Squares + Streets
Updates on Draft Zoning Text Amendment

Proposed zoning updates for Boston’s main streets + neighborhood centers

Public Meeting

Wednesday, January 10, 2024
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 tande 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），然後選擇您想聽到的語言。
Zoom Meeting Info + Tips

- **The BPDA will be recording this meeting** and posting it on the BPDA’s project webpage. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.

- **Zoom controls are available at the bottom of your screen.** Clicking on these symbols activates different features.

- **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.
Please Ask for Clarification!

Ask questions in the chat along the way!
Our staff are available to answer during the presentation.

Ask for us to clarify any terms or concepts we discuss!
We want to make sure that what we cover is accessible to everyone so you can all share your informed feedback.
Squares + Streets
Zoning Team

Will Cohen, Senior Planner II
Jack Halverson, Planner II
Adam Johnson, Urban Designer
Maya Kattler-Gold, Planner I
Andrew Nahmias, Senior Planner II
Abdul-Razak Zachariah, Planner I
Kathleen Onufer, Deputy Director of Zoning

Public Comment:
“Change is hard. If we want our City and neighborhood to thrive and be more equitable we need to create spaces for that to happen... It’s incumbent on political leaders, city workers and citizens to discuss this zoning amendment and make hard choices” —Steven, Roslindale

Public Comment:
“This approach [of] applying citywide zoning districts to individual neighborhoods... seems like good planning” —Barbara, Brighton
Agenda

Tonight’s Focus: Comments on and Revisions to the Squares + Streets Draft Zoning Text Amendment

- Reforming Boston’s Zoning Code
- Small Area Plans + Zoning Map Amendments
- Squares + Streets Draft Zoning Districts
- Next Steps to Refine the Draft Zoning
- Where to Find the Draft Zoning Text and Resources
- Questions and Comments

Public Comment:
“I would like to buy a home in Boston one day.” —Charlie, Jamaica Plain

Public Comment:
“This will allow existing residents to stay in their community and for new folks to join! A true win-win for Boston” —Michael, Fenway
Public Meetings on Squares + Streets Zoning

- Zoning Analysis Public Meeting #1 (Oct 16)
- Zoning Analysis Public Meeting #2 (Oct 30)
- Zoning Recommendations Public Meeting (Nov 13)
- Draft Zoning Amendment Public Meeting (Dec 5)
- Draft Zoning Amendment Update Public Meeting (Jan 10)
- Draft for Adoption Zoning Amendment Public Meeting (Feb 6)

Where we are today!
Ways We’ve Been Gathering Feedback on the Zoning Text Amendment

Additional Meetings + Focus Groups

Presented the proposed zoning at community meetings when invited by hosting neighborhood associations and community groups

5 focus groups with designers, small-scale developers, affordable housing developers + the Mayor’s Youth Council

Community Office Hours

18 hour-long office hours sessions weekly (and ongoing!) in afternoons and evenings from week of Dec 5 through week of Jan 25

Notes from office hours kept as another opportunity to gather public comments – 44 registrants and 6 more upcoming sessions this month

Public Comment Form

Receiving written comments from Dec 5 thru Jan 28

Public comments are shared weekly in BPDA’s Zoning Notices & Updates Newsletter

95+ comments received so far through this form

Meetings + Office Hours with Other City Departments

Including:

- Inspectional Services Department
- Disabilities Commission
- Mayor’s Office of Arts & Culture
- Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion
- Mayor’s Office of Housing
- Licensing Board
Reforming Boston’s Zoning Code
Citywide Zoning Reform
Yesterday’s State of the City:
“We restructured the BPDA to elevate planning and design, began modernizing development review, and launched the first comprehensive rezoning in decades. Our Squares + Streets planning kicks off next month, and in July, we’ll transition BPDA staff to the City, restoring planning as a core function of city government.”
What is Zoning?

Zoning is a set of laws that are used to guide development by dictating the **allowed 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
- **Physical Building Dimensions**: how much space a building takes up, its height, and the open space around it
- **Parking Requirements**: the number of parking spaces needed for certain land uses and where they can be located
Boston’s Squares + Streets in the Past and Future

- Original construction replaced with single story or strip mall construction
- Squares + Streets will use holistic view of these areas and their past as precedent
- Goal is to combine housing and business growth with re-establishing an urban fabric of mixed uses, walkability, and contextual density
What We Think of as “Squares + Streets” Areas

