

July

22

2026

PLANNING ACADEMY

Info Session



Planning Department

CITY of **BOSTON**

ZOOM TIPS AND MEETING INFO

- We will be recording this meeting and posting it on the Planning Department's project webpage

During the Q&A Portion

- Use raise hand function (dial *9 if joining by phone) to be invited to unmute (dial *6 if joining by phone) to ask your question or provide comment
- You can also add your questions or comments in the chat



AGENDA

- 1 Welcome + Introductions

- 2 Planning Academy Overview

- 3 Next Steps

- 4 Questions & Answers



MEETING CODE OF CONDUCT



Respect one Another

All attendees are expected to respect one another and any differences of opinion

Welcome Difference in Opinion



We welcome differences of opinion, including opinions that differ from the Planning Dept



Constructive Feedback

Constructive comments and opinions should be aimed at topics, not people

Allow All to Speak



To allow your fellow attendees a chance to ask their questions or comments, speaking time will be limited to 2 minutes

Code of Conduct

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

In the chat, share your:

Name

Neighborhood

In a few words, why you are attending this session?

WHO IS BEHIND THE PLANNING ACADEMY?



Kristiana Lachiusa
Deputy Director of
Community Engagement



Grey Black
Community Engagement Manager



Naoise McDonnell
Community Engagement Manager



Jonil Casado
Community Engagement Manager



Caroline Filice Smith
Senior Urban Designer

Planning Academy Overview

8-week
planning
school for
Boston
residents



Planning Academy will create a dedicated space to dig into the history, context, and complexities of Planning, Design, and Development.

Our goal is to support community members in more actively taking part in shaping the future of Boston

LEARN HOW TO SHAPE THE BOSTON YOU LOVE

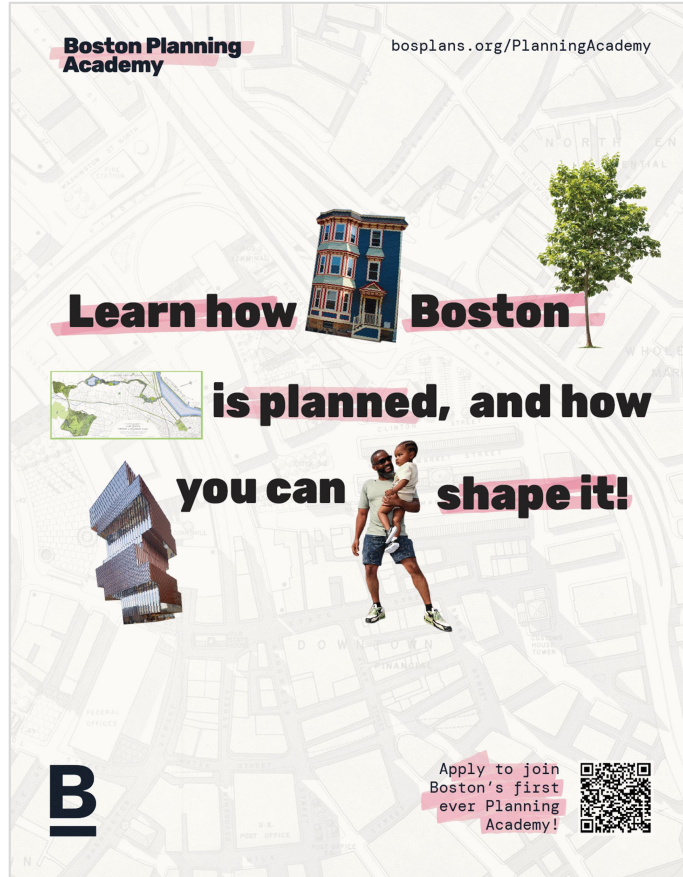
**Boston Planning
Academy**

Apply to join
Boston's first ever
Planning Academy!



bosplans.org/PlanningAcademy

Why Join?



Boston Planning Academy bosplans.org/PlanningAcademy

Learn how Boston is planned, and how you can shape it!

B

Apply to join Boston's first ever Planning Academy!



