

PROCESS UPDATES FOR CONSTITUENT ZONING PETITIONS

September 3, 2025



Planning Department

CITY of **BOSTON**

ZOOM CONTROLS TO LISTEN TO INTERPRETERS

(EN) Look for the interpretation icon (**globe**) at the bottom of your screen and select the language you want to hear.

(Caboverdean) Djobe íkune di interpretason (**un globu**) na parti inferior di tela y selesiona bu língua ki bu kre skuta reunion.

(Kreyòl Ayisyen) Chèche ikòn entèpretasyon ki gen fòm (**glòb**) anba ekran ou an epi seleksyone lang ou vle tandè a.

(Español) Busque el ícono de la interpretación (**globo**) en el borde inferior de su pantalla y seleccione el idioma en el que desea escuchar.

(Tiếng Việt) Tìm biểu tượng phiên dịch (**hình quả địa cầu**) ở phía cuối màn hình của bạn và chọn ngôn ngữ bạn muốn nghe.

(简体中文) 查找屏幕底部的翻译图标 (**地球仪**)，然后选择您想听到的语言。

(繁體中文) 查找屏幕底部的翻譯圖標 (**地球儀**)，然後選擇您想听到的語言。

ZOOM MEETING INFO + TIPS

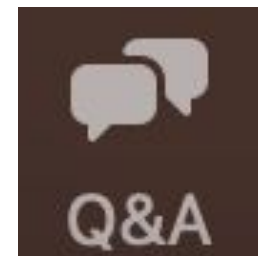
- **The Planning Department will be recording this meeting** and posting it on the Planning Department's project webpage. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.
- **Use raise hand function** (dial *9 if joining by phone) **and wait to be called upon to unmute** (dial *6 if joining by phone) before asking your question or providing comment.
- **Zoom controls are available at the bottom of your screen.** Clicking on these symbols activates different features.



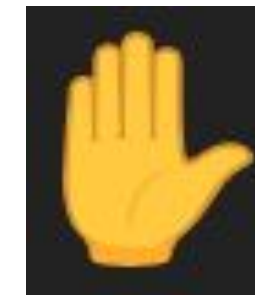
Mute/unmute



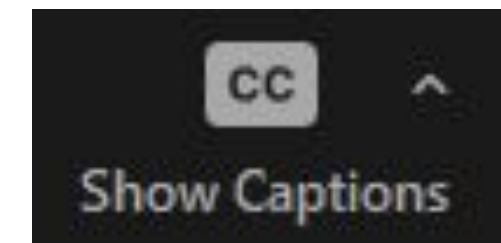
Turn video on/off



Use the Q&A feature for written questions and comments (instead of the chat)



