



PLAN: Charlestown

Preserving Charlestown's Sense of Place Part 2

March 2022



**boston planning &
development agency**

Welcome

Jason Ruggiero, Community Engagement Manager, BPDA

Meeting Recording

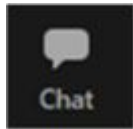
At the request of community members, this event will be recorded posted on the PLAN: Charlestown project webpage at <http://bostonplans.org/PlanCharlestown> for those who are unable to attend the Zoom event live.

Also, it is possible that participants may be recording the meeting with their phone cameras or other devices. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.

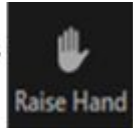
If your camera and microphone are off, you can still participate through the text chat feature at the end of the presentation.

Zoom Tips

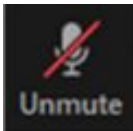
Welcome! Here are some tips on using Zoom for first-time users.
Your controls are at the bottom of the screen



Use the chat to type a comment or ask a question. Members of the PLAN: Charlestown team will enable the chat at the end.



To raise your hand, click on "Participants" at the bottom of your screen, and then choose the "Raise Hand" option in the participant box



Participants will be muted during the presentation. The host will unmute you during discussion if you raise your hand and it is your turn to talk.



Turns your video on/off

Zoom Etiquette

- Please remain muted until called on. If you'd like to speak during this time please use the "Raise Hand" function in Zoom.
- The chat function will be enabled at the end of the presentation (in keeping with convention from in-person meetings.)
- Please be respectful of each other's time.
- We ask that participants limit their questions so that others may participate in the discussion. If you have more questions, please wait until all others attending have an opportunity to ask questions.
- If we are unable to get to your question at this meeting, please put them in the Chat at the end or email **Jason.Ruggiero@boston.gov**