The poster features a background map of Boston with various landmarks labeled. Overlaid on the map are several icons: a blue and red building, a green tree, a small map of Boston, a modern building, and a man holding a child. The text is arranged in a central column, with the Boston Planning Academy logo and website at the top, the main headline in the middle, and the 'B' logo and application information at the bottom.

*Explore how
planning decisions
are made and why
your voice matters*

*Learn how to shape
and influence
planning decisions!*

*Meet others
interested in making
Boston a home for
everyone*



How will sessions be taught?

*Sessions will combine a balanced mix of **teaching**, **discussion**, and **activities***

Boston Case Studies

Learn fundamentals through local examples

Hands-On Learning

Be challenged to move from knowledge to action!

Guest Speakers

Dive deeper with local experts - and ask them anything!

Glossary

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT

An additional residential unit that can be built within an existing home or outside of it. Sometimes referred to as in-law units, or granny flats.

allowed use
A land use that is permitted as a matter of right. Zoning Board of Appeal approval is not required.

appeal
A request made to the Zoning Board of Appeal for relief from zoning code regulations (variance) or a conditional use permit.

as of right
Constructing or making adjustments to a building that follow the rules set out within the zoning code - this construction may still require permits and licenses.

article 80
Article 80 is a section of the Boston Zoning Code and sets the rules for the review of proposed real estate

development projects throughout the city, often referred to as development review. These apply to projects that include at least 15 units of housing, or are larger than 20,000 square feet.

affordable housing
(also see: Income-Restricted Housing)
Homes that are priced so that people with lower incomes can afford to live there without spending too much of their money. The term "affordable housing" is a relative term - it means different things to different people. We often try to refer to this housing as income-restricted because while it may not be subjectively affordable, it is only available to households at or below certain, specific incomes.

affirmatively furthering fair housing (AFFH)
Development projects over a certain size are required to consider their impacts on area residents who have historically been discriminated against, so that steps can be taken to reduce those impacts, provide new housing opportunities, and/or address past histories of exclusion.

area median income
As determined by the United States Department of Urban Development (HUD), AMIs are published annually for the Greater Boston Area. The percentages of AMI (i.e. 60% AMI, 80% AMI, 100% AMI, 120% AMI) often refer to the maximum amount of income a household can receive and still be eligible for the Inclusionary Housing program.

boston planning and development agency (BPDA)
The BPDA is the precursor to the Planning Department and was Boston's primary entity for guiding its physical and economic

blue bikes
The system of shared bikes that can be rented by any member of the public, usually by the half hour or hour. You can return the bike to a different place than you picked it up from, making them great for short one way trips, such as getting to a T station or to run a nearby errand.

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The BPDA is the precursor to the Planning Department and was Boston's primary entity for guiding its physical and economic

Post-War & Cold War City

The "bold line" which the city (and state) used to define the city limits in the post-war era. It was the line that separated the city from the surrounding area.

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BINGO

Identify who does what in Boston!

STREETS CABINET (TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS) Design, plan, and maintain the public right of way.	BOSTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT (BPRD) Create and maintain clean, safe, and accessible open space.	OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY & INCLUSION (OEOI) Help businesses launch, grow, and thrive.
BOSTON WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION (BWSC) Plan and maintain water and sewer infrastructure.	FREE SPOT	BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY (BPL) Manages Boston's central library and 25 branches.
MASSACHUSETTS BAY TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (MBTA) Manage transit service and infrastructure.	MAYOR'S OFFICE OF ARTS AND CULTURE (MOAC) Improve the city through arts and culture.	MAYOR'S OFFICE OF HOUSING (MOH) Affordable housing in Boston.

CITY CABINETS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Boston Planning Academy

A CULTURE

ARTS AND CULTURE
The Arts and Culture Department is responsible for the city's cultural affairs, including the management of the city's cultural assets, the promotion of the arts, and the development of cultural programs and events.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
The Community Engagement Department is responsible for the city's community engagement efforts, including the development of community engagement plans, the implementation of community engagement programs, and the monitoring and evaluation of community engagement efforts.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND INCLUSION

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND INCLUSION
The Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion is responsible for the city's economic development efforts, including the development of economic development plans, the implementation of economic development programs, and the monitoring and evaluation of economic development efforts.

