

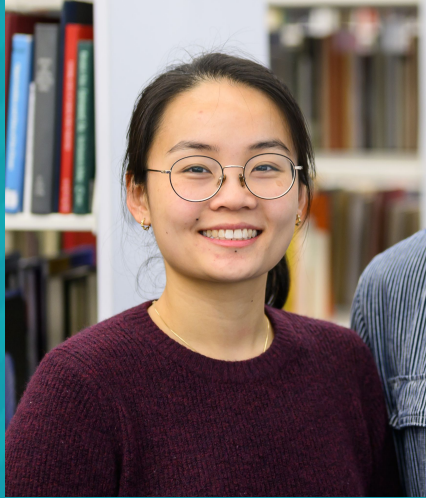
Chinatown Rezoning Kickoff Meeting

Chinatown Resident Association Meeting

Wednesday, February 7th, 2024

6pm-7:30pm

Chinatown Rezoning Team: BPDA



Lamei Zhang 张拉美
(she/her)

Comprehensive Planner II
Boston Planning & Development
Agency (BPDA)



Astrid Walker-Stewart
(she/her)

Zoning Reform Planner I
Boston Planning & Development
Agency (BPDA)

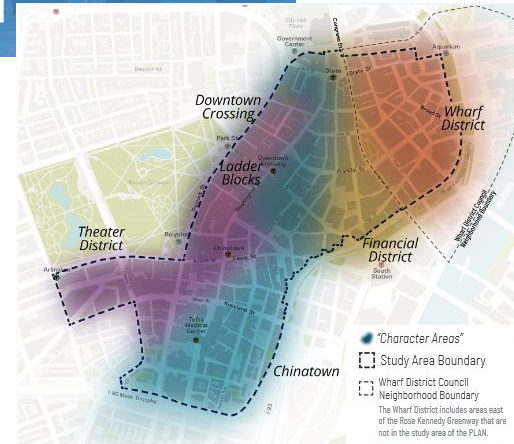
Agenda

- 1. PLAN: Downtown Recap & Chinatown Zoning**
 - a. Context
 - b. What We've Heard
- 2. What is Zoning?**
- 3. What We Are Hoping to Do**
- 4. Sharing Your Thoughts**
 - a. Timeline & Feedback Opportunities
- 5. Q&A**

PLAN: Downtown & Chinatown Rezoning

About PLAN: Downtown:

- Chinatown Rezoning started as part of PLAN: Downtown (2018-2023)
- About PLAN: Downtown
 - Creates a framework for the growth, enhancement, and preservation of Downtown Boston
 - Encourages a greater mix of uses for a more inclusive and vibrant Downtown that meets diverse needs of residents, workers, and visitors





What We Heard from PLAN: Downtown (2018-2023)

"(Need for) Chinatown-specific meeting"

"Growth potential and protection of certain areas is important"

"more lively mixed use. Affordable housing and commercial! more pedestrian streets. Protect character of small scale neighborhoods..."

"Chinatown residents would like to be included in resident-led placemaking initiatives"

"Include non-English speakers (Chinatown residents) in planning process"



Photo by the Boston Herald



Photo by The Boston Globe

PLAN Downtown: Identified Key Priorities for Chinatown

1. Improve housing options, with a focus on affordable housing (new or preserving existing)
2. Create additional housing for a range of incomes while balancing the preservation of the existing built fabric
3. Preserve the historic fabric of the neighborhood, especially the row house blocks.
4. Promote cultural activities and opportunities for art that expresses the area's heritage.
5. Support new and legacy small businesses