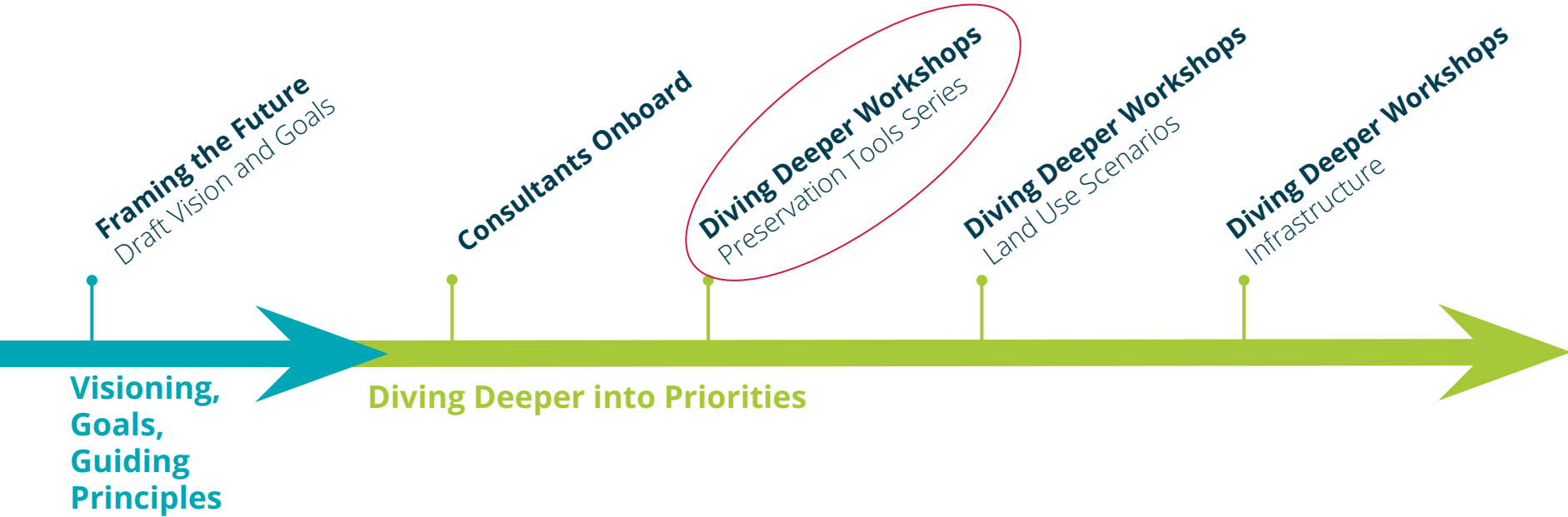
Agenda

- Welcome
- PLAN: Charlestown and Historic Preservation
 - a. Recap of last meeting
- Refining Neighborhood Design Overlay Districts/Neighborhood Design Review (NDODs/NDRs)
- Updating Preservation Design Guidelines
