

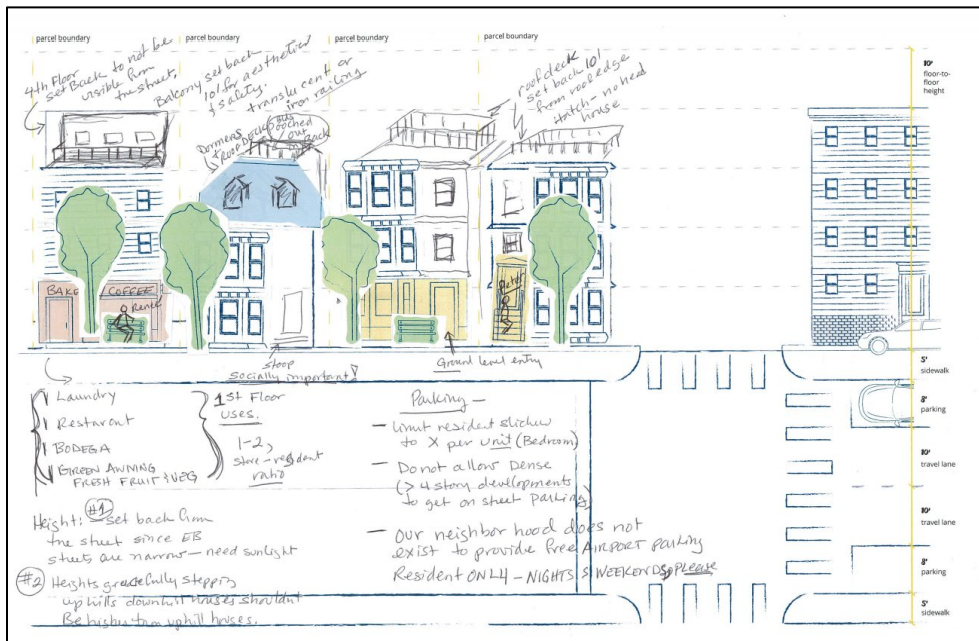
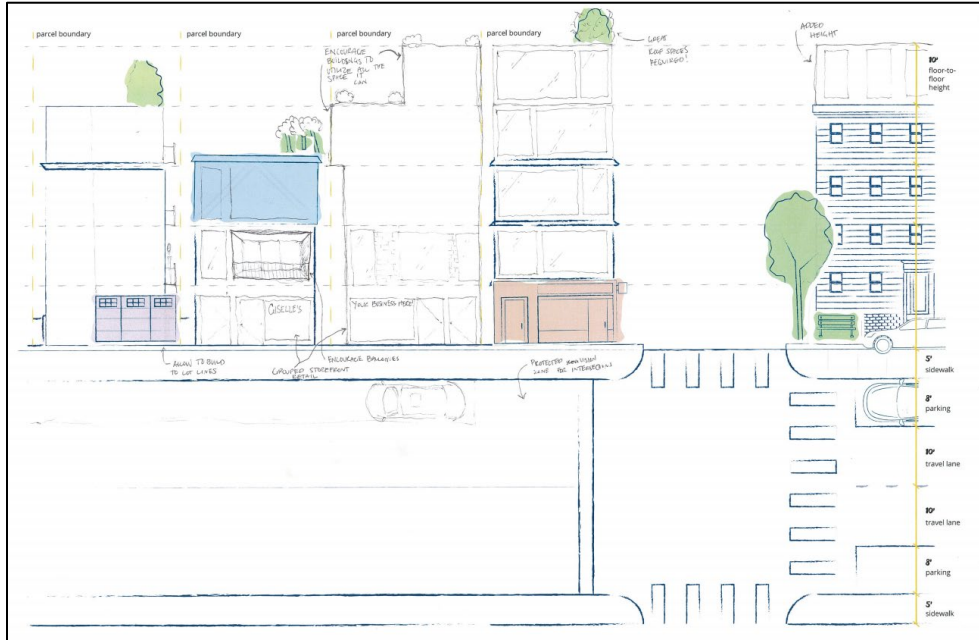
2019 10 24 – Neighborhood Residential Areas Workshop Feedback Synthesis