Raise hand to get in line to ask a question or provide comment



Turn on captions

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Planning Department

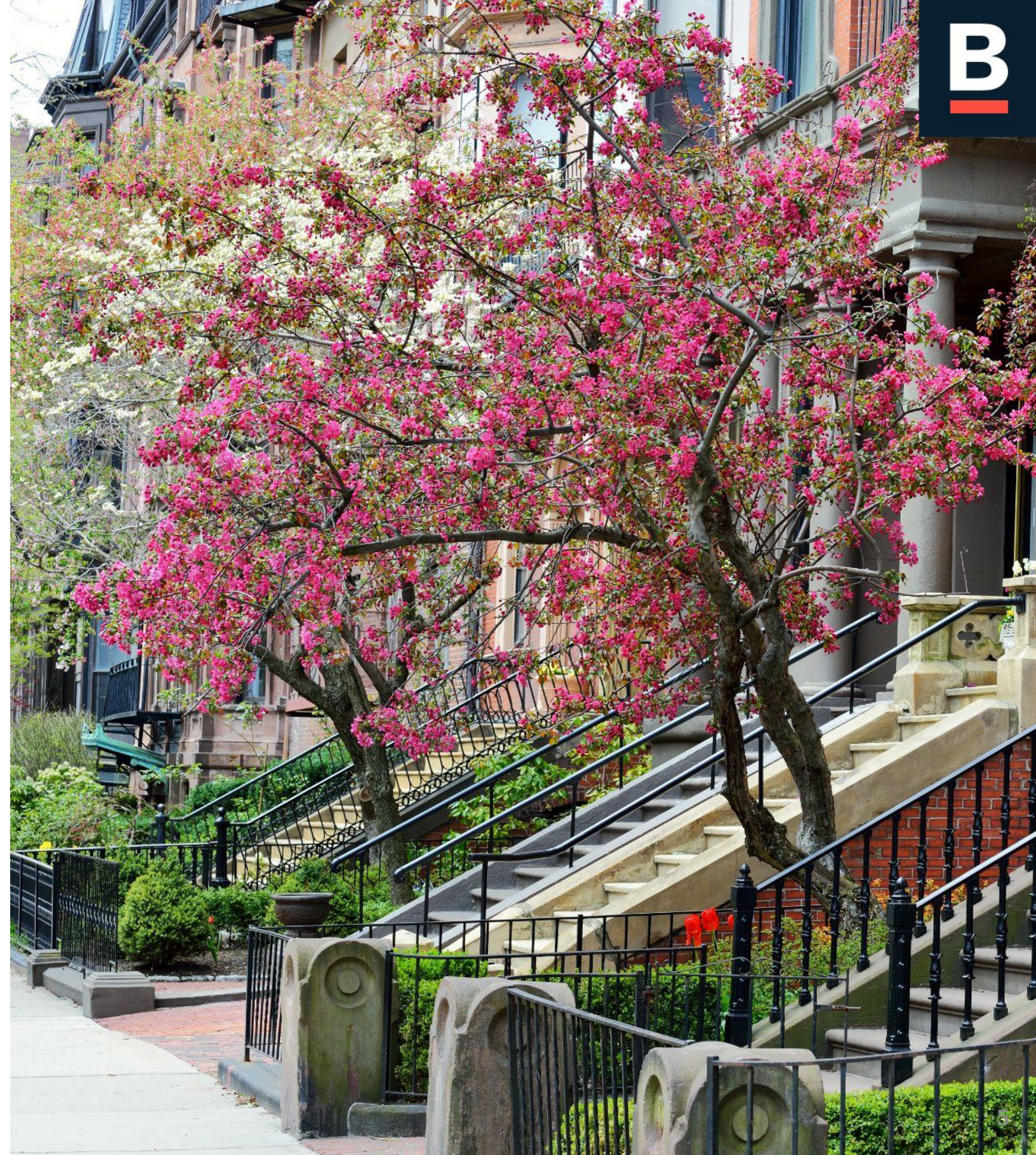
CITY of **BOSTON**

AGENDA

1 ZONING AMENDMENTS OVERVIEW

2 PROPOSED PROCESS UPDATES

3 NEXT STEPS





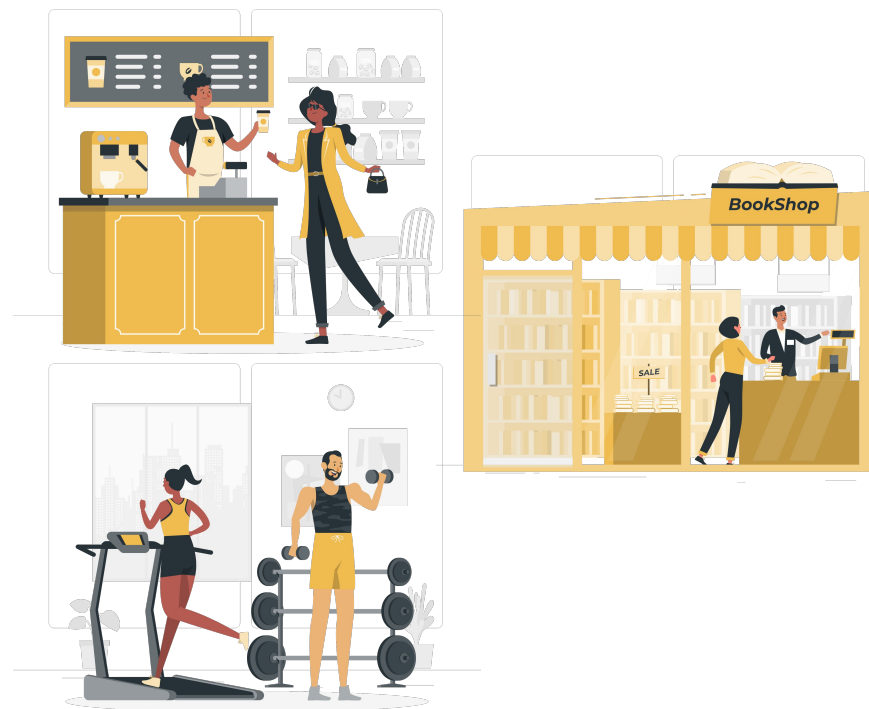
ZONING AMENDMENTS OVERVIEW



BASICS OF ZONING



Zoning is a set of laws that are used to guide development by dictating the **allowed land use, shape, and density of a building or structure** in a given area. Some of what zoning regulates includes:



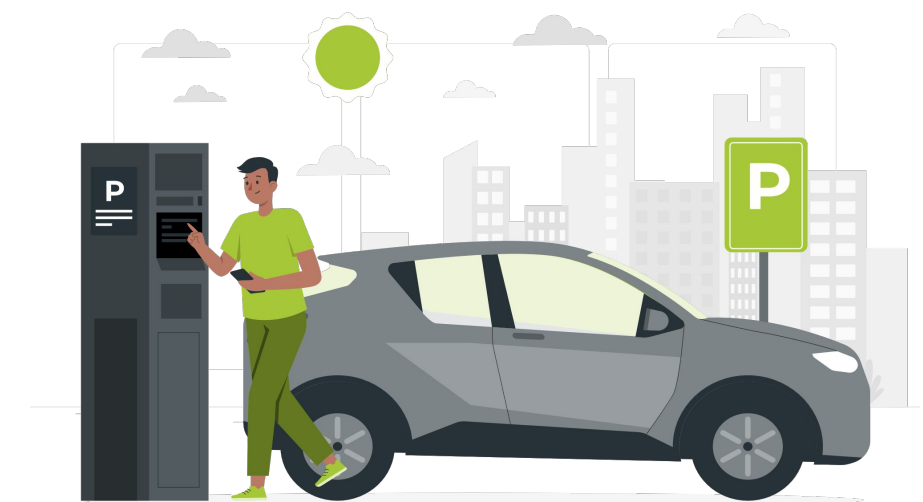
LAND USES

the types of activities allowed within a given area



BUILDING DIMENSIONS

how much space a building takes up, its height, and the open space around it



OTHER REGULATIONS

parking and loading, signage requirements, roof deck allowances, and many more.

Zoning doesn't build or demolish anything; it acts as guides and limits to what people can build.

ZONING AMENDMENTS



ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT

Change(s) in the written text of the Zoning Code that become new or updated rules for development.

E.x. Mattapan Zoning Text

ARTICLE 60. - GREATER MATTAPAN NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT^[1]

Footnotes:

--- (1) ---

Editor's note— Text Amd. No. 467, § 3, effective February 7, 2024, repealed the former Art. 60, §§ 60-1—60-46, and enacted a new Art. 60 as set out herein. The former Art. 60 pertained to similar subject matter and derived from Date of public notice: January 16, 1997 (see St. 1956, c. 665, s. 5); Article inserted on February 27, 1997; As of March 3, 2008; As amended on February 15, 2006; [Text Amd. No. 375](#), § 2a., 11-16-11; [Text Amd. No. 416](#), §§ 55a.—f., 7-2-2015; [Text Amd. No. 428](#), § 3A., 11-9-2017; [Text Amd. No. 440](#), § 10A., 5-8-2019; [Text Amd. No. 463](#), § 4, 8-16-2023.

IN GENERAL

Section 60-1. - Statement of Purpose, Physical Boundaries, and Applicability.