- Questions and Next Steps

If you have a follow up item, please reach out to Jason Ruggiero (**Jason.Ruggiero@boston.gov**) and we will be in touch as soon as possible.

Where We're Going

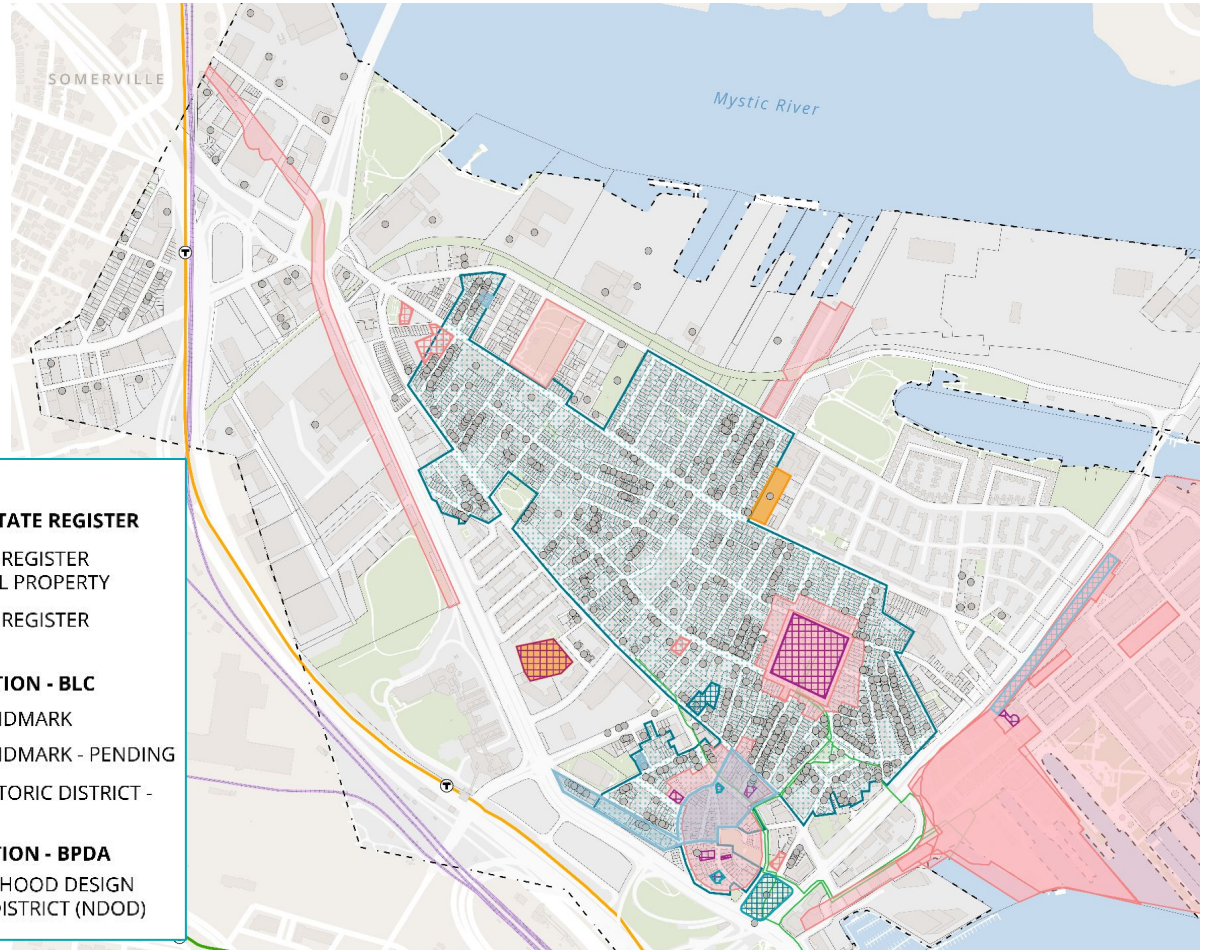
Next Phase: Diving Deeper into Priorities



