11/18/26 Zoning Commission

The meeting will begin soon!

Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

Interpreters for Today's Meeting

1 Joan Siu
Cantonese Interpreter

2 Ricky Huang
Mandarin Interpreter

3 Melisa Martin
Spanish Interpreter

4 Vicky Hodgkins
Vietnamese Interpreter

5 Jardine Jerome
Haitian Creole Interpreter

6 Carlos Brito
Cape Verdean Creole Interpreter

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS: ARTICLE 68 AND MAP 4F - SOUTH BOSTON NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT

Zoning Commission – November 18, 2026

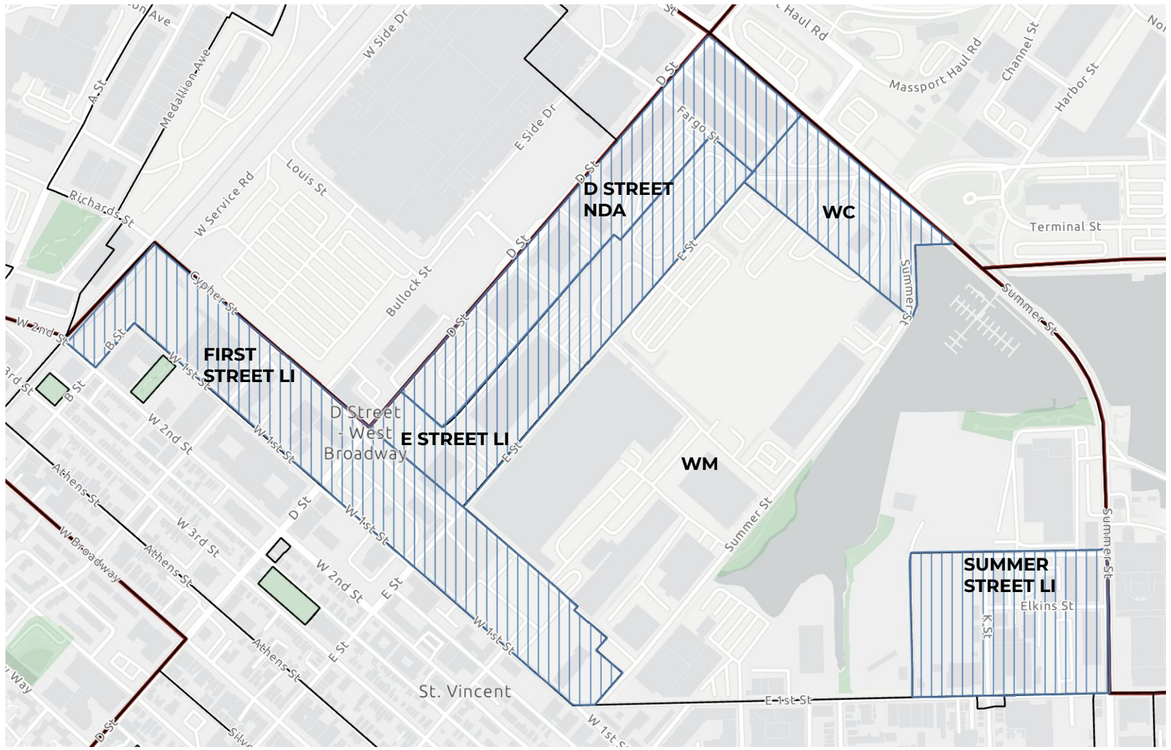
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PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENT

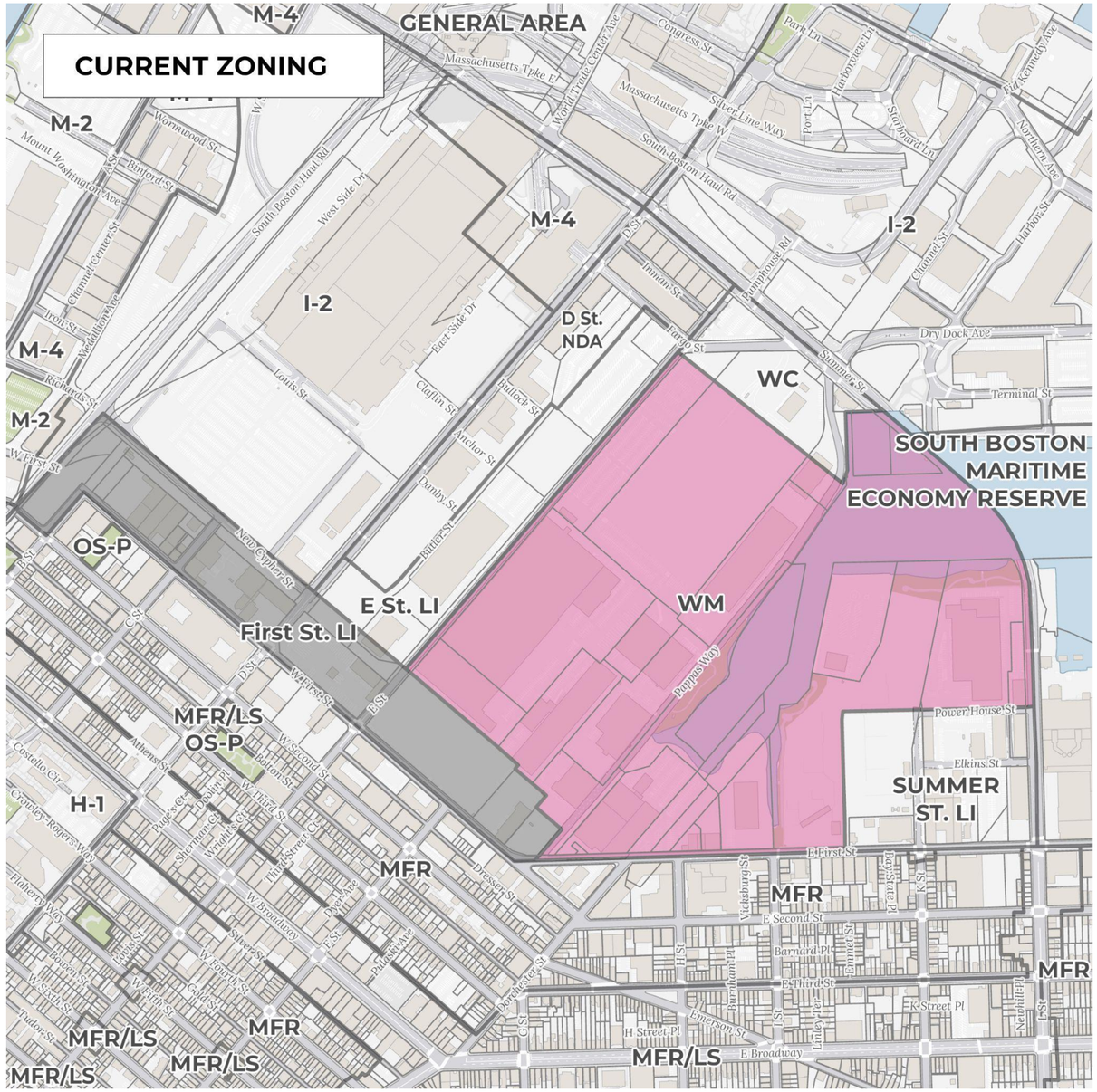
The 2011 East & West First Street Planning & Zoning initiative established a mixed-use zoning district that allows Planned Development Areas (PDA's) at scales consistent with existing context.