Photo by the Boston Herald



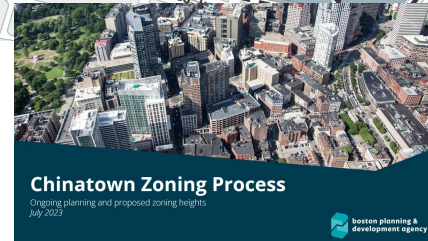
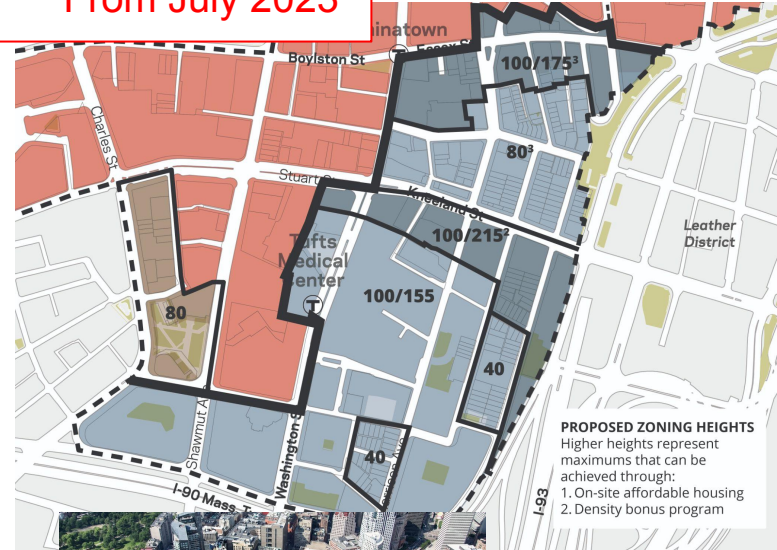
Photo by The Boston Globe

PLAN: Downtown - Where We Left Off

- **July 2023 Chinatown Zoning Process**

- Finding ways to protect key historic and cultural areas identified by the community (i.e. row houses)
- Additional density for affordable housing
 - What does this look like?
- Looking at ways to lower barriers for existing and new retail, services, and cultural uses

*** From July 2023



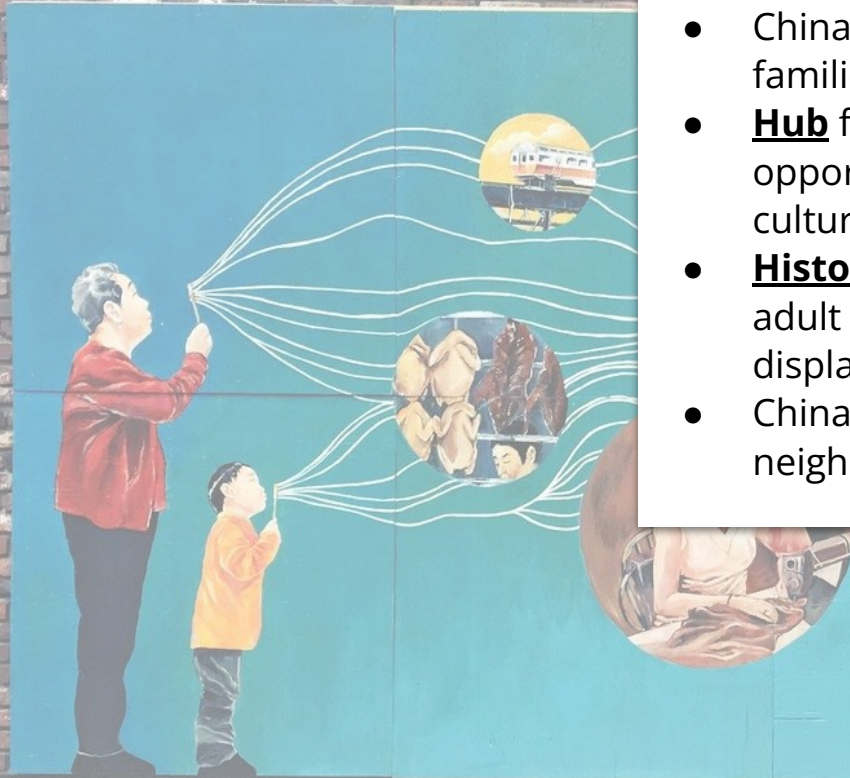
Understanding Chinatown Context



*"Tied Together by a Thousand Threads" by
Shaina Lu & Yvonne Ng (2017)
Photo from Asian Community Development Corporation*

