

A PLANNING STUDY FOR THE SOUTH END

by

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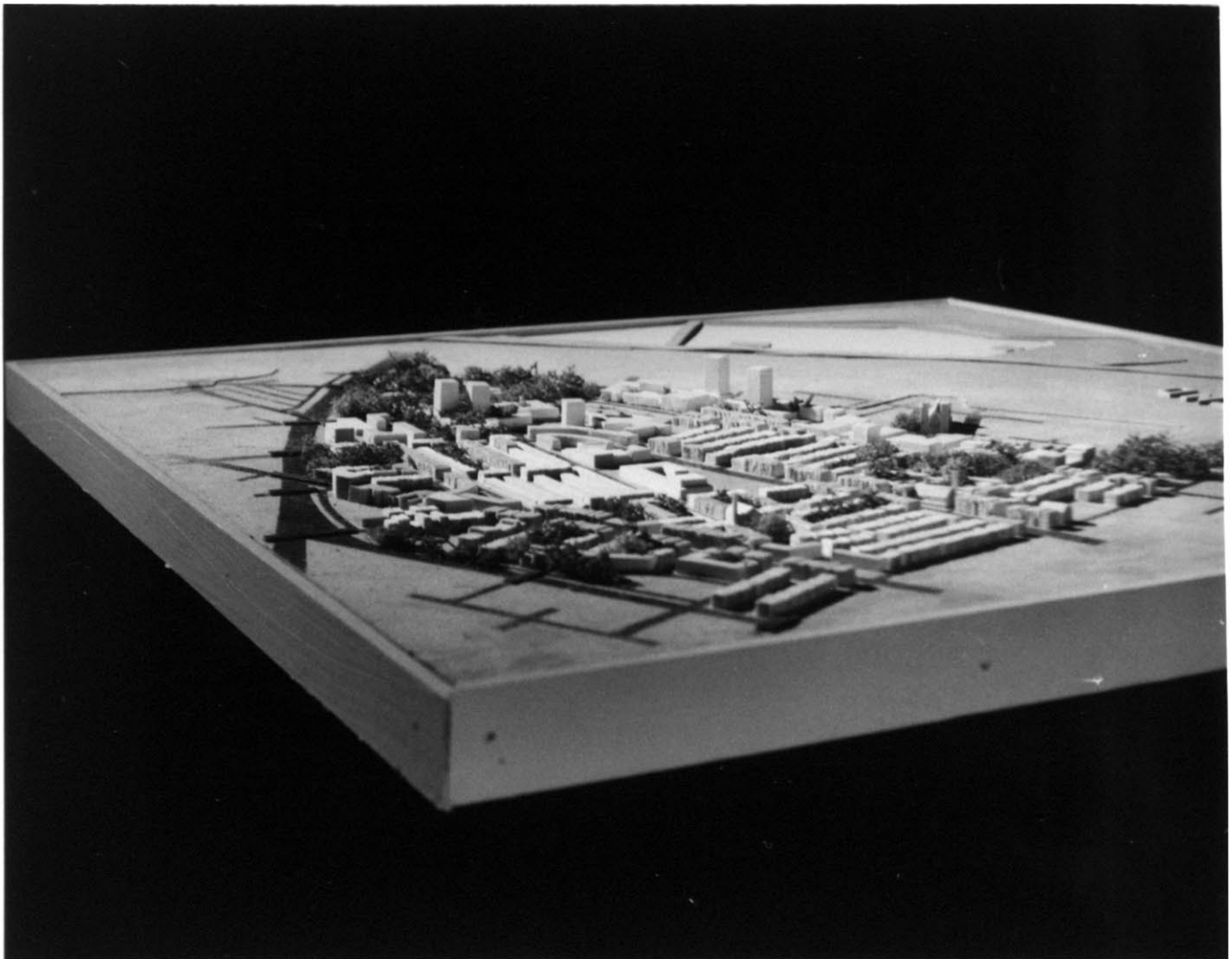
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on Graduate Students

## ABSTRACT

An important aspect of planning is problem solving. This thesis applies a planning process for analyzing problems, posing alternatives, and making recommendations.

The study area of the thesis is in the South End of Boston. It is faced with the problems of the aging city: mixed land use, declining population, and congestion. Because it is at an accessible point and offers convenience, it has a high potential for development.

The plan recommended in this study combines conservation, reconditioning, and redevelopment techniques for urban renewal.



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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study of an area in the South End of Boston.<sup>1</sup> Its objective is the preparation of a plan.

The nature of the study is applied, as opposed to theory or research. It incorporates and applies a planning process, and land use and circulation principles, to a case study. Because the subject concerns local problems, the report is of greatest interest to those who are involved in planning in the South End: the Redevelopment Authority, the residents, and to those in nearby areas who are effected by the plans.

The thesises of this study are: (1) a justifiable plan for an area is one which evolves from the existing physical and social environment; its problems, history, role, and potential; and reflects the society it is prepared for; and (2) the categories of the process

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1. City Record, "The 90 Million Dollar Development Program for Boston", City of Boston Administrative Services Department, September 24 1960. This article defines the South End from the point of view of renewal plans for Boston City.

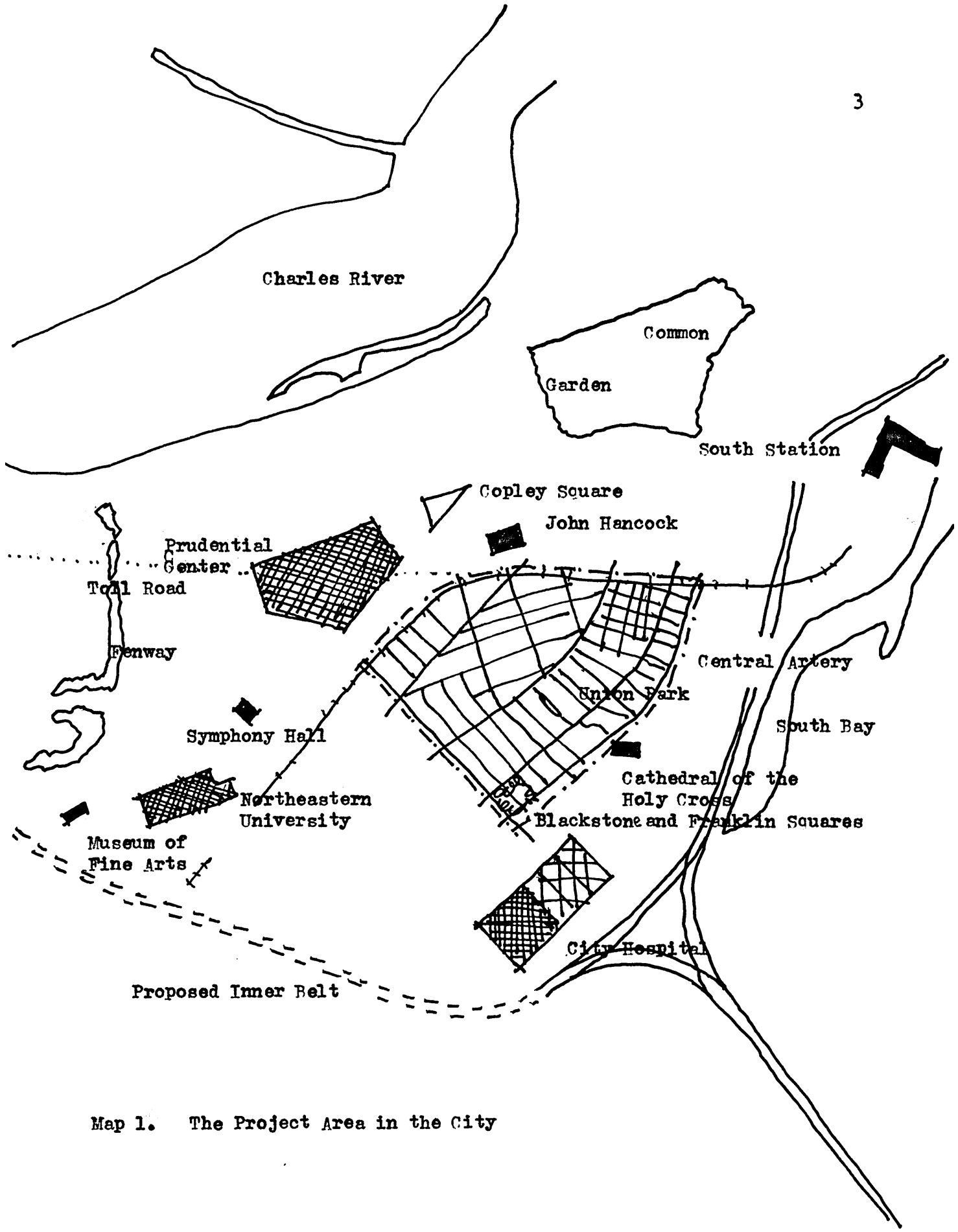
for determining these criteria in the environment are (a) analysis, (b) goal formulation, (c) preparation of alternatives, (d) decision, and (e) implementation.

The purpose of this study is not to propose a prototype design. Its purpose, rather, is to relate a process to specific local problems. The process used is not posed as the only process for preparing plans. In this study, the process was helpful because it (1) gave direction to the study, and (2) succeeded in uncovering and developing the relevant issues. For these reasons the process might be used to advantage in instances which involved similar physical planning.

The area was selected because (1) it suggested problems involving a variety of renewal treatments; conservation, reconditioning, and redevelopment, (2) it dealt with problems of mixed land use, (3) it dealt with problems of areas which border the central business district, (4) it is an area of top priority for physical planning in Boston, (5) its size is within Federal urban renewal requirements, (6) its boundaries are somewhat defined by physical development patterns, the railroads, commercial land uses (Washington Street), and circulation patterns (Newton Street), and (7) it forms the nucleus of a neighborhood which is centered around an elementary school.

Briefly, the study area is bounded on the north and east by the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroads right-of-way, on the west by Newton Street, and on the south by Washington Street. See Map 1. The area is primarily a residential land use. It borders the central business district, the city's office district, Copley Square,





Map 1. The Project Area in the City

and the proposed Prudential Center. The Fenway, the Museum of Fine Arts, Northeastern University, and Symphony Hall are within walking distance. The Public Garden and the Common are nearby. The streets of the area parallel South Bay which is four blocks away. Important landmarks in an near the study area are Union Park, Blackstone and Franklin Squares, the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, and City and Massachusetts Memorial Hospitals.

The study began with an evaluation of statistical materials; the 1950 and 1960 census, and other materials which are available from public agencies. Interviews with residents, and attendance at citizen meetings followed. On the basis of these, an analysis of the existing conditions was undertaken, followed by a formulation of goals, a preparation of alternatives, and finally the development of a single alternative. These stages form the outline for the report of the study.

Many questions arose during the study. What is the best land use or uses for the area? What should be the future role of the study area in the metropolitan and immediate area? How is the new development to be related to the past? What clearance can be justified? Can relocation be undertaken easily? What should be the nature of the physical growth? Should the study area be an entity in itself, or should it be an integral part of the immediate area? What will be the role of present residents in future plans? How should circulation patterns effect development?

There are several positions one could take on some questions, and for some there are no right (or wrong) answers. It is hoped that

the alternatives will become clearer as the report progresses, and the planning recommendations in Chapter VI will reflect considerations of these problems.

## CHAPTER II AN ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY AREA

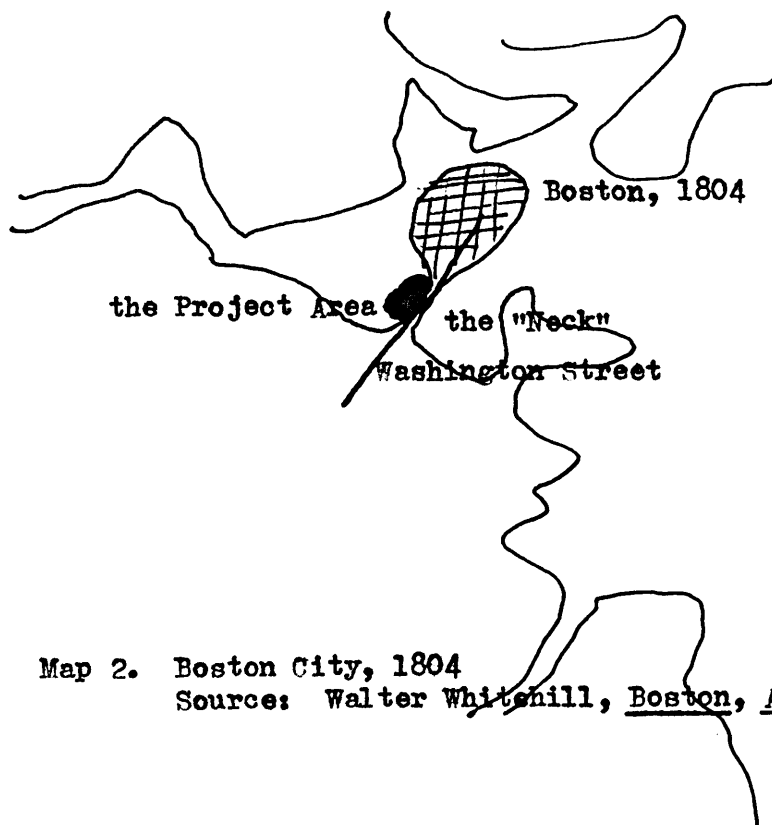
This chapter deals with the problems and potential of the study area. Relevant factors which are considered are (a) the history, (b) role, (c) land use, (d) circulation, (e) social structure, (f) the physical environment, (g) trends, and (h) current proposals involving changes.

### History 2

Many changes have occurred in the physical form of the city of Boston which have a significant bearing on the study area. The first developments were on a peninsula, now the central business district, which was connected to the mainland by a narrow strip of land called the 'Neck'. Until 1804, a single road, Washington Street, located in the Neck and two bridges to the north were the only means of access to the peninsula. See Map 2.

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2. Walter Whitehill, Boston, A Topographical History, Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1959. The materials in this section are based to a large extent on this publication.

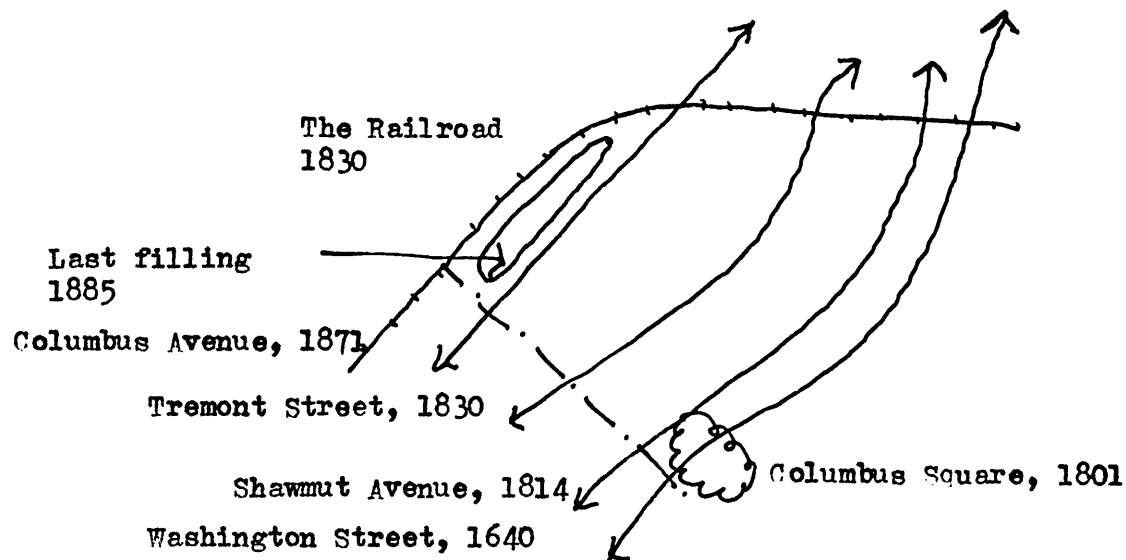


Map 2. Boston City, 1804

Source: Walter Whitcomb, Boston, A Topographical History

As Boston's population grew, there were increased demands for new accessible, developable land. The Neck was widened and new roads were built to accommodate the need. Harrison Avenue was built in 1804; Shawmut Street around 1814. See Map 3. The Neck was widened again in the 1830's and a fourth arterial road, Tremont Street, was built. Columbus Avenue first appears on the map of Boston in 1871.

The development which occurred between the roads was often discontinuous and unrelated to other nearby areas. Columbus Square, now Franklin and Blackstone Squares, appears on plans in 1801. By 1814 there were small developments along Washington and Shawmut Streets. Large scale development began in the 1850's, for people who wanted homes with open



Map 3. The Historic Development  
 Source: Walter Whitehill, Boston, A Topographical History

with open space nearby.

The filling of Back Bay caught the attention of big investors of 1860. It became the new prestige area of the city, attracted most of the new high-cost housing that was being built in Boston, and left the South End in a lower position on the prestige scale. The Panic of 1873 changed the character of housing in the South End from one of owner-occupied units to a lodging house area. Banks gained possession of housing, especially along newly developed Columbus Avenue, and sold them for any price they could get. By 1885 the South End was primarily a lodging house area.

