PLAN: Charlestown

Austin Street Parking Lots Visioning Workshop

October 27, 2022
Welcome

Jason Ruggiero, Community Engagement Manager
Meeting Recording

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

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.

Note: These meetings are not subject to Open Meeting Law. Open Meeting Law also does not require that public bodies allow public comment or public participation during meetings.
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 at any time** – 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.

- **Mute/unmute** – 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**
Code of Conduct

- Virtual planning events will be held via the Zoom “Meeting” platform, which allows participants to control their engagement features such as “mute/unmute,” “camera,” and other features. Zoom Webinar does not allow these capabilities.

- During presentations, the chat feature will be turned off. The chat feature will be enabled once a presentation is complete. Participants are encouraged to raise their hands to ask questions if needed. The virtual “Raise Hand” feature is located at the bottom of the Zoom screen (hand icon).

- We strongly encourage speakers to turn on their cameras while speaking.

- Comments or questions from the public will be limited to 2 minutes of speaking time. Two questions per person at a time is the maximum. A 30-second follow-up comment after a staff member responds is allowed. These time limits will be strictly enforced.

- All attendees are expected to respect one another and any differences of opinion. We welcome differences of opinions, including opinions that differ from those of BPDA staff. Always assume good intentions when any contradictions or disagreements are made. Constructive comments and opinions should be aimed at topics, not people.

- Unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated. Examples of unacceptable behavior are instances such as the following, but not limited to:
  - Threatening to take unwarranted legal action against meeting participants
  - Bullying participants either in the chat or verbally out loud
  - Harassment including criticizing, mocking, or posing threats against participants
  - Threats or derogatory speech against BPDA staff or other participants
  - Grandstanding or exceeding allowed time limits
  - Other violations within this code of conduct

- Those who violate the code of conduct may be subject to the following actions:
  - Given a verbal or written warning
  - Muted for the entirety of the meeting or event
  - Removed from the meeting or event
For all meeting content:
http://www.bostonplans.org/plancharlestown
Agenda

- Austin Street Parking Lots (6:10-6:20pm)
- Listening Tour Recap + Takeaways (6:20-6:40pm)
- Q&A (6:40-6:50pm)
- Activity - Break Out Rooms (6:50-7:15pm)
- Share-Out + Next Steps (7:15-7:30pm)

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.
Austin Street Parking Lots

Rebecca Hansen, Director of Real Estate
Patricia Cafferky, Senior Planner
# Austin Street Parking Lots

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Care and Custody</th>
<th>BPDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Acreage</td>
<td>6 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Use</td>
<td>Parking lots operated by BPDA and used by BHCC students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Map of Austin Street Parking Lots]
Why Now?

Citywide Land Audit

- The Land Audit is an inventory of all vacant or underutilized City-owned property.
- The data will guide the City in meeting Boston’s most urgent needs, including affordable housing, community development, and climate resilience.

American Rescue Plan Act Funding

- Mayor Wu has dedicated funds through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to build affordable housing in mixed-income communities on key properties identified in the land audit.
- This important funding source must be obligated by 2024.
Housing Need

Charlestown Rent Burdened Households in 2020 (ACS 5-year data)

- Households spending +50% of income on rent: 15.6%
- Households spending 30% to 49% of income on rent: 21.8%
- Households spending less than 30% of income on rent: 62.6%

Median Rents Over Time in Charlestown and Nearby Geographies (ACS 5-year and Census data)

- 2000: $692
- 2020: $1,609

2.3X since 2000

Charlestown
Boston
Everett
Suffolk County
Planning Led Development In Action

The City of Boston has a handful of key goals for the site(s), including:

- **Create affordable and workforce housing**
- Deliver on some key community needs and desires coming out of PLAN: Charlestown
- Support the community-serving businesses
- Create wide sidewalks with space for street trees, protected bike lanes, benches, and plenty of walking space (i.e. apply Boston’s Complete Streets Guidelines)
- Create and connect open spaces
How does the BPDA lease land?

1. Conduct **due diligence and strategic planning** to determine which parcels to issue for development

2. Lead a **community process** to hear feedback about appropriate uses and design guidelines

3. Issue a **Request for Proposals (RFP)** that is open to all respondents. RFPs lay out the guidelines for proposals, submission requirements, and evaluation criteria.