Understanding Chinatown Context

- Chinatown is a **gateway** for immigrants and their families
- **Hub** for housing, business & employment opportunities, education, resource sharing, social & cultural connectivity
- **History** of urban renewal, highway construction, the adult entertainment district, and concerns of displacement
- Chinatown is a **resilient, innovative, and active** neighborhood for a **diverse** array of users



*"Tied Together by a Thousand Threads" by
Shaina Lu & Yvonne Ng (2017)
Photo from Asian Community Development Corporation*

Goals for Chinatown Rezoning

*The purpose of the Chinatown Rezoning process is thus to work with community members to **identify key neighborhood assets**, such as housing, commercial development, and cultural spaces, which are necessary for the continued success of Chinatown, **to establish zoning regulations for uses and dimensions that ensure the protection and promotion of such developments.***

*“Tied Together by a Thousand Threads” by
Shaina Lu & Yvonne Ng (2017)
Photo from Asian Community Development Corporation*

What is Zoning?

What is zoning?

Zoning is a set of laws that are used to guide development by dictating the

1. **Allowed use**
2. **Shape and density of the project** in a given area.

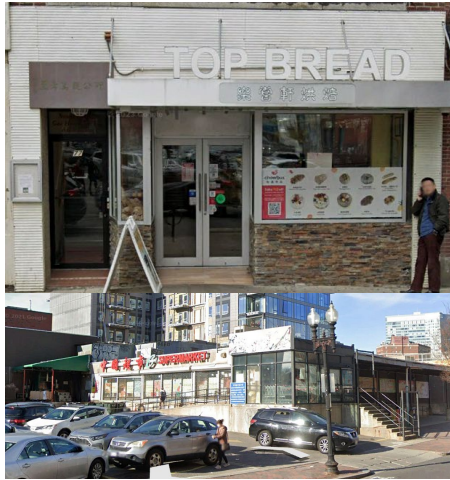
These are
encoded in
zoning.