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, AND OPEN SPACE

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, AND OPEN SPACE
The Department of Environment, Energy, and Open Space is responsible for the city's environmental, energy, and open space efforts, including the development of environmental, energy, and open space plans, the implementation of environmental, energy, and open space programs, and the monitoring and evaluation of environmental, energy, and open space efforts.

FINANCE

FINANCE
The Department of Finance is responsible for the city's financial affairs, including the management of the city's finances, the development of financial plans, the implementation of financial programs, and the monitoring and evaluation of financial efforts.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT
The Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development is responsible for the city's housing and neighborhood development efforts, including the development of housing and neighborhood development plans, the implementation of housing and neighborhood development programs, and the monitoring and evaluation of housing and neighborhood development efforts.

311 is your entry to city hall! When you are not sure who to call for non-emergencies, you can call, use the app, or go online any day, and the time, whether you're day, or trying to reach the right department. 311 makes it easier.

THINK LIKE A PLANNER



Open Space Needs
Get an understanding of the city's open space needs and priorities. This map shows the city's open space needs and priorities, including the amount of open space needed, the types of open space needed, and the locations of open space needed.



DELIVERABLE: OPEN SPACE SPATIAL VISION FRAMEWORK

New project uses established guidelines to guide the process of creating a POCP, and to design and operate open space.

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Who Should Apply?

Are you excited to get involved in planning, development, and design in the City of Boston?
Childcare, Dinner, and Transit Passes will be Provided

We are looking for:

**City of Boston
Residents**

**Representation
from across
Boston's
Neighborhoods**

**Diversity of life
and professional
experiences**

**Representation
from different
stages of life**

**A mix of long
time residents
and people new
to Boston**

**Long-time
neighborhood
stewards and
people new to
working in their
communities**

Session Outlines - Quick View

INTRO TO PLANNING

Week 1:

What is planning and who is involved?

Takeaways:

- Intro to Planning & the Planning Department
- Understand who does what in City Hall

Week 2:

How do past planning decisions shape our present?

Takeaways:

- Key moments in the building and planning of Boston
- Explore how planning is shaped by values

Week 3:

What kind of city are we creating and who is it for?

Takeaways:

- Intro to Urban Design
- What makes a complete neighborhood?
- Place making, the public realm, and streets

DEEP DIVES

Week 4:

What rules shape what gets built?

Takeaways:

- Zoning 101
- How to read the zoning code

Week 5:

What is Zoning Reform and who benefits?

Takeaways:

- The what, why, and how of Zoning Reform
- Navigating trade-offs
- Ongoing Zoning Reform efforts

Week 6:

What kind of city are we building and how do we build it?

Takeaways:

- The what, why, and how of development in Boston
- Understanding the role of development in funding City services
- How development is regulated by the City

Week 7:

How do we build affordable housing, and why is it difficult?

Takeaways:

- Market realities of housing development
- How affordable housing is funded
- Affordable housing resources

CAPSTONE

Week 8:

What will you do next? & Celebration!

Capstone Project Presentation:

- Participants applied their learnings to a project in their community

Session Outlines

INTRO TO PLANNING

Week 1:

What is planning and who is involved?

Takeaways:

- Intro to Planning & the Planning Department
- Understand who does what in City Hall

Week 2:

How do our values shape planning action?

Takeaways:

- How is planning shaped by values, opportunities, and constraints?
- How do past planning decisions shape our present

Week 3:

What kind of city are we creating and who is it for?

Takeaways:

- Intro to Urban Design
- What makes a complete neighborhood?
- Place making, the public realm, and streets

Session Outlines

DEEP DIVES

Week 4:

What rules shape what gets built?

Takeaways:

- Zoning 101
- How to read the zoning code

Week 5:

What is Zoning Reform and who benefits?

Takeaways:

- The what, why, and how of Zoning Reform
- Navigating trade-offs
- Ongoing Zoning Reform efforts

Week 6:

What kind of city are we building and how do we build it?