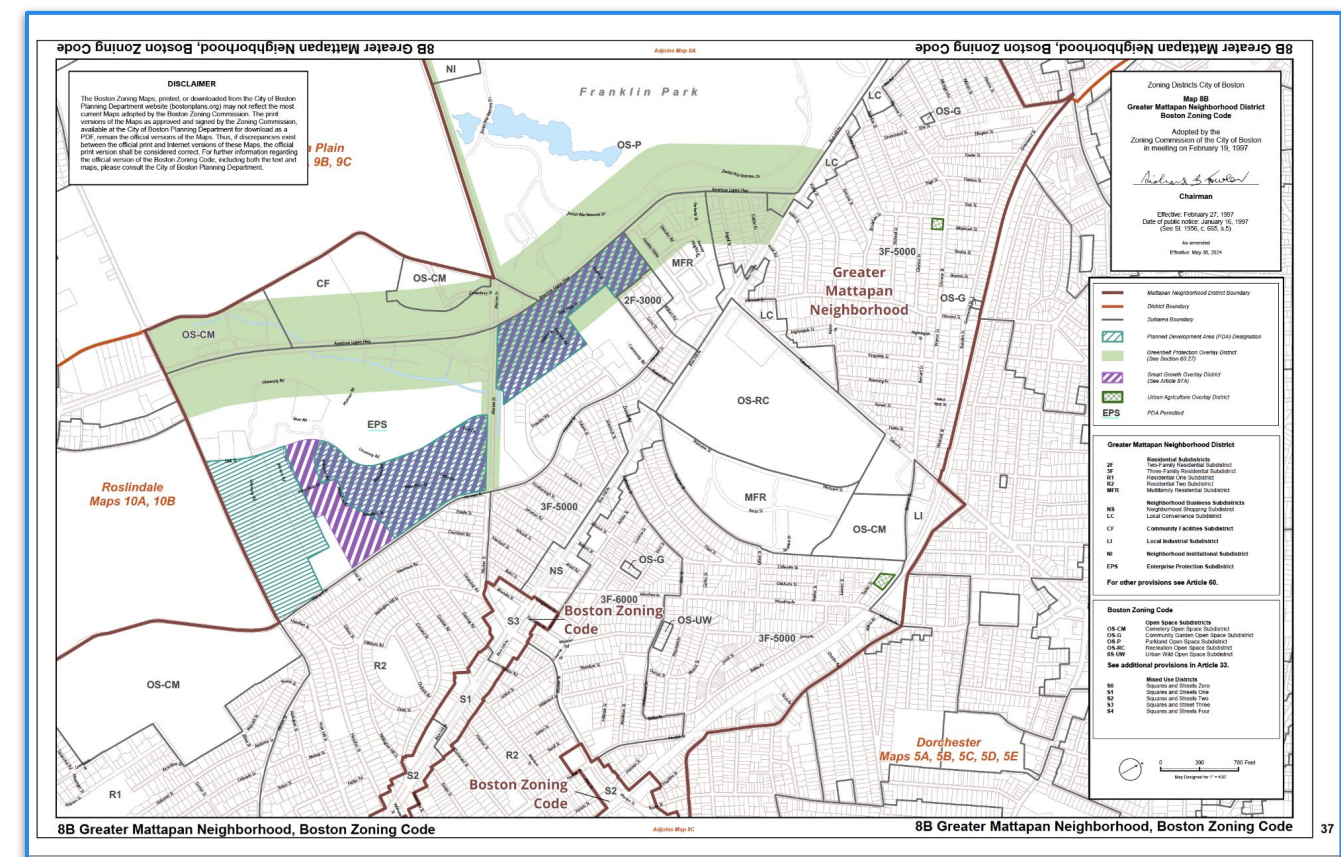
The purpose of this Article is to establish the zoning regulations for the Greater Mattapan Neighborhood District in accordance with the Greater Mattapan Neighborhood Plan and PLAN: Mattapan, as adopted by the Boston Redevelopment Authority on May 12, 2023.

