

Live Notetaking

03 October GMNC Meeting

Live Q + A

The following sections are brief recaps of questions asked and answered during the PLAN: Mattapan presentation at the Greater Mattapan Neighborhood Council October monthly meeting. To hear these questions and their corresponding answers, please watch the meeting recording which can be found [here](#).

Nodes & 10 Minute Neighborhood:

- **Tamara Sobers: What qualifies as mixed-use development? Should we expect to be able to walk to obtain basic essentials, ex. groceries? Does that definition vary based on location?**
 - Attempting to prioritize a mix of essential goods and services at all nodes
 - Local convenience at smaller scale will not replace the need for large grocers and similarly sized service providers, but you should be able to obtain essential goods (ex. a bag of sugar, a can of soup, medical supplies, etc) within walking distance of your home regardless of where in the neighborhood you live

- **Aalana Feaster: Will you be planting additional trees, and creating more green space within this plan?**
 - Yes, especially trees on streets to reduce the heat island effect
 - Requiring developers to provide green space on site
 - Goal is to safely move throughout the public realm

- **Donald Alexis: Is the plan truly feasible? How will that be determined, especially for developers?**
 - We prioritize community benefits (affordable housing, green space, etc) that come from private development
 - PLAN aimed at creating predictable long term growth and sustainability for the neighborhood
 - Many factors go into the feasibility of any one project - and they change over time. Goal is to set a long-term, consistent vision.

- **Jahvarie Alexander: Could you speak to the node/train station development at River Street?**
 - Continuing to push for the development of this train station. It will be an MBTA decision.
 - Connection is critical within the neighborhood and to external places and sites

- **Sheila Azores: What is the percentage of home ownership currently in Mattapan? What are the age demographics of Mattapan?**
 - Roughly 60%, we hope to maintain that as a level of ownership throughout the neighborhood (40% rental)

- Mattapan population has concentration of people at the ends of the age spectrum (a large population of young children and seniors), important to reiterate that new developments and housing projects will seek to accommodate those groups
- Public realm improvements (expanded sidewalks, safer street crossings, etc.) meant to create a more accessible Mattapan for all age groups

Corridors:

- **Fatima Ali-Salaam: With recent heavy rains, the neighborhood has experienced flooding and basement backups, especially near the Neponset Greenway. How will the city and developers work to insure this area from flooding and make it more climate resilient? How will the corridors deal with the adopted transit demand strategies? Will the TDM system trickle down to small project review (applicable to places like Mattapan Square)?**
 - TDM point system is a part of the A80 review process and is triggered anytime a proposed large development (50,000+ sqft) enters review (BTD initiative)
 - TDM point system meant to prioritize alternate modes of transportation, wide array of interventions align closely with what is proposed in the plan
 - TDM review is not legally required for small projects, but similar strategies are encouraged for all development projects

Residential Fabric & ADU 3.0:

- **David Lopes: Will there be street improvements (signage, sidewalks, pathways, etc.) made to both corridors and adjacent side streets (especially at/near key intersections) to calm diverted traffic and improve pedestrian mobility? Will the city consider implementing improvements for existing spaces? How are these improvements negotiated with different agencies and developers?**
 - Want to cut down cut-through traffic, PLAN is pedestrian forward
 - Part of Greenlinks is meant to make it easier to cross major corridors/intersections
 - Working with developers to make sure community benefits and vision is being implemented
- **Jovan Lacet: Could you elaborate on the proposed T-stop at River Street/Fairmount intersection?**
 - From the Mattapan Economic Development Initiative, MBTA would take the lead on that project, PLAN: Mattapan reiterates need for the station's development
 - The station is not currently a part of the MBTA's development pipeline
- **Louise Gant: Regarding ADUs, If a property owner has an ADU they would like to build or structure they would like to expand, what opportunities do neighbors have to provide input on that project?**
 - If a project complies with the zoning code, there is no necessary community process. However, a community process is required to make a zoning change. We want to have a

collaborative discussion on what zoning in Mattapan will look like

- **Sheila Azores: Why was Mattapan selected for this PLAN?**
 - This planning initiative was launched by Mayor Walsh
 - We are planning in Mattapan for many reasons, but in particular because of the neighborhood's lower land values. We wanted to intentionally get ahead of potential development to make sure it is implemented in a way that the community vision supports. We would like to build the future of Mattapan collaboratively
 - A plan allows an opportunity for input and co-creation

- **Kathy Glynn: Can you please provide more detail on how BPDA calculated the \$ subsidy gap that you presented, i.e., does it assume a certain type of mixed use profile in development?**
 - Yes, consultant analysis of current development in Mattapan as well as the real estate market determined this development gap.