PLAN: Charlestown and Historic Preservation

Meghan Richard, Urban Designer II, BPDA

Historic Charlestown



LEGEND

- CHARLESTOWN BOUNDARY
- EXISTING OPEN SPACE
- EXISTING BUILDING
- MBTA ORANGE LINE
- MBTA GREEN LINE
- COMMUTER RAIL
- HISTORIC TRAILS
- BURIAL GROUND
- INVENTORIED PROPERTY

NATIONAL AND STATE REGISTER

- NATIONAL REGISTER INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY
- NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT

LOCAL PRESERVATION - BLC

- LOCAL LANDMARK
- LOCAL LANDMARK - PENDING
- LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT - PENDING

PRESERVATION BY COVENANT

- PRESERVATION RESTRICTION

LOCAL PRESERVATION - BPDA

- NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN OVERLAY DISTRICT (NDOD)

Pros and Cons of Landmark Designation

PROS

- Legislation has “teeth” to identify and protect character of historic buildings by identifying important architectural features.
- Decisions are made by Community through Commissioners (appointed by the community).
- Fine details of new construction can be mandated, rather than suggested.
- Most unnecessary demolitions can be prevented.
- Helps achieve environmental goals by reducing landfill waste from complete demolition.
- Public realm changes are regulated.

CONS

- Does not regulate use.
- An extra step in the building process.
- Potential to be restrictive in terms of proposed exterior changes such as rooftop additions, new window openings.
- Recommended building materials are often more costly do to their high quality. (Example: wood windows vs. vinyl windows.)
- Some changes will be denied.



Community Importance v. Significance

Last time, we talked about landmarking individual sites and districts and places that are important to the community.

We did not talk about "*Significance*" and the importance of the site's integrity and the site in context.

Would the people who participated in the event or lived at the time of significance be able to recognize the site today?



1972

Main Street at Pleasant Street



2019

Significance and Integrity

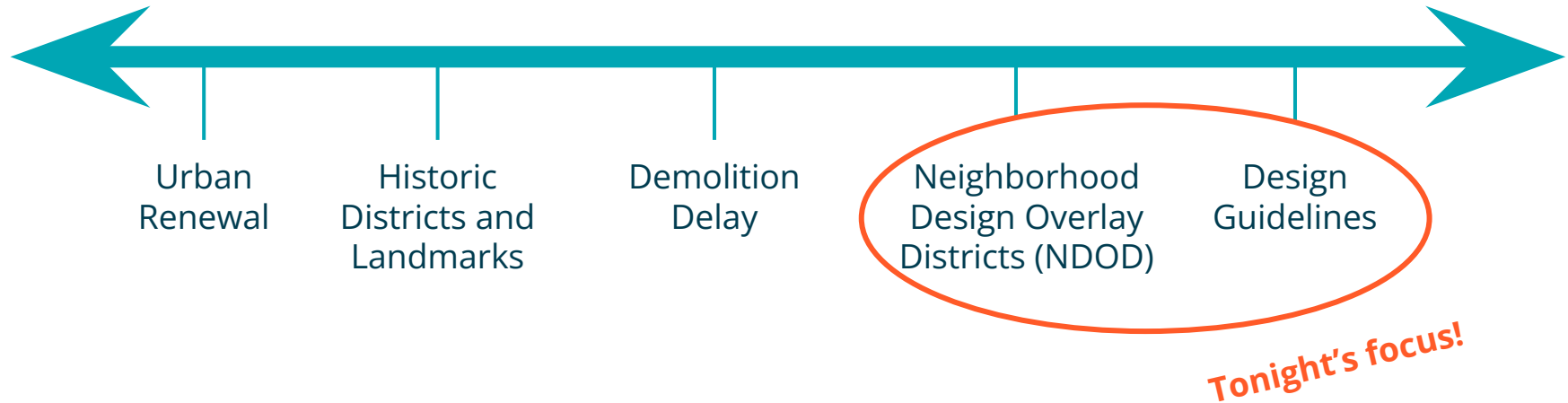
“The quality of **significance** in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess **integrity** of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.”