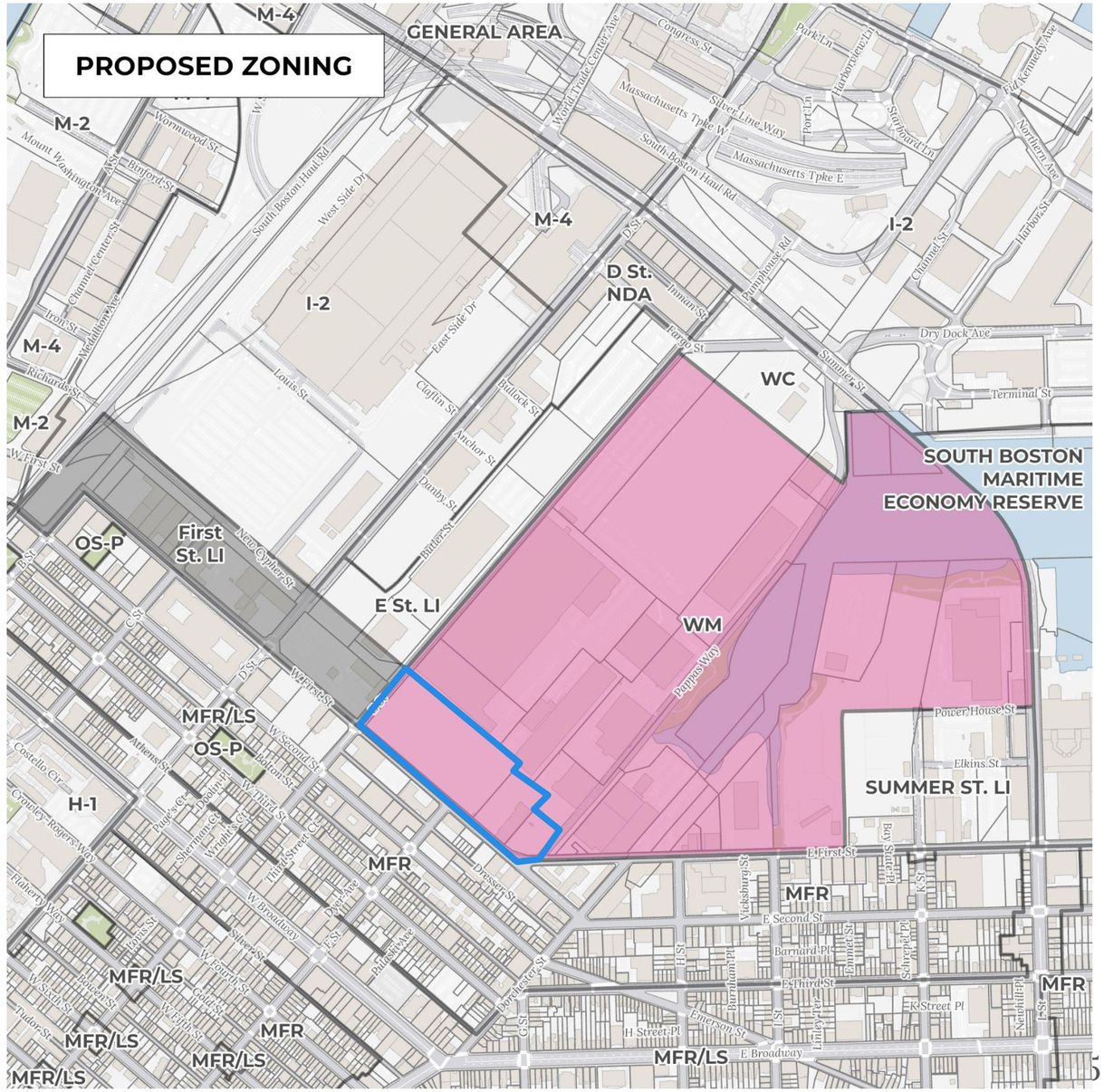
- PDA's may be proposed in:
  - D Street Neighborhood Development Area (NDA)
  - Local Industrial (LI) Subdistricts
  - Waterfront Commercial (WC) Subdistricts
- Amendment would add Waterfront Manufacturing (WM) to the list of subdistricts where PDAs may be proposed



Subdistricts where PDAs may be proposed

PROPOSED MAP AMENDMENT





Updates to Dimensional Definitions and Code Structure

Planning Department

CITY of BOSTON

PROJECT OVERVIEW

CURRENT CODE

- Provisions which explain what dimensions are and how they're measured exist in various places throughout the Code
  - *the definitions in Article 2*
  - *the "base code" Articles of 12-22*
  - *various sections in neighborhood article*
- Many of these definitions/provisions are outdated.

PROJECT GOALS

- Remove redundancy and streamline code structure for dimensional measurements
- Add diagrams and update language to make the Zoning easier to understand.
- Update definitions/provisions to align with current practice and planning goals as needed.

VETTING AND ENGAGEMENT

Before public release:

Planning Department Urban Design Division:
-focus group meetings: 12 (formal)
-full draft reviewed by 8 staff members
-full team briefings/working sessions: 2

Planning Department Planning and Zoning Division:
-full draft reviewed by 5 staff members
-full team briefing/working session: 1

Inspectional Services Department (ISD):
-focus group meetings: 15
-full draft reviewed by 1 staff member
-full team briefings: 2

July 10 - August 30: Public comment period + weekly office hours
Early August: Attorney and designer focus groups (4 meetings)
August 5: Public meeting
September 30: Draft re-release responding to public comments
October 9: Draft re-release resolving minor typos and clarifications

BY THE NUMBERS

23	20	25	13	9
Definitions substantively updated	Definitions clarified	Definitions diagrammed	Definitions deleted	Articles deleted

MAJOR SIMPLIFICATION TO CODE STRUCTURE BY CONSOLIDATING ORIGINAL "BASE CODE" ARTICLES INTO ONE ARTICLE

Original 1964 "base code" = Articles 12-22. Mostly superseded by neighborhood articles.

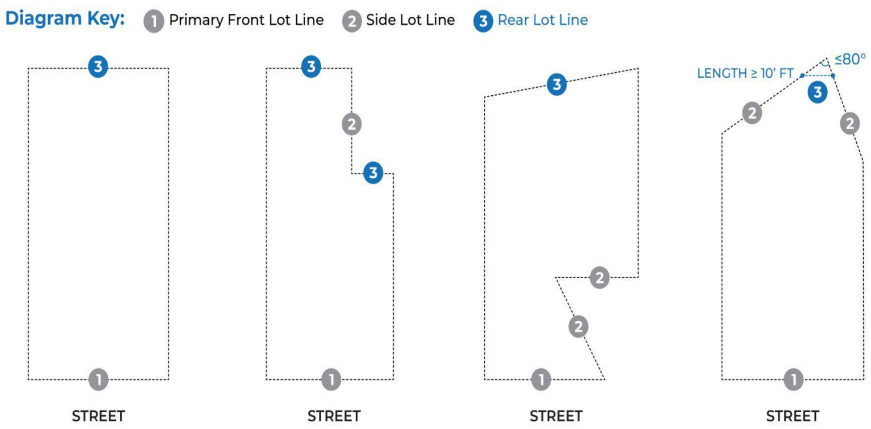
CURRENT 12-22 TEXT		DRAFT
REPEATED IN ARTICLE 2	→	**REMAINING IN ARTICLE 2, DELETING REDUNDANCY**
SPECIFIC TO ORIGINAL BASE CODE DISTRICTS / REPEATED IN OTHER DISTRICT ARTICLES	→	**MOVING TO NEW CONSOLIDATED DISTRICT ARTICLE (13)**
OUTDATED	→	**DELETED FROM CODE**

After amendment, all districts will have a district article and (mostly) the same set of citywide articles