Railroads preceded residential development in the South End. In the 1830's they made their way across the Receiving Basin of the Charles River at their present location. Residential development occurred later

independently on both sides, and, because the railroads limited the accessibility across their tracks, they became a physical barrier.

Horse-drawn transit operated on Washington Street in the last decades of the 1800's, accounting in part for the strip development which exists on that street. The elevated railway began operation on Washington Street in 1901. Its noise and physical presence have been a cause of blight since.

A number of institutions moved from the peninsula to the South End in the 50's and 60's. Boston College located in the South End in 1850 and remained till 1904. Several large downtown churches which built in the area stand today.

### The Role of the Study Area in the Metropolitan Area<sup>3</sup>

The South End study area is primarily a residential area. It supplies housing to lower income groups, unrelated individuals, older citizens, transients, and minority groups. See Chart 1.

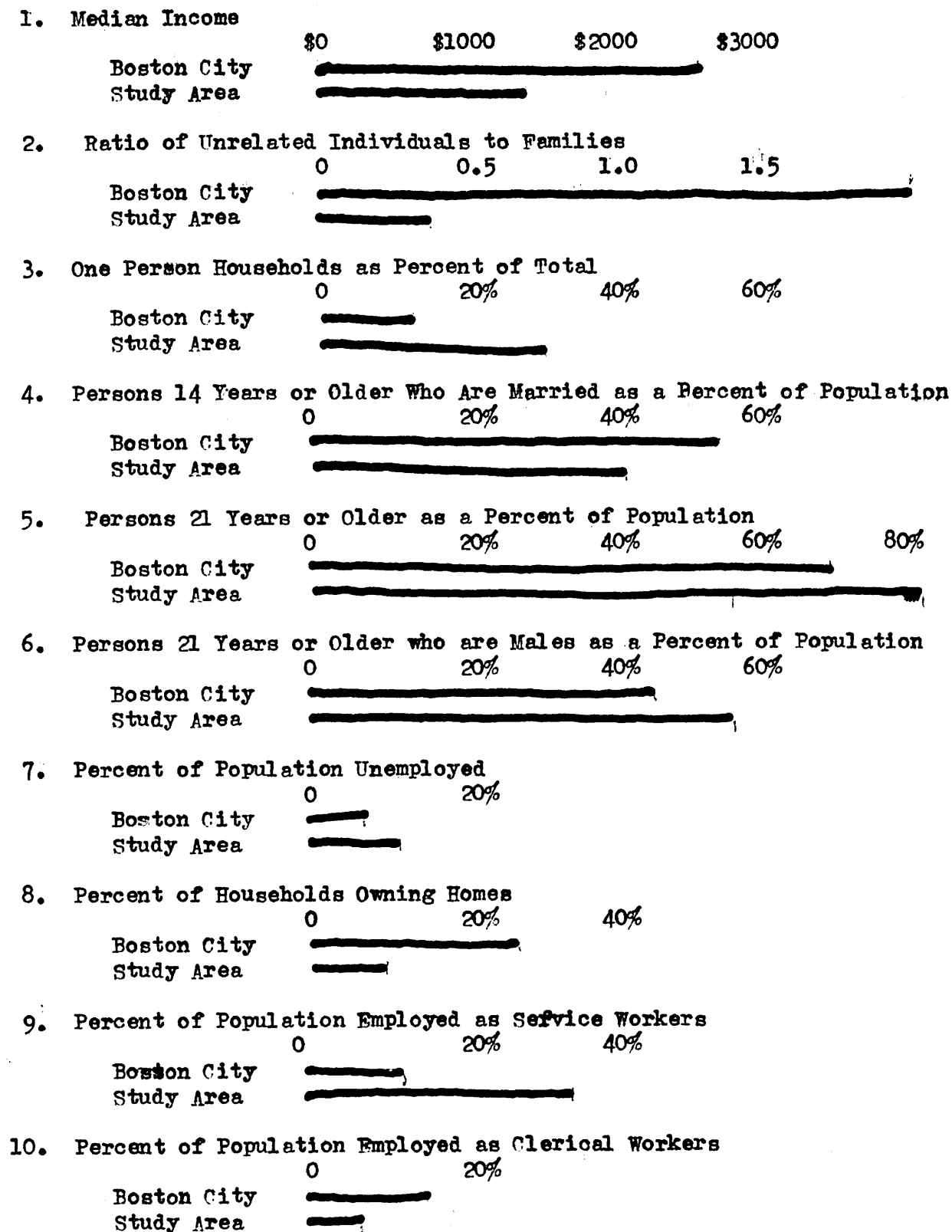
The median income for the study area in 1950 was \$1522 as compared to \$2643 for the City of Boston. Thirty percent of the households are one person as compared to 12 percent for the city. The ratio of families to unrelated individuals is 0.43 in the area: in Boston this ratio is 2.0. Forty-three percent of the persons 14 years or older are married compared to 55 percent for the City. A large percent, 81 as compared to 69, are older than 21 years. Of this group, the majority

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3. Much of this information was extracted from 1950 census materials. See Table 1, Appendix A.

## Chart 1. Population Statistics

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Seventeenth Census: 1950





are men, 56 percent as compared to 48 percent for the City. Unemployment tends to be slightly higher than in other parts of the City. A relatively large percent of the population are employed as service workers; there is a noticeable lack of clerical workers. Home ownership is at a low level.

The central business district of Boston, and residential areas to the west, meet at the study area. Four major radial streets, Washington and Tremont Streets, and Columbus and Shawmut Avenue, pass from the business district, through the area, to the residential areas.

The area is an integral part of Boston. Residents supply labor to other parts of the metropolitan area, and go outside the area for schooling, recreation, entertainment, religious activities, and shopping.

Diagram 1 illustrates these relationships.

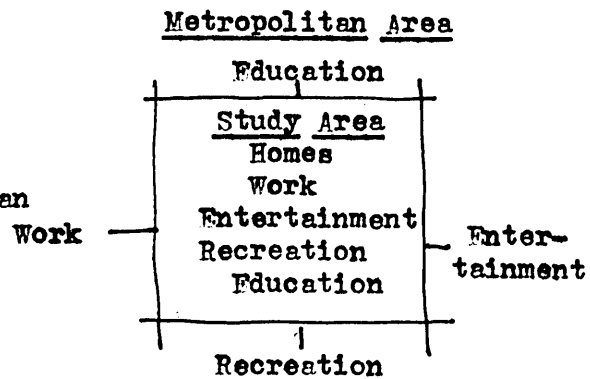


Chart 1. Functional Relationships of the Study Area

The Role in the Immediate Area.

The study area is roughly the northeast quarter of the South End, and is linked physically to the South End.

Diagram 2 illustrates the physical features of the immediate area. A prominent feature, the railroad forms the northern and eastern boundaries of the study area. The railroad deliniates the area both

physically and socially because: (1) development on the north paralleled the Mill Dam and occurred independent of southern development, which paralleled South Bay, (2) the Back Bay was established as a prestige

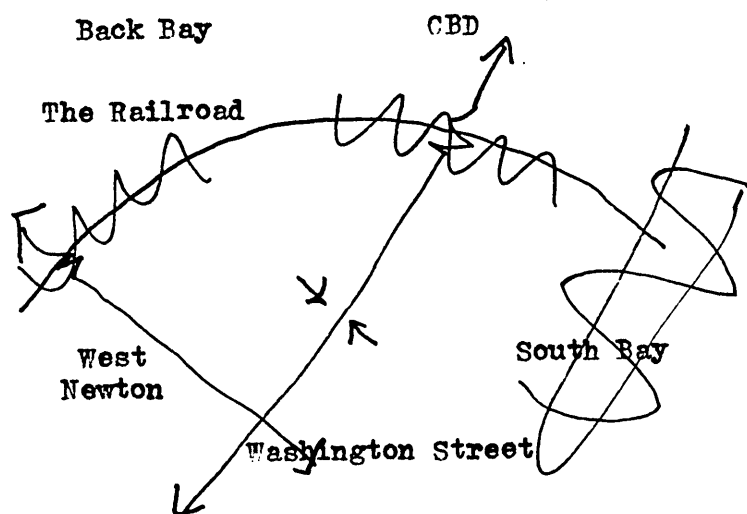


Diagram 2. The Immediate Area

area due to its relation to the Public Garden and Beacon Hill, and the buildings built were of a different nature than in the South End, (3) a bay of water, defined by the railroad, remained between the Back Bay and the South End for many years after the initial development, (4) the railroad yards, a large open area which is now the Prudential Center

site, formed a barrier because it limited accessibility and activity, and (5) the railroads limited north-south accessibility.

The other boundaries are defined differently. Washington Street is a strip commercial development which is similar to an axis. The study area is on one side of the axis, and a slightly different residential area is on the other. West Newton Street, the western boundary is the only street which crosses the railroad tracks between Dartmouth Street and Massachusetts Avenue.

There are two urban renewal type projects in the immediate area. The New York Streets project is a redevelopment project with industry as

the new land use. The second project, completed for some time, is a public housing project.

The South Bay defines the South End on the south. It (1) limits accessibility, (2) was historically a larger body of water which formed an even more prominent barrier, and (3) deliniates a change in land use.

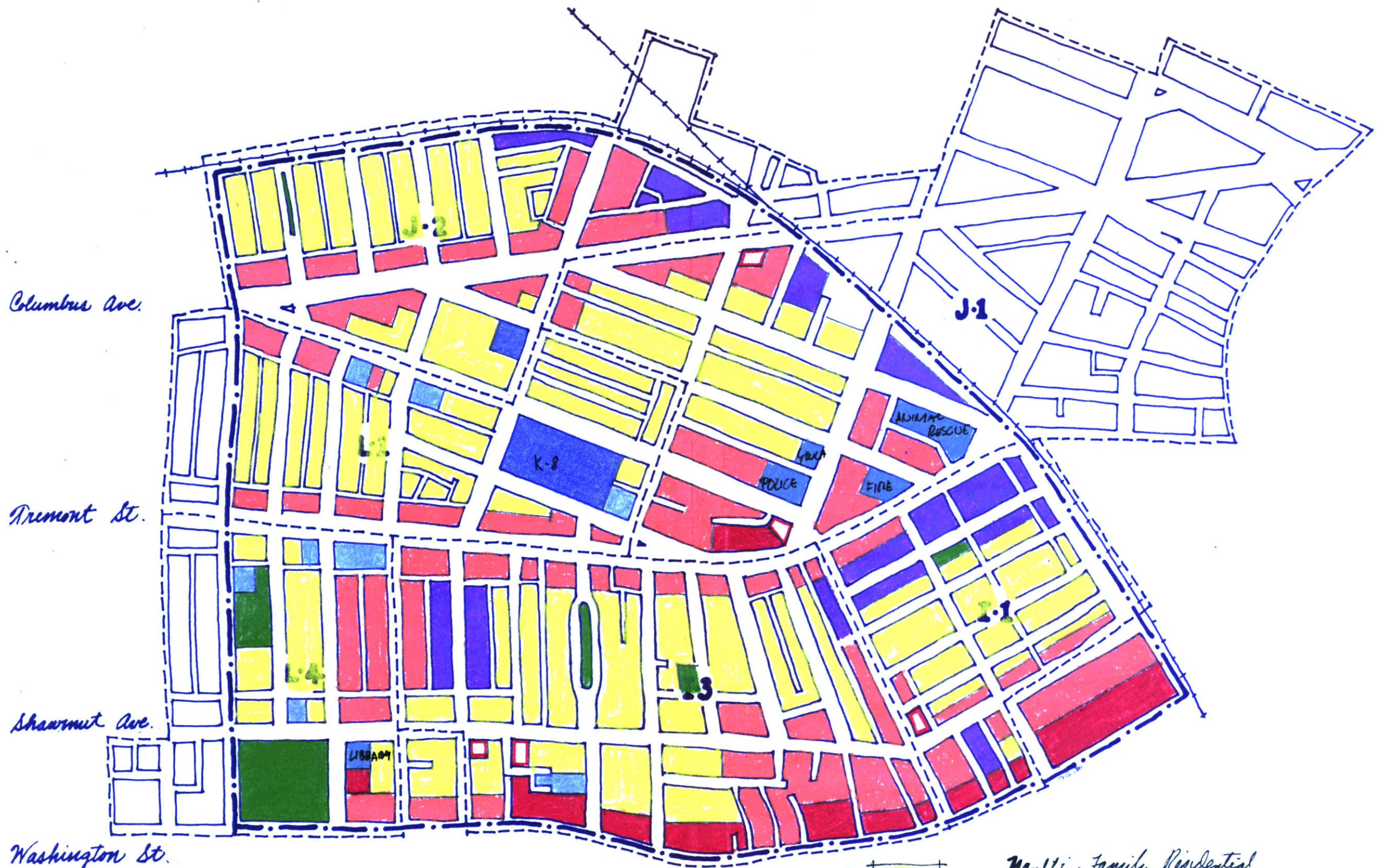
### Land Use

Map 4, page 14, illustrates the land use patterns in the study area. The primary use is multi-family residences. Commercial facilities, chiefly convenience shops on the first floors of apartments, are found along the major streets, Columbus Avenue, Tremont, and Washington Street. Some commercial uses, gas stations and businesses, are incompatible with local residential uses because they serve persons outside the area.

The amount of public recreational land is insignificant. Blackstone Square has recreational facilities, and Union Park provides some open space. One of the most used playgrounds is at Rice School. A new playground on West Newton Street will provide space for recreational purposes in that area. Its objective is to serve the liesure time needs of all age groups. There is a reasonable amount of private open space. However, this is cluttered and inefficiently used.

There are five churches, a public library, an animal rescue center, police and fire department headquarters, and new YwCA facilities. Two elementary schools serve the area, the Rice-Franklin, K-8, and Bankroff, 1-4. Enrollment is about 900, a 20 percent decrease from 1950 to 1960.

**Map 4. Existing Land Use**



- - - Project Boundary  
 . . . Census Tract Boundary  
 + + + Railroad  
**J:1** - Census Tract Number  
 0' 400'  
 Scale  
 ↑  
 N

- Multi-family Residential
- Commercial and Residential
- Commercial
- Service Commercial
- Gas Stations
- Schools
- Churches
- Public buildings
- Open Space

High school students go to a school of their choice outside the study area.

Commercial services, largely warehousing and wholesaling are located along the railroad. A significant use is the flower market on Tremont Street, which is the wholesale distributing point for New England. It contributes to the economic base of Boston, and, like most market areas in the City, has a rich tradition.

#### Circulation <sup>4</sup>

Circulation patterns are a dominant feature in the project area. Three major streets, Columbus Avenue, Tremont, and Washington Streets pass through the area, plus a minor street, Shawmut Avenue. Columbus Avenue extends to Jamaica Plain, Washington Street and Shawmut Avenue go the Roxbury, and Tremont Street is a link between Shawmut and Columbus.

Map 5, page 16, illustrates volumes of vehicular traffic flow. It shows that a large percent of the traffic passes through the area. Columbus Avenue is the most used.

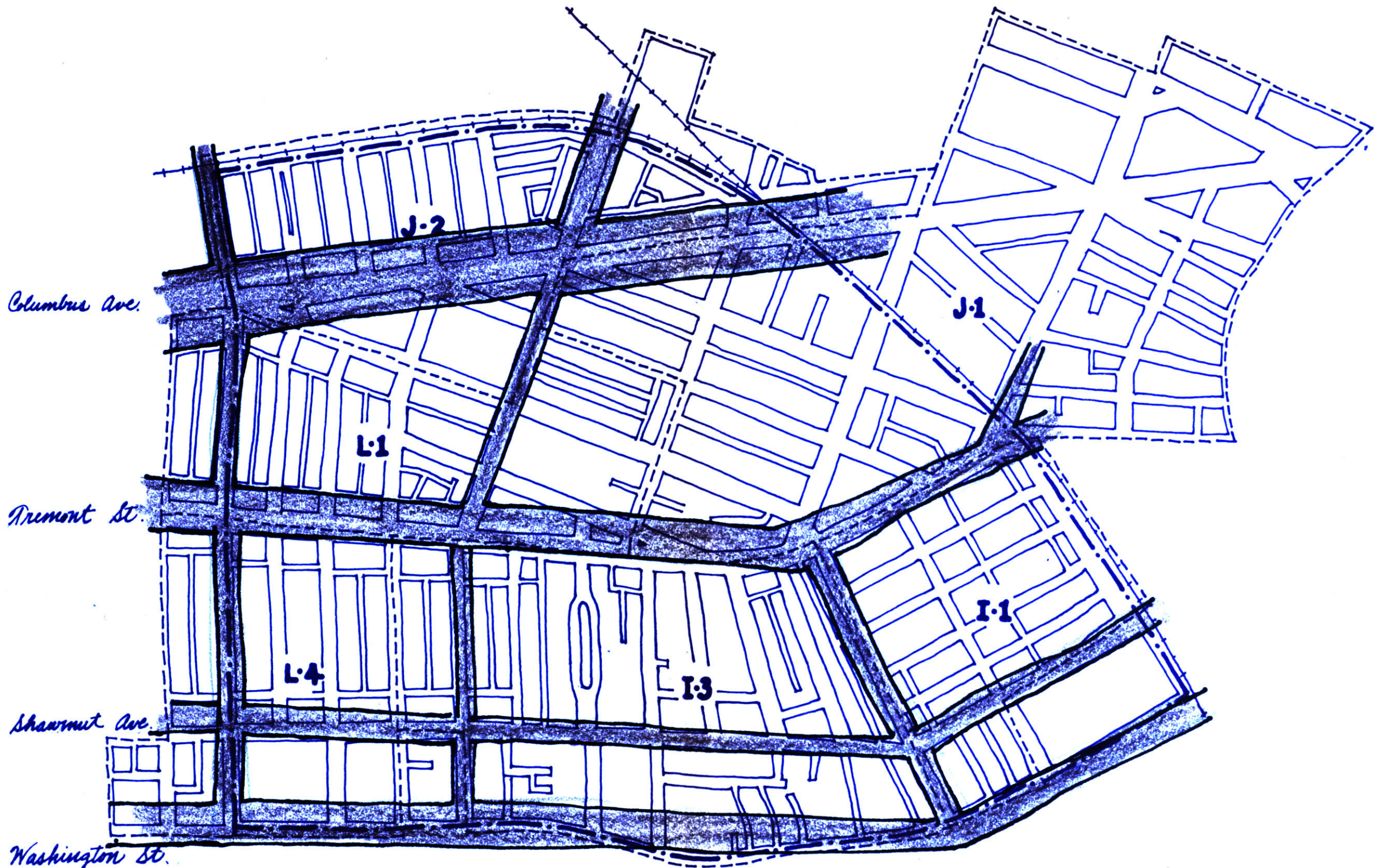
North-south routes are awkward because they are discontinuous, but there is a significant flow in that direction. Two well-used paths of travel are from Columbus Avenue to the Back Bay, and from the Southeast Expressway, via Dover Street, to the Back Bay.

