



# Allston-Brighton Community Plan

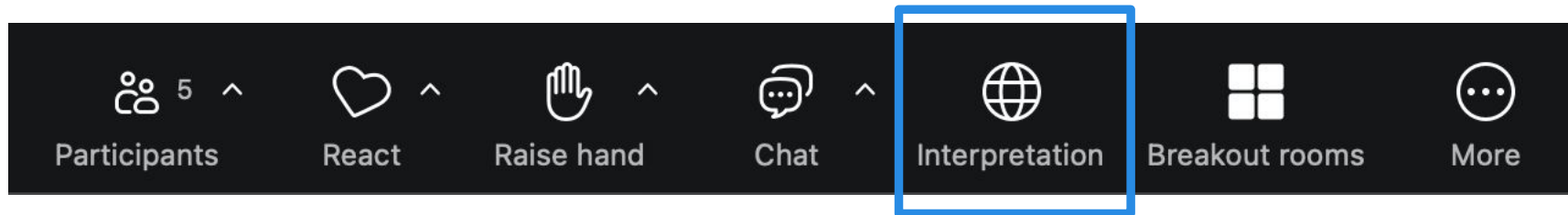
Public Meeting - February 9, 2026



Planning Department

CITY of **BOSTON**

## Zoom Controls for Interpretation



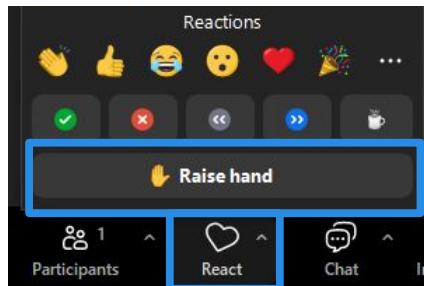
**(EN)** Look for the interpretation icon (**globe**) at the bottom of your screen and select the language you want to hear.

**(繁體中文)** 尋找螢幕下方的口譯圖示(地球儀)，選擇您想聽的語言。

**(Español)** Busque el ícono de la interpretación (**globo**) en el borde inferior de su pantalla y seleccione el idioma en el que desea escuchar.

## Zoom Meeting Info + Tips

- **This meeting will be recorded** and posted on the 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 followed by \*6 if joining by phone) **and wait to be called upon** before asking your question or providing comment.



Raise Hand



Mute/Unmute

Turn Video  
On/Off



# Tonight's Meeting

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What the ABCP Is

What We've Done & What's Next

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What is Zoning?