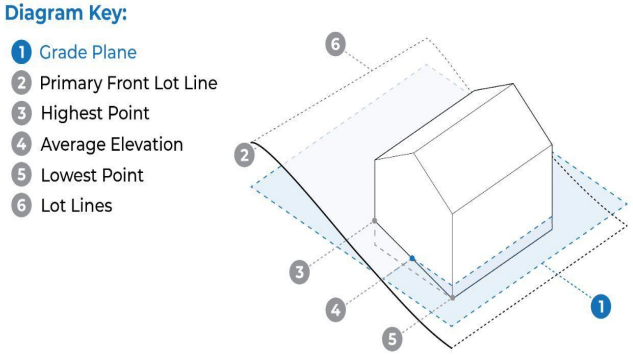
ADDED DIAGRAMS TO BOTH NEW AND EXISTING DEFINITIONS

Examples:

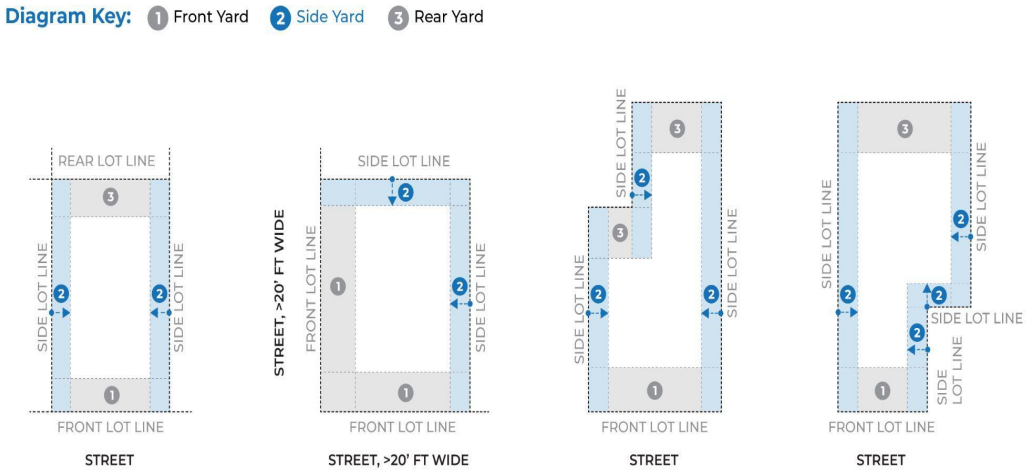
Rear Lot Line Diagram:



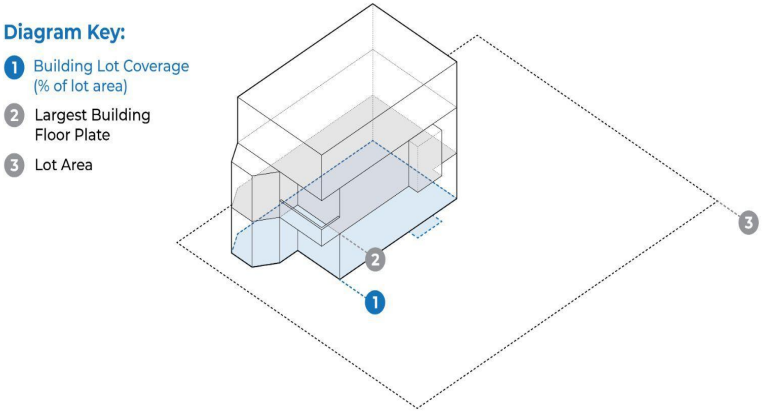
Grade Plane Diagram:



Side Yard Diagram:



Building Lot Coverage Diagram:





IMPORTANT DEFINTION CHANGES

VARIOUS REFINEMENTS TO LOT LINE AND YARD DESIGNATIONS

to simplify zoning and improve outcomes on irregular lots

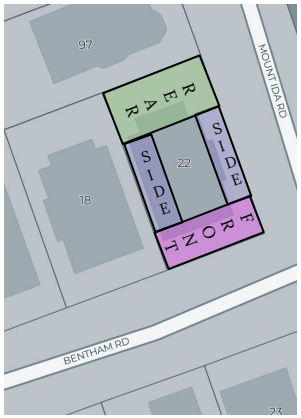
REQUIRED YARDS MORE OPEN TO THE SKY

by removing exceptions for bay windows, porches, balconies

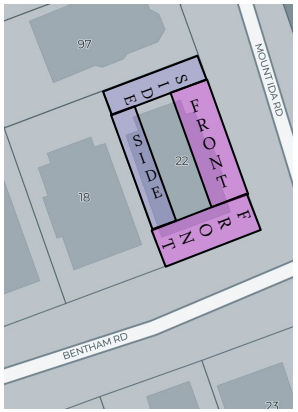
PORCHES AND BALCONIES EXCLUDED FROM SOME BUILDING MEASUREMENTS

making them easier to building and maintain

Existing Zoning



Draft





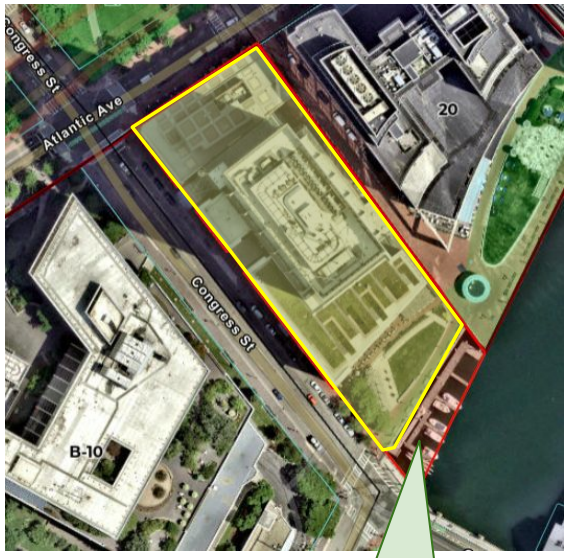
Bay Window would not be allowed in required Side Yard



Measurements to include only enclosed space

CLARIFICATION THAT THE DENOMINATOR IN FAR IS LOT AREA

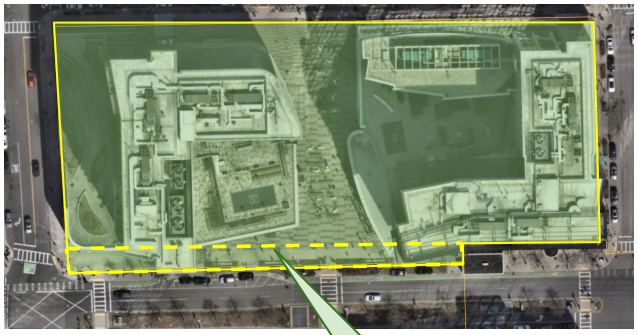
to more consistently exclude open water and vehicular areas in calculations



Open water excluded from Lot Area and thus the FAR calculation

SIDEWALKS ON PRIVATE LAND INCLUDED IN LOT AREA

to avoid penalizing property owners who create public sidewalks on private property