- National Register Bulletin, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation”

Most places that are important to the community **may not** fit these criteria. We need other tools to help with preserving a community’s sense of place.

Tonight, we’ll talk about refining existing preservation tools to better address community needs.

Many local preservation tools are at work in Charlestown....



Tonight's Goal

Community Feedback

	Level of Protection	High (Local Historic District)	Medium (NDOD / NDR with Design Guidelines)	Low (Design Guidelines only)
	Relevant Agency	BLC	ISD/BPDA	ISD/BPDA
Inappropriate substantive changes/alterations		●	<div style="border: 2px solid orange; padding: 10px;"> <p>Workshop Goal: Present trade-offs between different levels of protection & receive feedback on a preferred direction</p> </div>	
Inappropriate infill development		●		
Demolition		●		
Loss of trees/open space		◐		
Out-of-date for resilience / sustainability best practices		◐		
Maintain individual freedom for minor design changes		○		

Zoning Tools

Neighborhood Design Overlay Districts (NDODs) &
Neighborhood Design Review (NDR)

Kelly Sherman, Planner I, BPDA

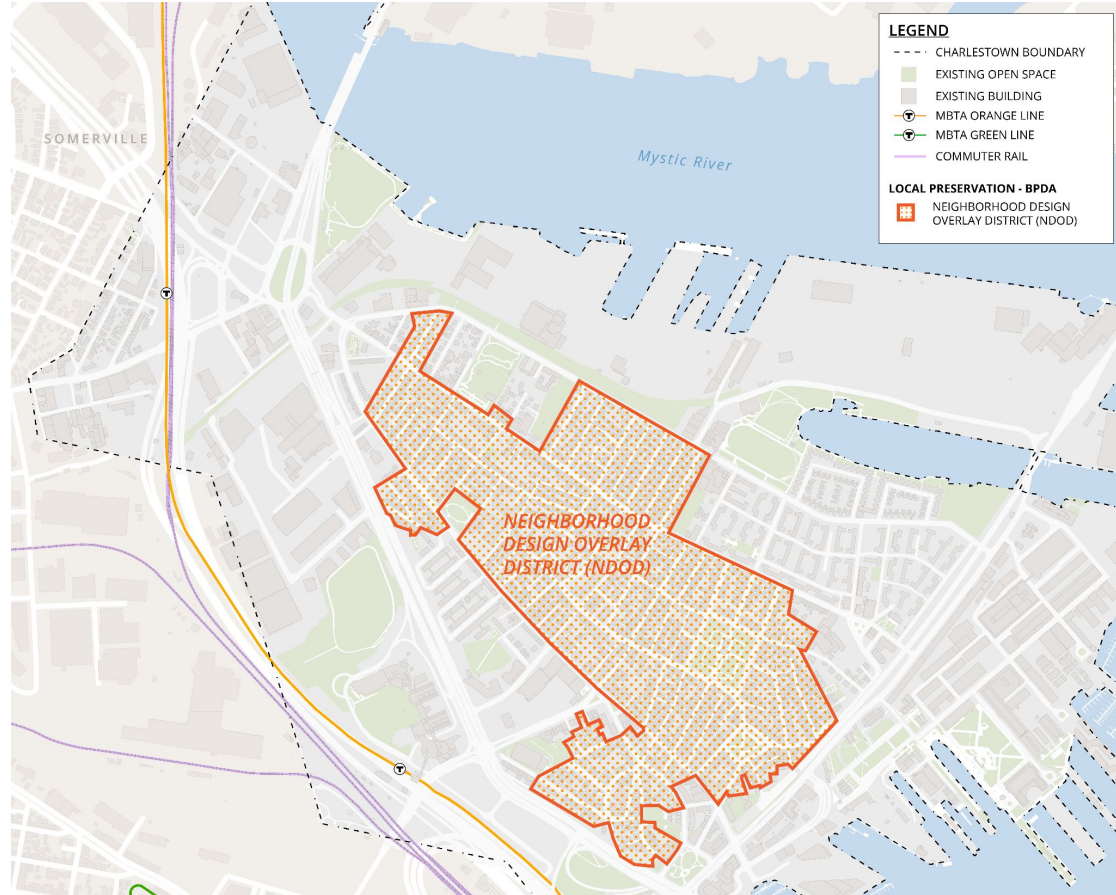
Meghan Richard, Urban Designer II, BPDA

How does it work now?

What is an NDOD?

Neighborhood Design Overlay Districts are overlays established to protect the:

- Existing neighborhood scale;
- Quality of the pedestrian environment;
- Character of the residential neighborhoods; and
- Concentrations of historic buildings within the district.



How does it work now?

How does the NDOD get triggered?

(1) Project has NO zoning violations (by right)

AND

(2) Project proposes one of these changes which are visible from a public street or public open space:

- An exterior alteration changing the roof shape, cornice line, street wall height, or building height of an existing building.
- The erection or extension of a building with a gross floor area of 300 sf or more.
- An exterior alteration to change the building massing or the size or location of door or window openings that affects 300 sf or more of the exterior wall area.

How does it work now?

Who submits feedback?

ISD determines that a project is by-right in an NDOD and notifies the BPDA to begin design review.

Those notified have 10 business days to provide written comments.

The BPDA shares final stamped plans with abutters, electeds, and CNC.

The BPDA notifies to solicit feedback:

- District 1 City Councilor
- Charlestown Neighborhood Council (CNC)
- Abutters within a 300 foot radius

After the comments have been received, **Urban Designers from the BPDA** use this information, along with the design guidelines, to review the project.

How does it work now?

What feedback can you provide?



You **CAN** comment on any specific proposed **design elements** that are visible from a public street or park.

- Ex: The new siding should be made of wood rather than vinyl.
- Ex: The windows should be spaced further apart.



You **CANNOT** comment on the **use, massing, height, interior elements, or non-building design elements.**

- Ex: There should be fewer units on site.
- Ex: The building is is too tall.
- Ex: The landscaping of the project needs improvement.

NDOD v. NDR - BPDA Tools

NDOD (Neighborhood Design Overlay District)

- Triggered by projects > **300sf**
- Zoning tool
- Intended to be used in areas that are listed or **eligible for listing on the National Register**
- All **residents within a 300 ft radius** of projects over 300sf are notified of the project. There is an open public comment period for at least 10 business days.
- Urban Design Guidelines apply