- **Transit**: T stops, commuter rail stations, key bus routes
- **Commercial activity**: main streets districts, retail along streets, businesses within walking distance of both transit and housing
- **Neighborhood centers**: central locations where neighborhood residents access local services to eat, shop, spend time, and run errands
- **Mixed use**: either directly above or directly adjacent to these businesses is housing, allowing some residents to get around without requiring a car
- **Places for growth**: existing housing and businesses are well-utilized, with context and market conditions that are suited for additional growth

**Public Comment:**
“This is a long time coming and I like that it is focused on the parts of the city that we desperately need more housing in, the squares and neighborhoods near transit.”
—Tim, Hyde Park

**Public Comment:**
“Love to see minority businesses still in the area.”
—Shakira, Hyde Park

**Public Comment:**
“I love the legalization by right for dense housing and mixed use buildings along the most lively places in Boston. I want to see more life and things to do come to my neighborhood.”
—Matt, Hyde Park
Squares + Streets: Cleary Square (Hyde Park)

One of the two initial locations.

Planning process to begin in mid-to-late **February 2024**.

**Public Comment:**
“[I like] the idea of improving Cleary Square and offering housing.”
—Ellen, Hyde Park

**Public Comment:**
“Happy with neighborhood growth while supporting beautification of existing structure.”
—Kaleigh, Hyde Park

**CLEARY SQUARE**

Cleary Square is a commercial area located in Hyde Park. It retains a number of historic buildings and has a diverse retail mix of restaurants, and shops, as well as considerable opportunity for commercial and residential enhancement.

This area is serviced by the Hyde Park station as part of the MBTA Commuter Rail.
Squares + Streets: Roslindale Square

One of the two initial locations.

Planning process to begin in mid-to-late February 2024.

Public Comment:
“It’s a start I guess. We have a housing crisis and we need to be making it easier to build housing.”
—Evan, Roslindale

Public Comment:
“Concentrating density in squares and major streets makes a lot of sense because that’s where most of our neighborhood commerce takes place and where public transportation converges.”
—Steven, Roslindale

Roslindale Square is a historic commercial area in the heart of Roslindale. It retains many historic buildings and has a diverse mix of local restaurants, shops, and civic spaces such as a library branch and the Roslindale Substation. There is a great opportunity for bringing new housing and residents to support the commercial core of Roslindale.

This area is serviced by the Roslindale Village station as part of the MBTA Commuter Rail, as well as several MBTA bus routes.
The two second phase locations will begin in early spring 2024.

Public Comment: “I’m hoping you will allow housing to be built on main streets in neighborhoods for up to 3 [or 4] floors above 1 story storefronts. This will enable many more units to be built.” — Lew, Dorchester

**FIELDS CORNER**
Fields Corner, in Dorchester, is anchored by two main intersections: Dorchester Avenue and Adams Street and Dorchester Avenue and Park Street. Fields Corner presents an opportunity to leverage existing commercial uses and transportation assets so that walkable stores and services, and open spaces are made available to more households.

This area is serviced by the Fields Corner Red Line T-Stop and seven MBTA bus routes.

**CODMAN SQUARE**
Codman Square is a commercial area in Dorchester, anchored by the intersection of Washington Street and Talbot Avenue. There are two schools, one community center, one library and the Codman Square Health Center here. The benefits of access to these civic assets and commercial opportunities should be made available to new residents.

This area is served by three MBTA bus routes and is within ½ mile of the Red Line’s Shawmut Station T-Stop and the Talbot Avenue Commuter Rail Station.
Small Area Plans +
Zoning Map Amendments
Process + Project Timeline

(1) ZONING OPTIONS

“Add tools to the toolbox”: Create options in citywide **zoning** to support Squares + Streets areas.

(2) SMALL AREA PLANS

Conduct **6-9 month planning processes (Small Area Plans)** in specific Squares + Streets to develop policy recommendations and select zoning options for an area.

**Partnerships** with other City of Boston departments to **align planning with implementation pathways** that are achievable within 10 years:

- Programs and funding to promote and preserve small businesses, affordable housing, and arts and culture
- Public space projects to address transportation, climate change, etc.
- Plans for city-owned parcels

(3) MAPPING ZONING

Codify zoning recommendations into **zoning map**.
What are Small Area Plans?

**Series of 6-9 month processes** that focus on individual squares and streets to convene the public and many City departments in cross-topic goal setting.