The problem of joining South Bay and Back Bay street patterns

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4. Boston Traffic Commission, Comparative Studies of Cordon Counts, Boston Traffic Commission, Boston Massachusetts, 1954. This reference was helpful in determining traffic conditions in the South End.

Map 5. Traffic Flow, 10 Hour Counts, 1956 - 1961  
Source: Boston Traffic Commission



- . - . - Project Boundary  
 - - - - - Census Tract Boundary  
 + + + Railroad  
**J:1** - Census Tract Number  
 0'      400'  
 Scale  
 ↑  
 N

[Shaded Area] Scale 1" = 20,000 Cars  
 10 hour counts 1956-61



was discussed briefly earlier. The radial street, the streets south of Tremont, and those north of Columbus reflect the South Bay pattern; between Tremont and Columbus, and Arlington and Dartmouth they fit the Back Bay pattern. Many odd-angled intersections result, especially along Columbus Avenue and Tremont Street.

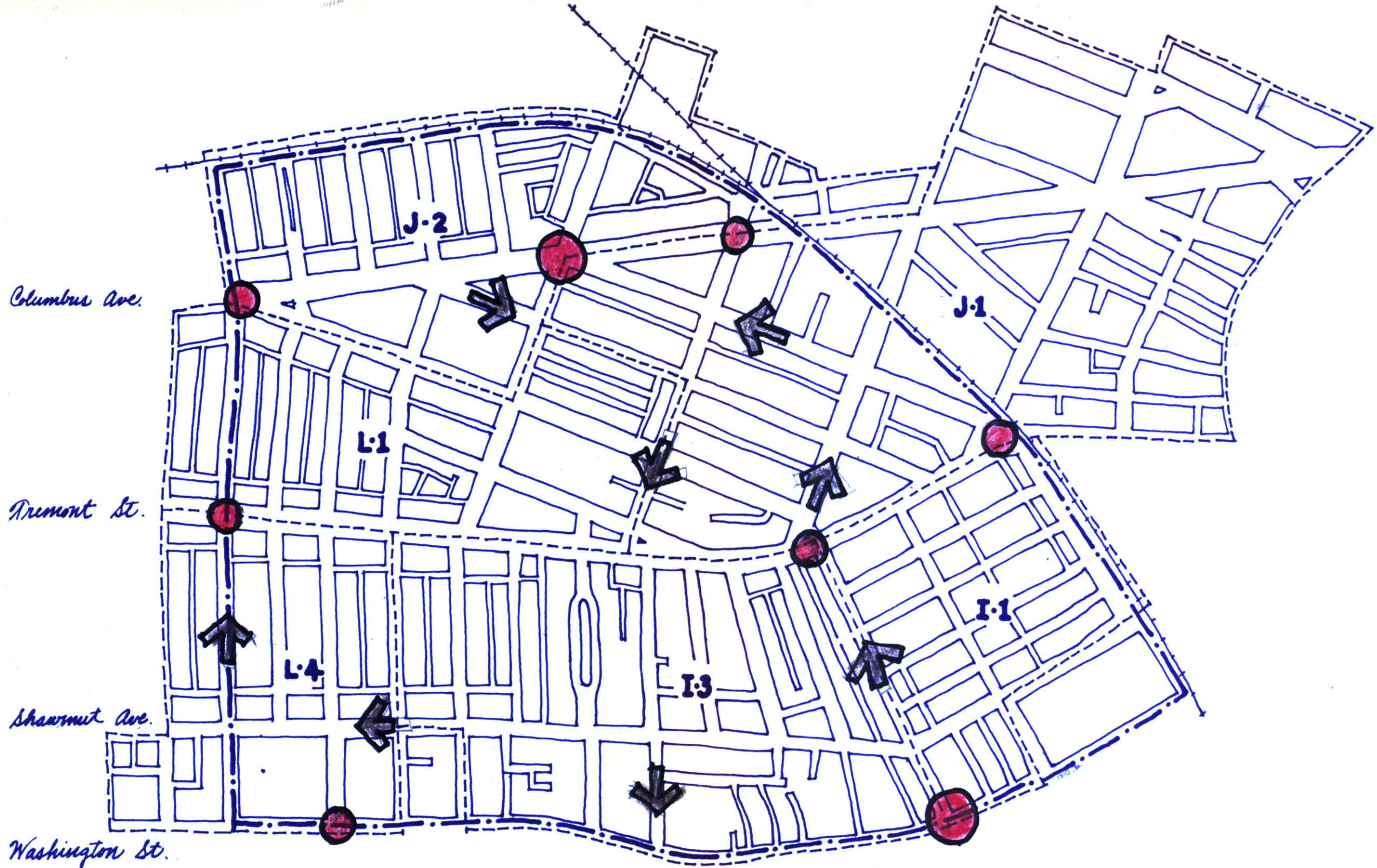
Map 6, page 18, shows accident rates at intersections, and the one-way street systems. The high accident rates occur chiefly along Columbus Avenue, and are due to (1) the width of the road which is hazardous for pedestrians, (2) the odd-angled intersections which limit visibility and increase the distance pedestrians must walk, and (3) the lack of traffic control. Accident rates are favorable. With about three percent of Boston's population (1950), it had two percent of the accidents in the 1957-1960 period.<sup>5</sup> One resident points out that everyone is aware of the danger, and people in general are more careful than usual.

The one-way streets occur where streets are too narrow to make two-way traffic practical, and at critical points to ease the flow of traffic. Berkeley-Dover and Clarendon-Waltham form an important north-south pair.




There is little provision for off-street parking. Cars from office areas in the Back Bay park on South End streets.

Mass transit serves Tremont and Washington Streets. The Tremont line is a surface line with local stops. The Washington Street line, a part of the subway system, is elevated with one stop at Dover Street. Washington Street narrows at Dover, and the elevated structure becomes



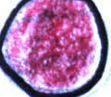
**Map 6. Accident Rates and One-way Street System**



Washington St.

-  Project Boundary
-  Census Tract Boundary
-  Railroad
- J:1** - Census Tract Number



-  One-way streets
-  20-29 accidents 1957-1959
-  30-39 accidents 1957-1959

an even more dominant feature from this point.

The railroad at the north boundary is a passenger line serving the Back Bay Station at Dartmouth Street, and South Station. The line also serves for distributing classified freight.

There is much pedestrian activity on the radial streets. Problems of integrated pedestrian and vehicular traffic are encountered, such as the providing of safety for elementary school children, slowing of vehicular flow, creating situations which discourage pedestrian movements.

### The Social Structure

The following observations, based on the 1950 census, can be made for the study area. <sup>5</sup>

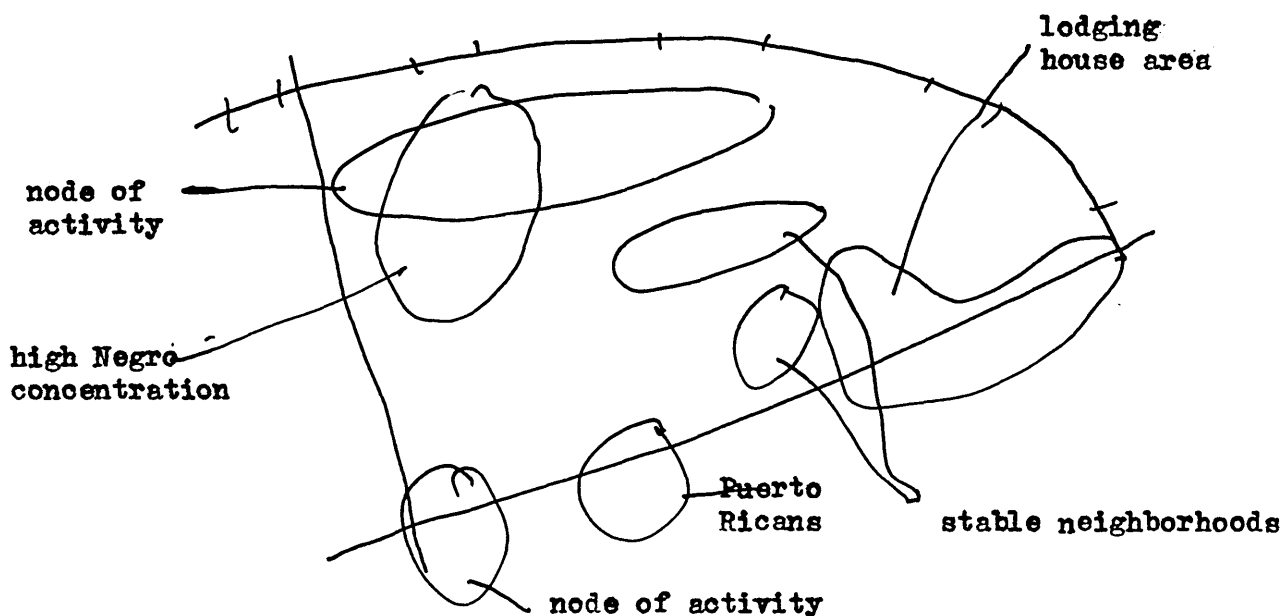
1. The population is in flux with losses of 30 percent in the past 10 years.
2. The percent of males is higher than for Boston City.
3. The percent of white population is lower than the Boston City average.
4. The percent of foreign born is higher than the Boston average.
5. The ratio of unrelated individuals to families is considerably lower in the study area than in Boston City.
6. The persons per household ratio is low.
7. The median school years completed is low.
8. Migration from within Suffolk County is relatively high.
9. Median income is low.
10. The percent of the population which are of elementary school age is low.
11. The percent of population over 21 is high compared to the City of Boston.
12. The percent of the population which is married is relatively small, while the percent of single, divorced, or widowed is high.

5. See Appendix A and Chart 1, page 10.

13. Unemployment tends to be higher than in other parts of Boston.
14. The birth rate is low, death rate high, and the infant mortality rate high.

Map 7 illustrates the social groupings and nodes of social activity. It shows areas of high Negro concentration, up to 59 percent; areas of highest stability based on home ownership, income, and low population turn-over; and lodging house districts, characterized by a large percent of male population and older citizens. It also shows areas housing occupied by Puerto Ricans, who have been moving to Boston in the past three or four years from New York.

Nodes of social activity are at the shops of Columbus Avenue, Tremont, and Washington Streets; at Blackstone Square; the schools; and churches. The Rice-Franklin school is used for community basketball



Map 7. Social Groupings and Nodes of activity

programs, and the auditorium facilities are used at nights by civic groups.

Incompatible land uses were discussed above; there are incompatible social uses also. There are evidences of dope, prostitution, and excesses of liquor. A recent study estimated there is one liquor outlet per 220 persons in the South End, as compared to a rough optimum of one to 1000. Persons with families, the stable population of the South End, sometimes complain that this is an undesirable environment for children, and the fact that population has fallen 30 percent in ten years, even if for not this reason alone, indicates this is a serious problem.

### The Physical Environment

There are two types of physical character in the area. One is quiet, and reserved, a residential land use occurring between the radial streets, and the second is characterized by variety, activity, and color.

Sketch 1 illustrates the first. It is created by brick dwellings rising two to four stories. The structures are continuous and are consistently a deep red, burnt ocher, or brown brick. Bay windows and bowed fronts supply relief to the facades. There is variety within the area on this theme. The scale is urban with densities of 60 to 90 persons per acre. The streets are linear developments, closed at the ends by the radial streets. In some instances, in terms of scale, there is too much repetition and a lack of variety. The study area has few trees in public areas, and a minimal number of street furnishings.



Sketch 1. Typical residential development

Sketch 2 illustrates the second type of physical character. It is colorful, though cluttered with signs and marquees which lack quality, and, in themselves are not worth saving. There are marginal shops and vacancies which are poorly maintained. The streets are wide, filled with cars and pedestrian activity. The unending vistas contribute to a lack of scale.



Sketch 2. Typical commercial character.

The structures are old; 1950 census materials show that seven dwelling units have been built since 1915. The Rice-Franklin elementary school was completed in 1959, and an Animal Rescue Center, a YWCA building, and a Stop & Shop grocery and a church at Blackstone Square were completed recently. There are signs of remodeling and improvements, such as new Perma-stone fronts, on commercial establishments and private homes.

Map 8, page 24, records census information on dilapidated dwelling units in 1950, by blocks. The map distinguishes between areas with 20 or more percent of units having building deficiencies (dilapidated, without plumbing) and areas with 50 or more percent of units having deficiencies. Map 9, page 25, shows the same information from the 1960 census, by census tract.

Federal Title I assistance is available for reconditioning to areas with 20 or more percent of the units having building deficiencies, and when two environmental deficiencies occur. Of the eight which the Title I program list as environmental deficiencies, four are present in the study area.

1. "...conversions to incompatible types of uses, such as rooming houses among family dwellings.
2. "Detrimental land uses or conditions, such as incompatible uses, structures in mixed use, or adverse influences from noise, smoke, or fumes.
3. "Unsafe, congested, poorly designed, or otherwise deficient streets.
4. "Inadequate public utilities or community facilities contributing to unsatisfactory living conditions or economic decline." <sup>6</sup>


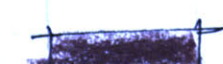

6. Housing and Home Finance Agency, Urban Renewal Manual; Policies and Requirements for Local Public Agencies, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington D. C., revised november 1960, page 3-1, 1.