This is a record of a PLAN: East Boston community workshop hosted by the BPDA on October 24, 2019. Bulleted text either paraphrases or directly quotes feedback received from participants. Scanned copies of the feedback are available on our website: bit.ly/PlanEastBoston

This feedback has been organized into several themes as they relate specifically to Neighborhood Residential Areas:

- Zoning
 - Land Use
 - Height
 - Density
 - Setbacks (space between buildings)
 - On-site Parking
- Public Realm / Street Design

Facilitated Exercise



Zoning – Land Use

Many participants spoke of the need for neighborhood-supporting commercial/retail uses on the ground floor of residential buildings. Some specified needs such as a daycare, coffee shop, bodega, or pharmacy. In general, this type of ground-floor use was identified as most appropriate for corner parcels. Participants discussed the current limitations of the 1F, 2F, and 3F zoning categories, with some supporting higher-density or “missing middle” housing in neighborhood residential areas and others preferring to maintain the low-density neighborhood fabric.

Bulleted text either paraphrases or directly quotes feedback received from participants.

- 6-unit minimum
- 1-3 units should be forbidden, 4 or more only
- No more than 3 units
- Preserve the residential scale
- More residential and mixed-use
- 1:2, Store-to-Resident ratio
- First floor uses should include laundry, restaurant, bodega, green awning/fresh fruit and vegetables
- More storefront shops on ground floor. More retail in general.
- Not much continuous retail in neighborhood fabric, which makes it difficult for stand-alone business to thrive
- “I’m surprised by the allowed and forbidden uses in the residential areas.”

Zoning - Height

Height provoked a lively discussion among participants. Some participants concentrated greater height at the corner parcels while others indicated they prefer height any greater than three stories in close proximity to MBTA transit stops and in the squares. Generally, height limits were identified at 4-5 stories maximum in neighborhood residential areas. Some of those who identified height maximums at 4 stories or more also discussed the need to step back stories above 3. In addition, several participants identified roof space as an opportunity for gardens, photovoltaic (solar) panels, or other features to benefit the building and the community.

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- Measure height above the flood plane
- 50' or higher is okay in neighborhood residential areas
- If an adjacent building is taller, it would look more balanced for the shorter building to be closer in height
- Taller buildings should be near other tall buildings and/or on wide streets
- Keep 35' height or whatever height prevails over 35' except within 2-3 blocks of subway stops
- Height should be accommodated with trees, upper story step-backs
- Increase height to allow for ground-floor retail
- Okay with increasing heights to match adjacent heights
- 4th floor and roof decks stepped back to not be visible from the street
- Encourage buildings to utilize all the space it can (indicating the roof)
- Green roof space required
- Downhill houses shouldn't be taller than uphill houses
- "A neighborhood feels like a neighborhood when it feels spacious"

Zoning - Density

Density regulations and setbacks work together to create a typical building massing. Few participants specified a particular metric for density. A few spoke generally of the need to increase the units per structure, and some residents indicated the need for basement/in-law units, which are currently allowed by zoning for owner-occupied buildings. Some participants noted that all setbacks should be decreased, but a few participants indicated that front yard setbacks are needed.

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- Increase floor area ratio (FAR)
- 6-unit minimum
- Keep the density as is
- "Density is a good thing, usually"
- Some areas are too dense - there is no space between buildings
- "FAR map shows a lot about how our zoning is out of date"
- Should consider mix of bedrooms rather than FAR
- Allow to build to lot lines
- Shrink space between homes
- Setback from the street since East Boston streets are narrow - sunlight needed
- We will always need space between buildings

Zoning – On-site Parking

Parking evoked many different responses from participants. Some indicated that they were primarily concerned with the impacts of parking ratios and development on on-street parking availability. A range of possibilities were provided by the participants: revising access to on-street parking, requiring new residents to park in new development spaces or not have a residential parking permit, or allow others to rent vacant parking spaces. Others believed that in the future there would be less need for cars, and that new construction should plan for that future, which would potentially allow for the creation of more living space or space for ground-floor retail.