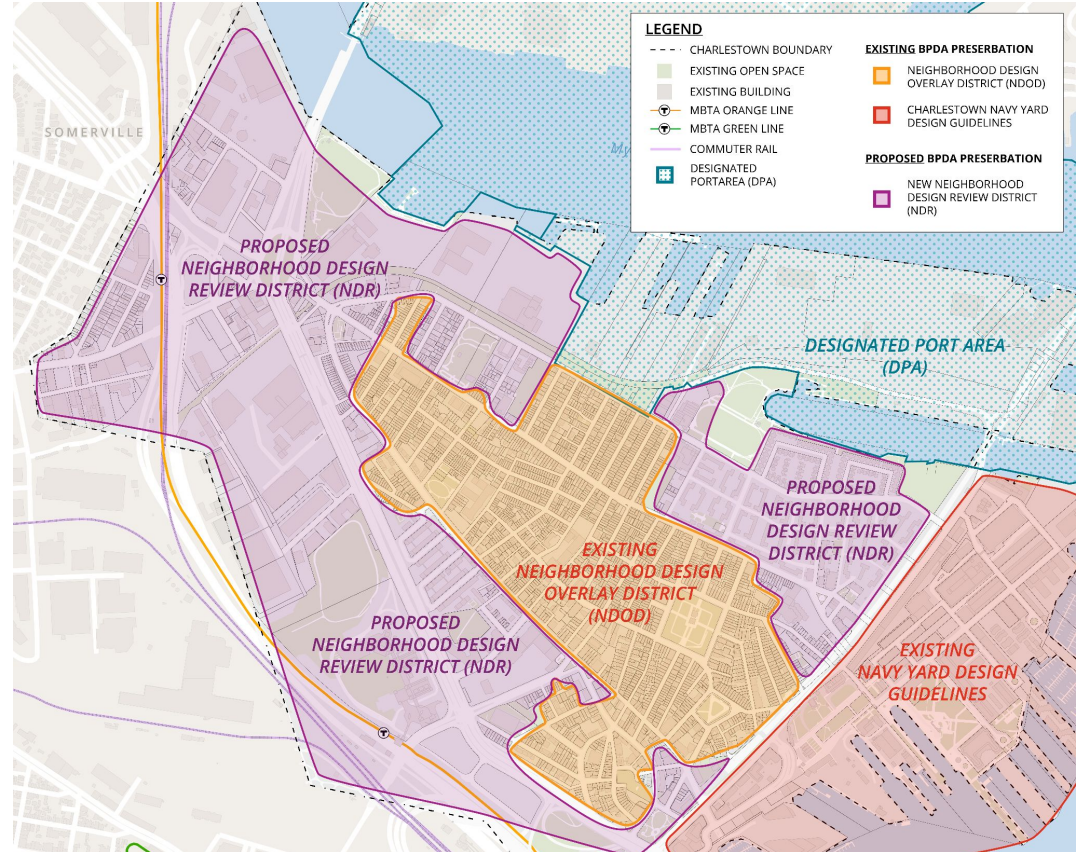
NDR (Neighborhood Design Review District)

- Triggered by projects > **750sf**
- Zoning tool
- Intended to be used in areas where neighbors want to be able to comment on **As-of-Right projects**
- All **residents within a 300 ft radius** of projects over 750sf are notified of the project. There is an open public comment period for at least 10 business days.
- Urban Design Guidelines apply

Proposed changes

What could we update?

- (1) Expand the NDOD to include some Urban Renewal parcels in the residential area - triggered at the existing 300 square feet (sf) threshold
- (2) Add Neighborhood Design Review (NDR) to the rest of the Charlestown Zoning District as a layer - triggered at a higher threshold of 750 sf
- (3) Advocate for the updating of the Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources



Proposed Changes

Benefits













- All areas of Charlestown would have some level of design review on many as-of-right projects
- Community can weigh in on **design elements** in as-of-right projects

Limitations

- Community **cannot** weigh in on public realm (including trees)
- Community **cannot** challenge ISD's zoning interpretation
- Proponent **cannot** change things that would make the project need zoning relief without refileing a new permit

How Do Protections Compare?

Community Feedback

		High (Local Historic District)	Medium (NDOD / NDR with Design Guidelines)	Low (Design Guidelines only)
		BLC	ISD/BPDA	ISD/BPDA
Levels of Protection	Relevant Agency			
	Inappropriate substantive changes/alterations			Reviewing In Next Section
	Inappropriate infill development			
	Demolition			
	Loss of trees/open space			
	Out-of-date for resilience / sustainability best practices			
	Maintain individual freedom for minor design changes			

Zoom Poll

Do you think creating an NDR and/or expanding the NDOD addresses your concerns?

- Yes - I agree we should add an NDR/expand the NDOD.
- Somewhat - we should pursue this AND a local historic district.
- No - I think we should just pursue a local historic district.
- No - I think we should keep everything the way it is.

