Forget the ‘doom loop.’ America’s downtowns are coming back.

**By David Scharfenberg**

When even the “Urban Prophet of Doom” is feeling optimistic, it may be time for a round of forecasts for America’s big-city downtowns. Columbia Business School professor 斜体 at the Columbia Business School says that urbanists have been wrong for too long because they’ve underestimated the resilience of downtowns.

But the Boston housing market has been a big reason for the optimism. In the past year, the number of downtown apartment units available for rent has fallen by 40 percent. And there’s been a surge in new development plans, says Adam Burns, the president of Boston Planning and Development Agency.

There’s also been a surge in new retail developments. The Rose Kennedy Greenway has accelerated a much-needed reimagination of the area. The BID has launched a multi-million dollar initiative to create something livelier and more in tune with the growing diversity of the city.

With the removal of the old elevated expressway, the construction of the Rose Kennedy Greenway, and the teardown of the old elevated expressway, Boston had become a more contemporary, accessible city,” says Burns. “The area’s now a destination for tourists, and it’s a great place to live.”

In addition, there has been a surge in new restaurants and bars. For example, the Wig Shop — high-end cocktails on the go — has opened in the area.

The face of retail has changed. The area’s largest landlords are talking repositioning and conversion incentives for the costly and complicated transaction. And some developers are biting.

But it’s clear, even now, that the downtown core is changing — that it’s finding a new identity.

**By David Scharfenberg**

Cocktails at The Wig Shop.

People promenade and browse during Open Newbury Street on Aug. 6, 2023.