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- Trade-off: same number of livable stories in exchange for ground-floor commercial or parking on-site
- 35' historic means all new construction has the burden to accommodate all parking
- Under 6-units, there should be no parking
- If on-street parking is bad enough, people will find other options
- Trade parking requirements for green space requirements
- “We are stuck in a time where we can’t imagine life without cars – if we plan all new construction to accommodate parking, what happens to that space in 50 years when cars aren’t needed”
- “Why are we stuck in the parking mind-frame?”
- In exchange for parking, they should not be allowed to park on street
- Need to consider free parking on-site
- Parking is still needed but how can it not be an eyesore

Public Realm/Street Design

Participants provided some insight on how they would design streets in the residential areas to better serve the community. Most prioritized increasing safety for people walking, biking, driving, and taking transit. Some provided traffic calming examples like raised intersections while others proposed removing on-street parking to provide better bus and bike access. In addition, some folks believed there is the space for trees and seating in the public way, in some instances removing parking. Lastly, many participants spoke of the need to increase tree cover in neighborhood residential areas.

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- Turn Horace Street into a one-way and include bike lanes on either side protected by parking
- Raised intersection: +6"
- "Raised traffic isle"
- Bump out at intersection with trees and benches
- Create "protected vision zone for intersections" by not allowing cars to park close to intersection
- Allow for "wider sidewalks near restaurants"
- Create wider sidewalks
- Buffer the bike lanes, possibly by trees
- "No more space savers"
- Have electric car charging ports on-street
- More bus lanes
- Use a parking space to create bicycle and moped parking
- "Narrow streets with parking on both sides is not a solution to slow down vehicle speeds"
- "Parklet in front of businesses – seasonal"

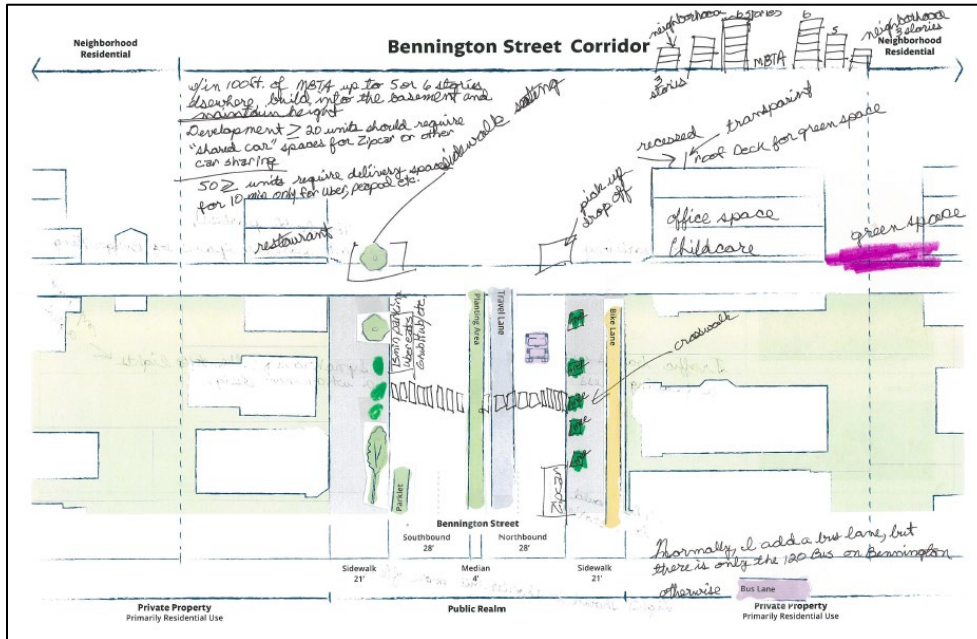
2019 11 06 – Mixed-Use Nodes & Corridors Workshop Feedback Synthesis