Updating Urban Design Guidelines

Patricia Cafferky, Urban Designer I, BPDA
Meghan Richard, Urban Designer II, BPDA

Previous Preservation Workshops

What characteristics of the built environment make Charlestown Charlestown?

- The hilly topography
- Hierarchy of street widths (wider commercial streets and narrower residential streets)
- Uniform street wall with very little setback
- Smaller scale buildings (3 to 4 stories) that allow for light and air to permeate and interesting sightlines
- Building materials like brick, iron, and wood
- Maintenance of historic decorative details



How Design Guidelines Work*

3 Possible Permitting Paths

Path 1: NDOD/NDR

Project is located in an NDOD or NDR and meets threshold

BPDA Design Guidelines Apply

ISD Issues Permit Once Design Guidelines are Met

Path 2: ZBA Requires Design Review

Zoning Board of Appeal case gets Design Review

BPDA Design Guidelines Apply

ISD Issues Permit Once Design Guidelines are Met

Path 3: No Design Review

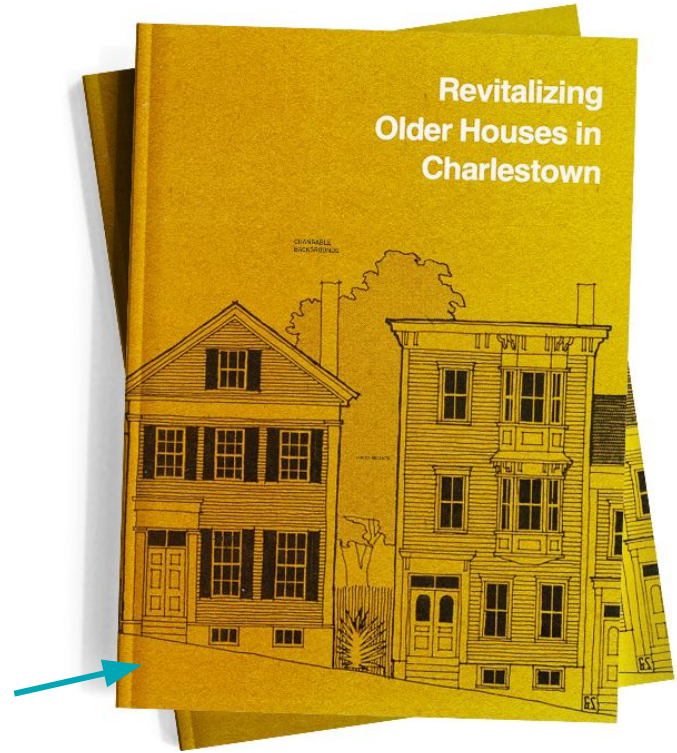
Project is As-of-Right or ZBA does not require Design Review

BPDA Design Guidelines use is at the discretion of owners

ISD Issues Permit without Design Guidelines

What changes are we proposing?

1. Update Materials
2. Update guidance on dormers
3. Renewable / Sustainability Efforts / Resiliency Mitigation
4. Incorporate Public Realm Elements
5. Update to apply to and include Lost Village typology