**Partnerships** with other City of Boston departments to align planning recommendations with implementation pathways that are achievable within 10 years:

- Programs and funding to promote and preserve small businesses, affordable housing, and arts and culture
- Public space redesign to address transportation, climate change, etc.
- Plans for city-owned parcels

**Updated zoning** through **zoning map amendments** to support housing, healthy business districts, and access to community resources
## Small Area Plans & Ongoing Citywide Policy Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anti-Displacement Strategies</th>
<th>Deeper Housing Affordability</th>
<th>Parking Needs for Small Businesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Comment:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Comment from Office Hours:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Public Comment:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“There is no clear policy and plan to prevent displacement. New height and stories regulations could mean that older buildings will be razed and new ones put in their place.” — Laurie, Roslindale</td>
<td>Current affordability requirements in the City don’t create enough residential units that are affordable for people below 60% AMI or small business owners who want to live near commercial areas</td>
<td>“We must retain existing free 2 hour street parking in the small neighborhood business districts so seniors, people with disabilities and people with young children can access the business districts” — Patricia, Hyde Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>The City is developing an overall anti-displacement strategy, that will be applied in small area plans.</td>
<td>The City is finalizing a housing strategy, that will be applied in small area plans.</td>
<td>We are contracting with a transportation consultant to conduct analysis and develop parking and curb management recommendations as part of small area plans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Small Area Plans: Analysis + Engagement

**We will bring you analysis of:**
- the size and spatial characteristics of existing parcels and buildings, and current land uses
- review of existing zoning, and
- review of recent variances and Article 80 projects to determine mismatch and opportunity for change.

**We will work with you to:**
- listen to community needs through engagement,
- present recommendations and facilitate iteration in partnership with the community, and
- collect work into a finalized plan document.

As a result, a zoning map amendment will be drafted for each small area plan.

Public Comment:
“[I like] hyperlocal involvement, respect for neighborhood uniqueness, and needs and focus on community engagement” —Michael, Roslindale
How and which districts are mapped is an interactive process and will depend on the Small Area Plan engagement.

Public Comment:
“Please prioritize objective criteria when mapping Small Area Plans to ensure an equitable process and outcomes.”
—Lynn, Dorchester
Example PLAN: Mattapan

PLAN: Mattapan was adopted in May 2023 after a 4-year planning process.

The PLAN included recommendations for new mixed-use and commercial zoning.

Squares + Streets Zoning is the tool for implementing those zoning recommendations.

For more information, visit bit.ly/PLAN-Mattapan
**Public Comment:**

“I would like to see a priority on greenlighting multi use developments with commercial properties on the ground floor and residences above. I would like to see more done to develop more affordable housing. I don’t see enough of this.” — Robert, South End

**Public Comment:**

“I like how most active uses are allowed by right or conditionally in Squares and Streets districts, and the removal of minimum parking requirements for these districts. That will definitely help make new construction and additions more feasible in these areas. I also like the lack of dimensional requirements in terms of facade and setbacks. I like the idea of creating varied intensities of district.

Overall, these changes are incredibly exciting and will improve the streets and squares of Boston! Not only will they allow mixed-use by right in these districts, but they retroactively make it possible for existing single story buildings, which occupy many square and streets, to build new residential on top.” — Nikolas, Roxbury

**Public Comment:**

“Unreasonable task to expect ordinary residents to work way through 120 page technical document to understand what is proposed originally, what is being amended etc. Public cannot be expected to offer feedback when document is complex and technical. Would have been so much better if there had been pictures showing what a current district looks like and what it would look like under the proposed Streets and Squares changes. Not at all clear how this proposal will make for a better city -- more affordable, more equitable, more oriented to needs of local residents and local businesses.” — Gene, Roslindale

**Public Comment:**

“Clearer expectations/enforcement of farther back setbacks for all parcels, including Main Street ones. Too often I now see buildings built right up onto the sidewalk, which makes the urban landscape look too synonymous. It lacks breathing room.” — Patrick, West Roxbury

**Pause for Comments & Questions**
# Squares + Streets Districts

**S0**  
**Transition Residential**  
- Transition between low and high activity streets and squares  
- Residential and accessory only  
- Large, context-scale yards

**S1**  
**Main Street Living**  
- Small-scale storefronts allowed on the ground floor with limited uses  
- Predominantly residential  
- Small scale yards

**S2**  
**Main Street Mixed Use**  
- Mixed-use main street  
- Mainstreet zero-lot-line  
- Outdoor amenity space required  
- Lower lot coverage to require yards or plazas

**S3**  
**Active Main Street**  
- Residential or small scale hospitality  
- Mainstreet zero-lot-line  
- Outdoor amenity space required  
- Active ground floor uses required  
- Lot coverage responds to parcel size

**S4**  
**Active Squares**  
- Wider range of upper floors uses  
- Large buffer with residential areas  
- Outdoor amenity space required  
- Medium to extra large scale ground floor active uses  
- Lot coverage responds to parcel size