This is a record of a PLAN: East Boston community workshop hosted by the BPDA on November 6, 2019. Bulleted text either paraphrases or directly quotes feedback received from participants. Scanned copies of the feedback are available on our website: bit.ly/PlanEastBoston

This feedback has been organized into several themes as they relate specifically to Mixed-Use Nodes & Corridors:

- Corridors
 - Buildings
 - Streets
- Nodes
 - Challenges
 - Opportunities

Facilitated Exercise



How would you improve Mixed-Use Nodes in East Boston? ¿Cómo mejoraría los nodos de uso mixto en East Boston?

In this Node ... En esta área de enfoque	... these are the challenges I experience or observe estos son los retos que experimento y observo...	... and here's how I think we should address these issues. ... y así es como creo que podemos tratar estos temas.
<p>1. Maverick Square</p>	<p>All squares and blocks need better traffic in maverick sq is congested. A possible solution is to make median st lanes towards maverick and create 1-way towards bay sq. The direction of the traffic would not shift around the central island it like it does now.</p>	<p>ALL NODES, SQUARES AND CORRIDORS NEED WIDE SIDEWALKS, MORE TREES, BIKE LANES</p> <p>* ADD TREES</p>
<p>2. Central Square</p>	<p>1. BUS STOP (SPECIFICALLY ON CORNER OF MERRIMAN & CENTRAL SQ IN FRONT OF LA HACIENDA) SHOULD BE RELOCATED ON CORNER OF DUMFRIES. BUSES BLOCK INTERSECTION REGULARLY. THIS IS ONE EXAMPLE OF MANY. 2. CARS SHOULD NOT PARK AT BUS STOP - ADDING TO CHAOS & TRAFFIC IN THE MORNING.</p>	<p>ADDITIONAL ISSUE: NEW STREET DESIGN ADDS TO TRAFFIC AND IDLING VEHICLES. THIS ADDS TO EXISTING POLLUTION IN ADDITION TO NOISE POLLUTION. THE OLD TRAFFIC PATTERNS WAS MORE EFFICIENT AND WENT BETTER.</p> <p>ADDITIONAL ISSUE: TRAFFIC LIGHT IN FRONT OF MERRIMAN IS A BARRIER.</p> <p>* ADD TREES * ADD SAFE BIKE LANES * ADD SAFE BIKE LANE 1-500 * ADD PARKING ON 1-500</p>
<p>3. Day Square</p>	<p>DELIVERY TRUCKS PARK IN LA HACIENDA BUS STOP - ADDING TO CHAOS & TRAFFIC IN THE MORNING.</p>	<p>REQUIRE REGULATIONS TO MAKE DELIVERY TRUCKS TRUCKS SOLUTION IS TO RELOCATE DELIVERIES BETWEEN 8-10 PM.</p> <p>* ADD TREES * ADD SAFE BIKE LANES * ADD PARKING ON 1-500 OF STREET * WIDER SIDEWALKS</p>
<p>4. Orient Heights Square</p>		<p>* ADD TREES * ADD SAFE BIKE LANES * WIDER SIDEWALKS</p>

Corridors - Buildings

Discussion focused on re-envisioning a corridor in East Boston. In terms of the buildings along the corridor and the adjacent neighborhood context, there was some interest in increased height along the corridor. Some participants supported more height in strategic areas along a corridor (for example, near a square) or a gradual increase in height, but other participants preferred the height along the corridors to remain the same as the adjacent neighborhood. Most participants wanted to see a greater diversity of uses along the corridor, including places for people to gather. They were also interested in opportunities to make better use of the open space immediately adjacent to buildings. Generally, attendees also wanted to see the ground floors along corridors be an active use or “third space.”

Bulleted text either paraphrases or directly quotes feedback received from participants.

