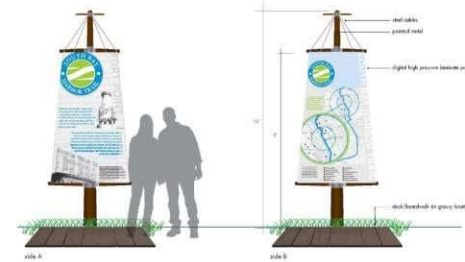
BICYCLE DIRECTION (pavement)



- FUNCTION**
- movement/directional information for pedestrians
- FEATURES**
- color-coded in directional orientation element
 - blue sign in the direction of Bay Park and green sign in the direction of Riggins
- LOCATIONS**
- improved on pavement

PEDESTRIAN DIRECTION (pavement)

SECONDARY ID



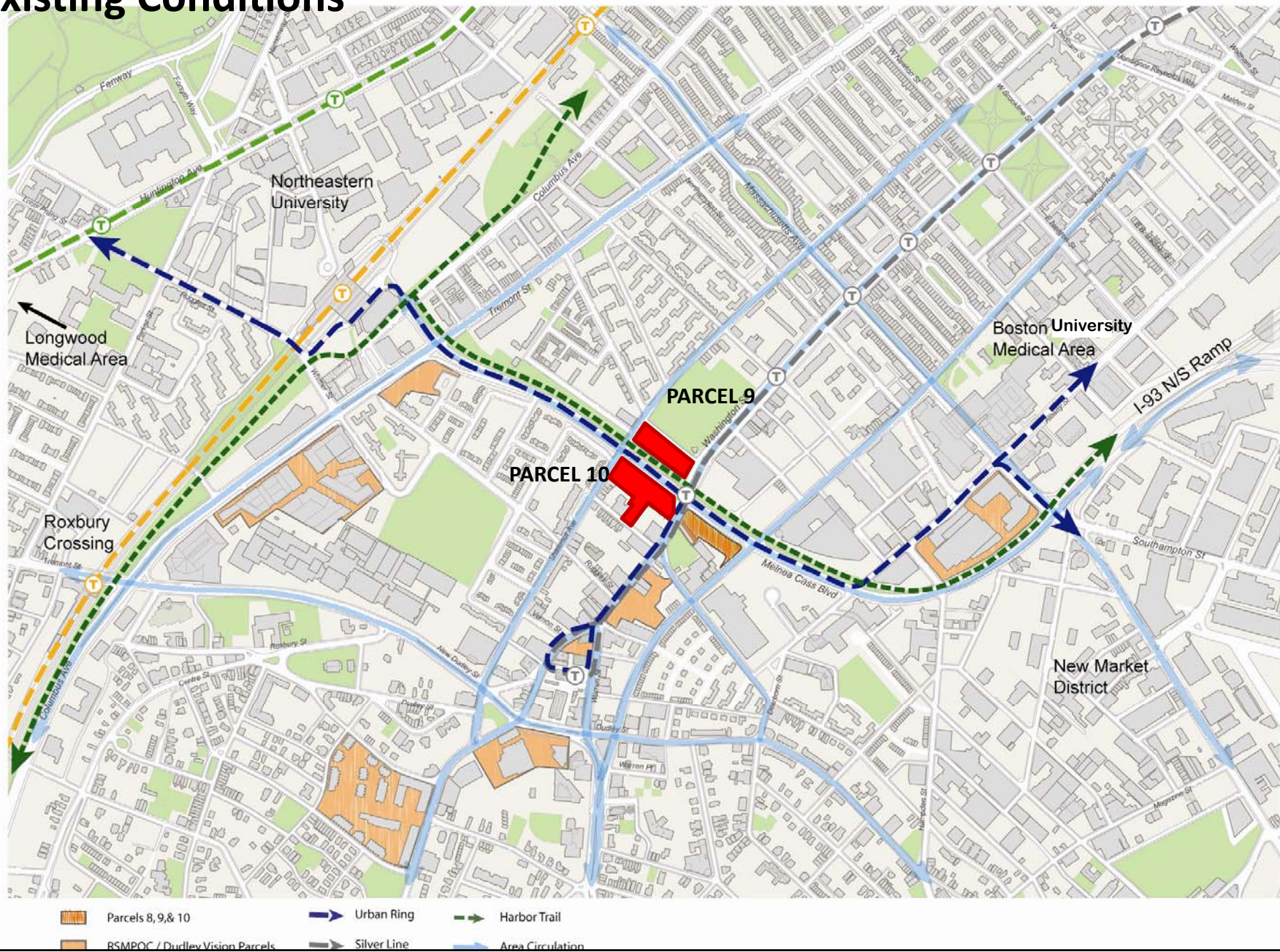
TERTIARY ID & BICYCLE / PEDESTRIAN DIRECTION – PAVEMENT MARKERS



Development Goals of Parcels 9 and 10

- Implement the Roxbury Strategic Master Plan
- Generate wealth for the Roxbury community
- Catalyze new economic growth
- Reinforce the physical, social, and economic fabric of Roxbury
- Leverage the resources of Roxbury at large
- Create a successful transit-oriented development
- Maximize the value of Parcels 9 and 10 as an economic development asset for Roxbury and the City.