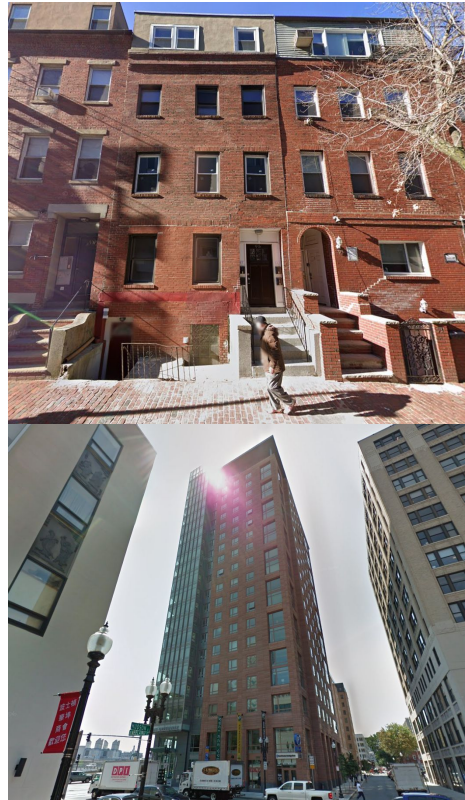
Land Use

Dimensional Regulations

Land Uses



Retail/Commercial



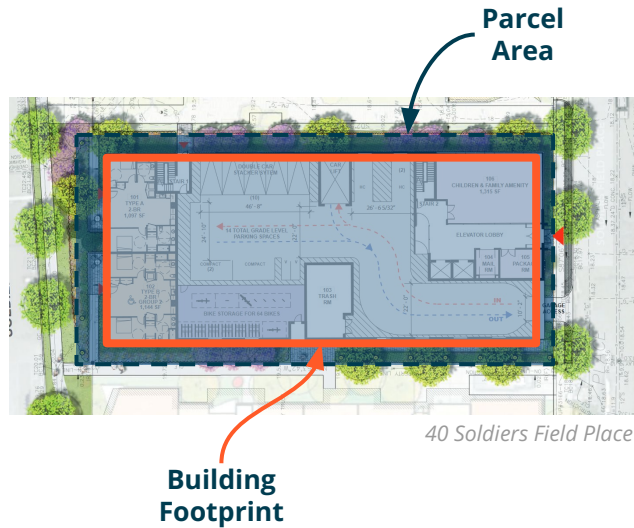
Residential



Educational

Dimensional Regulations

Building Lot Coverage



Setbacks

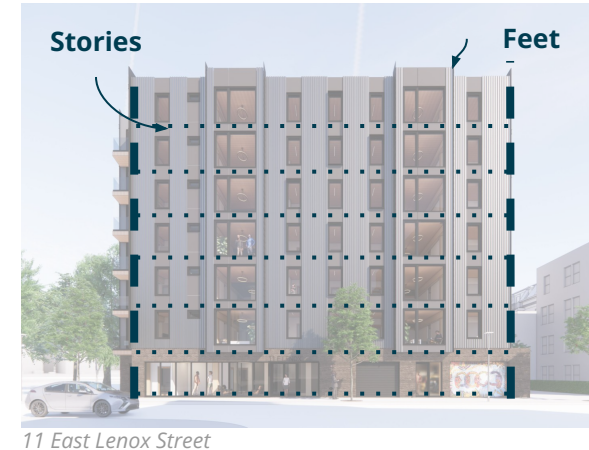
Setback



"Zero-lot-line"



Height



What is zoning?

Zoning is a set of laws that are used to guide development by dictating the

1. **Allowed use**
2. **Shape and density of the project** in a given area.

Article 80 (a chapter of the Boston Zoning Code) provides specific requirements for the review of certain development projects in all of the neighborhoods of Boston.

These are encoded in zoning.

These are enforced at the project level through Article 80 review.

Land Use

Dimensional Regulations

Design Guidelines

Individual Site Design

Why rezone?

1

Current zoning regulations do not match what's built, what exists, or the ways we want to grow

2

Updated zoning sets clear standards for what can be built (and makes it harder to rely on variances)

3

Provide pathways for small scale residential and commercial development as well as larger ones

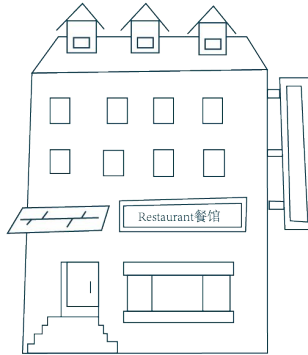
4

Make the zoning code more legible, predictable, and easy to navigate

Why rezone?

~30

buildings exceed
current allowed
density limitations



>40%

of Nonconformities in
Chinatown are due to
USES

1

**Current
zoning
regulations
do not match
what's built,
what exists,
or the ways
we want to
grow**

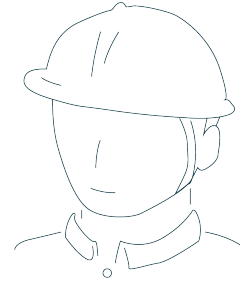
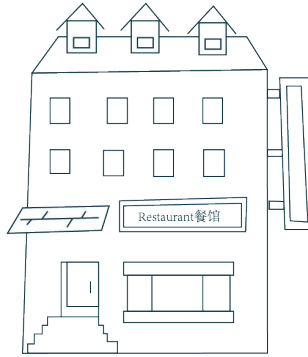
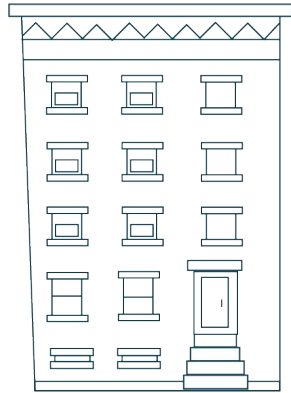
Why rezone?