- “No change of height because I do not want to see anti-working class elimination of the populace of East Boston”
- Increase height, especially at corners
- “Cap for buildings should be 40 feet”
- “‘Modal height’ gradually changing from height of closest residential buildings to a max height that would be no higher than ~70 feet”
- Keep density/height toward the street and away from residential areas
- “Avoid opaque first floors”
- Ground floors should be retail or other active use
- Upper stories should be used for residential and/or office space
- “More ‘third spaces’”
- Include parklets/patios in front of businesses
- Emphasize locally-owned businesses
- Be thoughtful of rear yards for mixed-use buildings; how are they activated?

Corridors - Streets

There were some conflicting perspectives regarding how to better use and design the major streets in East Boston. Some common themes, however, included ensuring parking for residents, slowing traffic, and creating safe infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists. Some participants saw the median of Bennington Street as an opportunity for emergency vehicle access or street trees. Other attendees noted that these mixed-use corridors need places to sit and gather, and appropriate waste receptacles and streetscape amenities.

Bulleted text either paraphrases or directly quotes feedback received from participants.

- Need to consider Saratoga Street as a corridor
- “More trees, no bus lanes, no bicycle lanes”
- Slow traffic using cameras or other traffic calming measures
- Need space for residents to park
- Use median area for emergency vehicle access
- Create a bike lane on the corridors
- Use the median for street trees
- Include dedicated bus lanes
- Mid-block cross walks would be an improvement
- Resident only parking garage
- Have shared vehicle parking on-street
- Create drop-off zones
- Create bus rapid transit (BRT) lanes with signal priorities
- Add angled, head-in parking
- Include compost, recycling, and waste bins on the street

Nodes – Challenges

Attendees were asked to highlight the challenges they have experienced or seen in the nodes, or squares. Many participants focused on traffic congestion, safety concerns, and the lack of a “sense of place.” Many attendees indicated that double parking and business deliveries caused traffic congestion during peak times. Although we refer to these areas as squares, participants noted that there seems to be a lack of space to gather both indoors and outdoors. Others noted that there is a lack of diversity in the types of businesses in the squares.

Bulleted text either paraphrases or directly quotes feedback received from participants.

- Too much double parking
- Light cycles are too long
- Intersections are not safe and confusing to navigate
- “Biking here [through the squares] is a nightmare”
- There are “not enough ‘third spaces’ to gather . . . for a length of time”
- Three main corridors intersect in Day Square and it feels unnecessary
- There are no grocery stores in the squares except Central Square
- Pedestrian crossings are not safe
- Delivery trucks park in bus stops, adding to traffic
- Buses block intersections
- Too much parking in Day Square
- There is limited usable space in Maverick Square because of the T and buses
- Squares don’t feel welcoming
- Spaces are unwelcoming to pedestrians
- Focus seems to be on cars rather than people

Nodes – Opportunities

Participants were also asked for ideas on how we might address the challenges identified. Many noted that circulation in and around the squares could be improved, which might address the traffic, congestion, and safety concerns. Attendees indicated that enforcement of double parking, parking bus lanes, and instituting timed/metered parking would ease congestion. Scheduling deliveries and providing better bike infrastructure were also recurring ideas. Some noted that the areas could be improved for pedestrians by increasing the size of sidewalks, adding more street trees and greenscape, and creating better access to the harbor. Another attendee noted that all of the ground-floors uses should be active and not primarily office space.