**S5**  
**Placemaker**  
- Widest range of mixed-use uses  
- Large buffer with residential areas  
- Outdoor amenity space required  
- Wide range of ground floor active uses (no residential)  
- Lot coverage responds to parcel size

**New Update!**

- Mixed-use main street
- Mainstreet zero-lot-line
- Outdoor amenity space required
- Active ground floor uses required
- Lot coverage responds to parcel size
**Housing a Common Theme So Far**

**Public Comment:**
“The previously-discussed S5 Placemaker District is not included in the draft text amendment... the BPDA should be stocking its toolbox with as many tools as possible to create more homes and invigorate neighborhoods.”
—Abundant Housing MA

**Public Comment:**
“Bring back the S5! We need so much more housing”
—Barnabas, Jamaica Plain

**Public Comment:**
“Please keep Placemaking Square subtype in this process. **Landmark buildings... define our landmark squares**, while providing housing and jobs for so many”
—Michael, Fenway

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**Public Comment:**
“[S5] has the potential to jumpstart housing availability in appropriate locations in a way that the S4 option does not” —Nate, Jamaica Plain

**Public Comment:**
“We need to have the *option* for taller buildings in areas well-served by transit. Allowing the potential for this type of zoning doesn’t mean all buildings will automatically be so dense.”
—Stefanie, South Boston

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**Public Comment:**
“We hope the city has the courage to be bold and definitive with these changes. Scaling back and being more incremental will not help the future of Boston and those of us who... would like to keep calling the city home.”
—Zack, Jamaica Plain

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“If anything, height limits should be increased... We need to be doing anything and everything to increase... housing supply.”
—Prashant, Brighton

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What’s shared across each district?

- **Limit building footprint and building width** to better reflect existing urban design scale.
- Include **maximum building lot coverage** and **minimum permeable area of lot** to shape future development.
- **Set dimensions for yards where they are important**, such as larger rear yards adjacent to residential areas.

**Public Comment:**
“Appreciate focus on **not encouraging the combining of smaller parcels into larger ones**, as those projects have been much less welcoming and engaging in my neighborhood.”
—Benjamin, East Boston
What’s shared across each district?

- **Allowed uses** include:
  - Most residential uses
  - Community uses such as schools, places of worship, child care, and publicly accessible open space
  - Accessory parking, shared parking, and accessory EV charging

- Most **industrial and vehicular** uses are forbidden

- Commercial/active uses are **regulated** depending on their **size and impacts**
What’s shared across each district?

- Give **small projects** the same **parking flexibility as large projects** by removing parking minimums and **modernizing loading requirements** *(S0-S5)*

- Create better places to live by requiring square footage for **outdoor amenities** like balconies, roofdecks, terraces, and ground floor courtyards, streetscapes, and plazas *(S2-S5)*

- Create vibrant streetscapes by requiring a certain amount of **active ground floor uses** and limiting the amount of windowless “blank walls” on the ground floor *(S3-S5)*

**Public Comment:**
“**The elimination of parking minimums in all Squares + Streets districts is an important reform** that will reduce the cost of housing, support the City’s long term commitments to investing in transit and active transportation, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.” —Thomas, Roslindale
What differentiates each district?

**Uses**
- Ground floor vs. upper floor uses (or max size overall)
- Whether active uses are required on the ground floor

**Lot Standards**
- Building lot coverage
- Size of front, rear, and side yards
- Permeable area of lot

**Building Form**
- Building floor plate
- Maximum building width
- Maximum building height and stories
- Rear stepbacks
New Use Regulations in Article 8

- Include a **simpler table** with similar uses consolidated and obsolete uses removed
- Include **improved definitions**
- Include **use and performance standards** where appropriate
- Add **size thresholds** for uses to regulate impact
- Becomes the basis for **city-wide zoning reform** and singular place where future updates can be made

**Public Comment:**
“Updating and simplifying the categories for various residential and commercial property use... will streamline permitting and support the creation of dynamic streetscapes and neighborhoods across all of Boston.” —Andrew, Allston
## New Use Table (from 250+ down to 90)

### OPEN SPACE USES
- Cemetery
- Private Open Space
- Publicly Accessible Open Space

### CIVIC USES
- Municipal Use
- Place of Worship
- School, K through 12

### RESIDENTIAL USES
- Artists’ Live-Work
- Fraternity or Sorority
- Group Living - Small
- Group Living - Large
- Household Living - 1-4 units
- Household Living - 5-8 units
- Household Living - 9-14 units
- Household Living - 15+ units
- Lodging House
- Mobile Home Establishment
- Student Housing
- Temporary Shelter Facility