4. **Evaluate** proposals with community feedback
Next Steps

WHERE WE ARE

Present

Visioning + Goals Session with Community

Draft Scenarios for Community Review

October

2023

Draft RFP for Community Review

December

February/March

Goal RFP Release

Publish RFP

April
Listening Tour Recap + Takeaways

Patricia Cafferky, Senior Planner
Listening Tour Timeline (8 weeks, 15 events)

- Scenarios Released
- Scenarios Soft-launch with AG
- BPS High School Students Walk #1
- BPS High School Students Walk #2
- Listening Session #1
- Listening Session #2
- Listening Session #3
- Listening Session #4
- Tabling #2 (Navy Yard)
- Tabling #3 (Farmers Market)
- Listening Session #5
- Listening Session #6
- Tabling #4 (BHA Family Fun Day)
- CNC Meeting
- Pints with a Planner
- June 29
- July 15
- July 20
- July 27
- Aug 2
- Aug 3
- Aug 4
- Aug 10
- Aug 17
- Aug 18
- Aug 18
- Aug 24
- Aug 27
- Aug 27
- Aug 29
- Aug 30
- Sept 21
- Sept 29

June | July | August | September
BPS Student Walk/Drawing Events
July 15th+27th

BHA Family Fun Day - Aug 27th

Pints with a Planner - Aug 30th
Survey Participation

Survey Responses by Topic (952 Submissions)

Number of Survey Submissions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Topics</th>
<th>Paper (10%)</th>
<th>Online (90%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Streets</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike Connections</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shuttle / Buses</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>147</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports Fields</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
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<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>148</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Use</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You can download all of the survey data here by going to our PLAN: Charlestown website.
Survey Results: Bike Connections

Map of bike lane survey responses

**LEGEND**
- Ferry Terminal
- Water Taxi Stop
- Bike Lanes Proposed by Scenarios
- Existing Bike Lanes
- Intersection Improvement Proposed by Scenarios
- Streets Highlighted for Bike Lanes in Survey Responses (*Line thickness = frequency of response*)
- Streets Identified as Potentially Poor for Bike Lanes
Survey Results: Parks

Where would you like to see new parks in Charlestown? (160 Responses)

- Bunker Hill Community College parking lots (39%)
  (AKA: The Austin Street Parking Lots)

Quotes:

“Given the number of families and children that live in Charlestown, I definitely want to prioritize sports fields for the kids.”

“Please incorporate dog friendly spaces within linear parks and greenways.”
Survey Results: Sports Fields

What sports fields do you travel outside of Charlestown to use at least once a month? (185 Responses)

- Soccer: 69
- Lacrosse: 39
- Tennis: 29
- Basketball: 19
- Baseball/Softball: 18
- Football: 6
- Track: 5
Survey Results: Land Use

*Note: There was some concern from survey respondents that ground floor retail would not be allowed in “Housing Only” areas. As we attempted to note in the survey question, ground floor retail, as well as neighborhood services, would be allowed in all areas. This confusion may have skewed results more towards “Commercial” than they otherwise would have been.
Survey Results: Land Use

What level of housing affordability should be prioritized for new Charlestown developments? (61 Responses)

- Deeply affordable only: 3%
- Workforce only: 0%
- Market-rate only: 18%
- Both deeply affordable and workforce: 11%
- Both deeply affordable and market-rate: 0%
- Both workforce and market-rate: 0%
- An equal amount of deeply affordable, workforce, and market-rate: 66%

What should the ratio of Rental to Ownership be in new Charlestown housing developments? (91 Responses)

- Much more rental than ownership: 3%
- Slightly less rental than ownership: 11%
- Equal amounts of rental and ownership: 35%
- Slightly less rental than ownership: 30%
- Much less rental than ownership: 21%
Survey Results: Land Use

Opinions on land use in Charlestown:

“We need affordable housing but mostly we just need as much housing as possible of any type. Especially in areas that are newly opened up for residential use, there’s no risk of displacement, so if developers want to build lots and lots of market rate housing, we should let them.”

“I would like to see a shift from talking about mixed-use as a "buffer" - what this sounds like is that people who move into mixed-use developments are less valuable than those who live in currently residential neighborhoods.”