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- We need enforcement to keep the bus lane clear
- Consider metered parking with 15-minute limits, but resident parking overnight
- More trees and landscaping would help make the squares welcoming.
- Central Square commercial area should have access to harbor
- “Parking should be reconfigured in Orient Heights Square”
- Make circulation in Maverick Square counterclockwise
- Remove parking near Spinelli’s and make it a park/plaza
- More trees and wider sidewalks would improve the quality of the squares
- Adding bike lanes and bike racks to the squares would also be an improvement
- Business deliveries should be made during a set window
- Removing a parking space at each corner could improve pedestrian safety
- There should be more open space in the squares
- Use upper stories for office to keep the ground floor active
- “Increase height and density of Day Square”
- “Synchronize the lights in Central Square”

2019 11 21 – Waterfront, Industrial, and EDAs Workshop Feedback Synthesis

This is a record of a PLAN: East Boston community workshop hosted by the BPDA on November 6, 2019. Bulleted text either paraphrases or directly quotes feedback received from participants. Scanned copies of the feedback are available on our website: bit.ly/PlanEastBoston

This feedback has been organized into several themes as they relate specifically to Waterfront, Industrial, and EDAs:

- Zoning
 - Land Use
 - Dimensional
 - On-site Parking
- Open Space/Water Access

Facilitated Exercise



Zoning – Land Use

There was robust discussion about what uses should be along the waterfront. Some attendees wanted to see more commercial space opportunities while others understood that some maritime uses were best suited for certain areas of the waterfront. However, there were also comments about how the current waterfront uses, such as industrial uses, are not always compatible with the residential community. Some industrial business owners wanted to see a change in the area from the existing zoning. There was some discussion about the need for transition areas between the industrial uses along the waterfront, or the higher-density residential areas, and the existing neighborhood fabric.

Bulleted text either paraphrases or directly quotes feedback received from participants.

- Some uses you can only do on the water's industrial edge
- "As a business owner, I think it's an area ripe for innovation space"
- The waterfront can have a mix of uses, but don't want housing next to oil tanks.
- We need to keep some of the commercial/industrial space to support city as a whole
 - Where does the industrial go to support the entire city?
 - Transportation changes in Central Square and other parts of the neighborhood preclude some industrial uses from existing, even though they used to exist.
- Industrial uses conflict with residential uses
- Industrial uses in a floodprone area is an environmental concern
- What are the necessary water-dependent uses?
- What is the relationship between disconnected business (such as industrial uses) and residents?
- Expand marine industrial so that it may not have to be water-dependent but related
- Add in more recreational uses
- More arts and culture along/in the waterfront, like the ICA
- Consider a parking garage that could converted to other uses in the future
 - We still need parking

Zoning – Dimensional

Conversation focused on land uses and access to the water's edge, and there were some comments regarding the dimensional characteristics that zoning controls. For some attendees the height of buildings should be associated with its context including street widths. A prevailing theme was that visual access to the water is important. Some participants also indicated that in order for new buildings to be resilient, a change of how height is measured is needed.

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- "I think the Eddy is too tall"
- "I disagree; I don't think height is good or bad."
- "Boston East is too tall, it blocks more views and makes it feel more claustrophobic. The Eddy, however, is okay."
- Lower is better along the waterfront to maximize views
- Stilted buildings to protect against flooding
- Consider 6 stories with the 6th floor stepped back or 5 stories with 5th floor stepped back
- "How do East Boston FARs compare to Seaport?" For the urban buzz/excitement, do we need FAR of 6?
- We appreciate view corridors – preserve or create view corridors to the water
- Stepback upper stories of buildings (5th or 6th)

Open Space/Waterfront Access

Conversation focused on increasing visual access to the water, and increasing both passive and active recreational opportunities along the waterfront. Attendees agreed that the shoreline is an asset to the community and called for better Harborwalk connectivity and shared space so that the community may enjoy this feature. Participants also noted that measures to protect against sea level rise must be taken.

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- What about a “highline” in the middle of East Boston
- Nice that we can access the water now, but how can we do better?
- It would be nice to have more canoe put-ins
- Could dunes help to protect from flooding?
- Could we bike along the waterfront?
- How do we address gaps in the Harborwalk?
- Bring in more shared space
- Add in more recreational uses like kayaking and fishing
- A viewing deck along Condor Street looking over water and kayak launch would be nice.
- Make a path from the BRT to the water—a protected path so people have access but aren’t walking through the commercial/industrial areas
- More water transportation and ferries