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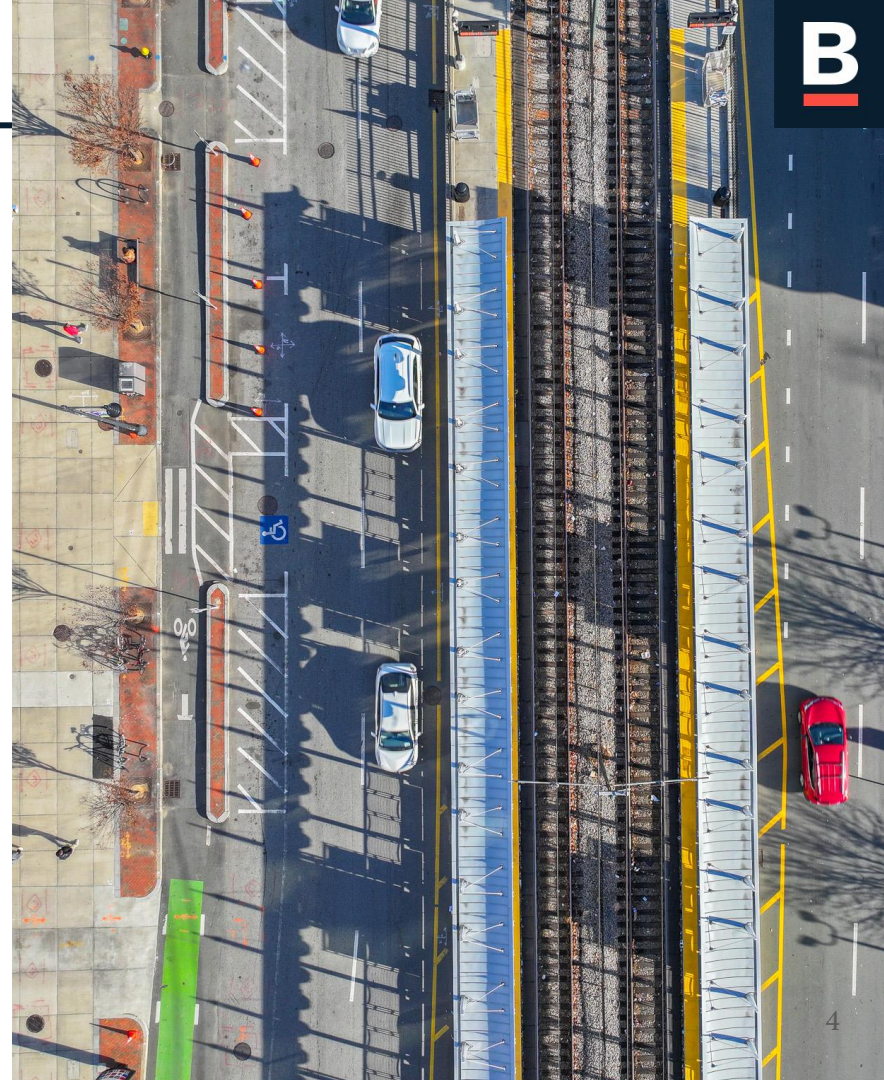
Why We're Updating Zoning in  
Allston-Brighton

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How Zoning Advances Planning

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Breakouts/Discussion





# What is a Community Plan? What's the ABCP?

## A Plan guides future development and investment:

- What kinds of changes to the physical environment are desired?
- How will these changes be achieved?
- How can development and investment support these changes for everyone in the community?

## The Allston-Brighton Community Plan (ABCP) will build on:

- Community knowledge and feedback
- Community needs and opportunities
- Other plans or development projects that are happening
- Current conditions in land use, transportation, housing, open space, community resources, economic development, and employment



# Total Project Community Engagement To Date

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June 2024 - Present:

**50+**

Events and meetings hosted or attended by the project team where information about the Community Plan was shared

**1,400+**

People directly engaged at community events and meetings

**2,800+**

Recorded comments about the plan

**500+**

Attendees at in-person and virtual ABCP Open House events

# What We've Heard

These are **some common themes** heard across all of the focus area engagement from last summer, **not representative of every comment** we've received.

These themes will be **addressed in both the Plan and in new zoning** for the neighborhood.

## Business + Culture

Increase retail options and provide missing amenities

Invest in more small, neighborhood-serving businesses

Create more arts/culture spaces

## Housing + Affordability

More affordable housing options

More homeownership opportunities, without change neighborhood character

Build more housing, but with different ranges of intensity and scale

## Mobility + Open Space

Address parking needs

Enhance connectivity to green space

Improve pedestrian and cyclist safety

## Mixed-Use Activity

Encourage more mixed-use development and housing density, but with varying density based on location