2

Updated zoning sets clear standards for what can be built (and makes it harder to rely on variances)

Why rezone?



3

Provide pathways for small scale residential and commercial development as well as larger ones

Why rezone?



4

**Make the
zoning code
more legible,
predictable,
and easy to
navigate**

What We Are Looking to Do

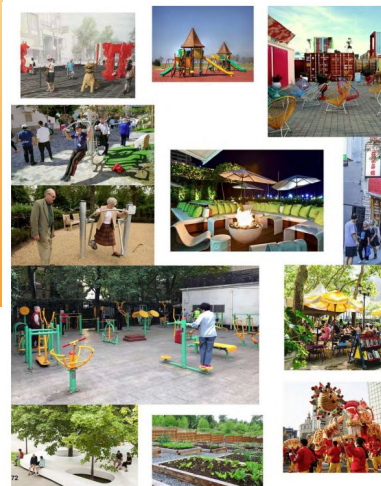
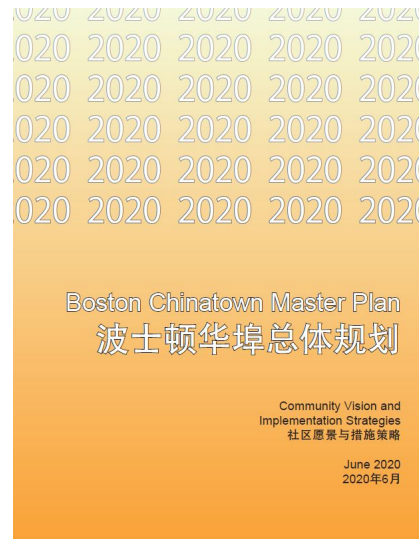
What We Are Looking to Do

- Use community feedback to understand what ways zoning can allow development that better reflects Chinatown's needs
- Allow for predictability and transparency
- Reduce barriers of entry for new and existing small businesses



Chinatown Cultural Plan

- Led by MAPC and community organizations (ACDC, CCLT, Pao Arts Center, and Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy), and supported by the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture
- **About the Chinatown Cultural Plan:**
 - Addendum to the 2020 Chinatown Master Plan
 - Inventory the neighborhood's cultural assets
 - Strategies to preserve and expand cultural and artistic vitality in Chinatown
- BPDA's goal: Find ways to support the Chinatown Cultural Plan through zoning



Community Engagement



Timeline

Timeline

February

- **Chinatown Rezoning Kickoff Meeting**
- Survey opens
- Workshops

March

- **Public Meeting #1** to share Draft of Zoning
- Planning Office Hours
- Stakeholder Focus Groups

