

KENMORE SQUARED

Boston, Massachusetts

Boston's Kenmore Square has never been a good place for walking. Public space is tight—there's no square in the square—and both pedestrians and cyclists face long wait times at some truly hairy crossings. When neighborhood opposition to new hotel in the heart of the Square seemed insurmountable, the developer asked whether an urban design solution might exist. Could a revised layout offer public benefits that would more than compensate for the addition of a 300-foot tower at this historic crossroads?

Jeff Speck's initial proposal was to create a new city block by reconfiguring the overtaxed fork intersection into what is effectively a signalized triangular roundabout. Through a public/private land swap, a new southbound street crosses the former building site, and the tower shifts east to sit on a new half-acre plaza. By distributing the traffic of one intersection into two, the plan maintains vehicular flow while reducing crossing times for pedestrians. The new plan also creates a complete network of protected sidewalk-level cycle tracks across the entire site.

The new design resulted in widespread public support, and the plan has been approved by the Boston Planning and Development Agency and the City Zoning Commission.

CLIENT
Mark Development

COLLABORATORS
Stantec Urban Places,
Reed Hilderbrand,
Studio Gang

TIMELINE
2017-2023

CATEGORY
Transit-Oriented
Developments, Urban
Infill, Streets & Networks

BUDGET
\$900 million

SCALE
2 acres

STATUS
Approved by Boston
Planning and
Development Agency
and the City Zoning
Commission

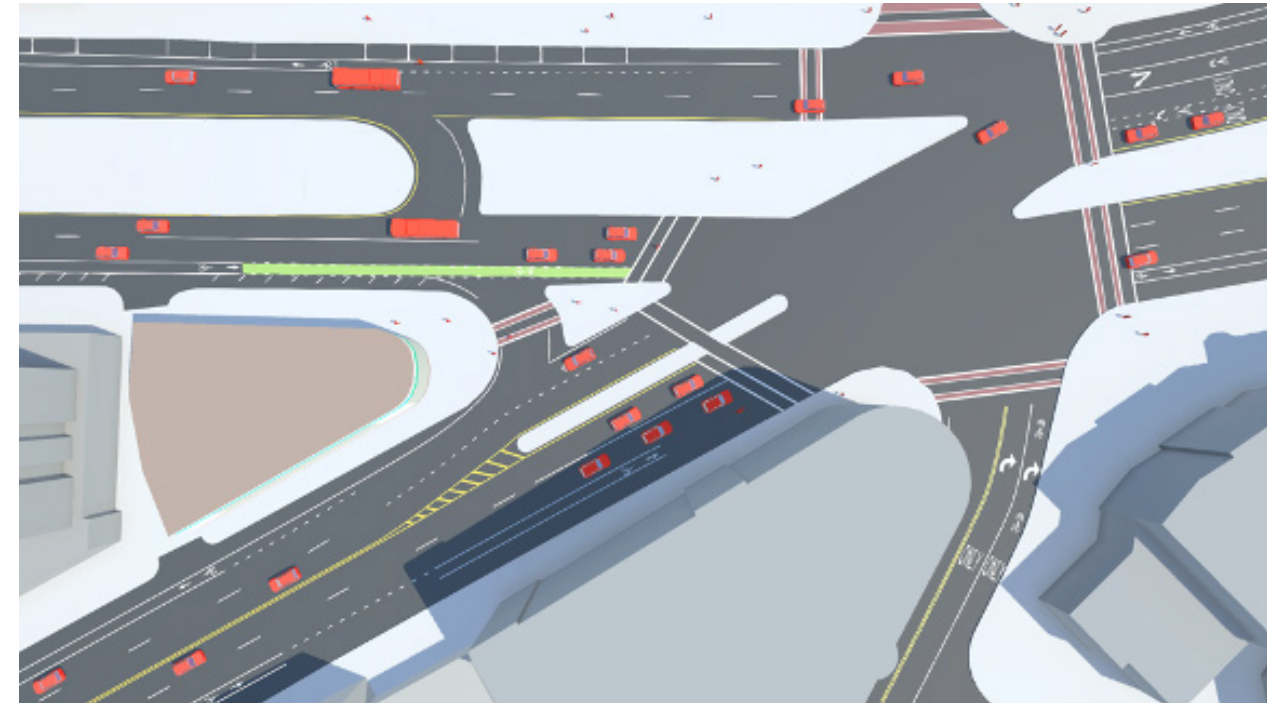
REFERENCE
Robert Korff, President,
Mark Development,
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A public/private land swap and street reconfiguration create a new heart for the Square.