“Making use of the Bunker Hill College area and the industrial area by the Mystic makes a lot of sense and would greatly improve the neighborhood.”

“Let's make Charlestown a space where you want to spend a full day, or (stretch goal) a whole weekend, instead of just an afternoon.”
Density Survey Questions

#3. What level of density do you feel is appropriate for the following areas (High, Medium, or Low): 1) Bunker Hill Community College area; 2) Parking Lots South of Austin Street; 3) The area along the Mystic River; 4) The Lost Village south of Cambridge St; 5) Sullivan Square

Low Density
68 Baldwin St
Residential
4 to 5 stories; 23 Units

Medium Density
Flagship Wharf
Residential
11 stories; 198 Units

High Density
151 Park; Cambridge Crossing
Residential
20 stories; 400+ Units
Survey Results: Density

What sort of density would you like to see in the following areas? (147 Responses)

- Bunker Hill Community College: Low 17, Medium 58, High 66
- Mystic River: Low 27, Medium 51, High 63
- Lost Village: Low 40, Medium 45, High 55
- Sullivan Square: Low 23, Medium 50, High 60
- Parking Lots south of Austin St: Low 58, Medium 45, High 27
Survey Results: Density

Density concerns shared:

“I support high density uses, but hope we can include ground-level retail, etc. and avoid a lot of unused green space, parking lots, or other dead areas that make the ground-level areas sterile for pedestrians.”

“I’m concerned about] increased traffic in and out of bottlenecks - this can be avoided by focusing on transit oriented spots for the maximum density.”

“I am worried that new residents will be used to shield existing residents from negative neighboring uses. I am also worried that the developments will be too short and not cast sufficient shade on hot days.”
Questions?

(Please hold comments to 2 minutes so we can hear from everyone! Thank you!)
Visioning Activity - Break Out Rooms

Rebecca Hansen, Director of Real Estate
Activity - 4 Breakout Rooms

Room 1 - Housing

Room 2 - Ground Floor Activation / Retail

Room 3 - Open Space

Room 4 - Mobility
Room 1 - Housing

Charlestown Rent Burdened Households in 2020 (ACS 5-year data)

- Households spending +50% of income on rent: 15.6%
- Households spending 30% to 49% of income on rent: 21.8%
- Households spending less than 30% of income on rent: 62.6%

What levels of affordability should be targeted? (Deeply affordable? Workforce?)

Median Rents Over Time in Charlestown and Nearby Geographies (ACS 5-year and Census data)

- Median rent in Charlestown: $692 in 2000, $1,609 in 2020
- Median rent in Boston: $692 in 2000, $2,3X in 2020

What types of housing should be included? (ex. ownership, rental, compact, senior/supportive, etc)
Room 2 - Ground Floor Activation + Amenities

What neighborhood services should be accommodated here?

What kinds retail/restaurants would you like to see accommodated here?

What kinds of community spaces would your neighborhood benefit from here?
Room 3 - Open Space

Who should the open space be for? (ex. Dogs, children, college students, seniors?)

What kinds of open spaces should be prioritized for inclusion? (ex. Butterfly gardens? Lacrosse/soccer fields? Playgrounds?)

How would you like to see climate resilience incorporated?
Room 4 - Mobility

Where should people access the site and how should they move around it?

What kinds of transportation infrastructure should be prioritized on the site?

How should the site tie into the city’s larger transportation network?
4 Break Out Rooms

**Room 1 - Housing**
1. What levels of affordability should be targeted?
2. What should the mix of ownership to rental units be?
3. What types of housing should be included? (ex. compact, senior/supportive, student, etc)

**Room 2 - Ground Floor Activation / Retail**
1. What neighborhood services should be accommodated here?
2. What kinds retail/restaurants would you like to see accommodated here?
3. What kinds of community spaces would your neighborhood benefit from here?

**Room 2 - Open Space**
1. Who should the open space be for? (ex. Dogs, children, college students, seniors?)
3. How would you like to see climate resilience incorporated?

**Room 4 - Mobility**
1. Where should people access the site and how should they move around it?
2. What kinds of transportation infrastructure should be prioritized on the site?
3. How should the site tie into the city's larger transportation network?
Share-Out
Share-Out - What did your group think?