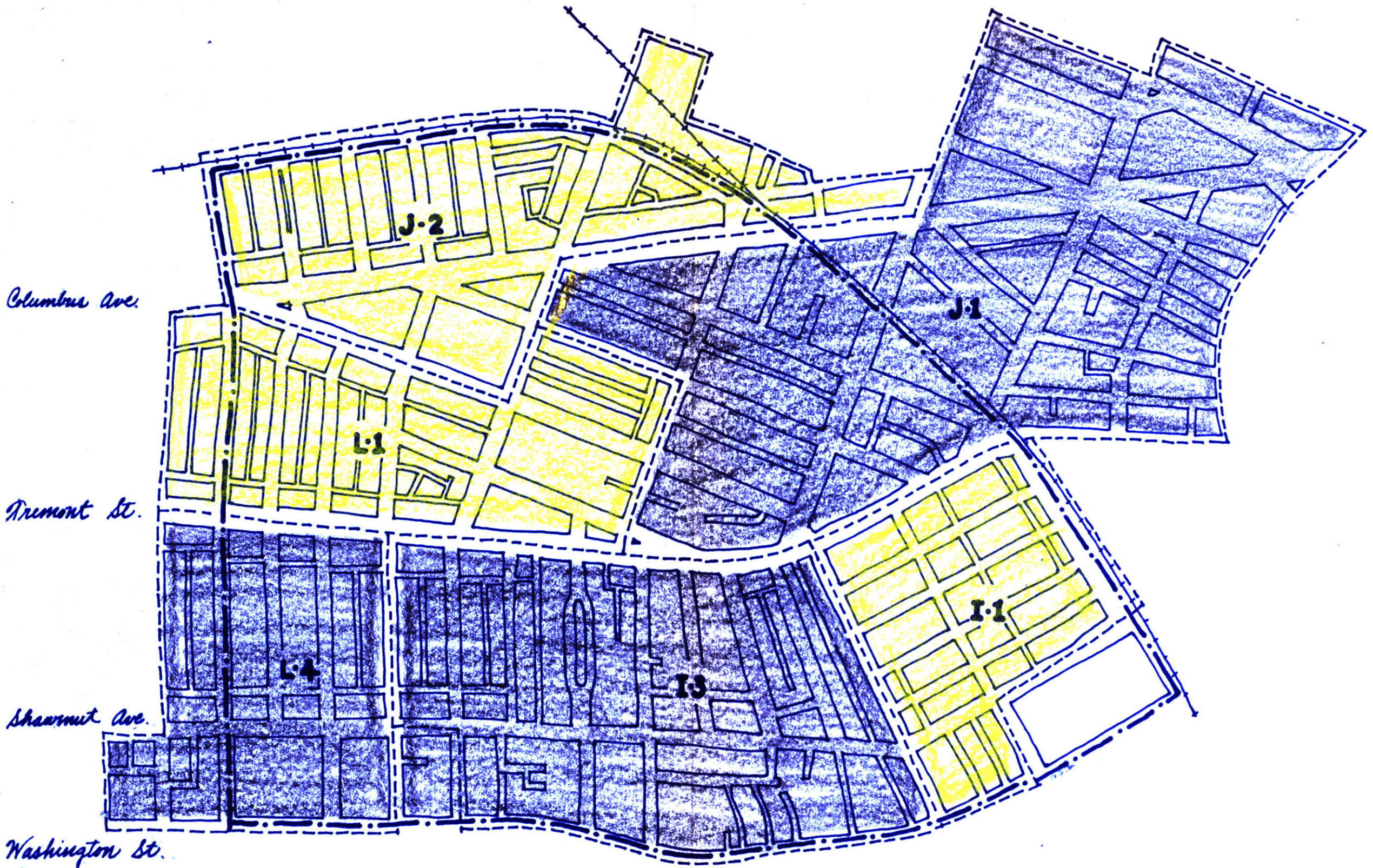
Map 8. Percent of Dilapidated Units by Block  
Source: 1950 U. S. Census




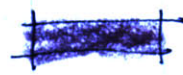
- . - - Project Boundary  
 - - - - Census Tract Boundary  
 + + + Railroad  
**J:1** - Census Tract Number  
 0' 400' Scale  
 ↑  
 n

 50 or more percent of unit dilapidated  
 20 to 50 percent of units dilapidated  
 less than 20 percent of unit dilapidated

Map 9. Percent of Units Dilapidated by Census Tract, 1960  
Source: Preliminary Releases of 1960 U. S. Census



- - - Project Boundary  
 - - - Census Tract Boundary  
 + + + Railroad  
**J:1** - Census Tract Number

 50 or more % of units dilapidated  
 20 to 49 percent of units dilapidated



Title I assistance is available for clearance and redevelopment when more than 50 percent of the buildings are substandard and warrant clearance, or when more than 20 percent of the buildings are substandard requiring clearance, and substantial other clearance is warranted to effectively remove blighting influences. The blighting influences which Title I lists are found in the study area in varying degrees.

1. "Inadequate street layout.
2. "Incompatible uses or land relationships.
3. "Overcrowding of buildings on the land.
4. "Excessive dwelling unit density.
5. "Obsolete buildings not suitable for improvement or conversion.
6. "Other identified hazards to health and safety and to the general well being of the community."<sup>7</sup>

With these as requirements, much of the study area qualifies for reconditioning and clearance aid.

There are violations of housing and building codes. Of 2419 buildings surveyed recently by the fire department, 1059, or 44 percent, were considered unsafe in terms of life. Fire occurrences are higher in the South End than for the average in Boston. In 1960, four percent of the Boston fires occurred in the South End, with three percent of the population. Insurance rates are high making home ownership more difficult for lower income groups.

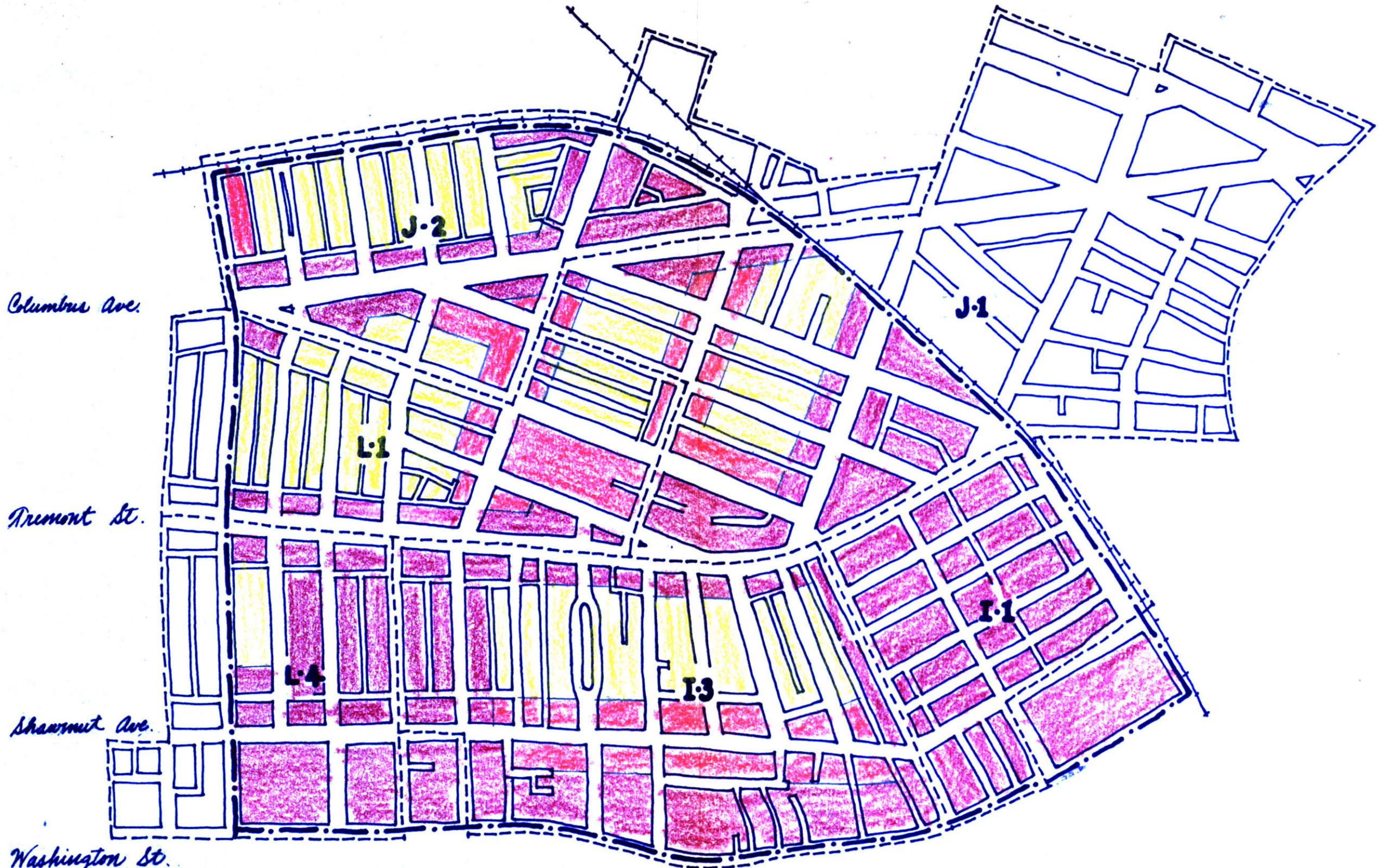
Map 10, page 27, shows the existing zoning for the study area. There are no non-conforming uses, which illustrates the permissive nature of the ordinance. Little protection is given residential areas from non-

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7. Ibid.

Map 10. Existing Zoning

Source: City Planning Board, Zoning in Boston, City of Boston Printing Department, Boston Massachusetts, 1924.



- - - Project Boundary  
 - - - Census Tract Boundary  
 + + + Railroad  
**J:1** - Census Tract Number  
 0' 400'  
 Scale  
 ↑  
 N

[Yellow Box] General Business  
 [Red Box] Local Business  
 [Dark Red Box] General Business

compatible land uses.

Map 12, page 30, shows the zoning districts of the proposed zoning ordinance. Its purpose is to eliminate excessive ribbon development, to provide a better environment for residential living by removing incompatible and traffic-generating uses, and to provide commercial areas at critical points in sizes which will be supported.<sup>8</sup> The new ordinance would establish sizeable residential areas. Map 11, page 29, illustrates the non-conforming uses which will exist when the ordinance is adopted.

The high percent of absentee landlords has been a problem. Buildings often need repairs, garbage receptacles are sometimes not provided, and enforcing existing codes is difficult because ownership is hard to trace.

### Trends

Based on the 1950 census and preliminary 1960 census materials, and the observations of citizens of the South End, the following seem to be the trends in the study area:

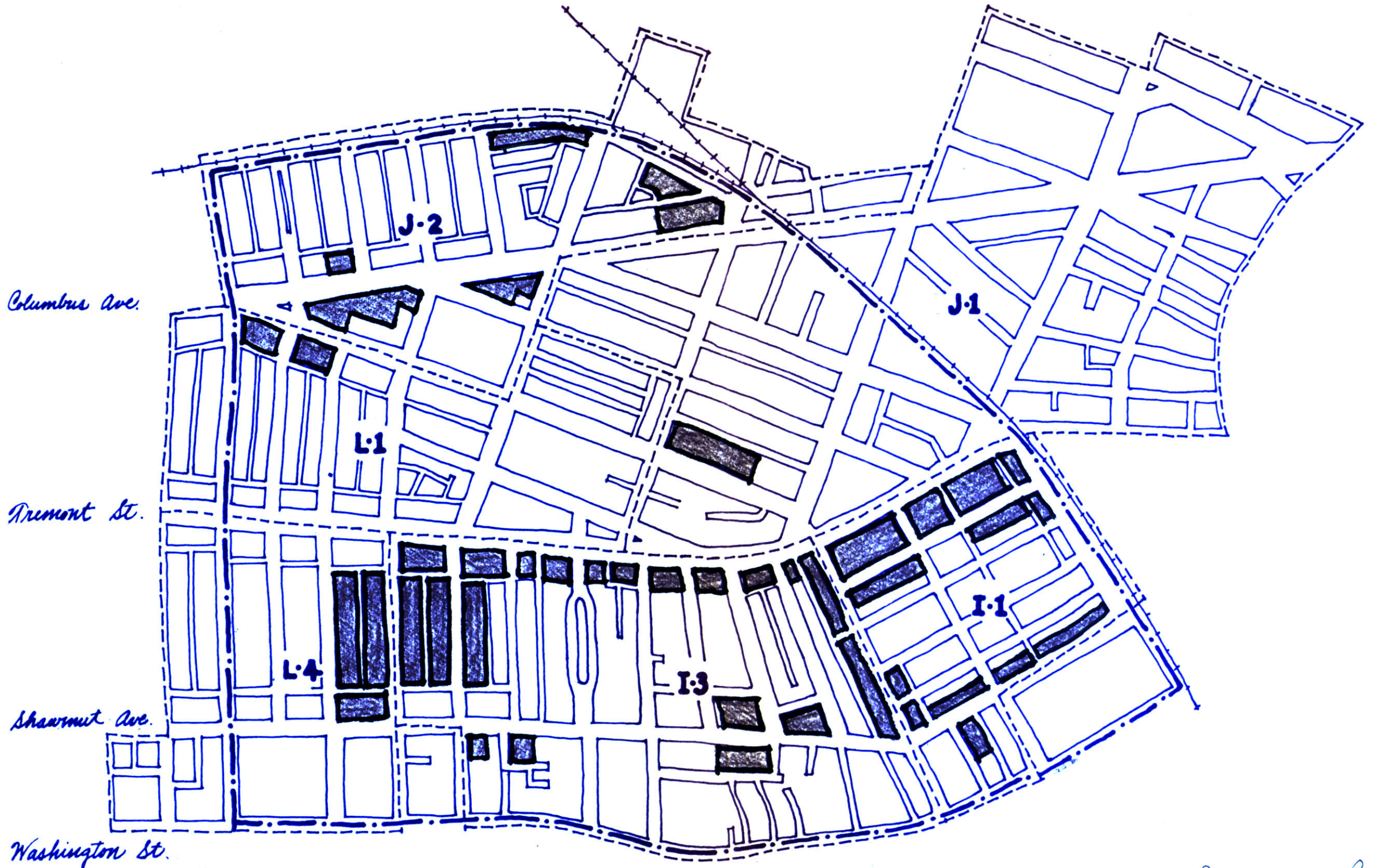
1. The overall population is decreasing, 32 percent by preliminary census materials, and roughly 20 percent within elementary school age.
2. There will be increases in the percent of population that are minority groups. This trend has been a continuous one, with an increase of seven percent from 1950 to 1960.
3. The Puerto Rican population will increase. There are an estimated 2000 in the area now who have arrived in the past four years.
4. There will be more vacancies in housing based on the decreasing population.

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8. City Planning Board, Proposed Zoning, Boston Massachusetts, May 1958, page 1.



Map 11. Nonconforming Uses in the Proposed Zoning



Washington St.

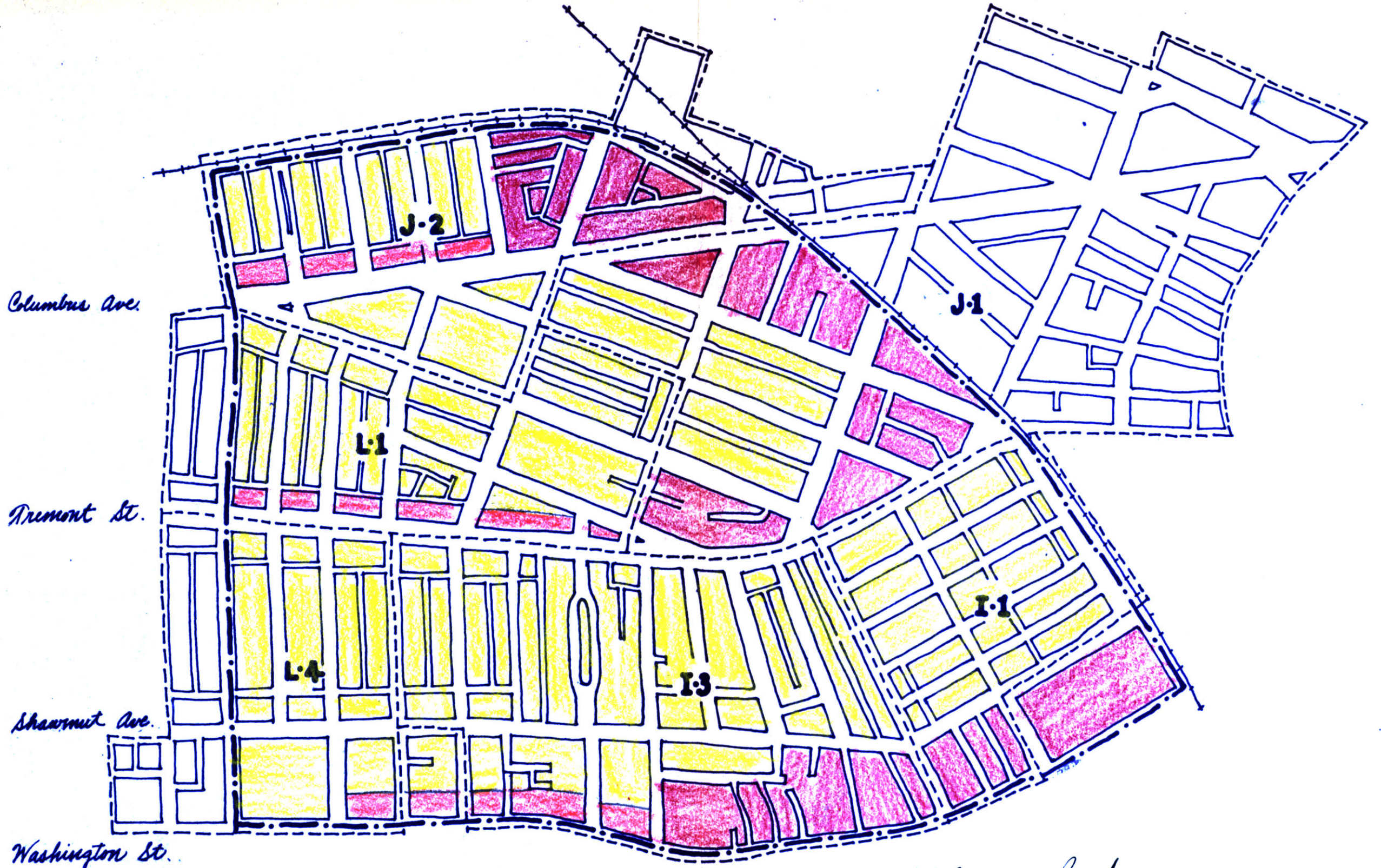
- · — Project Boundary
- - - Census Tract Boundary
- + + + Railroad
- J:1** - Census Tract Number






Nonconforming Uses of Proposed Zoning Plan.

Map 12. Proposed Zoning




Source: City Planning Board, Proposed Zoning, Boston  
Massachusetts, May 1958.



Washington St.

-  Project Boundary
-  Census Tract Boundary
-  Railroad
- J:1** - Census Tract Number



-  General Residence
-  Local Business
-  General Business

5. There will be undoubling and probably lower rent rates relative to the City averages.
6. Lack of incentive for private groups indicates construction will remain static.
7. The area will continue to be a lodging house area. The percent of males has increased three percent, and the percent of single, divorced, or widowed has increased six percent over the past ten years.