- **Dane Fletcher: "Where" is Mattapan in terms of affordable housing. Is there a % threshold that needs to be reached that is driving more development?**
 - We do not have a target number for needed affordable housing units
 - Any development proposed 10+ units of housing is required to provide at least 13% of said units at an affordable rate
 - We are focused on maintaining the neighborhood's IDP number and will require affordability to be a part of development review/community benefits packages moving forward

- **Zennetta Armstrong: Could you say something about additional parking in the plan?**
 - The plan does not identify additional parking sites/strategies, parking development will come up through zoning process in development review

- **Tiffany Vassell: Who determined that Mattapan should be 40% rental? Why are we not creating homes and encouraging home ownership?**
 - 40% comes from data analysis of existing housing in Mattapan, it was not a chosen number plan aims to maintain that percentage (and 60% ownership)

- **Chad Fletcher: When you speak about bringing new retailers into Mattapan Square, have there been any studies in terms of annual income of all Mattapan residents to make sure we can all afford the products and services from new retailers even if they're not "big-box?"**
 - Challenging to do commercial market analysis, largely due to covid and the market changes that followed
 - Plan seeks to provide opportunities for existing small businesses and the creation of new affordable spaces for future small businesses

- **Aalana Feaster: Will existing store fronts be updated as well?**
 - PLAN: Mattapan does not specify new programs for this purpose.
 - There are existing programs through the Small Business Unit which can be used to address this issue
- **Cassandra Campbell: Is Plan Mattapan analogous to any other plan that has been implemented in the city of Boston?**
 - It is in the sense that it is a neighborhood plan and that we seek to create zoning changes based on it
 - The content of the plan differs from others and was shaped around the specific inputs from and context of the neighborhood
- **Susan Lombardi-Verticelli: 52 and 54 and now 58 River Street in an Overlay Shopping District/Neighborhood Shopping district/Commercial were not required to be put in mixed use. So will the zoning code change to prevent that?**
 - Plan thinks about where ground floor retail is appropriate, we are looking for further input on what this will look like moving forward
 - We want to have consistent approach to neighborhood corridors, we will continue to look into what can be done to address these concerns
- **Tamara Sobers: Have you done a study on how people in Mattapan commute to work and school? learning the average distance traveled, methods of transportation, length of time of a commute if we take public transportation, etc.?**
 - Mattapan residents have some of the longest commute times in the city
 - Plan aims to bring goods and services closer to home and prioritize expanded and more efficient transit options

Additional Questions

The following section is questions that were asked in the GMNC meeting Zoom chat but were not able to be addressed given time constraints. Each question has been answered by a member of the PLAN: Mattapan planning team.

Fatima Ali-Salaam, GMNC Chair:

How will the PLAN address the very narrow aerial streets.

PLAN: Mattapan complies with and will reinforce the City of Boston's Complete Streets Guidelines. In addition, PLAN: Mattapan aims to reduce cut-through traffic and ensure that all streets are safe and accessible for users.

From Christian Docanto:

Hi Kenya! Quick question, is there a contact for proposing the Fairmount Indigo Line Urban Rail?

Questions regarding rail transformation should be directed to Alistair Sawers, Senior Director of Rail Transformation at the MBTA. Alistair.Sawers@mbta.com

From Aalana Feaster:

How will you prevent overbuilding in a community when applying ADU zoning?

Additional Dwelling Units (ADUs) are an important and increasingly common strategy for generating affordability and equity in urban areas across the US. They are largely invisible but provide needed housing and supplemental income to property owners.

The proposed ADU 3.0 policy would only allow for one additional unit on an existing property. PLAN: Mattapan lays out a framework for this policy but the details of the allowed size (height, footprint) and other dimensional regulations will be determined through its own community process.

From Allentza Michel:

@Kenya or @Jared, can you please send me the data sources you used for your analyses?

Demographic data such as age, race/ethnicity, country of origin, and family income was compiled by the BPDA's Research Division using the 2020 US Census.

Previous data related to Mattapan was shared during the community process. That data packet can be found [here](#) and each chart is cited. Again, the majority of this data comes from the US Census Bureau.

From Donna Woodley:

When the City of Boston talks about affordable housing, that is often not affordable for Mattapan residents, is it possible to use an AMI(?), based on the income of Mattapan residents, not one based on the income based of all residents of Boston. If 13% is affordable, can at least 5% of that be based on the income of the specific neighborhood's income?

The Federal government requires affordable housing programs with Federal funding to use "Area Median Income" (AMI) in order to set maximum income limits and rent-caps for different affordable units. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) calculates AMI by looking at all families who live in an area, ordering them up by income, and then reporting the income of the family in the middle. When setting rents and sales prices for Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) units, the BPDA uses the HUD AMIs as a basis since this is the standard used for most income-restricted housing in the Boston area.

The BPDA works with developers to create housing opportunities for a range of incomes. Income guidelines vary by development, but most BPDA opportunities are available to renters with incomes up to 70% and homebuyers with incomes up to 100% of area median income (AMI). To learn more about the income, asset, and price limits visit [the Housing section of BPDA's website](#).

Through other PLAN processes, the BPDA developed a toolkit that helps describe how affordable housing is developed in Boston. PLAN: Mattapan shared this [Boston Housing Toolkit](#) during its community process.

From Seth Daniel:

How does the ADU program interface with fire regs like having two egresses? Such as with the fire truck easement, are fire codes traded for more housing?

The proposed ADU 3.0 policy does not compromise the safety of residents in additional dwelling units.

PLAN: Mattapan proposes working with the Boston Fire Department to establish appropriate alternatives to a 20-foot fire truck access aisle currently required. PLAN: Mattapan has referenced cities across the country including the cities of Somerville and Cambridge which have implemented alternative safety measures like additional sprinklering in additional dwellings.

All ADUs, as proposed by PLAN: Mattapan would be subject to existing Building Code regulations so as to ensure their safety, security, and accessibility just as all new housing in Boston is subject to these regulations.