April

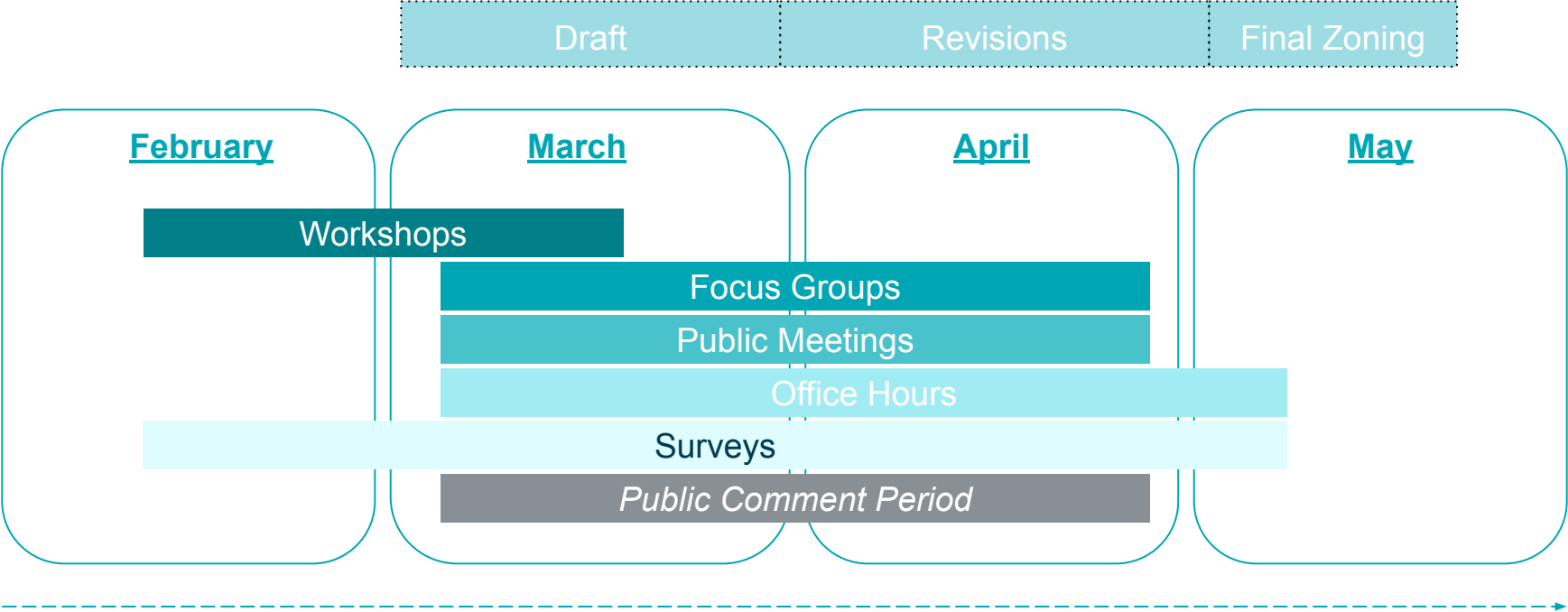
- Stakeholder Focus Groups
- **Public Meeting #2** to share Revised Draft of Zoning
- Planning Office Hours

May

- Final Draft of Chinatown Zoning released
- Go to BPDA Board



Timeline



How to Share Your Thoughts

Feedback Opportunities

- Different ways to give feedback

- Surveys
- Workshops
- Focus Groups
- Office Hours
- Public Meetings



Chinatown Rezoning Survey and Public Feedback Form//唐人街重新分区调查和公众意见反馈表

We are looking to hear from you! As part of the larger PLAN: Downtown process, the BPDA will be updating Chinatown's zoning to ensure that the needs of the neighborhood are reflected in future development. As part of this process, we are looking to community members to help identify key assets and characteristics of Chinatown that support it as a successful, vibrant, and diverse neighborhood.

我们期待听到您的心声！作为更大规模的“规划：市中心”计划流程的一部分，BPDA将更新唐人街的分区，以确保未来的开发计划能够体现社区的需求。作为此工作的一部分，我们希望社区成员能够帮助我们识别唐人街的关键资产和特征，以支持其成为一个成功、充满活力和多元化的社区。

lamei.zhang@boston.gov [Switch account](#)

🔒 Not shared

What Is Zoning? 什么是分区？

"The Boston Zoning Code is the set of rules that dictate the allowed shape, density, and use of development in a given area. It protects Boston's distinct neighborhoods from the development of buildings or uses that do not harmonize with their surrounding context." - [Boston Planning & Development Agency website](#)

"波士顿分区法规是一套规则，规定了特定区域允许的 shape、密度和开发用途。它保护波士顿独特的社区免受与周边环境不协调的建筑物或用途开发项目的负面影响。
- [波士顿规划与发展署网站](#)