*Existing design guidelines
from 1973 [49 years ago]*

Materials

APPROPRIATE MATERIALS



INAPPROPRIATE MATERIALS



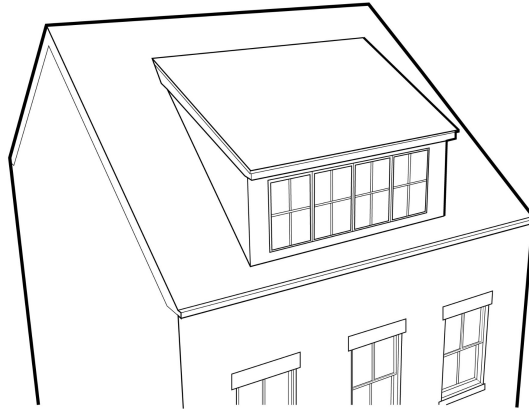
Dormers

GABLE DORMER



- Proportions are key
- Center on roof
- Take cues from dormers of neighbors

SHED DORMER



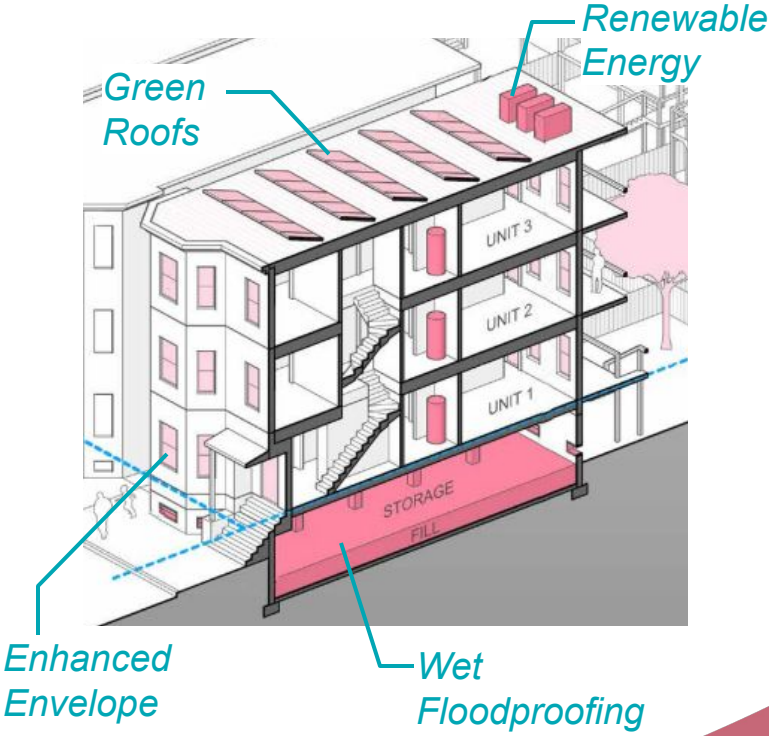
- Only appropriate with some architectural styles
- Ideally only used on rear
- Pitch of dormer roof to minimize visual impact
- Space from roof edges

NANTUCKET DORMER



- Proportions are key
- Center on roof
- Space from roof edges

Resilience /Sustainability



Public Realm

LOST VILLAGE



- Establish public realm standards
- Focus on improving and adding to the tree canopy

ORIGINAL PENINSULA



- Improving and creating pocket parks
- Maintenance and planting of new street trees

How Do Protections Compare?

Community Feedback

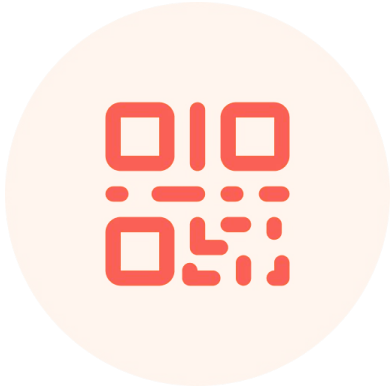
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Demolition				
Loss of trees/open space				
Out-of-date for resilience / sustainability best practices				
Maintain individual freedom for minor design changes				

Zoom Poll

Do you think creating an NDR and/or expanding the NDOD in combination with updated Urban Design Guidelines addresses your concerns?

- Yes - I agree we should add an NDR/expand the NDOD.
- Somewhat - we should pursue this AND a local historic district.
- Somewhat - we should only update the urban design guidelines.
- No - I think we should just pursue a local historic district.
- No - I think we should keep all the regulations the way they are.

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#02129**

① Start presenting to display the joining instructions on this slide.

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What are you still concerned about?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

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Suggestions?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

Next Steps

Jason Ruggiero, Community Engagement Manager

Coming Soon!

PLAN: Charlestown Walking Tours

Locations, routes and times – TBD

Late April/May

Email jason.ruggiero@boson.gov to help brainstorm and organize these events!

All meeting content available:
www.bostonplans.org/plancharlestown