Existing Conditions



Parcels 9-10 Submissions

Parcel 9

Melnea Hotel + Residences

Urbanica

Hotel, Residential & Retail

Shawmut Green

Nuestra Comunidad & New Atlantic

Residential & Retail

Washington Crossing

In-Town & Bauer Properties

Office, Residential & Retail

Parcel 10

Washington Crossing

In-Town & Bauer Properties

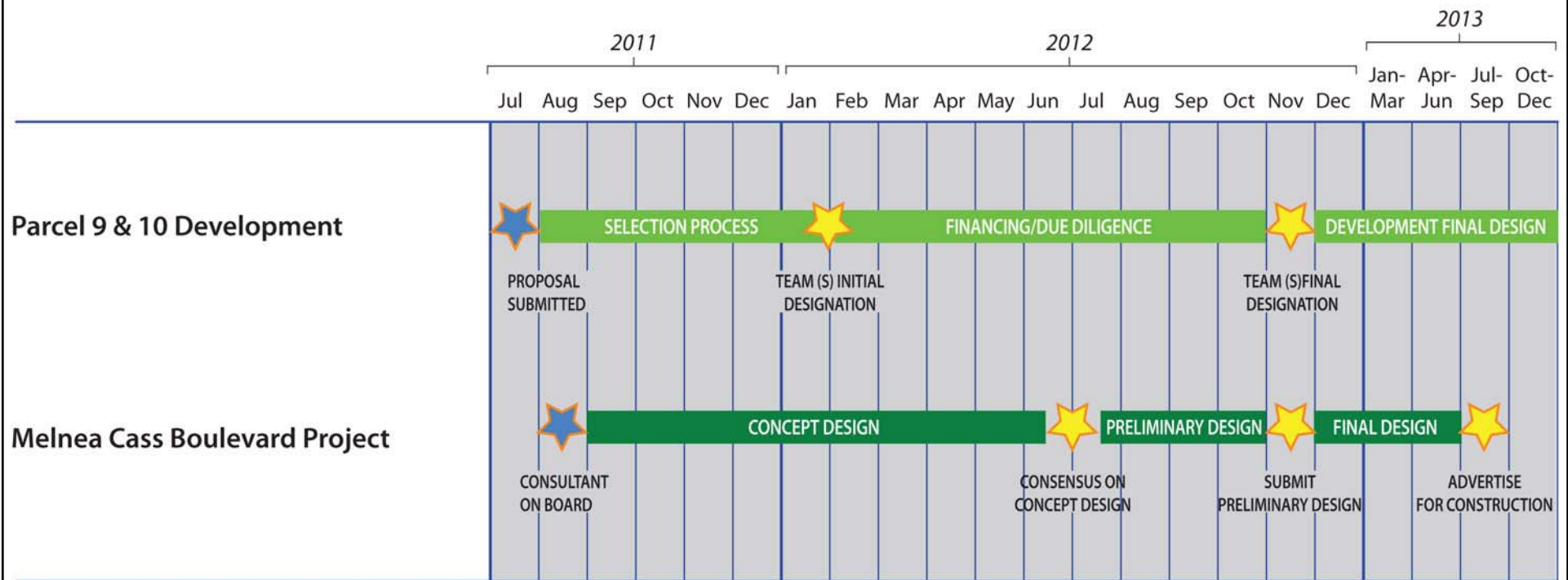
Office, Residential & Retail

Madison Tropical

Madison Park & Tropical Foods

Office, Residential & Retail

Estimated Schedules



Overall Summary of Previous Planning

- Return the street to the neighborhood;
- Create a new kind of street for the community rather than just for vehicle traffic passing through;
- Emphasize pedestrian access and safety, access to transit, cycling access and safety;
- Create favorable environment for economic development and job creation; and
- Commit to a transparent, open public process.

Next Steps

- Review feedback from tonight's meeting
- Begin to develop design alternatives based on project goals and community feedback
- Hold next community meeting in late January/early February