### Current Proposals

Four current proposals in the South End vicinity are likely to have effects on the area soon. The Prudential project may give the area a focus, aid in breaking down the barrier between the Back Bay and the South End, and eliminate marginal business which cannot compete with Prudential. If not properly designed, Prudential may dump traffic onto residential streets.

A proposed Toll Road, located on the railroad right-of-way would accentuate the Back Bay-South End barrier because it is a strong physical feature. It will drop some traffic at Dartmouth Street, which is the only interchange near the study area, and may increase traffic flow if it becomes a traffic generator. The Toll Road will not reduce the traffic load carried by Washington, Tremont, or Shawmut and Columbus Avenue since it serves a different section of the metropolitan area.

A third proposal which may affect the South End is the Inner Belt. This will provide a north-south route and relieve some existing traffic, channeling it to the Central Artery.

The City Hospital plans to expand its facilities. This would add a new source for labor, a potential source of home owners and

stabilizing population, possibly some attractive buildings, and a stimulus for further development in the South End.

A new zoning ordinance, discussed on page 28, has been proposed. In itself, it is a flexible plan, subject to periodic review, which proposes residential land uses be continued, and expanded into existing marginal commercial areas. If enforced, it would direct new construction and provide a better residential environment by eliminating non-conforming uses and discouraging strip development.

The area has top priority in the Redevelopment Authority. Though no new studies have been made, steps may be taken to improve the area on short notice. Forty-three million dollars has been budgeted for the South End. It is expected that there will be some reconditioning and clearance.

### Conclusions, Problems

The South End was blighted from its early development by the railroads, the unsightly bay, and uncontrolled development. One of the most difficult physical problems was the joining of streets which paralleled South Bay with those which paralleled Back Bay. This problem never was solved in a way which would stimulate attractive development and minimize circulation problems.

The study area is a transitional land use, between commercial and residential uses, and suffers from the problems of such a use. There is flux, changing land use, conversion, speculation, and mixed land use.

The entire form of the Boston Metropolitan Area is in a state of change, having passed from eras when strip developments were practical because of accessibility limitations, to an era of nearly unlimited accessibility and increasing and decentralized population. The study area, being old, permanent, and concentrated, resists this change.

The mixed land-use strip development patterns tend to be a blighting influence. The commercial uses are not in harmony with the residential: (1) they generate traffic through residential areas, bringing danger to pedestrians, especially children and older residents, (2) are noisy and dirty, and (3) they fragmentize the physical development by breaking continuity and order.

The area lacks open space. There is no spacial relief or variety in the physical environment, and the provisions in the neighborhoods for outdoor liesure time activities are minimal. The lack of open space limits the choice of available activities which are reasonably accessible.

The metropolitan circulation which passes through the area divides the area into fragments, and confuses local circulation patterns by dumping traffic on residential streets. Complex odd-angled intersections slow traffic and are hazardous. North-south routes are discontinuous and difficult.

On the south boundry, the elevated street car lines are an oppressive feature. They dominate their surroundings, hiding what may be attractive buildings, are themselves unattractive, and are noisy to live near.

The fact that the area is a lodging area brings special problems. It has an element of unstable-transient population who are less concerned about their environment than permanent residents generally are. Some of the transients are undesirable neighbors. They bring vice into the area that is incompatible with desirable residential conditions. Some absentee landlords are not concerned about the physical appearances of their buildings, and are slow to make improvements.

There is a lack of imageability. With the possible exceptions of Union Park and Blackstone Square, there are no strong physical nodes to give the community an identity; a positive imageable physical character is lacking.

The study area suffers from dilapidation and obsolescence of buildings and land use. Many buildings lack proper facilities for sound public health, and because of fire potential, endanger human lives. A large part of the area will qualify for federal aid for urban renewal.

### Conclusions, Potential

The study area has several assets. It is near the central business district which is a prime supplier of entertainment, employment, shopping facilities, and is still the most convenient place to do business. The area is near industry, and there are possibilities for employment nearby.

The study area is at one of the most accessible points in the entire metropolitan area. It is near the proposed inner belt, the



proposed Toll Road, the Central Artery, and the Southeast Expressway. It is near inter-city transit facilities, such as South Station, Back Bay Station, and the City bus terminals. The metropolitan transit system serves the area.

There are some attractive buildings. The area is near the Harbor and South Bay giving it potential for access to possible attractive natural developments.

Massachusetts Memorial Hospital, City Hospital, and the New England Medical Center have a service to build around. Their potential lies in serving those who most require medical service. The institutions also have large staffs which could provide a stable population and economic base to the immediate area.

The large majority of the population, in themselves represent potential. For the most part these people want urban life, are eager to see improvements in their environment, and are an important resource. As a Mayor's report stated, "Above all...is the indomitable spirit of the people of the South End, and the great faith of their friends and supporters in the rest of the city." 9

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9. City Record, op. cit.

### CHAPTER III GOALS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PLANNING THE STUDY AREA

Three goals are proposed as aids in preparing and judging alternatives for the future development of the study area. They are an expansion of the primary goal of planning, "to provide a satisfactory living and working environment for humans".<sup>10</sup> They consider the interests of the entire community and the study area, and provide a framework for answering the questions posed in Chapter I.

1. To determine the best land use or uses. The criteria for determining which are the best uses are (a) those which best relate to, are integral parts of, and harmonize functionally with, the immediate area, the city, and the metropolitan area, (b) those which best relate to the tradition and culture of the area and provides continuity to the present, (c) those which maximize the potential of the area as discussed beginning on page 34.

2. To provide suitable accessibility to other parts of the metropolitan area. What is suitable depends to a degree on the land use. The following objectives apply to all land uses: (a) to provide means

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10. Housing and Home Finance Agency, op. cit.

of access to related land uses in the metropolitan area, (b) to provide as far as economically feasible, ease of flow, and (c) to provide accessibility to related land uses for all age, economic, and social groups.

3. To determine the best direction and nature for physical and social growth. The objectives of this goal are to : (a) provide for densities which are safe and healthy, (b) provide for a pleasant environment, (c) provide for change through flexibility, (d) economize resources by allocating them at times and places where they will be most effective, and (e) provide a physical organization which allows ease of social intercourse, and choice of social intercourse.

## CHAPTER IV      ALTERNATIVES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The discussion of alternatives for the future development of the study area is divided into four headings: (1) metropolitan implications, (2) land use alternatives, (3) social structure alternatives, and (4) physical planning alternatives.

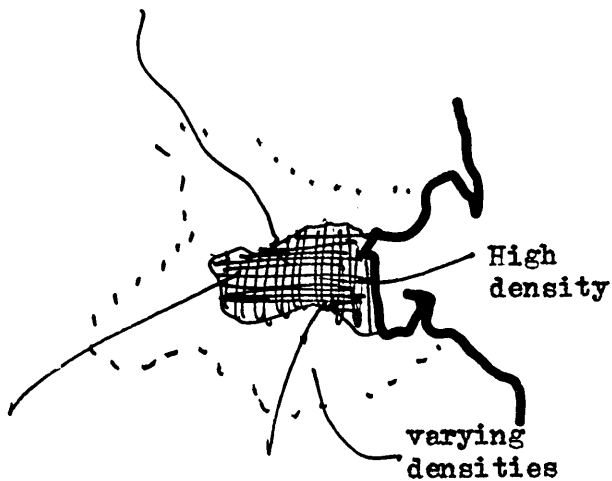
### Metropolitan Implications

The Greater Boston Economic Study Committee, based on recent natural and migratory increases in population in Boston and other metropolitan areas, have predicted a 400,000 person increase in population for Eastern Massachusetts.<sup>11</sup> One assumption of the report is there will be no drastic changes in recent trends of distribution, which means there will be further decreases of population in the central areas of the City. However, urban renewal programs of the City may change this trend.

Four alternative city forms for absorbing this growth are shown on the following pages.

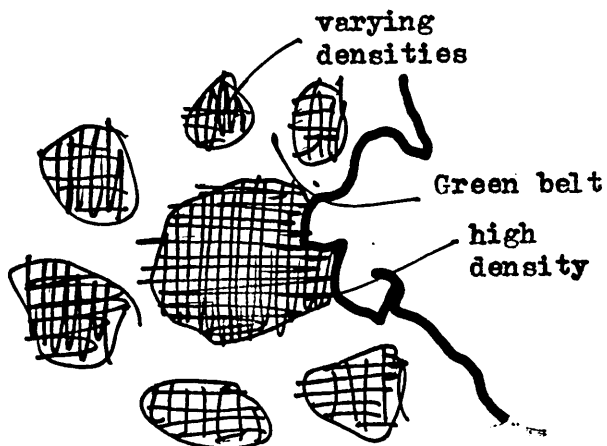
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11. Greater Boston Economic Study Committee, the Population of Greater Boston Projected to 1970, Boston Massachusetts, June 1959, page 3.



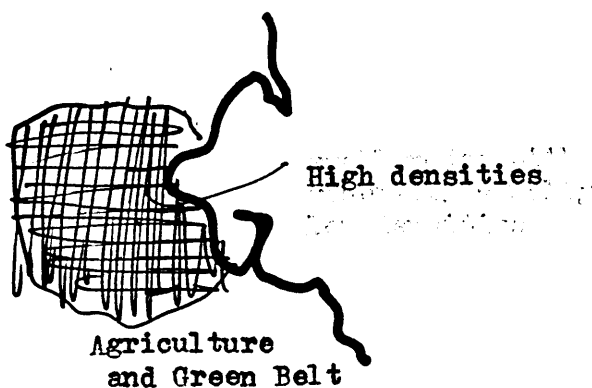
Alternative A. The Star City

The Star City proposes to take up most of the new growth in the suburbs, retaining a high density core and lower densities in the suburbs. The development occurs along major circulation paths. The Star City form provides a wide spectrum of variety and choice.



Alternative B. The Satellite City

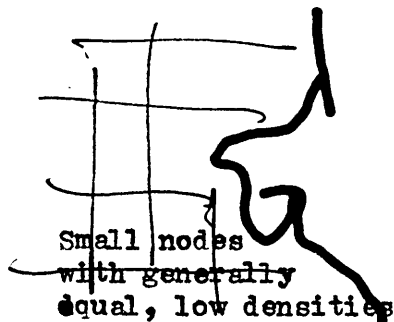
Alternative B is the Satellite City. This proposal would destroy gray and low potential areas. The central area would be renewed within about an hour's walking distance. Green belts would surround this area. New Satellite Cities would take much of the new population



Alternative C. The Core City

Alternative C concentrates all of the new population at the center of the existing city. It would renew the city at new high densities. Surrounding the core would be green belts with agricultural, recreational, and industrial uses.

The sketch of alternative



D illustrates a fourth form, a Dispersed City. It would disperse the existing population as well as the projected growth. Dilapidated areas and those areas with environmental deficiencies would be cleared.

Alternative D. The Dispersed City

The new developments would be at low densities with many small nodes of activity.

With the exception of Alternative D; which may be least desirable because it would (1) limit choice, (2) break the continuity with the past, and (3) encourage a misallocation of land in the society; all of the alternatives favor a continued high density in the study area.

### Land Use Alternatives

There are a number of land uses which can be considered for the study area. Because the study area is near the central business district, specialized commercial uses, office districts along the northern boundary, and central business district uses near the eastern boundary are all reasonable land use alternatives. The fact that the study area is at one of the most accessible points in the metropolitan area make truck orientated industry, wholesaling, and warehousing possibilities, as well as railroad orientated industries along the railroad routes. The location of the study area at the fringe of culture, business, and

employment centers make residential, open land, and recreational and institutional uses reasonable considerations.

Consideration of goal 1, to determine the best land use relative to the metropolitan area, eliminates some of the alternatives. Sites near the John Hancock area and the Blue-Cross Blue-Shield building are better suited for new offices because they are established for this use already, have linkages with nearby related land uses, and have space for expanded activity. Many businesses operating in the Central Business District are on a marginal basis and provide better sites for CBD activity expansion than the study area. While the area is at an accessible point, there is much non-industrial traffic which make it less desirable as an industrial location than sites, for example, near Route 128.

Specialized commercial uses, non-regional commercial uses, residential, open land, recreational, and institutional uses are most desirable, in the terms of goal 1, because they (a) are in harmony with the functions of the immediate area, the city, and the metropolitan area, (b) evolve from the existing physical and social environment, and (c) are capable of maximizing the potential of the area.

#### Social Structure Alternatives

The following are the alternatives for the social structure of the study area.

1. Stable versus transient population.
2. Home ownership versus tenant occupied dwelling units.
3. High incomes versus low incomes.

4. Mixed incomes versus segregation by income.
5. Married versus single population.
6. Older residents versus younger.
7. Childless families versus those with children.
8. Maximum versus minimum social intercourse.
9. Inner directed versus outer directed communities or community.

Providing for low income groups, older citizens, and lodging house citizens would be consistent with the goal of establishing a link to the past. It has been noted that providing for older citizens would help realize the potential of the hospitals. Providing for some higher income people may make the area a more pleasant place to live, because it would make available additional financing for improving the physical environment. Home ownership would have the same affect. Planning for families with children may bring more variety into the area and make it a more pleasant place to live. Communities should be inner directed to the extent that there is ease of social intercourse, and outer directed as an integral part of the metropolitan area.

#### Physical Planning Alternatives

The alternatives for the physical development of the study area are:

1. To provide ease of accessibility or limited accessibility.
2. To provide high densities or low.
3. To design in a suburban or urban character.
4. To design in old existing styles or in modern expressions.
5. To propose (a) no changes in the physical environment, (b) conservation, (c) reconditioning, (d) clearance, or (e) a combination of these.

Goal 2 considerations indicate there should be ease of access to and from the area, and from the metropolitan point of view, there



should be accessibility through the area. However, accessibility patterns should not interfere with the goal of creating a pleasant living environment.

Based on the metropolitan implications, high densities are most desirable, in an urban character. Designing for the existing physical environment using the techniques of modern technology, and the expressions of modern society, is most consistent with providing continuity with the past, and providing for a pleasant environment.

Scheme A, page 44, shows the area as it would appear if the 'no change' alternative were adopted. There are likely to be no natural changes in trends which will improve the area. Lacking a stimulus, it will continue to have problems of dilapidation, congestion, lack of open space, lack of imageability, fragmentation, and will be poorly linked to the immediate area. Blighting influences, such as mixed land use and incompatible land uses, will continue; the area will not realize its potential, and it will not become a more pleasant place to live.

Scheme B, page 45, proposes improvements with a modest budget, and a minimum of disturbance to existing patterns. It proposes to give the community increased structure and imageability by joining nodes, schools and recreation areas, with pedestrian streets. The new walks, landscaped to provide pleasant environments and areas for outdoor and leisure time activities, replace old vehicular streets. New parking facilities would be entered from the alleys. Vacated businesses would revert to residential uses in accordance with the proposed zoning ordinance.

Scheme A. No change

Columbus Ave.

Tremont St.

Shawmut Ave.

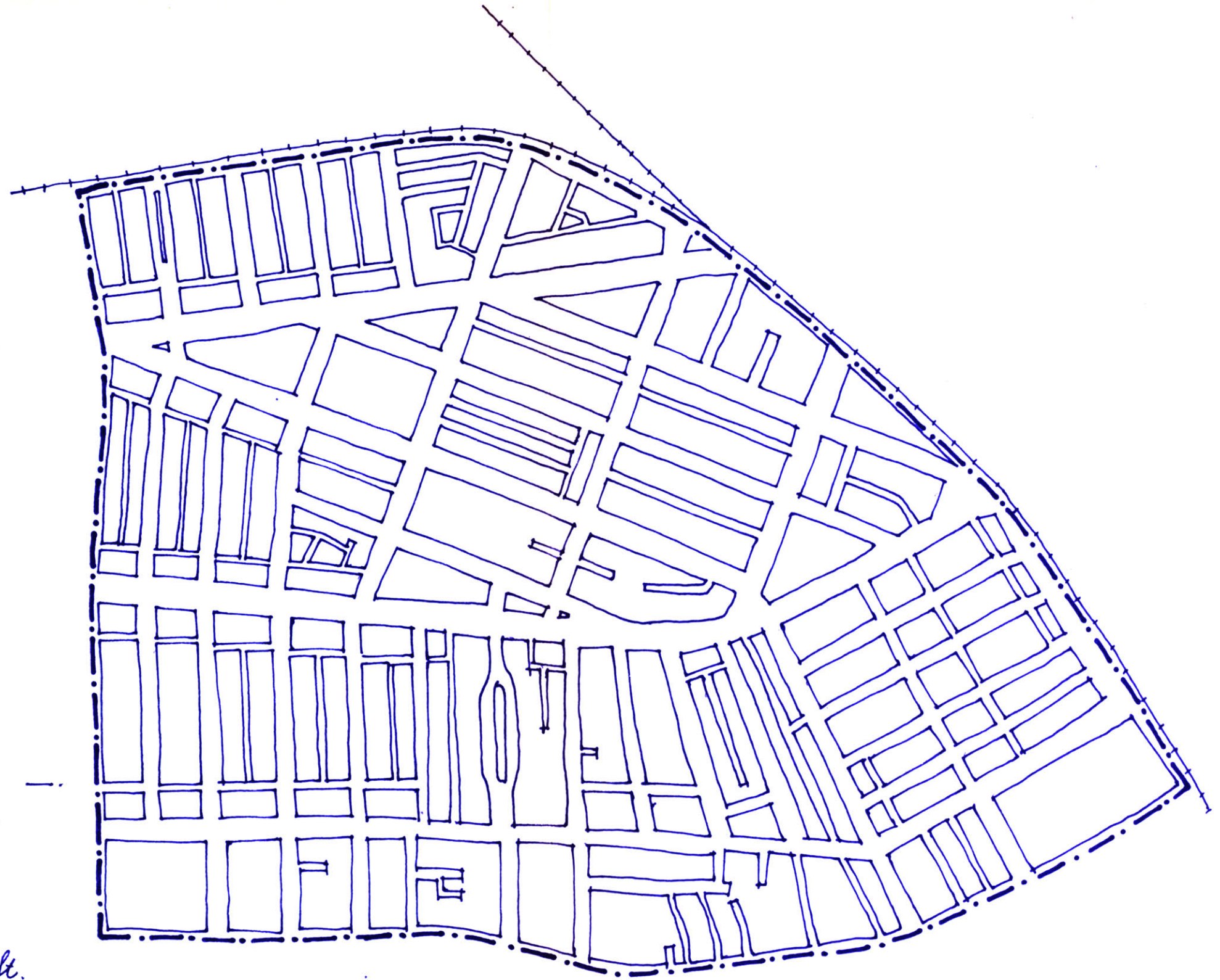
Washington St.