The provisions of this Article are applicable only in the Greater Mattapan Neighborhood District. The boundaries of the Greater Mattapan Neighborhood District and its subdistricts are as shown on the maps numbered Maps 8A, 8B, and 8C, entitled "Greater Mattapan Neighborhood District," "Boston Zoning Code" all of the series of maps entitled "Zoning Districts City of Boston," as amended.

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT

Change(s) in the geographic location and application of specific zoning rules on a zoning map of one or more areas within the City.

E.x. Mattapan Zoning Map



WHO CAN CHANGE ZONING?



PLANNING DEPARTMENT

- 1** Planning Department leads a **public process** for geographic or topic areas, including extensive public engagement.
- 2** BPDA Board votes to **petition** the Zoning Commission to amend the zoning code.
- 3** Boston Zoning Commission (BZC) votes to adopt or deny amendment.

CITY COUNCIL

- 1** City Councilor(s) propose an **amendment**, refer the amendment to committee, and hold public hearing(s).
- 2** City Council votes to **petition** the BZC to amend the zoning code.
- 3** Planning Department writes a **recommendation** on the proposed amendment.
- 4** BZC votes to adopt or deny zoning amendment.

RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS

- 1** Petitioner reaches out to BZC with a proposed amendment and pays \$275.
- X** No public engagement standards.
- 2** Planning Department writes a **recommendation** on the proposed zoning amendment.
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ENABLING LEGISLATION

Section 3, Paragraph 2:

Any resident of the city of Boston or any owner of property therein may petition the zoning commission to adopt an amendment of a zoning regulation, but shall not be entitled to have her or his proposed amendment considered by the commission unless he or she **pays the city such reasonable sum, if any, as may from time to time be established by zoning regulation** as the estimated average cost to the city of giving notice of a hearing on a proposed amendment of a zoning regulation in accordance with the provisions of this section.

The current cost, last updated in 1990, is \$275 (~\$580 if adjusted for inflation)

WHY UPDATE THE PROCESS?

- 1** Residents and property owners are already allowed to petition the Zoning Commission, but the **rules are unclear and outdated.**
- 2** With increased City-run zoning reform efforts, **residents and property owners are becoming more interested** in changing zoning themselves.
- 3** Directly amending the zoning code is an empowering tool, but **should have appropriate rules to ensure an equitable process** that adheres to the City's Language Access Plan and aligns with how the City conducts public engagement.





PROPOSED PROCESS UPDATES

2

WHAT THE NEW PROCESS DOES



Sets submission requirements for Zoning Text Amendments and Zoning Map Amendments.



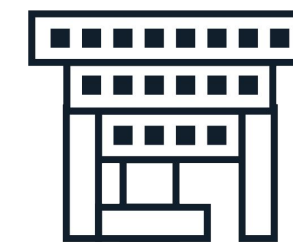
Formalizes the Planning Department Report and recommendation process.



Requires an Application Fee and a **Public Notice Fee** for mailing property owners and holding public meeting;



Establishes a public engagement process that is accessible, equitable, and consistent with City-led rezoning efforts.



Commits the **Planning Department to provide technical assistance** for zoning drafting.

<20 Business Days of Application

Petitioner Submits Zoning Amendment Request with \$400 Application Fee

- \$400 fee
 - Equivalent to advertising Boston Zoning Commission Hearing
- Zoning amendment summary sheet (2 pages)
- For Map Amendments:
 - Existing zoning map
 - Proposed zoning map
 - List of parcels with new zoning
- For Text Amendments:
 - “Greenlined” copy of zoning text with indicated changes

Planning Department Creates Draft Report and Recommendation

- Planning analysis about the proposed zoning amendment request
- Draft recommendation to the BZC; indicates Planning Department’s position to Petitioner.
- Updated continuously throughout process

<20 Business Days of Application

Planning Department Calculates Public Notice Fee

Mailing Affected Property Owners

- \$0.75 per affected property owner
- For Map Amendments: properties within 300-feet of new zoning
- For Text Amendments: properties that receive more restrictive zoning
- Mailing fee can be waived by Planning Department