Takeaways:

- Development 101 in Boston
- Connection between development and funding City services
- How development is regulated by the City

Week 7:

How do we build affordable housing, and why is it difficult?

Takeaways:

- Market realities of housing development
- Funding mechanisms
- Affordable housing resources

Session Outlines

CAPSTONE

Week 8:

What will you do next?
& Celebration!

Capstone Project Presentation:

→ Participants will share how they plan to apply their learnings to a project in their community. This could be a proposal for research, advocacy, data collection, tactical urbanism, and more.



Run of Show - Example

SESSION THREE

What kind of city are we creating and who is it for?

By the end of Session 3, participants will

- Be introduced to the urban structure of Boston
- Be introduced to the research tools and reports available from the Planning Department
- Be introduced to the field of Urban Design
- Explore what makes a neighborhood feel vibrant and complete

Guest Speakers:

- Urban Designers from Planning Department
- Guest Speaker from a nearby University

Time	Topic	Method
<i>pre-session</i>	Food + Fellowship	-
6:00-6:10	Welcome + Session Objectives	Discussion
6:10-6:25	Boston's Urban Structure	Discussion + Activity
6:25-6:45	Urban Design 101 <i>Activity: UD in the World; UD in Boston</i>	Teaching + Activity
6:45-7:30	Envisioning and Building a Complete Neighborhood <i>Activity: 8-80 City & Street Mix</i>	Activity
7:30-7:40	Break	-
7:40-8:50	Guest Speaker	Teaching + Discussion
8:50-9:00	Evaluation + Closing	Survey

Session Details

Location: all sessions held in-person at Boston City Hall

Time: 6:00pm - 9:00pm

Dates: Tuesdays, September 29 - November 17, 2026

Session #: Eight

Cost: Free. Childcare, dinner, and transit passes will be provided

**Applications due
by August 3rd!**



Glimpses + Takeaways from the first Planning Academy



"I will carry these lessons forward...sharing what I learned during future community meetings... Encouraging informed participation is one of the best ways to help keep Boston a vibrant, inclusive, and well-planned city."

"I enjoyed the historical context of how Boston's zoning code developed over time."

"I really feel a sense of how we got the Boston of today. It...helps us make sense of the development of the city."

"It was also enlightening to work through some of the problems & limitations that planners have to resolve."



"The relationship between development and municipal budgets was not something I was aware of here in Boston. Understanding that relationship... is very important."

NEXT STEPS

APPLY OR LEARN MORE!

1. **Apply to join the Planning Academy by August 3, 2026!**
2. Learn more on our project page, check out our FAQ, or send us an email PlanningAcademy@boston.gov
3. Sign up for Planning Department emails



[Bosplans.org/PlanningAcademy](https://bosplans.org/PlanningAcademy)



PROJECT PAGE



APPLICATION



City of Boston
Planning Department

The Planning Academy Application

The City of Boston Planning Department is excited to invite you to apply for the [Planning Academy](#) – a free interactive learning experience designed to equip Boston residents from different backgrounds and neighborhoods with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to meaningfully have a voice in shaping its future.

The Details:

- There will be eight weekly sessions: September 29 - November 17, 2026
- Each session will be held Tuesday evenings from 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM in-person at Boston City Hall
- Childcare, dinner, and T passes will be provided for free
- Learn how you and your neighbors can be most effective in shaping your neighborhood!

Please complete the following questions to help us learn about you and share why you want to take part in the Planning Academy. The application period closes on **August 3, 2026**.

Want to learn about other opportunities to get involved in planning and development happening in your neighborhood? [Sign up here](#) to receive emails from the Planning Department.

Thank you for your interest in the Planning Academy! Our staff looks forward to reviewing your application and will be in touch with whether or not you have been selected to join this group.

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Boston, showing a mix of urban development, green spaces, and water. A large white rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the text "WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?". The background shows a city with various buildings, roads, and parks, with a large body of water and a bridge visible in the foreground.

**WHAT QUESTIONS DO
YOU HAVE?**