--- Project Boundary  
+ + Railroad

0' 400'  
Scale



**SCHEME A - NO CHANGE**



**Scheme B. Conservation**

1. Pedestrian ways joining schools, parks, roads
2. Conversion of non-conforming uses
3. No Clearance.

Columbus Ave.

Tremont St.

Shawmut Ave.

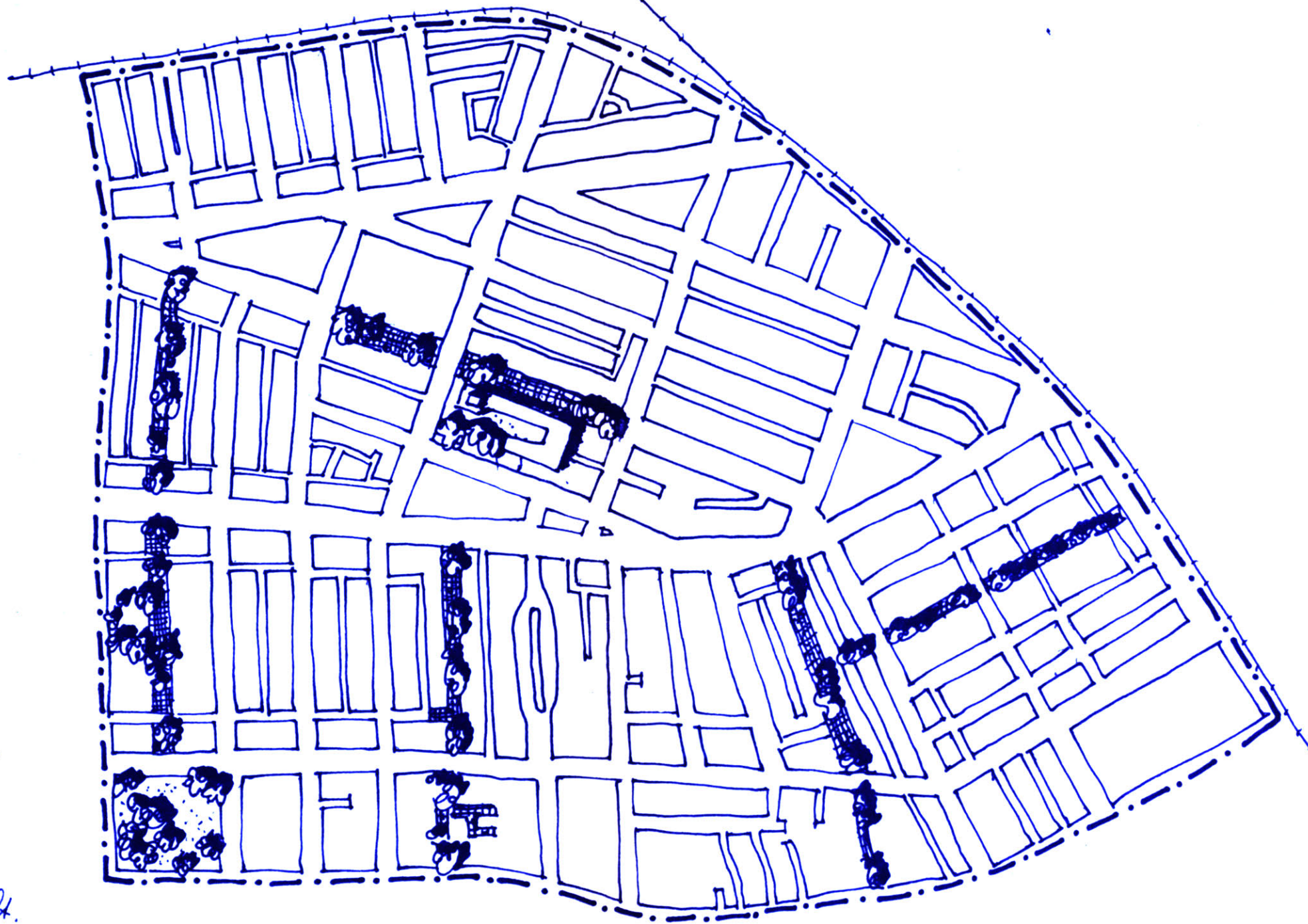
Washington St.

--- Project Boundary  
 +++ Railroad

0' 400'  
 Scale.

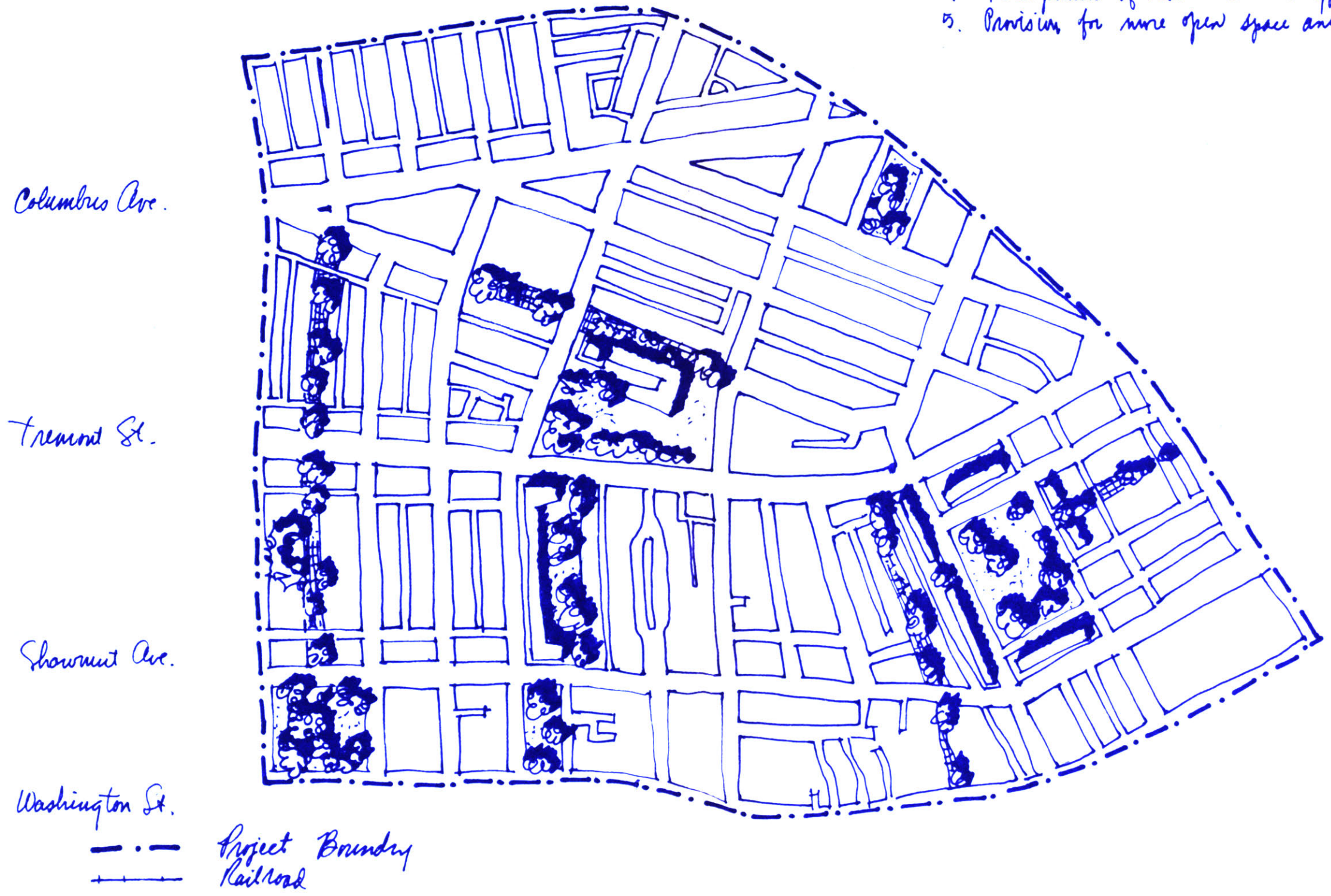


# SCHEME B - CONSERVATION



**Scheme C. Reconditioning**

1. Pedestrian ways joining schools, parks, nodes.
2. Conversion of non-conforming uses
3. Spot clearance and rebuilding.
4. Realignment of north-south traffic routes
5. Provision for more open space and parks.



## SCHEME C - RECONDITIONING

**Scheme D. Combined Conservation, Reconditioning, and Redevelopment.**



1. Pedestrian ways forming schools, parks, nodes
2. Conversion of non-conforming uses
3. Spot clearance and rebuilding
4. Realignment of north-south traffic routes
5. Clarification of intersections of Columbus Ave.
6. Physical ties to the C.B.D. & Prudential Ctr.
7. Clearance and new uses.
8. a Boston "Green"
9. Expanded School site.

Columbus Ave.

Tremont St.

Shawmut Ave.

Washington St.

Arlington St.

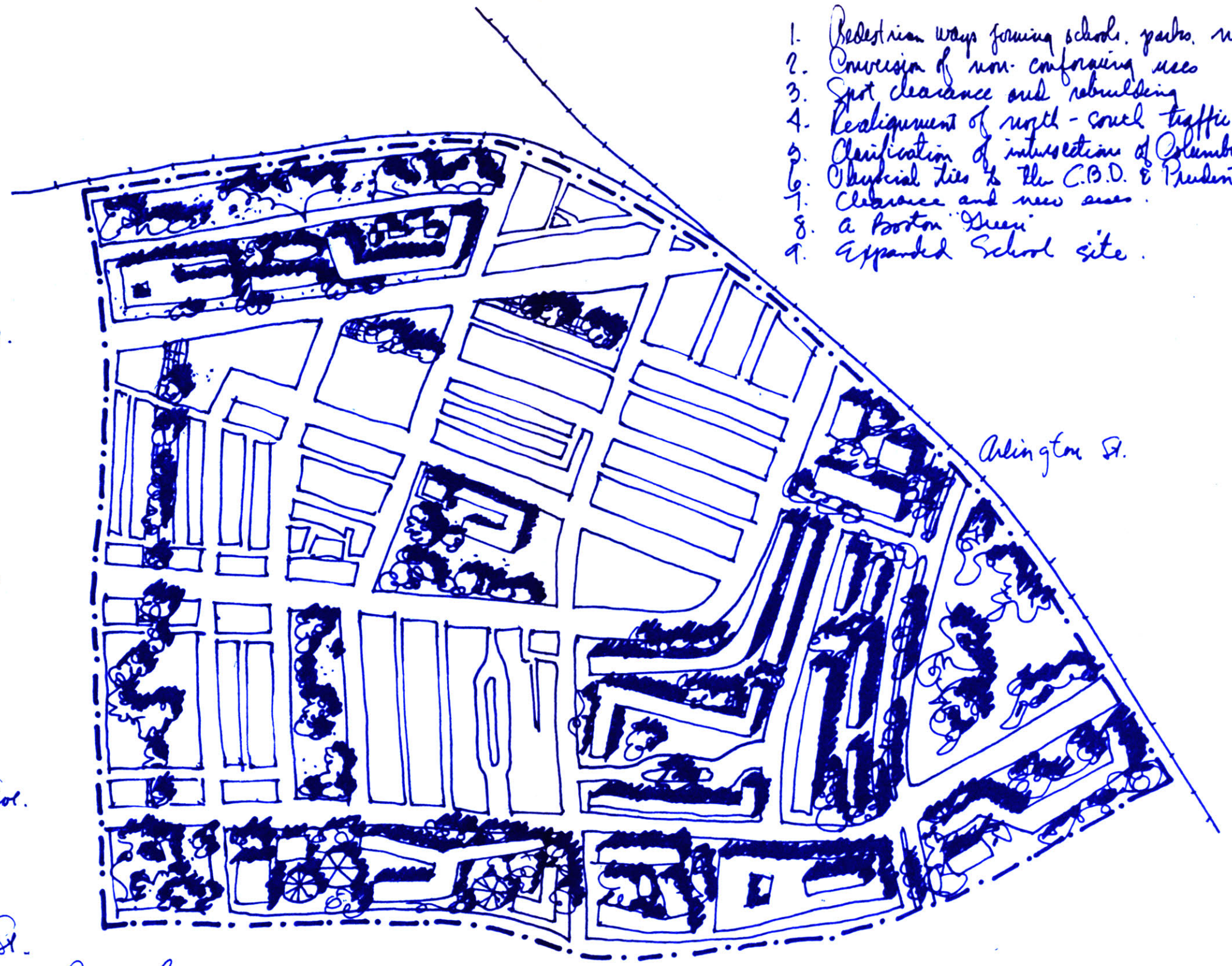
--- Project Boundary  
 +++ Railroad

0' 400'  
 Scale.



# SCHEME D - COMBINED

CONSERVATION, RECONDITIONING, REDEVELOPMENT



**Scheme E. Redevelopment.**

1. Complete clearance and rebuilding.
2. Return of water to the South End
3. Community as entity in itself.

Columbus Ave.

Tremont St.)

Shawmut Ave.

Washington St.

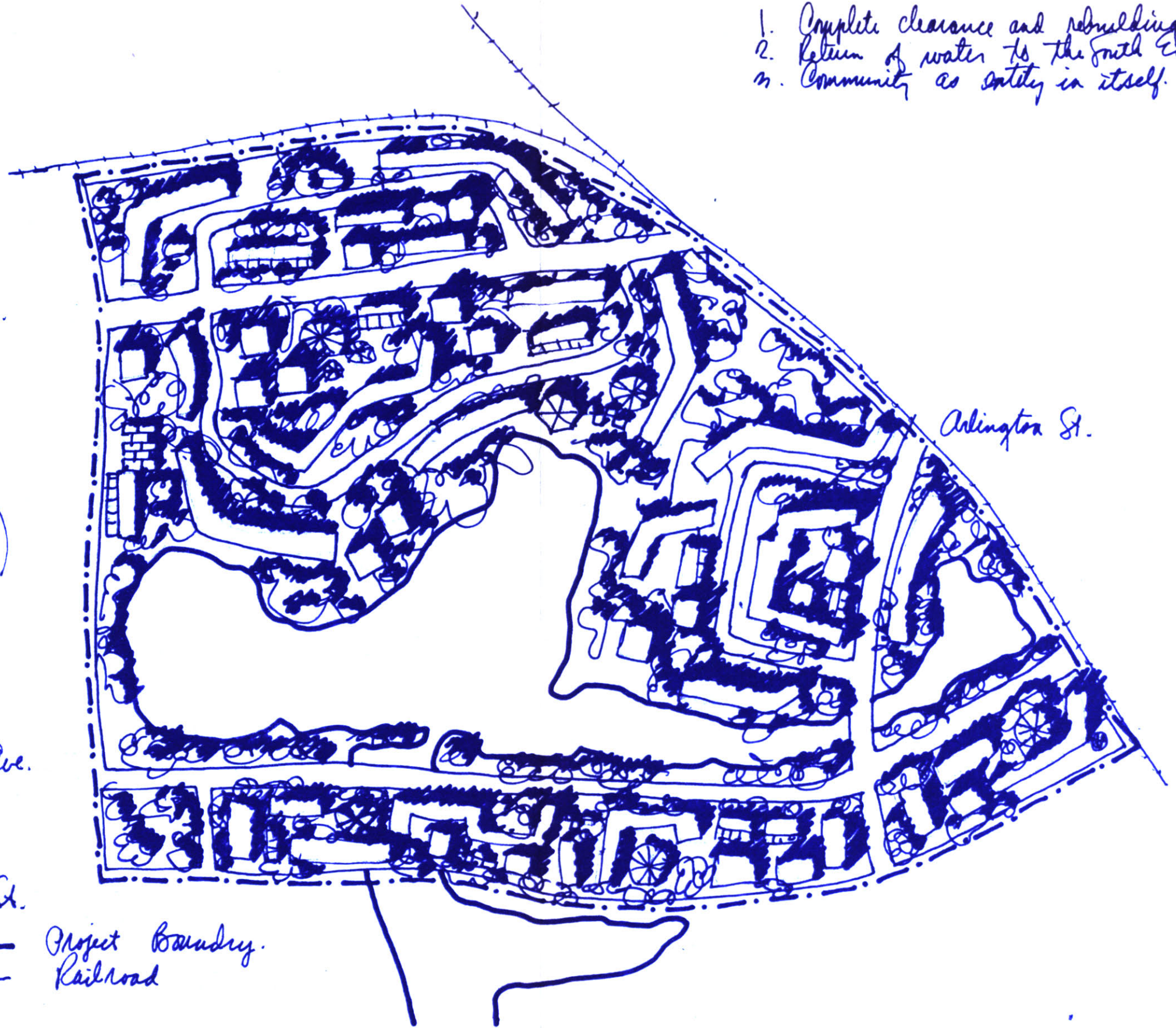
Arlington St.