Intentional Engagement: Workshops & Focus Groups

Workshops: Learning for Participation



Focus Groups: Topic Area Expertise & Feedback



Upcoming Engagement Events & Survey

- **Complete a survey to share your thoughts:** — — — — — 
 - bit.ly/ChinatownRezone_Survey
- **Participate in a community engagement event:**
 - Workshop (February - March 2024):
 - Elders
 - Youth
 - Limited English Proficient
 - Focus Groups (March 2024): small group discussions with topic experts
 - Residents & Families
 - Small Businesses
 - Property Owners & Developers
- **Tips to Providing Feedback:**
 - Complete a survey
 - Stay informed
 - If possible, be descriptive



Chinatown Rezoning Survey and Public Feedback Form//唐人街重新分区调查和公众意见反馈表

We are looking to hear from you! As part of the larger PLANK Downtown process, the DPWA will be updating Chinatown's zoning to ensure that the needs of the neighborhood are reflected in future development. As part of this process, we are looking to community members to help identify key assets and characteristics of Chinatown that support it as a successful, vibrant, and diverse neighborhood.

我们希望听到您的声音! 作为更大的PLANK Downtown过程的一部分, 市规划发展部(DPWA)将更新唐人街的分区分区, 以确保未来的开发计划能够反映该地区的需求。作为此过程的一部分, 我们期望社区成员能够协助我们识别唐人街的关键资产和特征, 以支持其成为一个成功、充满活力的、多元化的社区。

lamei.shang@boston.gov [Switch account](#)

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“波士顿分区法规是一套规则, 规定了特定区域允许的建筑形状、密度和开发用途。它保护波士顿独特的社区免受与其周边环境不协调的建筑或用途的开发项目的负面影响。”
- 波士顿规划及发展局网站

check all that apply// 您和唐人街有怎

//我在唐人街购买商品和服务

经常去唐人街探亲和/或聚会

4a. If "Other" please explain// 要是选了“其他”请在以下说明

Your answer

5. Based on the existing physical landscape of the neighborhood, what do you envision for Chinatown's future? (short answer)// 基于该社区现有的实际景观, 您对唐人街的未来有何设想? (请简短回答)

Your answer

Questions?



Thank you!

If you have any questions, please contact: Lamei.Zhang@boston.gov

Existing Chinatown Zoning



Over 40% of
Chinatown's Zoning
Nonconformities are
USES

An aerial photograph of a dense urban area, likely in New York City. The image shows a mix of residential and commercial buildings, streets, and green spaces. In the top left, there is a large green park with a pond and a baseball field. The rest of the image is filled with a dense grid of buildings and streets. A large highway interchange is visible in the bottom right corner. The text "BPDA Article 80 Projects" is overlaid in a white box in the top right corner.

BPDA Article 80 Projects

BPDA Article 80 Projects



41 LaGrange Street
(ongoing)



290 Tremont Street
(ongoing)



49-63 Tremont
Street (ongoing)



66 Hudson Street (2015)



288 Harrison Ave
(ongoing)



88 Hudson Street (2017)

Who Does Chinatown Rezoning affect?

Small Property Owners

- Typically applies to those who want to make modifications to a smaller parcel or building (i.e. addition onto a building) or change in use of the building
- Follows zoning regulations set by the City's zoning ordinances

Article 80

- Projects that exceed 20,000 square feet or the creation of 15 or more dwelling units
- Has significant impact on surrounding neighborhood and city-wide (effects on transportation, environment, infrastructure)
- Article 80 review process

Who Does Chinatown Rezoning affect?