Sidewalk on private property included in Lot Area

AREA IN PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY INCLUDED IN PERMEABLE AREA OF LOT FOR ARTICLE 80 OR 28 PROJECTS

to give a zoning benefit to property owners for creating a public benefit



Area in public right-of-way could be counted for required Permeable Area of Lot

BUILDING HEIGHT MEASURED TO AN EXTERIOR PART OF THE ROOF

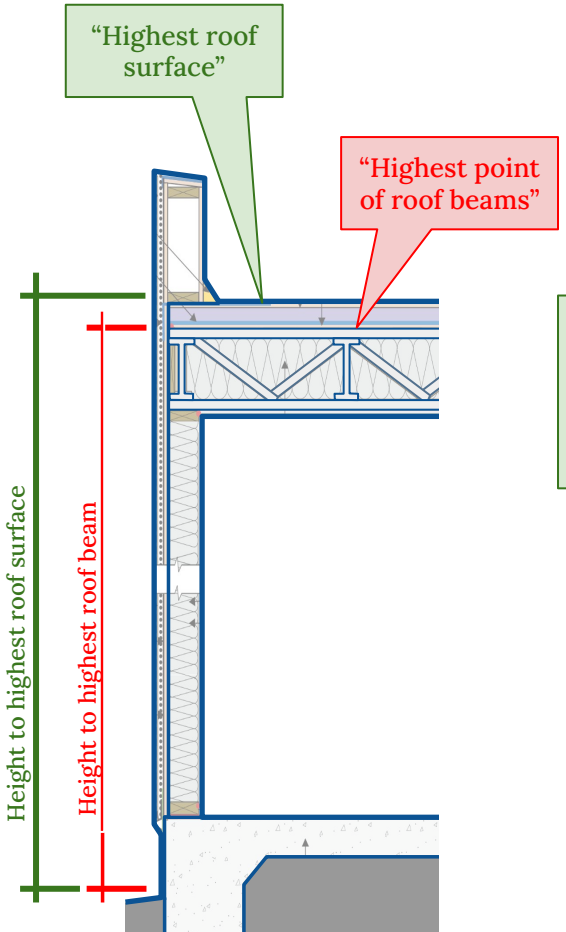
aligning with the building code as well as visual perception

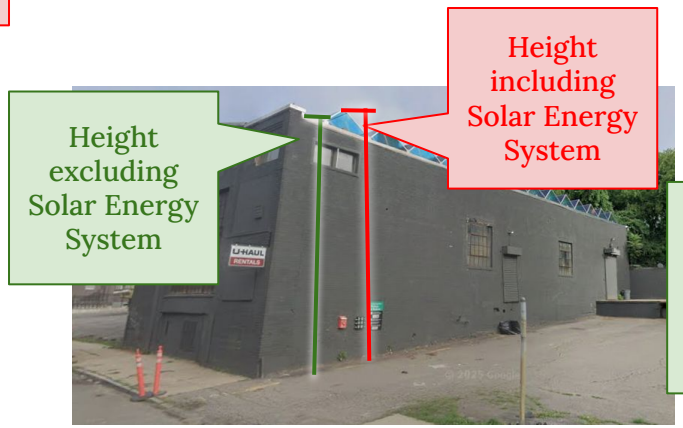
EXPANDED BUILDING HEIGHT EXEMPTIONS TO ALLOW FOR ROOFTOP SOLAR AND ROOF DECKS

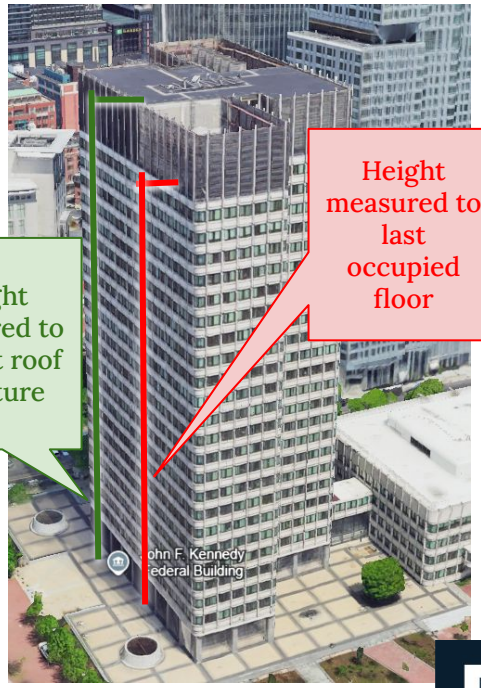
supporting climate goals

REMOVED DOWNTOWN ROOFTOP STRUCTURE EXCEPTION

making Building Height more consistent citywide

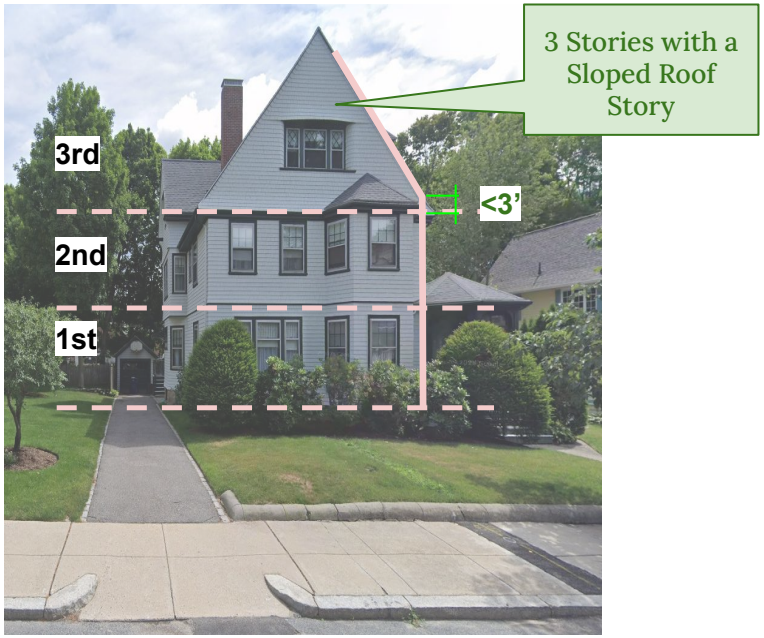






ADDED DEFINITION FOR NEW TERM “SLOPED ROOF STORY”

for use in the new “Dormer” neighborhood housing districts



RECAP

PROJECT GOALS ACHIEVED

- Remove redundancy and streamline code structure for dimensional measurements
  - "Base Code" articles streamlined to one article. 9 articles deleted.

- Add diagrams and update language to make the Zoning easier to understand.
  - 25 diagrams added. About 20 definitions clarified.

- Update definitions/provisions to align with current practice and planning goals as needed.
  - About 23 definitions updated