Room 1 - Housing
1. What levels of affordability should be targeted?
2. What should the mix of ownership to rental units be?
3. What types of housing should be included? (ex. compact, senior/supportive, student, etc)

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1. Who should the open space be for? (ex. Dogs, children, college students, seniors?)
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1. What neighborhood services should be accommodated here?
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1. Where should people access the site and how should they move around it?
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Next Steps

**WHERE WE ARE**

**Present**

- Visioning + Goals Session with Community
  - October

**2023**

- Draft Scenarios for Community Review
  - December
- Draft RFP for Community Review
  - February/March

**Goal RFP Release**

- Publish RFP
  - April

**Goal RFP Release**

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*Boston Planning & Development Agency*
Next Steps

NEXT STEP: Draft Scenarios will be a framework for developers (height range, density, goals, etc) It is not full site design.

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Visioning + Goals Session with Community
October

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Appendix
ROOM 1 - HOUSING

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. What levels of affordability should be targeted?
2. What should the mix of ownership to rental units be?
3. What types of housing should be included? (ex. compact, senior/supportive, student, etc.)
53% of Charlestown housing units are renter-occupied compared to

65% of Boston housing units are renter-occupied
ROOM 1 - HOUSING

Charlestown Rent Burdened Households in 2020 (ACS 5-year data)
- Over 1 in 3 Charlestown Households are Rent Burdened
- Households spending +50% of income on rent: 15.6%
- Households spending 30% to 49% of income on rent: 21.8%
- Households spending less than 30% of income on rent: 62.6%

Boston Rent Burdened Households in 2020 (ACS 5-year data)
- Nearly HALF of Boston Households are Rent Burdened
- Households spending +50% of income on rent: 24.3%
- Households spending 30% to 49% of income on rent: 53.6%
- Households spending less than 30% of income on rent: 22.1%

Household Incomes in Boston in 2020 (ACS data)
- Nearly 50% of Households in Boston cannot afford the median rent
- Line of approximate Boston median rent
- Household Income Bracket:
  - <$10k: 9%
  - $10-20k: 10%
  - $20-30k: 6%
  - $30-40k: 6%
  - $40-50k: 5%
  - $50-60k: 7%
  - $60-75k: 11%
  - $75-100k: 9%
  - $100-125k: 7%
  - $125-150k: 10%
  - $150-200k: 14%
  - >$200k: 16%
ROOM 1 - HOUSING

Responses to similar questions from the PLAN: Charlestown Draft Scenarios Land Use Survey, below.

What should the ratio of Rental to Ownership be in new Charlestown housing developments? (91 Responses)

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<tbody>
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</table>
Map of Multi-family Residential Buildings Adjacent to Above Ground Highways in Boston
ROOM 2 - GROUND FLOOR ACTIVATION / RETAIL

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. What neighborhood services should be accommodated here?
2. What kinds retail/restaurants would you like to see accommodated here?
3. What kinds of community spaces would your neighborhood benefit from here?

Do you have ideas? Draw them on this map!
ROOM 2 - GROUND FLOOR ACTIVATION / RETAIL

Map of Ground Floor Uses and Neighborhood Services in Walking Distance from the Site
ROOM 3 - OPEN SPACE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. Who should the open space be for? (ex. Dogs, children, college students, seniors?)
3. How would you like to see climate resilience incorporated?

Do you have ideas? Draw them on this map!
Map of Open Space Network in Walking Distance from the Site
ROOM 4 - MOBILITY

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. Where should people access the site and how should they move around it?
2. What kinds of transportation infrastructure should be prioritized on the site?
3. How should the site tie into the city’s larger transportation network?

Do you have ideas? Draw them on this map!
Map of Transportation Network in Walking Distance from the Site
Summary of Participation

- 7 Listening Sessions → 56 different attendees
- 9 Surveys → 952 survey submissions
  - 858 (90%) online
  - 94 (10%) paper
- 4 Tabling events
  - 200+ postcards distributed (English + Spanish)
  - 150+ paper surveys distributed (English + Spanish)
- BPS High School Student Walks → 29 Students
  - Joint effort w/ the Private Industry Council (PIC) Internship program
- Pints with a Planner → 60+ Attendees
- CNC Meeting → 12 Attendees
- Coming next month:
  - Coffee hour at Bunker Hill Housing with seniors
  - City Hall visit with Charlestown’s Turn It Around youth group