### ACTIVE USES
- Child Care/Adult Day Health Center
- Community Center
- Grocery Store - Small
- Grocery Store - Large
- Entertainment/Events - Small
- Entertainment/Events - Medium
- Entertainment/Events - Large
- Entertainment/Events - Extra Large
- Makerspace
- Museum or Art Gallery
- Restaurant - Small
- Restaurant - Large
- Retail Cannabis Establishment
- Retail Store - Small
- Retail Store - Medium
- Retail Store - Large
- Retail Store - Extra Large
- Indoor Recreation
- Service Establishment - Small
- Service Establishment - Large
- Social Club

### COMMERCIAL USES
- Adult Entertainment
- Standalone ATM
- Arts Studios
- Bank
- Check Casher
- Drive-in
- Funeral Home
- Hotel - Small
- Hotel - Large
- Office - Small
- Office - Large
- Research Laboratory

### HIGHER EDUCATION USES
- College or University Use
- School, Trade or Professional

### HEALTH CARE USES
- Clinic
- Hospital Use
- Nursing or Convalescent Home Use

### TRANSPORTATION USES
- Airport-Related Remote Parking Facility
- Gasoline Station
- Major Transportation Facility
- Motor Vehicle Rentals
- Motor Vehicle Sales
- Standalone Parking Garage
- Standalone Parking Lot
- Vehicular Services

### INDUSTRIAL AND STORAGE USES
- Crematory
- Food and Beverage Production
- General Industrial
- Light Manufacturing or Trade Establishment
- Non-retail Cannabis Establishment
- Restricted Industrial
- Self-Storage
- Storage of Fuel or Minerals
- Storage of Supplies and Scrap
- Urban Agriculture
- Warehouse or Distribution Center

### ACCESSORY USES
- Accessory Car Share
- Accessory Drive-Through
- Accessory Dwelling Unit (Detached)
- Accessory Dwelling Unit (non-Detached)
- Accessory Electrical Vehicle Charging
- Accessory Entertainment/Events
- Accessory Family Day Care Home
- Accessory Helicopter Landing Facility
- Accessory Home Occupation
- Accessory Keeping of Animals
- Accessory Keeping of Laboratory Animals
- Accessory Office
- Accessory Parking
- Accessory Personnel Quarters
- Accessory Research Laboratory
- Accessory Smoking
- Shared Parking
Defining “Active” Ground Floors

### Active Uses
- Child Care/Adult Day Health Center
- Community Center
- Grocery Store
- Entertainment/Events
- Makerspace
- Museum or Art Gallery
- Restaurant
- Retail Cannabis Establishment
- Retail Store
- Indoor Recreation
- Service Establishment
- Social Club

### Public Comment:
“The active use ground floor uses and outdoor community [outdoor amenity] spaces are great. I like that the buildings are allowed to be mixed use with higher stories for residential use that bring residents to the community centers and make them vibrant places to live.” —Mary, West Roxbury

Q: What other uses should be added to this list? What do you think makes a use “active”? 
## Districts Have Different Use Allowances

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<th>S4</th>
<th>S5</th>
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<tr>
<td>Community Center</td>
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<td>Restaurant - Small</td>
<td>C-G</td>
<td>A-G</td>
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<td>Restaurant - Large</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

…and many more

![Community Center in South Boston](image1)

![Small Restaurant in Mattapan](image2)

![Small Retail in Roslindale](image3)

![Large Retail in Back Bay](image4)

Source: Google Maps
S-0 District: Transition Residential

Fine-grained residential district that provides a transition from lower activity residential areas to mixed-use and high activity streets and squares.

**Lot Standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot Standards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Lot Coverage</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Yard</td>
<td>8’ minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Yard</td>
<td>15’ minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Yard</td>
<td>14’ cumulative (3’ minimum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permeable Area of Lot</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Building Form Standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Form Standards</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floorplate</td>
<td>4,000 square feet max</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>50’ / 4 stories maximum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
S-0 District: Transition Residential

Allowed uses:

- Mostly residential uses, limited to 14-units and sub-Article 80 scale.