Public Meeting Advertising

- For Map Amendments: \$300 per neighborhood newspaper
- For Text Amendments: \$300 per neighborhood newspaper OR \$400 per citywide newspaper
- Cost not to exceed \$900

Zoning Commission Hearing

- For Citywide Changes: \$0
- For Neighborhood-Specific Changes: \$300 per neighborhood newspaper (not to exceed \$900)

PETITIONER INITIATION

<20 Business Days of Application

6 Months

Unspecified Time

Public Notice Fee and Planning Department Report Given to Petitioner

- Planning Department sends draft report and calculated public notice fee to the Petitioner

Petitioner Pays Public Notice Fee

- Petitioner decides whether to pursue zoning amendment based on Planning Department Report

WORKING WITH THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Unspecified Time

Begin Refining Zoning Amendment and Planning Public Meeting

Zoning Amendment Refining

- Planning Department creates official draft zoning maps for request
- Review zoning amendment for typos/clerical errors (not content)

Public Meeting Planning

- Planning Department handles interpretation and translation for meeting materials/advertisement
- Petitioner responsible for presentation

Planning Department Mails Affected Property Owners

- Public Notice Fee covers cost of mailing
- Mailing notifies property owners that their property is under consideration for new zoning

PUBLIC MEETING & REVISIONS

Unspecified Time

>15 Business Days

Unspecified Time

Public Meeting Advertisement

- Newspaper ads, emails, and/or mailers sent out to notify of upcoming public meeting

Public Meeting

- Facilitated by Planning Department, but largely run by the petitioner
- Venue for hearing feedback from affected property owners, neighbors, and broader community

Further Modification & Refinement

- Petitioner can modify amendment request based on feedback
- Planning Department can modify Draft Report and Recommendation based on changes

ADOPTION PROCESS



Unspecified Time

>20 Days



Petitioner Indicates Moving Forward

- Notifies that they would like to be considered at a Zoning Commission Hearing



Zoning Commission Advertises Hearing

- Advertisement in citywide newspaper and/or neighborhood newspaper

Planning Department Finalizes Report

- Planning Department issues final report and recommendation



Zoning Commission Hearing

- Zoning Commission holds public hearing and votes on the proposed zoning amendment

ADDITIONAL UPDATE: CITY COUNCIL

The Boston City Council may also petition the Zoning Commission with proposed zoning changes.

- Officially stating this process in Article 5
- Adding a public meeting requirement, similar to the constituent petition process

CITY COUNCIL ZONING PETITIONS FOR TEXT AMENDMENTS

Overview

[Petition to Amend Bulfinch Triangle Zoning for Residential Uses \(Article 46\)](#)

[Petition to Amend Honey Bee Regulations \(Article 2A, Article 8, and Article 89\)](#)

Overview

The Boston City Council may petition the Zoning Commission to adopt an amendment to the Zoning Code. The Planning Department and the Zoning Commission are currently in receipt of the following petition(s). The petition(s) are included here as submitted, along with any relevant Report to the Zoning Commission prepared by the Planning Department

Petition to Amend Bulfinch Triangle Zoning for Residential Uses (Article 46)

Date Received

January 29, 2025

Contact

ZoningCommission@Boston.gov

Information about recent City Council amendments are available online.



NEXT STEPS

3

ADOPTION TIMELINE



SEP 3, 2025
Draft Zoning
Released

SEP 3, 2025
Virtual Public
Meeting

OCT 1, 2025
Public Comment
Period Close

OCT 16, 2025
BPDA Board
Meeting

NOVEMBER 2025
Boston Zoning
Commission



WE ARE HERE

**Virtual Office
Hours**

- 9/9 | 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
- 9/11 | 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM
- 9/17 | 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM
- 9/19 | 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
- 9/23 | 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM
- 9/25 | 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Public Comment Period

Zoning Adoption

THANK YOU

HAVE QUESTIONS?

JACK HALVERSON Jack.Halverson@boston.gov

AHREHON THOMPSON Ahrehon.Thompson@boston.gov

OR VISIT:

bosplans.org/ConstituentPetitions