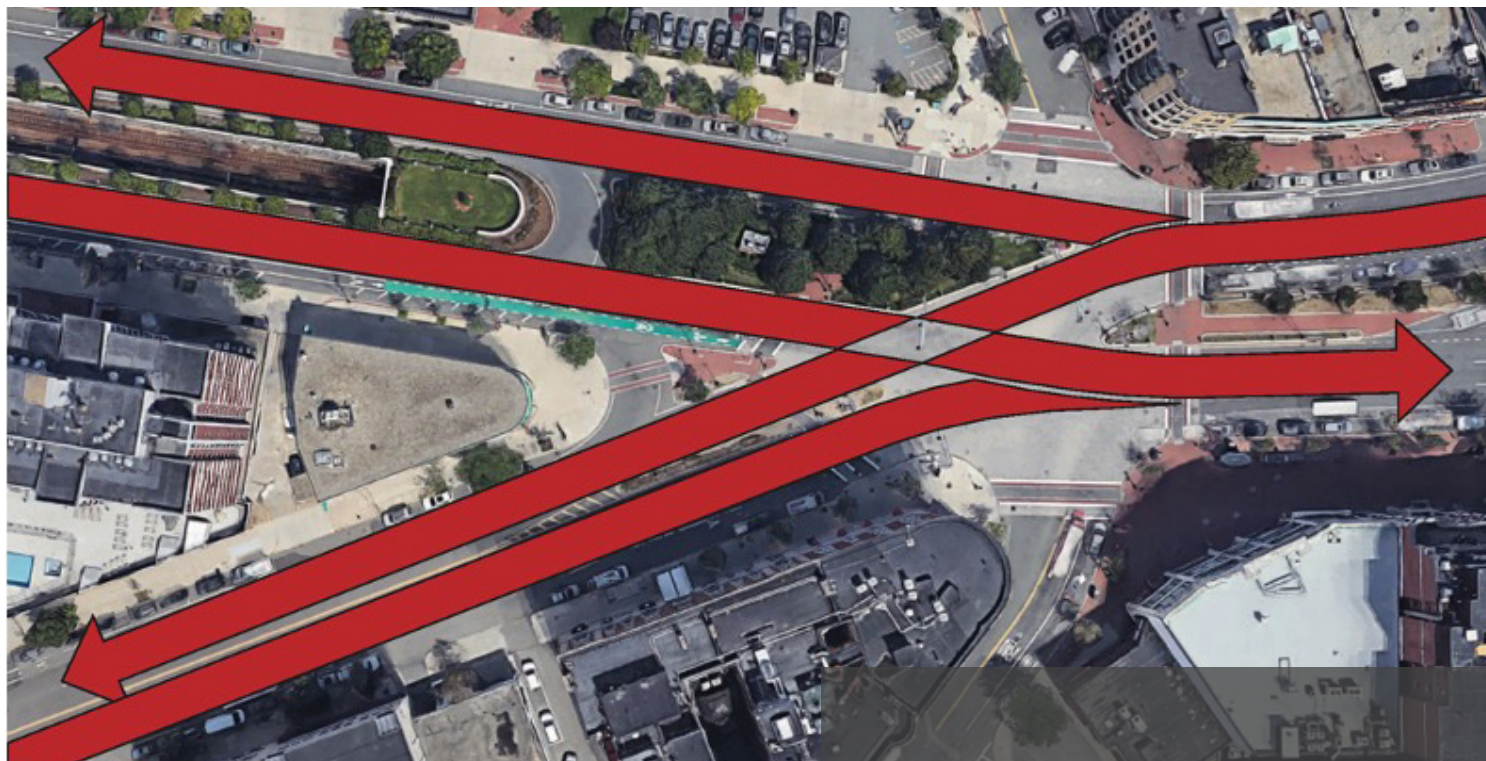
Street view of Plaza



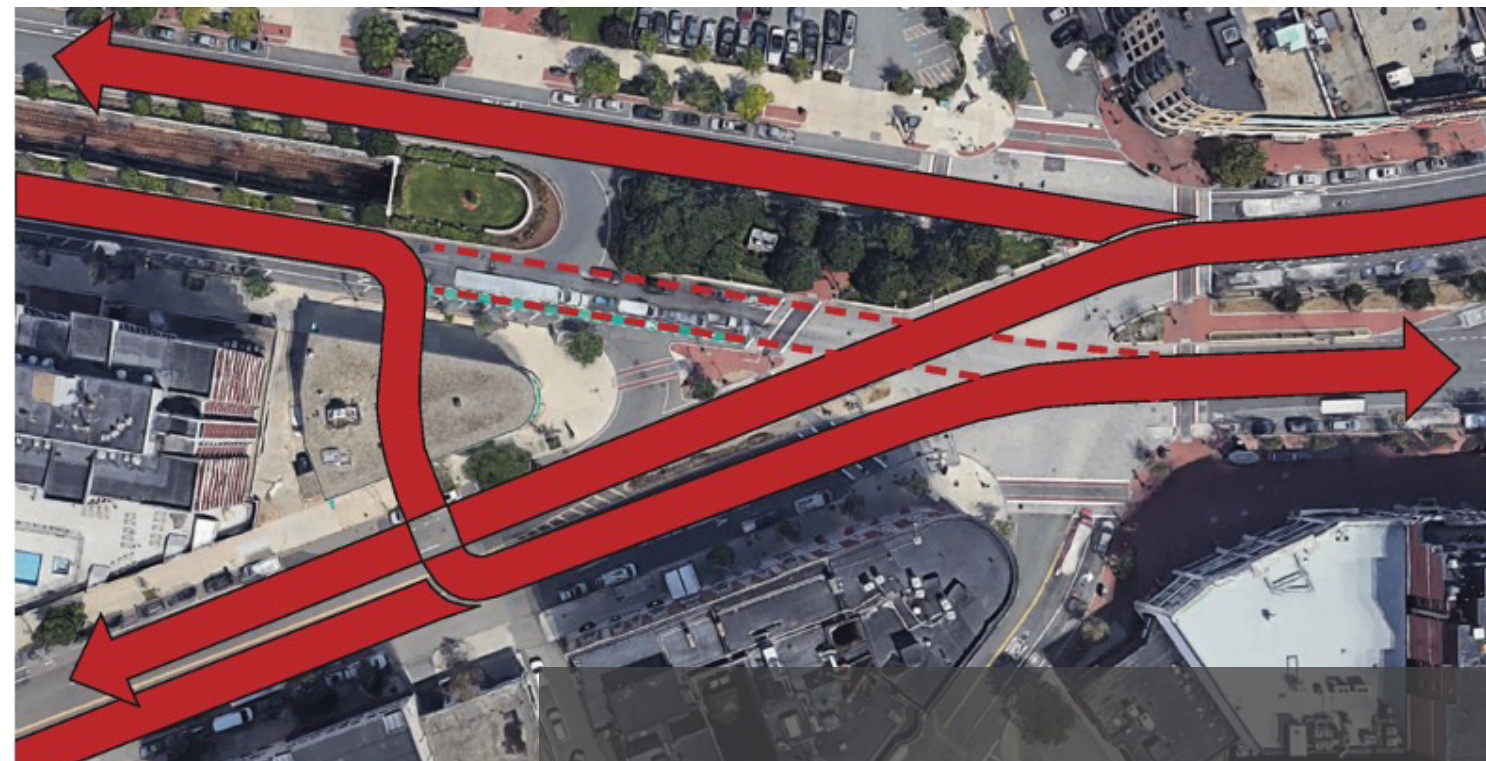