Conditionally allowed uses:

- A few active uses (community centers, small grocery stores, social clubs), some restricted to the ground floor (small restaurant, extra small entertainment/events)

Small grocery stores and community centers are conditionally allowed

Question: should small retail be conditionally allowed on the ground floor in S0 (similar to restaurants)? Allowed on corner parcels?
S-1 District: Main Street Living

Predominantly residential buildings that can also have small-scale storefronts or offices on the ground floor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot Standards</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Lot Coverage</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Yard</td>
<td>6’ minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Yard</td>
<td>10’-15’ minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Yard</td>
<td>14’ cumulative (3’ minimum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permeable Area of Lot</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Form Standards</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floorplate</td>
<td>8,000 square feet max</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Width</td>
<td>120’ maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>50’ / 4 stories maximum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
S-1 District: Main Street Living

Allowed uses:

- **Most residential uses**
- **Small active uses** (small grocery stores and service establishments), **some restricted to the ground floor** (small retail stores, restaurants, and entertainment/events)
- **A few other active uses** (social clubs, museums or art gallery, makerspaces)
- **A few commercial uses** (small offices [restricted to the ground floor] and art studios)
S-1 District: Main Street Living

Conditionally allowed uses:

- A few additional active uses restricted to the ground floor (including large restaurants and medium retail stores)
- Banks [restricted to the ground floor] and standalone ATMs
S-2 District: Main Street Mixed Use

Mainstreet mixed-use buildings where ground-floor-retail and storefronts are the prevailing condition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot Standards</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Lot Coverage</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Yard</td>
<td>2’ minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Yard</td>
<td>10’-15’ minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Yard</td>
<td>5’-15’ minimum (0’ party wall)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permeable Area of Lot</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Form Standards</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floorplate</td>
<td>15,000 square feet max</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Width</td>
<td>150’ maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>60’ / 5 stories maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Amenity Space</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Permeable Area requirement and lower lot coverage ensure space for planting and buffering.

Mix of active and residential uses on ground floor.

Limit on the amount of “blank wall”.
S-2 District: Main Street Mixed Use

Allowed uses:

- Most residential uses
- Small active uses
- A few other active uses (including medium retail stores)
- A few commercial uses
S-2 District: Main Street Mixed Use

Conditionally allowed uses:

- **Most large active uses** (including service establishments, grocery stores, and retail stores)
- **A few commercial uses** (including small hotels)
Mainstreet residential and small-scale hospitality buildings in neighborhood mixed-use areas with a wider range of ground floor uses.

**Lot Standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot Standard</th>
<th>Requirement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Lot Coverage</td>
<td>90% (70% on large parcels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Yard</td>
<td>2’ minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Yard</td>
<td>10’-15’ minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Yard</td>
<td>5’-15’ minimum (0’ party wall)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Building Form Standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floorplate</td>
<td>20,000 square feet max</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Width</td>
<td>150’ maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>85’ / 7 stories maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Amenity Space</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Required outdoor amenity space

Active uses required on ground floor and higher-intensity commercial uses allowed

Tighter setbacks and lot standards for main street continuity
S-3 District: Active Main Street

Uses:

- **Most residential uses** are allowed
- **Most commercial uses** are allowed or conditionally allowed.
- **Most active uses** are allowed with some ground floor restrictions.

- Large retail stores are allowed
- Small offices are allowed
- Small entertainment/events are allowed on the ground floor
S-4 District: Active Squares

Medium-scale, mixed-use building in mixed-use areas with a wide range of active ground floor uses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot Standards</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Lot Coverage</td>
<td>90% (70% on large parcels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Yard</td>
<td>2’ minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Yard</td>
<td>3’-20’ minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Side Yard</td>
<td>5’ minimum (0’ party wall)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Form Standards</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Floorplate</td>
<td>25,000 square feet max</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Width</td>
<td>200’ maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height</td>
<td>85’ / 7 stories maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Amenity Space</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
S-4 District: Active Squares

Uses:

- **Most residential uses** are allowed.
- **Most commercial uses** are allowed or conditionally allowed.
- **Most active uses** are allowed with no ground floor restrictions.

- **Art studios are allowed**
- **Medium entertainment/events are allowed**
- **Large retail stores are allowed**
S-5 District: Placemaker

Taller mixed-use buildings located in neighborhood centers, with high street frontage and many active uses allowed throughout the building.

Locations: S-5 would be limited to key mixed-use gateway areas and near transit hubs that can support higher density housing and job growth.

Uses: Allowed and conditional uses would remain the same as S-4, with a wide range of active uses.

Public Comment:
“Some of the most successful recent redevelopments in the city (including Boylston Street in the Fenway and the Harrison-Albany district) fit the building types contemplated by the S5 district.”
—Tim, Dorchester
S-5 District: Placemaker

Form: S-5 is an opportunity to align with new building code standards and support efficient sustainable building methods alongside greater housing and job growth.