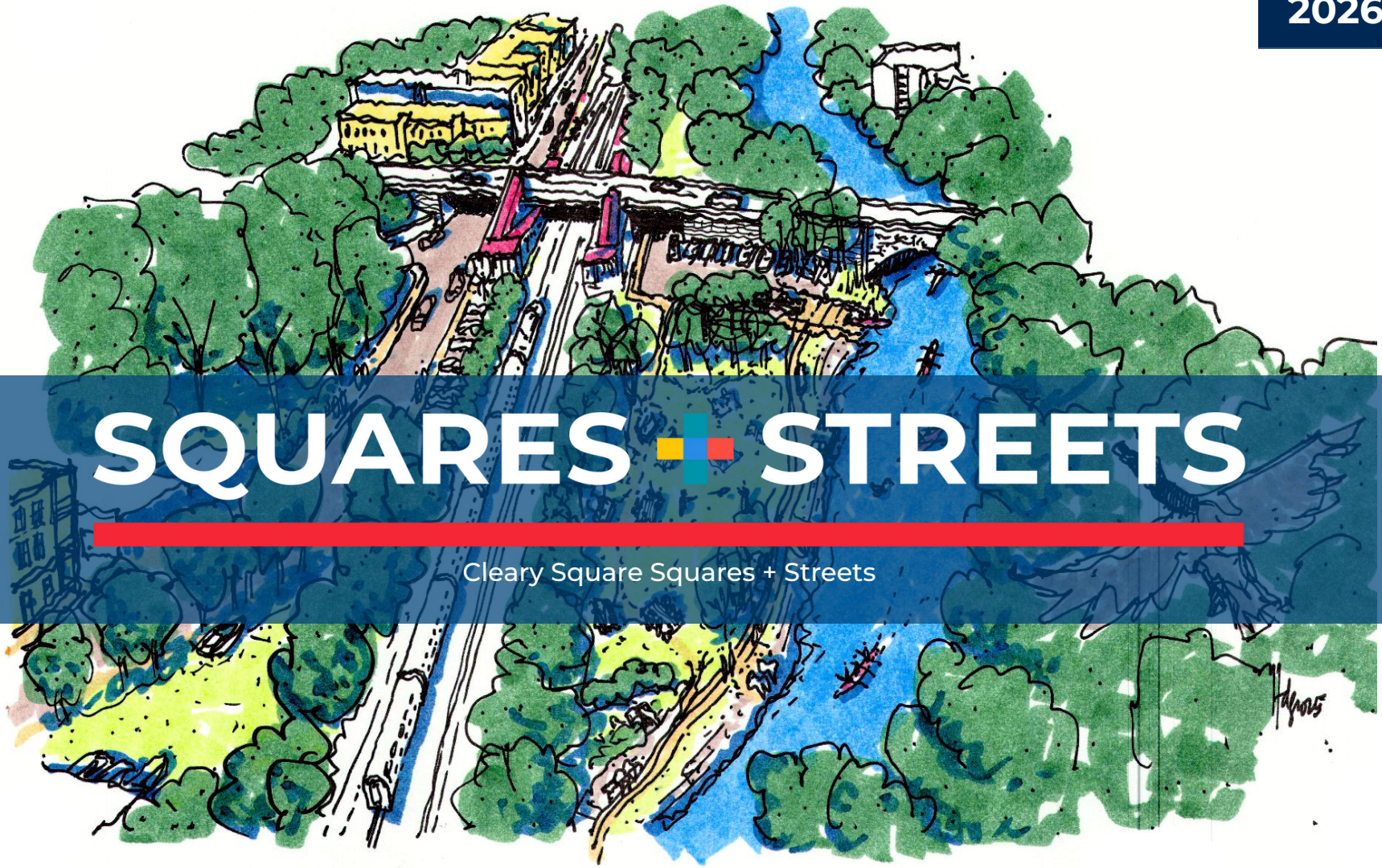
THANK YOU

For the full annotated draft and information about office hours and public meetings, go to bosplans.org/dimdefs

HAVE QUESTIONS?

PROJECT MANAGER maya.kattler-gold@boston.gov

NOV 18
2026



SQUARES + STREETS

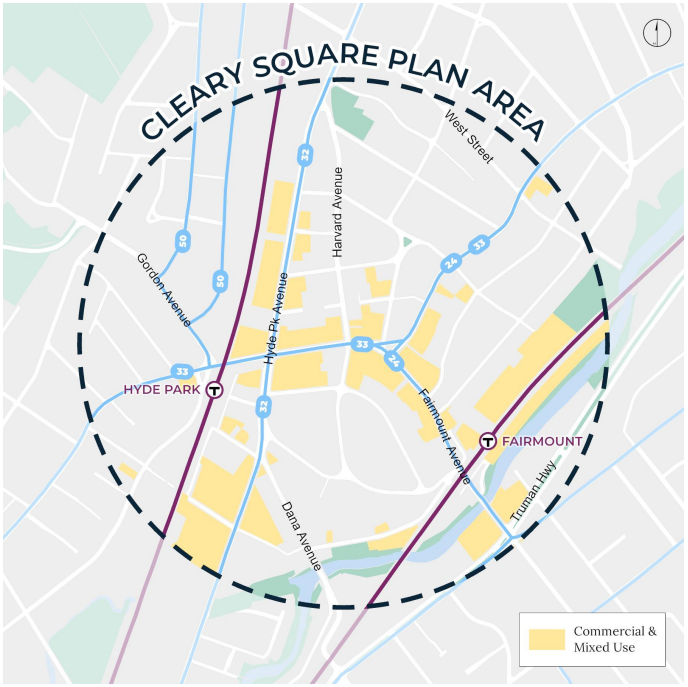
Cleary Square Squares + Streets

WHAT IS SQUARES AND STREETS?

- Planning and zoning initiative focused on **transit-accessible, mixed-use** areas in Boston's neighborhoods

- Goal to provide **more housing with an abundance of commercial, civic, cultural, and transportation resources**

- Achieved through **zoning reform and other investments across City Departments** that address a range of needs



WHY CLEARY SQUARE?





- Connected to Downtown via **MBTA Commuter Rail Stations**
- Wide **variety** of **restaurants** and businesses representing a diversity of cultures
- Surrounded by **environmental**, **cultural**, and **historical amenities**

ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE SNAPSHOT

2024



Kick-off Event

FEBRUARY



Educational Workshops

MARCH



Educational Workshops

MARCH



Community Walkshop

MARCH



Coffee Hours with ONS

APRIL



Haitian Creole Pop-up

MAY



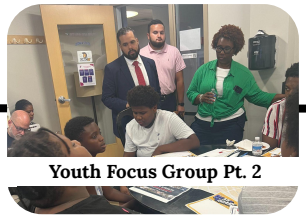
Arts + Culture Focus Groups

OCTOBER



Small Business Workshop

AUGUST



Youth Focus Group Pt. 2

AUGUST



Youth Focus Group Pt. 1

JULY



Juneteenth Pop-up

JUNE



In-Person Visioning

MAY/JUNE



Ideas Reception

OCTOBER



Blockwalks

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

2025



Spanish Speaking Focus Group

MAY

Black Civic Leaders Focus Group

MAY



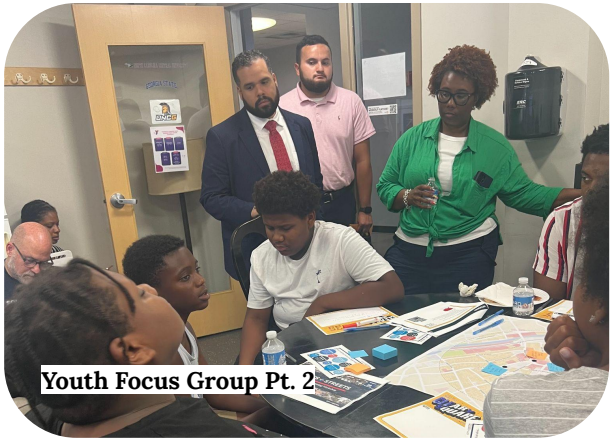
Worked with HP community to add new zoning districts. Adopted by Zoning Commission

DECEMBER

HIGHLIGHTING DIVERSE VOICES



Scares + Treats: Ideas Reception



Youth Focus Group Pt. 2

- Topic-based deep dives, such as **small business, arts & culture, zoning education, youth specific workshops**
- Language specific focus groups in **Haitian-Creole and Spanish**
- **Virtual, in-person, and informal formats** such as pop-ups and tabling at community events and spaces like the Pocket Park
- **Block walks with community partners**, including interpreters in Haitian-Creole and Spanish
- All events included interpretation services