Small Property Owners

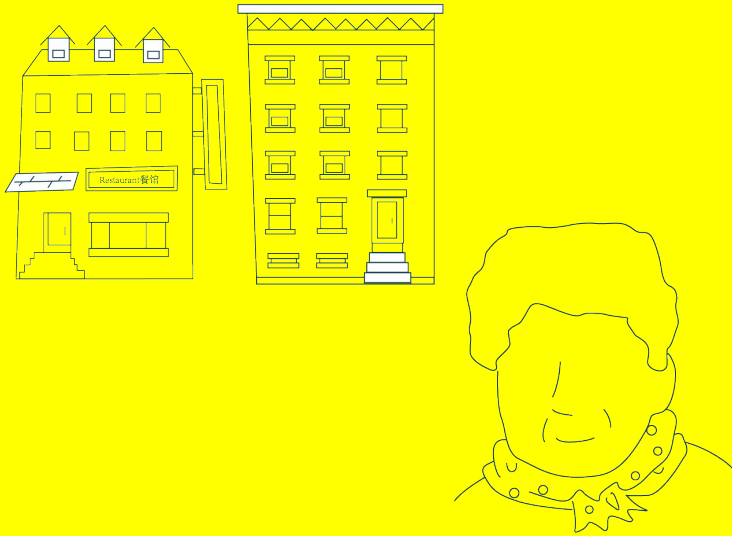
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- Follows zoning regulations set by the City's zoning ordinances

Article 80

- Projects that exceed 20,000 square feet or the creation of 15 or more dwelling units
- At least 1 acre in size
- Has significant impacts on surrounding neighborhood and city-wide (effects on transportation, environment, infrastructure)
- Article 80 review process

Who Does Chinatown Rezoning affect?

Small Property Owners

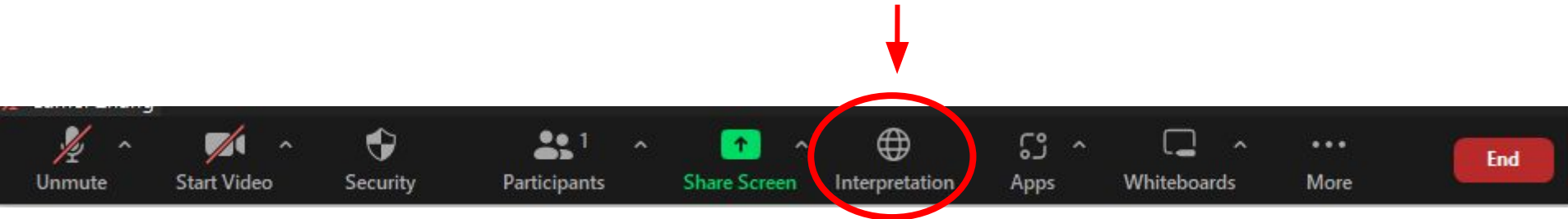


Article 80



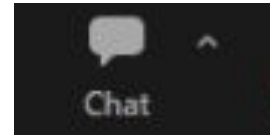
Zoom Instructions: Language Interpretation

- Welcome! Consecutive **CANTONESE** and simultaneous **MANDARIN** interpretation services are being provided for this meeting.
- How to access language interpretation:
 - To switch to MANDARIN, please select the box that looks like this
 - The box will appear at the bottom of your screen like this:



Zoom Instructions: How to Participate

- Please press the **Raise Hand** button at the bottom of your screen if you would like to speak or ask a question
 - If you joined the meeting by dialing in from your phone, dial *9 to raise your hand
- If you want to speak, you can press the **Mute/Unmute Button**
 - If you joined the meeting by dialing in from your phone, make sure to dial *6 to mute/unmute yourself
- Ask questions in the chat along the way!



What We Heard from PLAN: Downtown

- Row homes are important to the identity, affordability, and history of Chinatown
- Need more affordable housing and open space
- Interest in additional density if it includes affordable housing
- Identify opportunities for growth & preservation
- Recognition of Chinatown's role as a residential neighborhood
- Chinatown's arts and culture need to be protected
- Need to protect local stores and small businesses



Photo by the Boston Herald



Photo by The Boston Globe

Why rezone?

1

Current zoning regulations do not match what's built, what exists, or the ways we want to grow

Over 40% of Chinatown's Zoning Nonconformities are USES

~ 30 existing buildings in Chinatown exceed the allowed zoning density