--- Project Boundary.  
 +++ Railroad

0' 400'  
 Scale.



# SCHEME E - REDEVELOPMENT



The improvements would hopefully stimulate private investment in the physical structure of the community. The scheme would help solve the problems of imageability, lack of open space, and safety for the pedestrian. The plan provides a strong link to the past in its attempt to make the existing environment pleasanter. There is some question as to whether the amount of money spent could renew the area to long-term sound condition, which is the objective of Title I conservation.

Scheme C, page 46, suggests a possible solution using the reconditioning alternative. It requires a somewhat larger budget than Scheme B. In addition to the features of Scheme B, it advocates clearance of dilapidated structures at critical points and replacing them with new nodes, formed by new structures and open spaces. The plan would advocate spot demolition of physical structures which are dilapidated and are a blighting influence in the neighborhood. The school site is expanded and pedestrian bridges are built at Tremont Street to provide for the safety of students. Berkeley and Clarendon Streets are aligned with Dover and Waltham Streets to (1) ease the vehicular flow at the intersections (2) provide better north-south routes from the South End to Back Bay, and (3) provide structure and cohesiveness to the physical environment.

It is hoped as in Scheme B, that new private development would occur around the new physical nodes. Scheme C provides better accessibility in and through the area, safety for pedestrians, and a pleasanter environment than Scheme B. However, as in Scheme B, not enough money is spent to make significant improvements, and new development may not be able to hold its own. The amount of money spent does not allow enough

freedom to establish a new direction, and the plan must go along with the existing pattern, building on its shortcomings.

Scheme D, page 47, suggests a plan which incorporates conservation, reconditioning, and redevelopment. The scheme requires a sizeable budget for land purchase and public improvements.

The plan calls for clearance of blighted areas along Washington Street, and the building of a shoppers mall. The mall would facilitate Tremont Street merchants who were displaced, and serve as a focus for residential communities on both sides of Washington Street. The elevated railway would be removed and rebuilt as a subway in the mall project.

A Boston 'Green' is proposed. This area would be a focus for the South End, as the Public Garden and the Common are in the north. It would provide the needed open land. The Green would also be a factor in forming and defining the central business district. It is a natural feature (1) directing movement from the CBD to the John Hancock area, and (2) forming a boundary between the CBD and residential uses, stabilizing the area and eliminating the problems of flux. Arlington Street is a logical boundary because it serves the same function in the Back Bay-Public Garden area.

Tremont Street is discontinued as a through street and joins Berkeley Street to form a tie with the Back Bay. The result is the formation of a sizeable residential area between Shawmut Street and Columbus Avenue, which is less fragmentized than the original. The change

is justified, since Tremont is not a radial, but joins two radials, Columbus Avenue and Shawmut.

Intersections along Columbus Avenue are simplified. The Warren Avenue-Appleton Street residential area is improved by terminating Canton and Dartmouth Streets, ending the vistas, and minimizing the through traffic.

Ties are established with immediate areas of the City at Prudential Center and at the existing Castle Street. These ties with the Back Bay and the Central Business District are achieved by providing park areas on both sides of the railroad with pedestrian bridges crossing them.

The scheme solves many of the dilapidation, congestion, fragmentation, and improper land use problems of the area. It goes a long way in achieving the goals of providing continuity with the past, relating and integrating itself with the other parts of the City, providing suitable accessibility, providing a pleasant environment, and realizing the potential of the South End.

Scheme E, page 48, is a design for complete redevelopment. The project requires a large budget for its implementation.

The most striking feature of the plan is the introduction of water from the South Bay. The purpose of the water is (1) to provide an attractive feature which creates an attractive alternative to suburban living, and (2) to rebuild the 'Neck', providing a continuity with the past. The water and the physical development which occurs

around it establish a character and image which would be unique to the South End and the City.

Two of the Scheme D features are incorporated into the plan. The Boston 'Green' is retained, and the elevated railway is replaced by a subway.

The plan achieves many of the goals discussed in Chapter III. The 'Neck' provides continuity with the past, and the informal character of the physical development harmonizes with the development of old Boston. It is an expression of the existing environment in the terms of modern technology and society's expressions. The scheme realizes better than the others the potential of the area, and creates a pleasant environment. The environment better provides for a variety of social groups, including families with children, and allows ease of social interaction. Home ownership can be accommodated.

A goal which the plan does not meet is 'the economizing of resources'. The development of Scheme F would require a larger portion of the money available than the City can afford, and would mean that other priority projects would lack funds. It would be difficult to stage such a project since markets might not demand so many units of this type over a short period of time. Continuity with the past is broken as communities are disbanded, and landmarks of history are removed from their settings. Difficult design problems appear; contact with adjacent areas is awkward.

## CHAPTER V PLANNING DECISIONS

The following are policy decisions proposed as goals for the Urban Renewal Plan, based on (1) the analysis of land use, circulation, and existing conditions of the physical environment as discussed in Chapter II, (2) interviews with residents and civic leaders, and (3) the evaluation of alternatives in terms of the goals, economic feasibility, and metropolitan implications.

1. To make residential uses the principle land use, providing accessory commercial and public uses, and considering open land, recreational, and institutional uses which enhance the primary use.
2. To encourage a pattern of variety in the social structure, achieving the variety by varying the size and composition of groups. Special consideration should be given the people who live in the area. New housing shall be primarily for low income, and low-middle income groups, with some housing for middle income groups. Attempts should be made to achieve satisfactory housing for older residents, and to attract a stable population base.
3. To provide urban densities of 75 to 100 persons.
4. To clarify traffic patterns and establish a hierarchy of streets.
5. To design a physical environment consisting of conservation, reconditioning, and redevelopment, as illustrated in Scheme D, page 47.



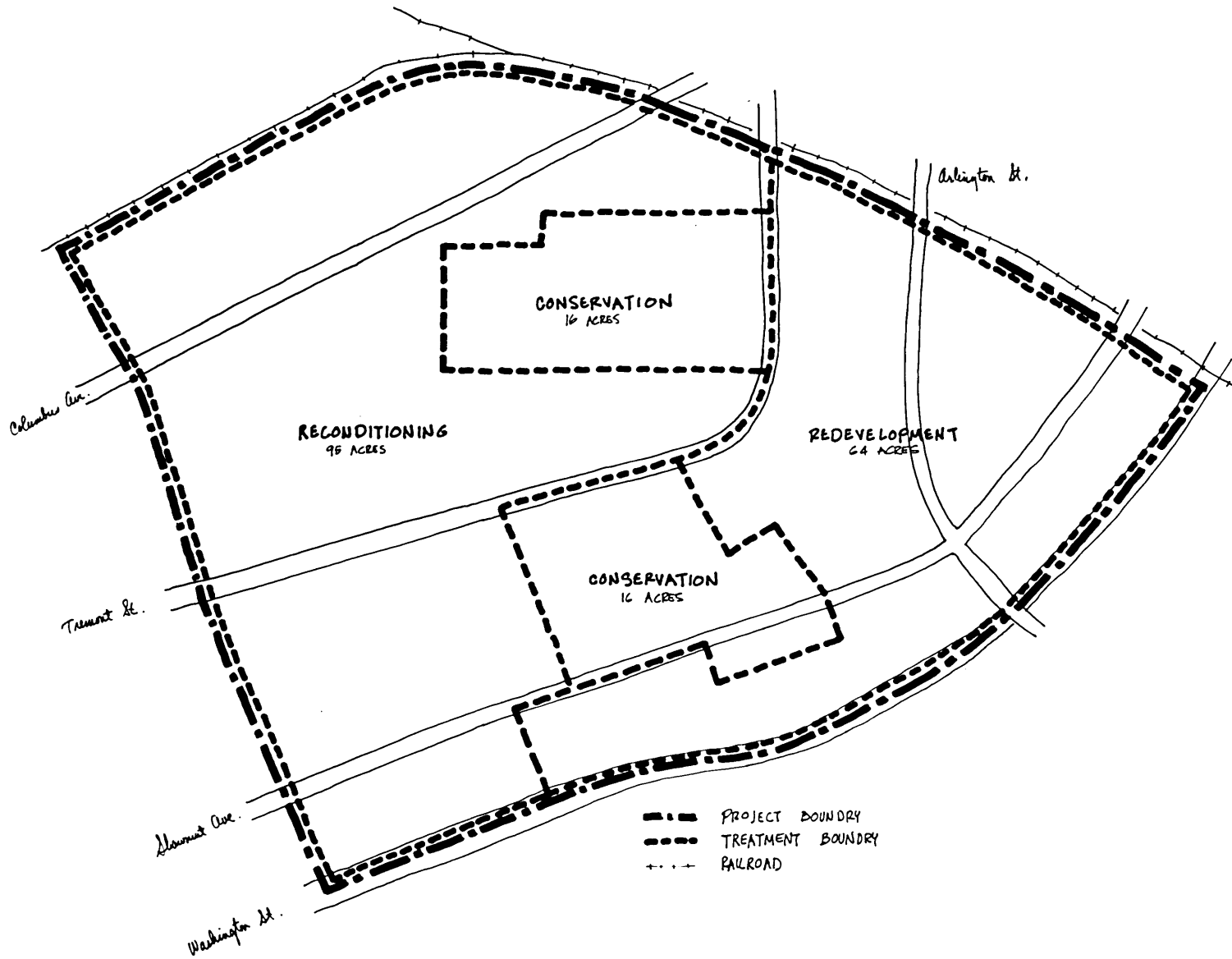
## CHAPTER VI      IMPLEMENTING A PLAN FOR THE STUDY AREA

The Urban Renewal Plan for the study area is illustrated on Maps 13 through 18, pages 55 to 60. A photograph of a model of the proposed development appears on the frontispiece of this report. The features of the plan are discussed under five headings, (1) proposed treatment areas, (2) land use, (3) circulation, (4) the physical plan, and (5) implementation.

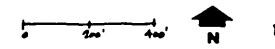
### Proposed Treatment Areas

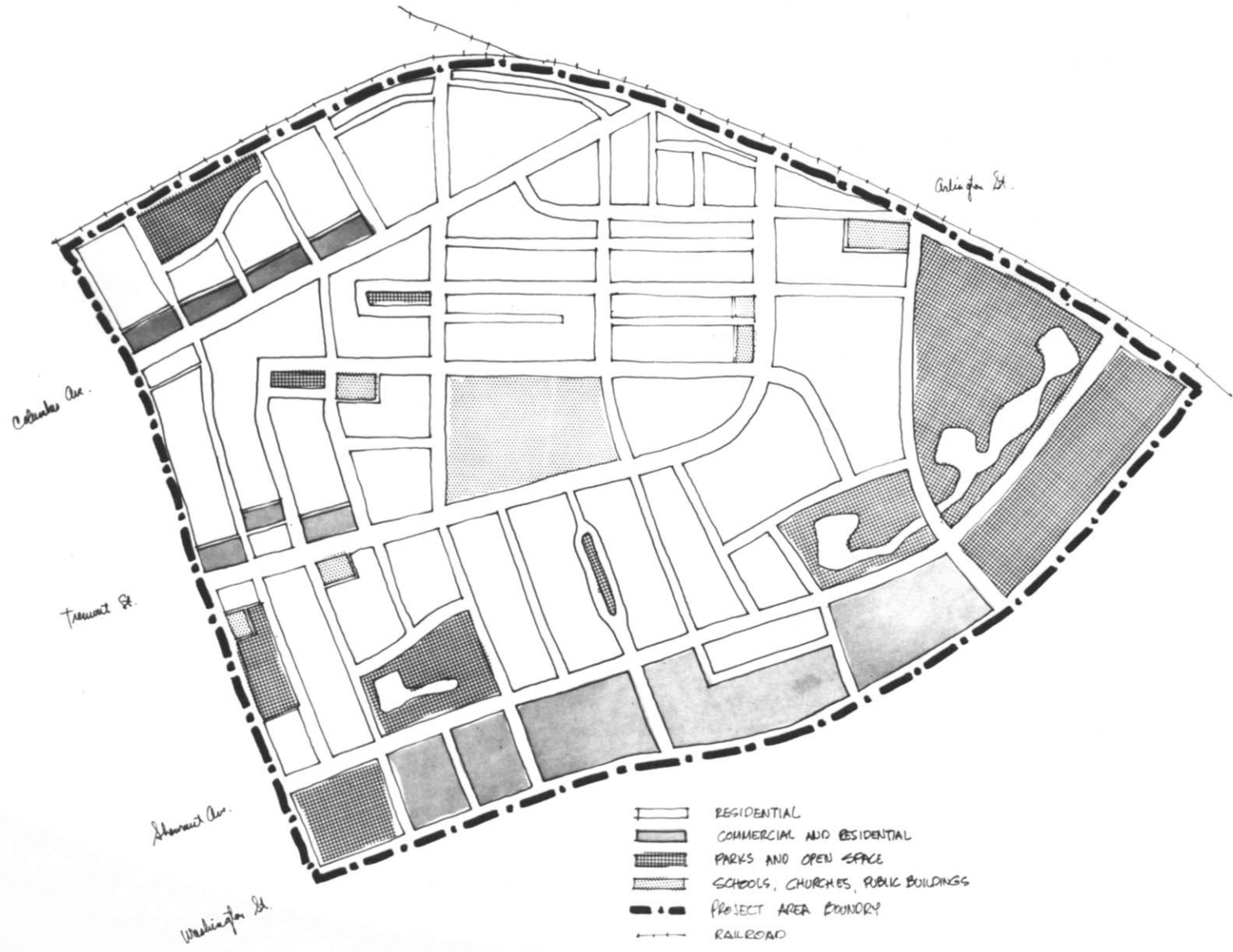
The objective of the treatment plan is to delineate areas which will (a) preserve stable neighborhoods, (b) revitalize deteriorating areas, and (c) recreate worn out areas. Map 12, page 55, shows the boundaries of the proposed treatment areas.