For example: Residential mass timber buildings on a one-story podium can go up to 13 stories and 19 stories depending on the construction type.

Public Comment:
"We need options that allow for more density than S4. We should allow for more than 7 stories / 85 feet of height and without stepback requirements."
—Chris, Jamaica Plain

Mass timber building in Milwaukee

Can become a landmark to key transit areas

Mixed-use mass timber 12-story building in Portland

Question: what do you want to see S-5 Placemaker districts do differently in scale and uses from other districts?
Beyond Zoning

Once Squares + Streets zoning sets the maximum envelope, tools such as the Boston Design Vision, community process, and BPDA Design Review shape the project to reflect the character and needs of the local context.
Social Clubs

Current Draft Definition:

**Social Club.** A facility used or operated by a non-profit association for meeting, recreational, or social purposes. The use of such premises is restricted to the members of these organizations and their guests.

This would include things like:

- Elks Lodge
- Polish American Citizens Club
- Veterans Service Organizations

This would also include things like:

- Tavern Club
- Chilton Club
- Harvard Club of Boston

Currently allowed in S1-S5, conditionally allowed in S0

*Question:* which of these types of organizations do you think should be allowed in Squares + Streets? Should there be another restriction in the definition of social clubs (such as being regularly open to non-members)?
Pause for Questions & Comments

Some Questions We Have for You:

What other uses should be added to the list of active uses? What do you think makes a use “active”?

Should small retail be conditionally allowed on the ground floor in S0 (similar to restaurants)? Allowed on corner parcels?

What do you want to see S-5 Placemaker districts do differently in scale and uses from other districts?

Which of these types of “social clubs” should be allowed in Squares + Streets? Should there be another restriction for social clubs (such as being regularly open to non-members)?
Next Steps towards Refining the Draft Zoning
Revisions Made (so far)

Comments

Public comment: “I do not understand the need for the A-G designation. What could possibly be the downside of having an art studio on the second floor of a building? Or a restaurant having a second floor? Or a maker space or an art gallery? What are we trying to prevent?”

Response: Removed ground floor only limitation for: grocery store, makerspace, museum or art gallery, large restaurant, large retail store, and art studio in all districts and from medium retail store in S3

Feedback from community office hours: draft was unclear about whether things like insurance brokers and real estate offices would be “offices” or “service establishment.” They should be “offices” since they are not very active.

Response: Added clarifying language that includes these in the definition of office to include this use.

Public comment: “Some of the most successful recent redevelopment in the city fit the building types contemplated by the S5 district. We need it included in this reform”

Response: Added the S5 district to the draft amendment. S5 had been included earlier in the public process but not included in the initial draft amendment, as it is not proposed to be mapped in Mattapan.
Share Your Thoughts + Stay Updated!

Come to Our Virtual Office Hours!

Upcoming Sessions (Afternoon + Evening)
- Week of Jan 8
- Week of Jan 11
- Week of Jan 18
- Week of Jan 25

Give Us Your Feedback!

Public Comment Period continues UNTIL JANUARY 28
Share your thoughts on the draft zoning amendments through the public comment form.

Attend the Final Public Meeting!

February 6 at 6:00 PM
Citywide S+S Zoning Text Amendment Final Meeting
Where to Find the Draft Zoning Text + Resources
What chapters of the Zoning Code are being updated in this proposed text amendment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article 26</th>
<th>Article 8</th>
<th>Article 23</th>
<th>Other Articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A new chapter to define Squares + Streets Zoning Districts</td>
<td>Updates to the “Regulation of Uses”</td>
<td>Remove minimum parking requirements for small projects in Squares + Streets</td>
<td>To make sure updates from Art. 26 and Art. 8 are reflected + workable throughout the Code</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The draft amendment contains **administrative or clerical changes to text**, either to reorganize sections for clarity or remove language that is no longer applicable. These three articles are the substantive changes to the code. Please see the “**smaller changes** section of the amendment summary” for explanations of the adjustments to other articles.
How Will the Squares + Streets Zoning Text Amendment Impact Development in Neighborhoods?

In the short term, it won’t*!

Not until the zoning is applied to specific areas through zoning map amendments. These amendments will only be created after community processes to find the right configuration of the districts to map into each specific area. As a first step, these districts are proposed to be mapped in Mattapan, based on PLAN: Mattapan.

The Small Area Planning process will engage residents, stakeholders, local main streets districts, and neighborhood groups in mapping the zoning districts in ways that support future housing and active streets.

*except Mattapan. Please join us Jan 17 to discuss the proposed S+S zoning map in Mattapan.