Current condition of Square



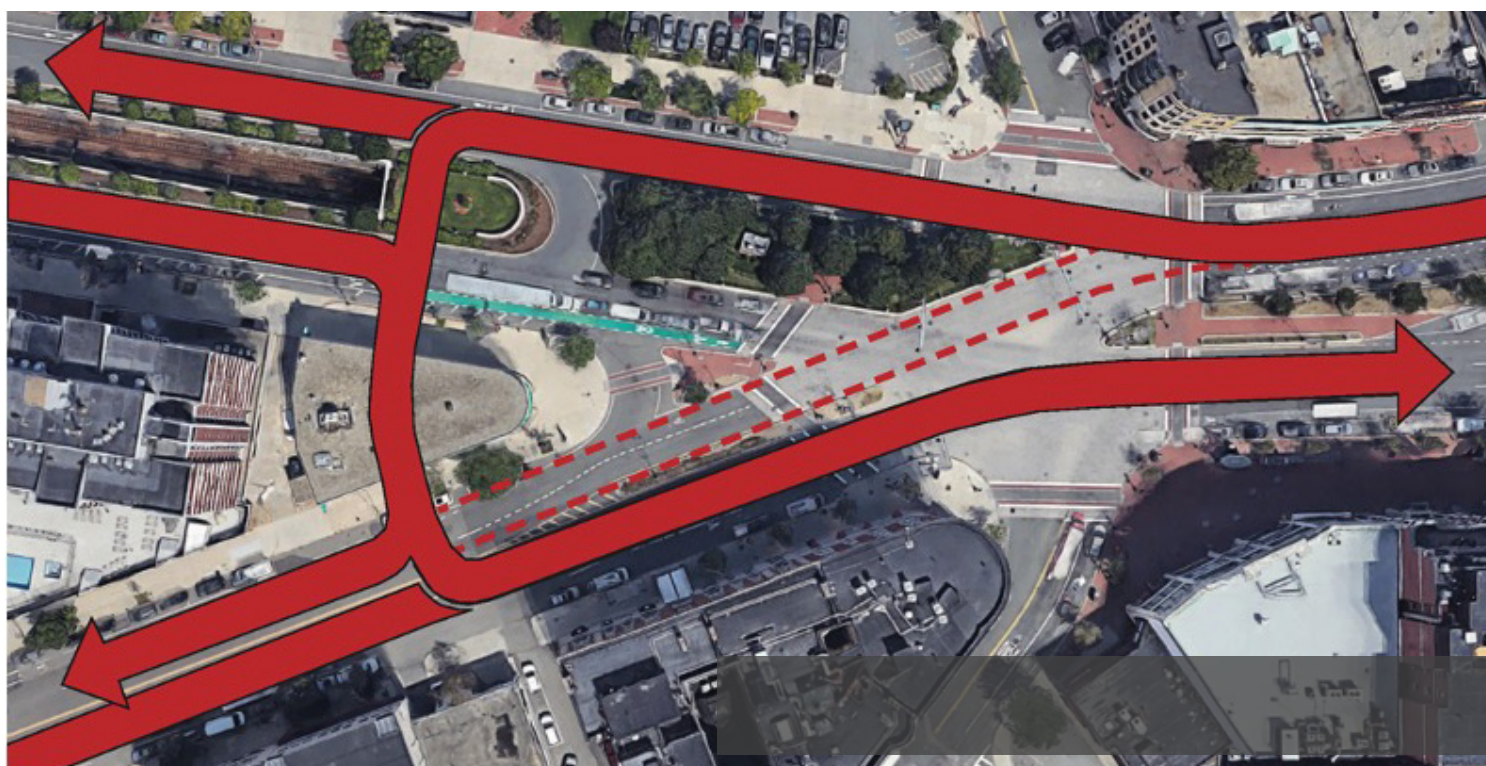
Reconfiguration



Current traffic pattern



Eastbound Commonwealth Ave. diverted



Westbound Beacon St. diverted



Site moved and Plaza created