A 64 acre redevelopment site is located where dilapidation rates are high, and where there are a number of environmental deficiencies. Two conservation areas are set aside: a 15 acre area which delineates a stable residential area at Warren and Appleton Streets, and a 16 acre



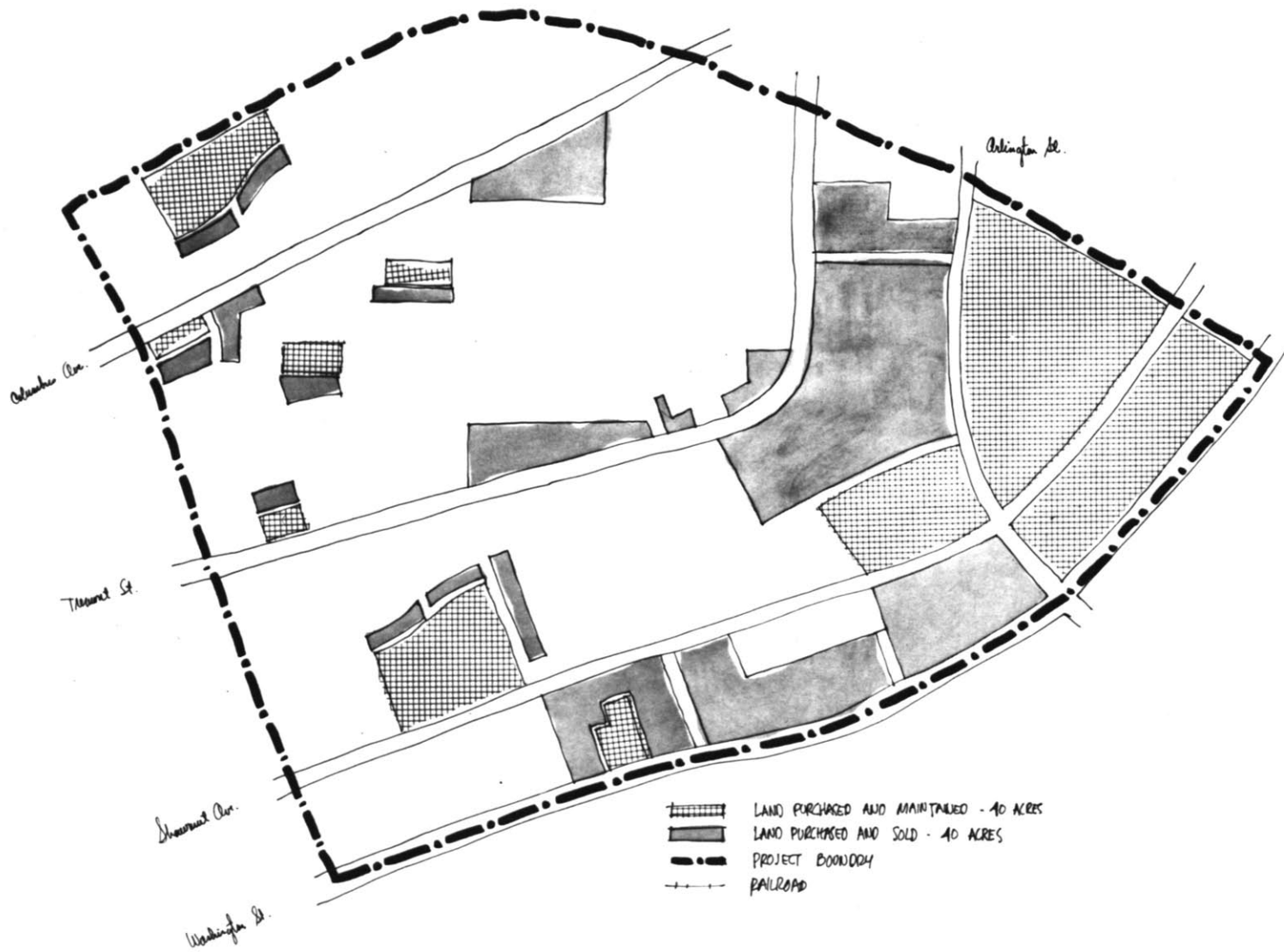
URBAN RENEWAL TREATMENT AREAS



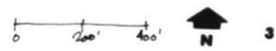


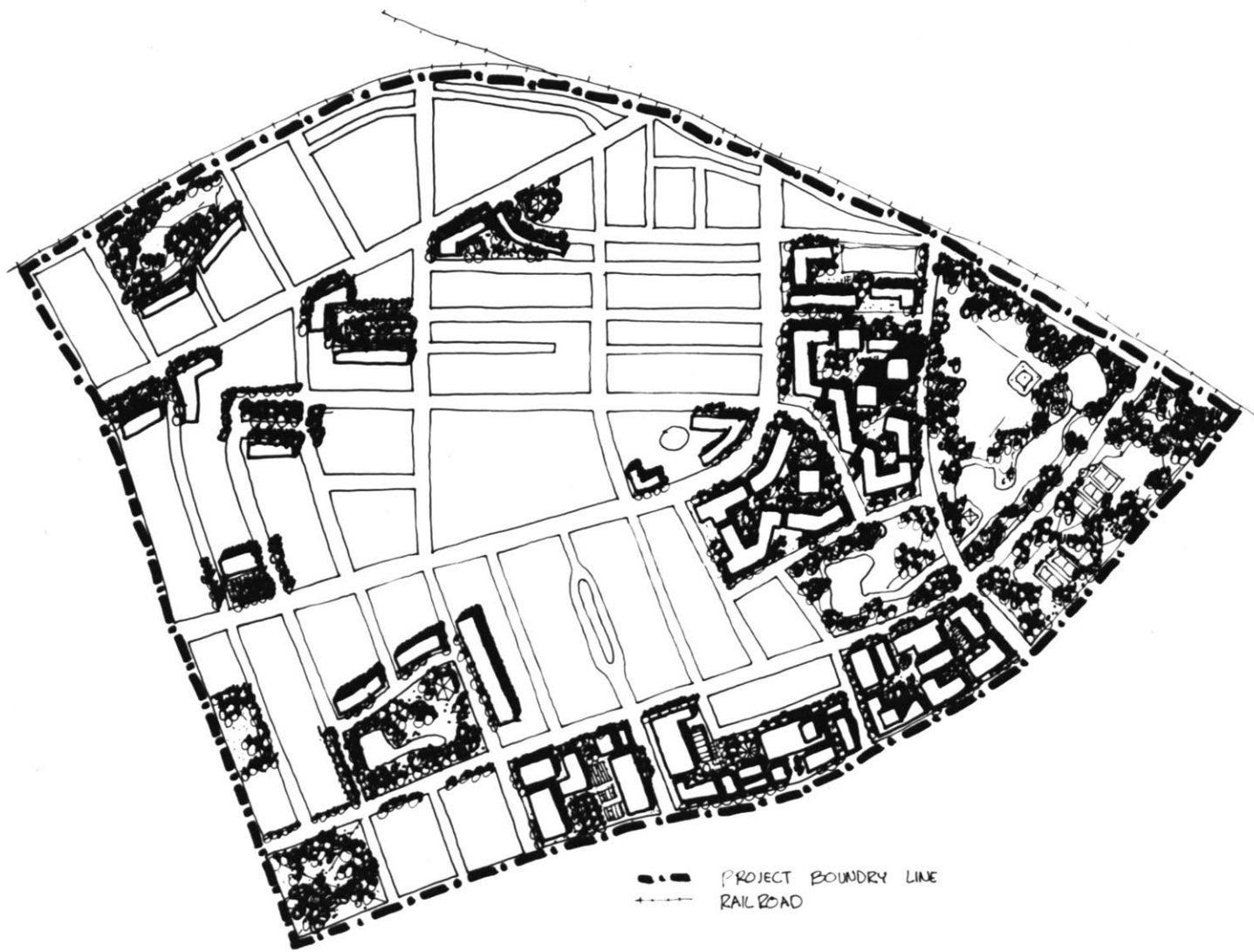
PROPOSED LAND USE





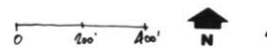
LAND AQUISITION PLAN

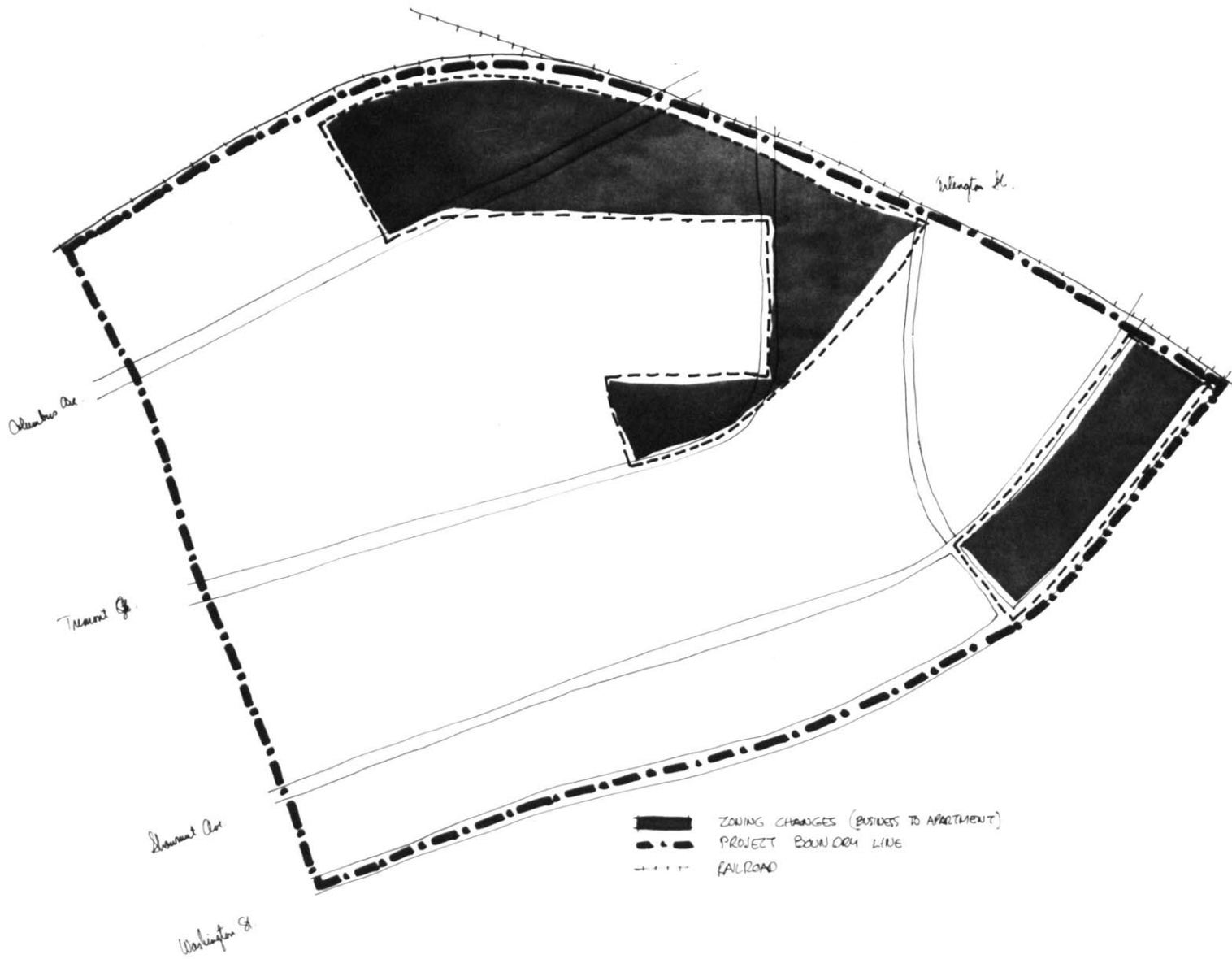




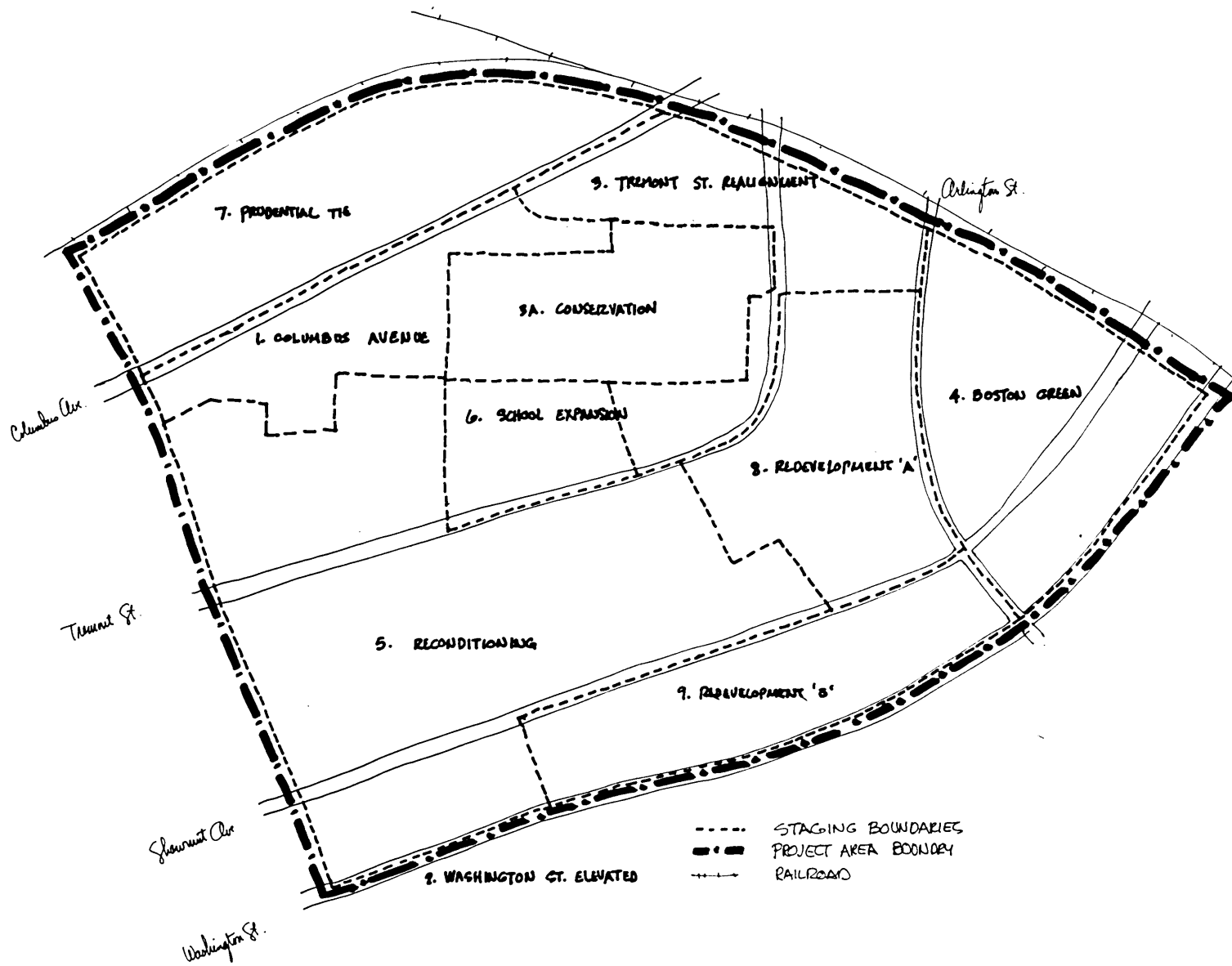
--- PROJECT BOUNDRY LINE  
 +---+ RAILROAD

SITE PLAN





PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES



## STAGING PRIORITIES

tract at Union Park. The fourth area is a 96 acre reconditioning site. Each of the areas meet Title I requirements for size, and the existing conditions meet the criteria for the treatment proposed.

### Land Use

Map 14, page 56, illustrates the proposed land uses for the area. The area remains primarily residential. Businesses serving local needs are allowed at points on Columbus and Tremont. There will be a gradual elimination of traffic-orientated commercial uses on these streets as vacancies occur. Specialty shop development is encouraged between Shawmut Avenue and Washington Street.

The Boston 'Green' is built defining the CBD, providing a tie across the railroad, and providing a harmonious connection between commercial and residential land uses. It provides space for active recreation, with softball, tennis, and swimming. The expanded school site provides more space for playgrounds and allows the school to assume a more dominant role in the community.

### Circulation

The new traffic patterns can also be seen on Map 14. The objective of the plan is to clarify the traffic patterns and to establish a hierarchy of streets. Columbus Avenue, two way, and Shawmut Avenue and Washington Street, a pair of one-ways, are the east-west arterials; Arlington Street is extended to form a new north-south route.



Tremont Street is realigned to minimize the traffic which passes through the area. Its function changes from semi-arterial to a secondary road. Berkeley Street joins Tremont at one end to form a tie with the Back Bay. At the other end, Tremont Street is realigned with Chandler Street to provide a tie between Columbus and Shawmut. The rerouting of Tremont Street simplifies several intersections.

The intersections of Warren Avenue, Appleton Street, and Chandler Street with Columbus Avenue are simplified to provide a better flow of traffic, permit them to become secondary roads, and make the school area safer for children.

The elevated railway structure on Washington Street is rebuilt as a subway. The Tremont Street line is rerouted to Chandler Street and Columbus Avenue.

### The Physical Plan

Map 16, page 58, and the frontispiece illustrate the physical plan. Variety is introduced into reconditioning areas by providing open spaces. Examples of these are at the intersections of Clarendon and Chandler Streets, and at Tremont and Dedham Streets. In the redevelopment areas the form of the buildings introduce variety into the environment. Five verticle buildings are introduced as symbols of the South End.

The vistas of long residential streets are ended. Columbus, Shawmut, and Washington are partially lined with trees to mark them as main lines of traffic flow.

Redevelopment area 'A' has two and three story apartment buildings and towers with open space surrounding. Redevelopment area 'B' is more intensely developed. It has shops with residential towers. Small spaces are created to give scale to the development. A plaza is provided in front of the Cathedral to display it in a more attractive way.

The population for the area would be around 18,000, at gross densities of 100 persons per acre. The Rice-Franklin school is capable of facilitating this population.

#### Implementation

Maps 15, 17, and 18 illustrate the implementation of the plan. Map 15 shows lands which are to be purchased under the Urban Renewal Plan. About 80 acres of built-up land would be purchased, 40 of which would be sold after clearance. Some of these areas serve as housing for minority groups, but the percent is relatively small.

Map 17, page 59, illustrates the changes necessary in the proposed zoning ordinance. The changes follow existing classifications, and change the district from commercial to residential. The plan would be partially achieved, over a period of years, by enforcing the ordinance, and converting non-conforming uses as they become vacant.

A program of exhibition of model homes would be undertaken to stimulate interest in investing in the area.

Relocation would be undertaken with an emphasis on relocation

in the South End study area. The fact that there are currently 17 percent vacancies, makes relocation somewhat easier than in other instances.

The objectives of staging are (a) to achieve a harmonious transition, (b) to enhance stable areas immediately to insure they retain their status, (c) to stage clearance at the same rate as construction, and (d) to make public improvements early to stimulate interest in the area.

Map 18, page 60, illustrates 9 project areas. The program is scheduled for a ten to fifteen year period with priorities given in the following order:

1. Columbus Avenue realignment.
2. Rebuilding of the Washington Street elevated.
3. Tremont-Berkeley Street realignment.
4. Boston 'Green'.
5. Reconditioning of western area.
6. School expansion.
7. Prudential tie.
8. Redevelopment Project 'a'.
9. Redevelopment Project 'b'.