Public Comment:
“Even if people read the new documents they don’t understand the impact on their neighborhoods.”
- Elizabeth, Roslindale
Squares + Streets Zoning Districts

Initiative Webpage: https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares

Zoning Initiatives

Squares + Streets Zoning Districts

Latest Updates Overview

Squares + Streets Draft Zoning Text Amendment
Connecting Planning Processes to Squares + Streets Zoning
Upcoming Events
Past Events
Timeline

Latest Updates
[Tuesday, December 6] The draft zoning text amendment for Squares + Streets has been released! The draft zoning text amendment and materials to help explain the proposed zoning can be found in the Squares + Streets Draft Zoning Text Amendment section below as well as in the Helpful Resources box of this page.

The public comment period to share your thoughts and feedback on the draft zoning is now open and will close on SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024. Please share your comments through this public comment form.

Squares + Streets Draft Zoning Text Amendment

To create new Squares + Streets Districts, a new chapter in the Boston Zoning Code called Article 26 has been drafted. Related updates to several existing chapters of the Zoning Code are being proposed as well, including Article 8 (Regulation of Uses) and other citywide chapters of the Zoning Code to make sure that updates to Art. 26 and Art. 8 are reflected throughout the Zoning Code.

Please review the DRAFT ZONING AMENDMENT AND EXPLANATION MATERIALS BELOW to understand how all these updates work together to enable these zoning districts to function to meet the goals of this initiative:

- DRAFT Squares + Streets Zoning Text Amendment
- Reference Guide - Squares + Streets Amendment Overview and Dimensional Regulations
- Land Use Modernization Visual Guide

Help us revise this draft zoning by sharing your comments through THIS PUBLIC COMMENT FORM from now until SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024!
Resources to Read + Understand the Draft Zoning

DRAFT Squares + Streets Zoning Text Amendment

Amendment Overview and Reference Guide

Contents

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3. Summary of Changes to other Articles 14
4. Article 8 (New Use Table) 20
5. Article 23 (Parking) 73

Smaller Changes
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7. Article 6 (Conditional Uses) 90
8. Article 11 (Signs) 94
9. Article 13 (Dimensional Requirements) 102
10. Article 18 (Front Yards) 105
11. Article 19 (Side Yards) 108
12. Article 22 (Yard Regulations) 112
13. Article 24 (Off-Street Loading) 115

Amendment Summary + Reference Guide

Land Use Modernization Visual Guide

* * *

Land Use Modernization Visual Guide

Entertainment/Events

- Small: An entertainment facility with a capacity of up to 500 persons.
- Medium: An entertainment facility with a capacity of 500-1,200 persons.
- Large: An entertainment facility with a capacity of 1,200-10,000 persons.
- Extra Large: An entertainment facility with a capacity of greater than 10,000 persons.

- Brighten-More Hall: 400 people
- Small Venue: 400 people
- Large Hall: 1,200 people
- Small Restaurant: 140 people
- Large Restaurant: 400 people
- Extra Large Restaurant: 1,200 people

* * *
Reading the Amendment

The amendment is long! The reason for that is that it includes the original zoning chapters and where changes are being proposed to those chapters.

To better read through specifically for changes, look out for the colors of the text to understand what is being proposed:

BLACK TEXT = current text within the Zoning Code that we have not changed at all

EXCEPTION: The NEW Article 26 (which creates the Squares + Streets zoning rules) is also in BLACK TEXT because it is an entirely new chapter being added to the Zoning Code.

Example from Article 6 in the amendment document

Example from Article 26 in the amendment document

Public Comment:
“Unreasonable task to expect ordinary residents to work way through 120 page technical document to understand what is proposed originally, what is being amended etc.”
- Gene, Roslindale
Reading the Amendment

In some instances, text that is removed from one area may be added to a different section to make that part of Zoning Code easier to read.

Example: Moving and updating the list of neighborhood districts from one place to another to better organize them.

Public Comment: “It's not clear to me what is the amendment and what is the original draft to judge the amended changes against.”  
- Gene, Roslindale
Zoning Notices & Updates Newsletter

Sign up at: https://www.bostonplans.org/about-us/get-involved

I'm interested in: (optional)

- Development Projects
- Institutional Planning
- Downtown & Neighborhood Planning
- Climate Change Planning & Sustainable Development
- Urban Renewal
- Zoning Notices & Updates
Questions & Comments

Some Questions We Have for You:

What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

What are organizations, services, or businesses have a hard time finding a space in your community?
Thank you!

For more information:  
https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares

Questions? Email us: squaresandstreets@boston.gov