WHAT'S IN THE PLAN DOCUMENT

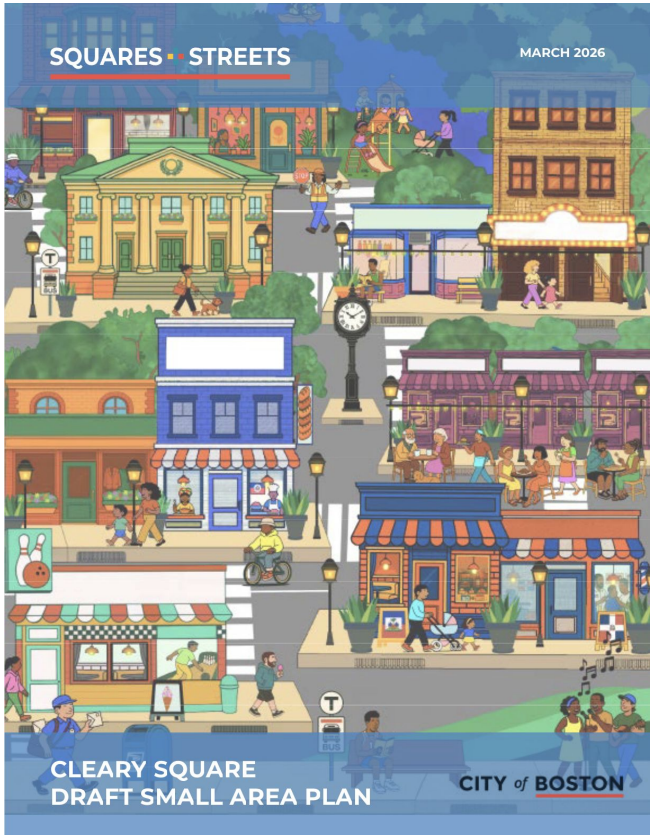
Recommendations focused on 6 topic areas:

1. Land Use and Design Framework
2. Housing and Real Estate
3. Small Business
4. Arts and Culture
5. Transportation
6. Open Space and Resiliency

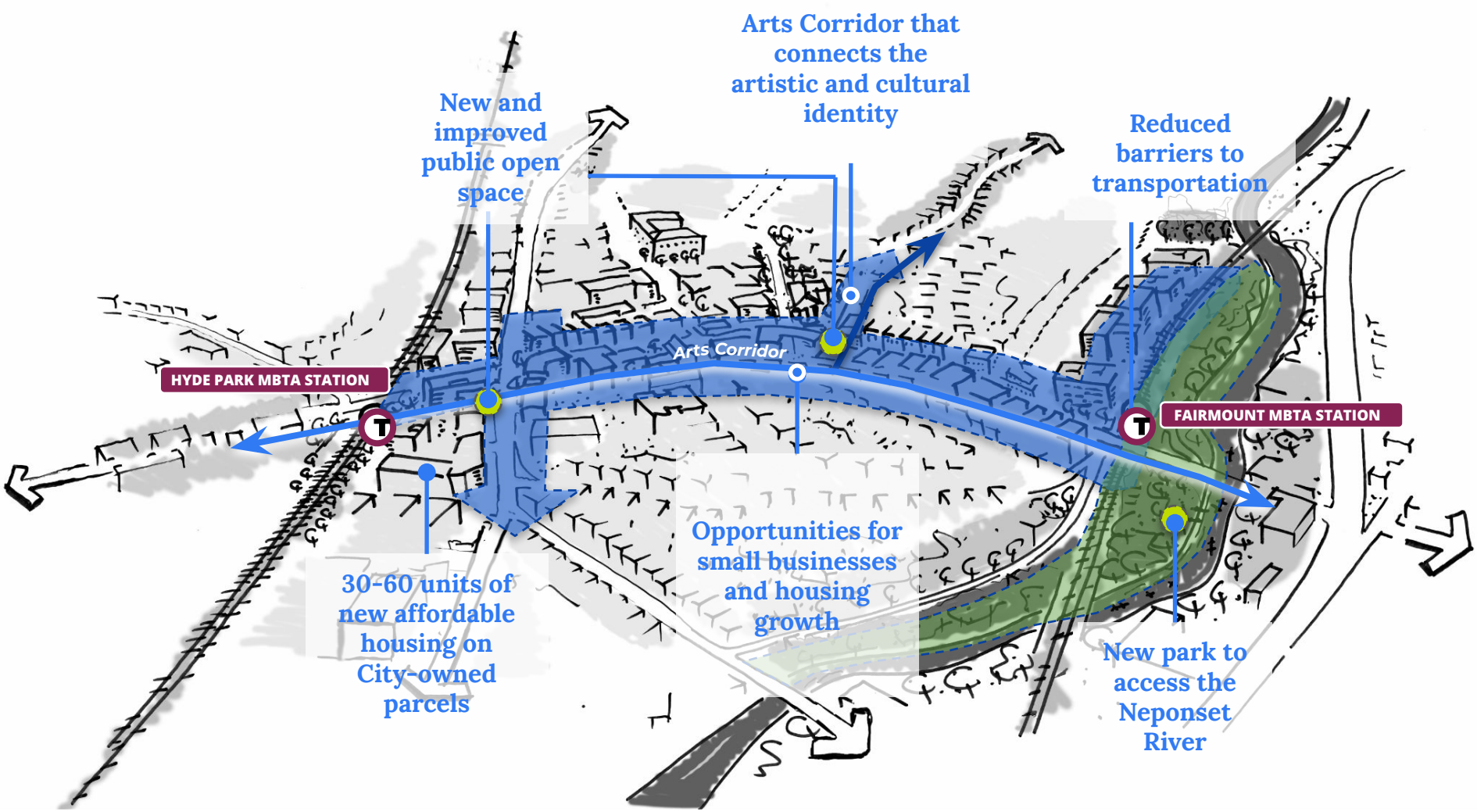
Each topic chapter contains the following information:

1. Existing conditions summary
2. Community engagement results
3. Recommendations

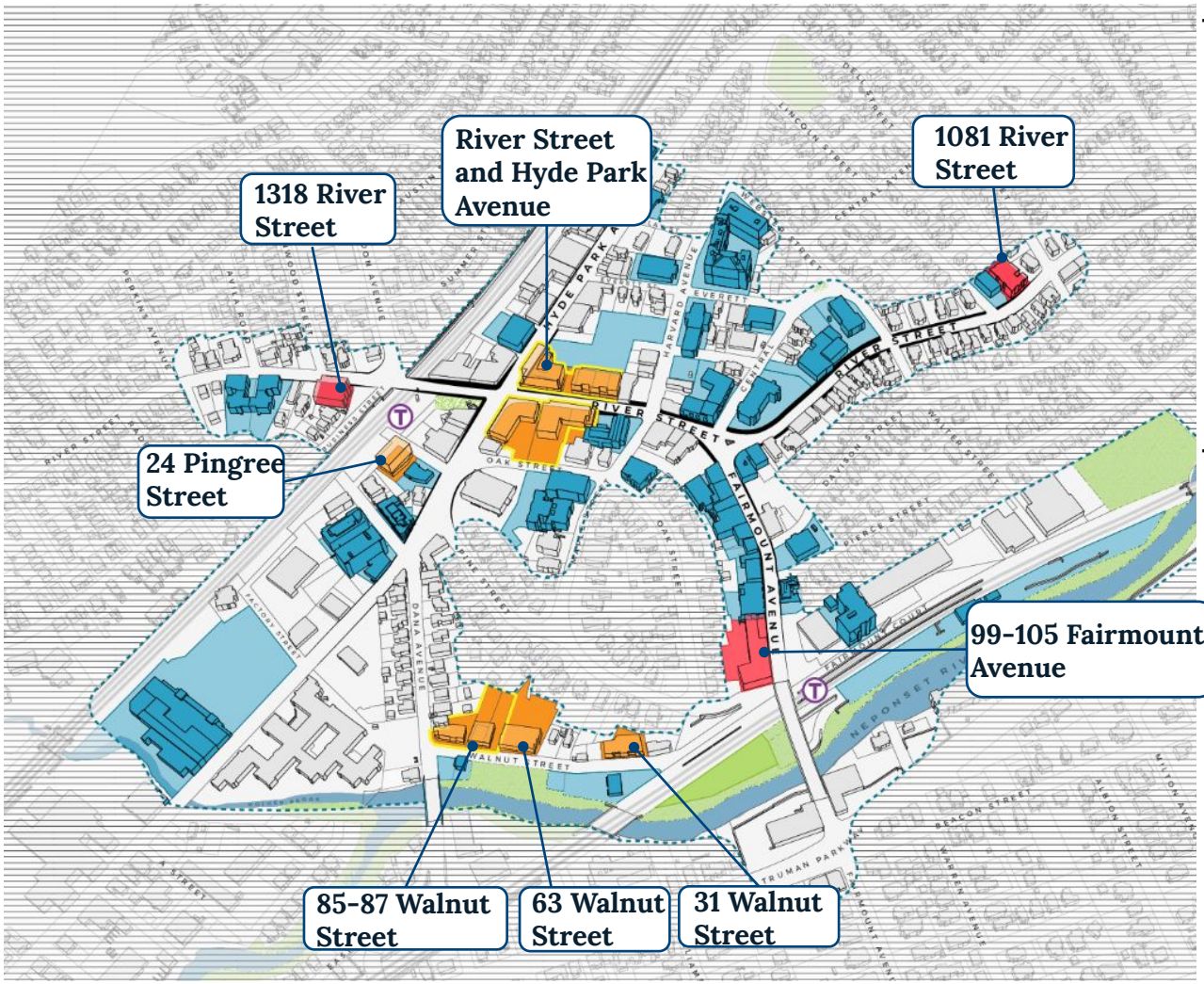
Separately, we have released the **Zoning Map** that includes proposed updated districts in the planning area.



CLEARY SQUARE TOMORROW



CATALYTIC SITES IN CLEARY SQUARE STUDY AREA



What is a *catalytic site*?

- Sites that are likely to change in the near future

  and

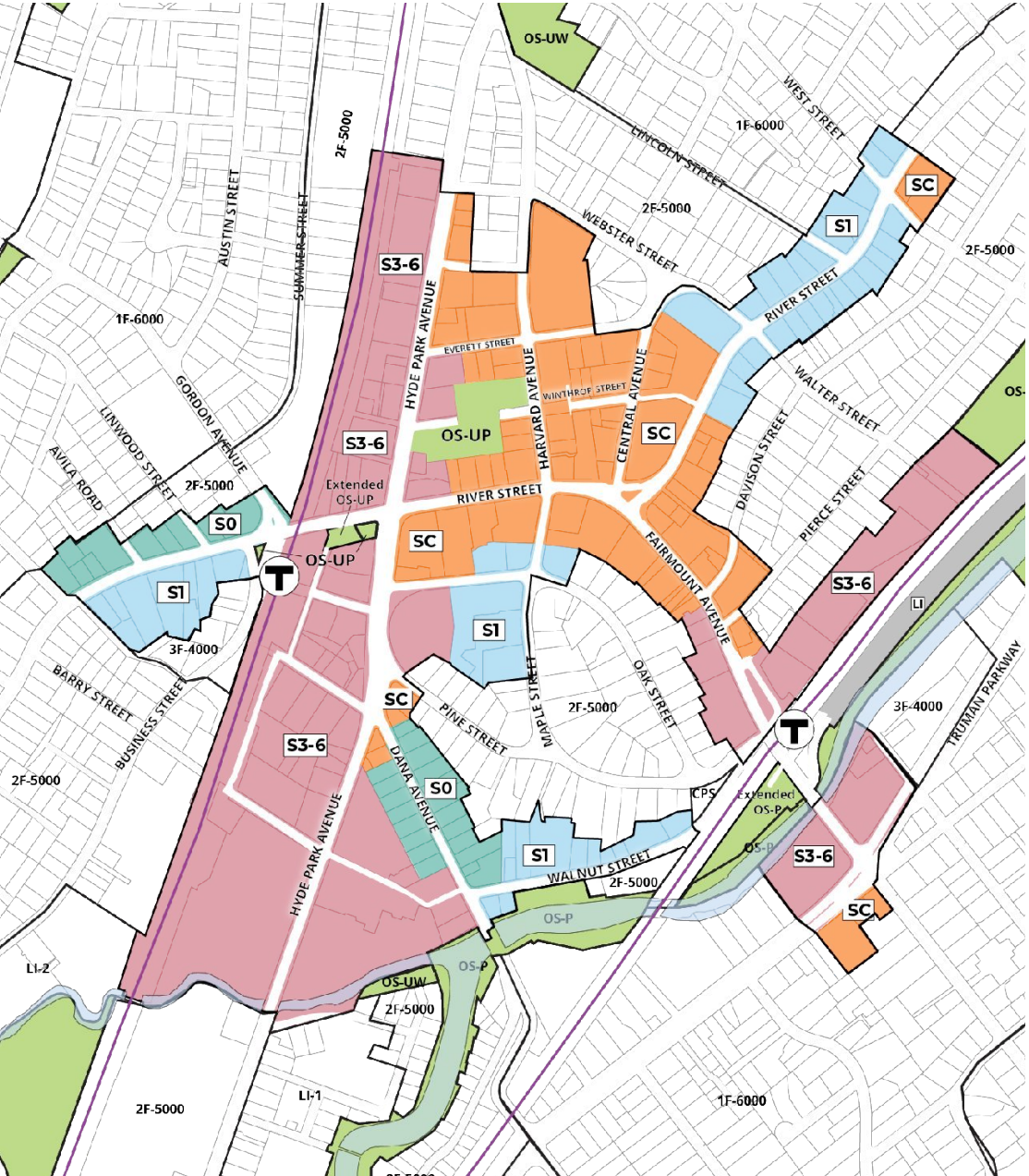
- The development of the sites will drive change/facilitate implementation of this Plan

Why we're including this:

- Transparency for community
- Site-specific guidelines to use in Article 80 ("*Redevelopment of this catalytic site should:*")

Blue and Green = unlikely to change
Orange and Pink = likely to change
(aka catalytic sites)

CLEARY SQUARE DRAFT ZONING MAP



- 6-story, mixed-use district (S3-6) on Hyde Park Ave and near each commuter rail station
- 4-story, mixed-use district (SC) in historic and commercial core
- 4-story, transitional residential districts (S0 and S1) in transitional residential areas
- Open space districts on existing or new open spaces and the municipal parking lot

HYDE PARK AVENUE
PROPOSED ZONING



Goal: **retain or expand commercial character** and **grow housing near transit**

- S3-6: requires active uses on the ground floor (includes restaurants and retail)
- SC: Dwelling units on the ground floor facing the street require a conditional use permit. Range of commercial uses allowed with limited allowed height (4 stories)

Goal: **retain existing public uses of open space and parking**

- *Open Space – Urban Plaza* (OS-UP)
  - Affirm and expand Pocket Park for open space use
  - Make development forbidden on municipal parking lot, affirming plan recommendation to defer development for at least 5 years

COMMUNITY AND COMMERCIAL CORE
PROPOSED ZONING



Goal: **maintain existing scale** due to historic buildings (Everett Square Theatre and BCYF) and narrow streets

- SC: 4 stories (same as current zoning)

Goal: **retain existing commercial character**

- SC:
  - Most commercial uses allowed
  - Dwelling units on the ground floor facing the street require a conditional use permit

NEAR FAIRMOUNT STATION
PROPOSED ZONING



Goal: allow **housing growth near the Fairmount Station** + flexibility for new **structured parking**

- S3-6: Larger floor plate for parking layouts + housing

Goal: add **new road** and **pedestrian connection to the Fairmount Station**

- S3-6: Outdoor Amenity Space requirement, which can be used for sidewalk and other public open space to access and improve Fairmount Station

RIVERFRONT
PROPOSED ZONING



Goal: improve **connections to Fairmount Station**

- S1: allows new residential development, which supports construction of new sidewalks
- S1, S3-6, SC: align with existing uses while encouraging more activity

Goal: **increase open space and connection to the river**

- *Open Space* (OS): support use for park space or urban wilds
- *Light Industrial* (LI): aligns with existing uses

Goal: **increase permeability near river**

- S1, S3-6, *and* SC: require Permeable Area of Lot (unlike existing zoning)

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
PROPOSED ZONING



S0 *and* S1: supports existing residential uses and allows some mixed-use to connect existing commercial

SC: supports existing small-scale commercial uses (Asian Thai Eatery and Laundry Queen)

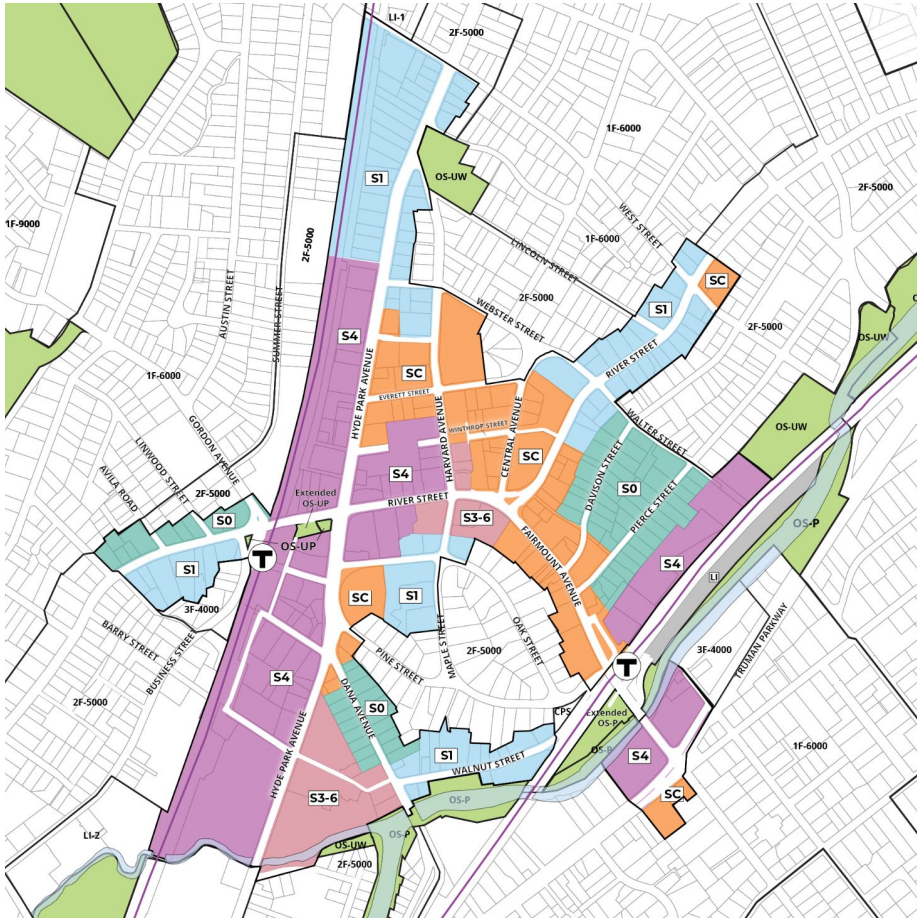
TRANSITIONAL RESIDENTIAL PROPOSED ZONING



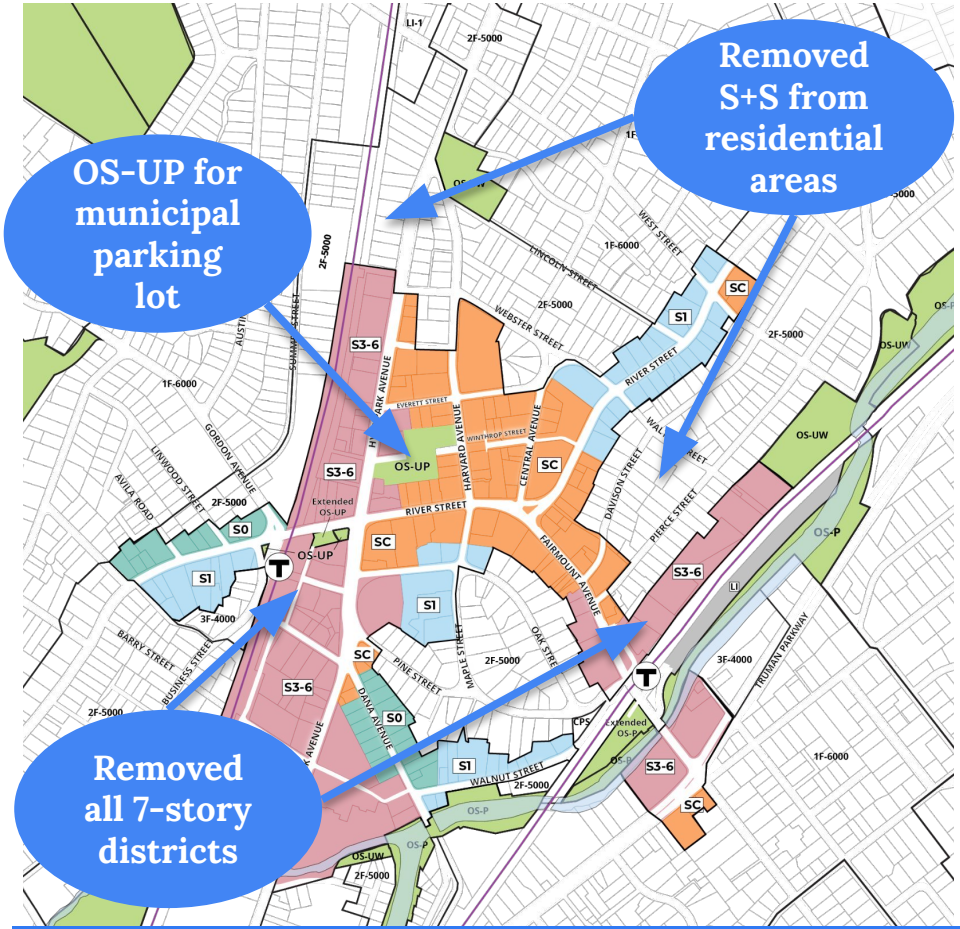
S0 *and* S1: allows residential growth and some small-scale commercial uses in areas with greatest access to mixed-use areas

Zoning for other parts of the residential areas to accommodate ADUs and contextual infill will be updated in the future through **Neighborhood Housing** (recently concluded first comment period and is being revised)

ZONING MAP UPDATES



Released 3/17/2026



Revised

ZONING TEXT UPDATES

- Deleting references to subdistricts which are overwritten by newly mapped Squares + Streets Districts
- Adding reference to Squares + Streets Districts to applicably language for the Neighborhood Design Overlay Districts (NDOD) so that this overlay will still apply
- Minor updates