Make some areas better "destinations" like Cleveland Circle and Packard's Corner



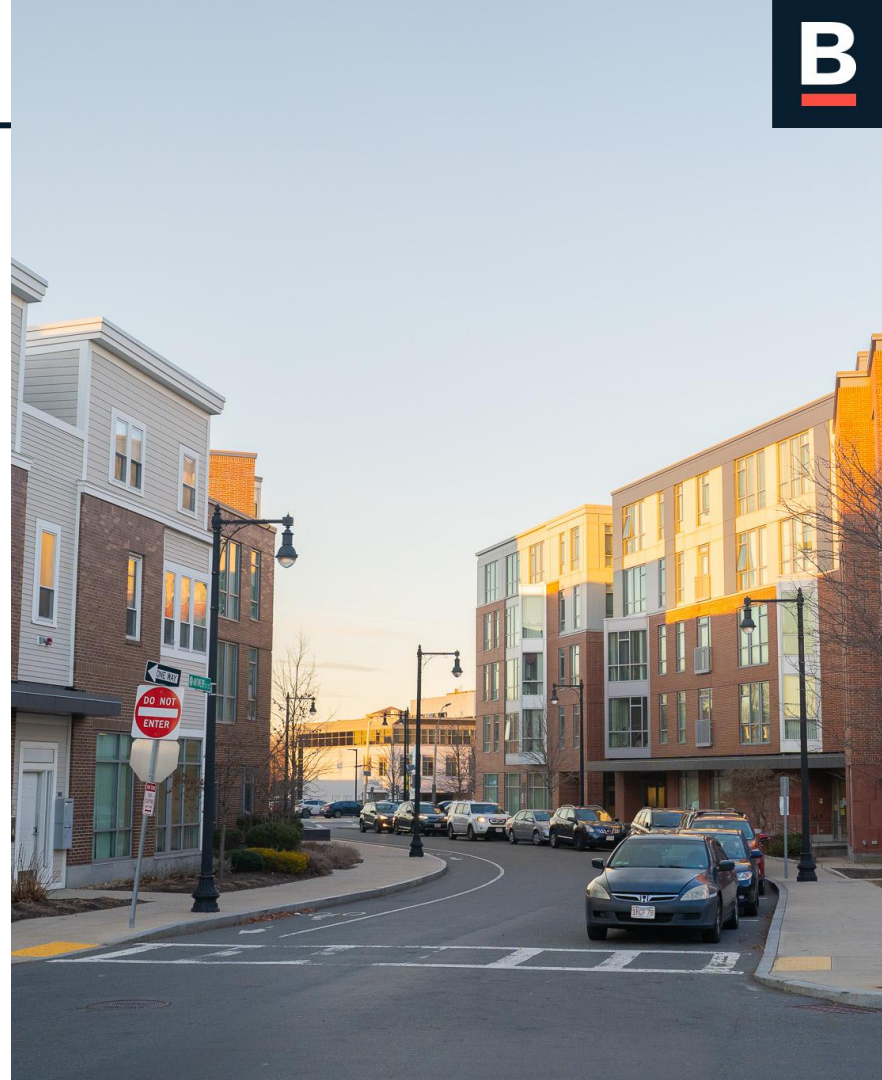
# What We've Been Up To

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Since the focus area workshops in Summer 2025, the Planning Department has been **drafting the Allston-Brighton Community Plan** based on all of our engagement so far.

**Additionally**, we've been working on the **new zoning for the entire neighborhood**, working concurrently with developing the Draft Plan.

Release Draft Plan and new zoning for extensive public engagement in late Spring 2026.



**Allston-Brighton is a neighborhood where everyone puts down roots - where seniors can stay; where young people grow their careers, find chosen family, and become parents; and where children grow up.**

**We can't wait on only the biggest projects to provide the housing everyone in Allston-Brighton needs to thrive.**



*Since 2010, Allston-Brighton gained children (+4%) and family-age adults (+37%), while Boston overall saw a decline in children (-11%) and slower growth among family-age adults (+20%).\**

## INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

**Major infrastructure investments are reshaping Allston-Brighton**, with the Green Line realignment advancing sooner than larger projects like BPY and ERC which are further in the future.



## HOUSING GROWTH ACROSS THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Allston-Brighton's continued population growth, particularly among family-age households and children, calls for a range of **housing strategies distributed across the neighborhood** to support long-term residents and continued demand.



## THRIVING FOCUS AREAS

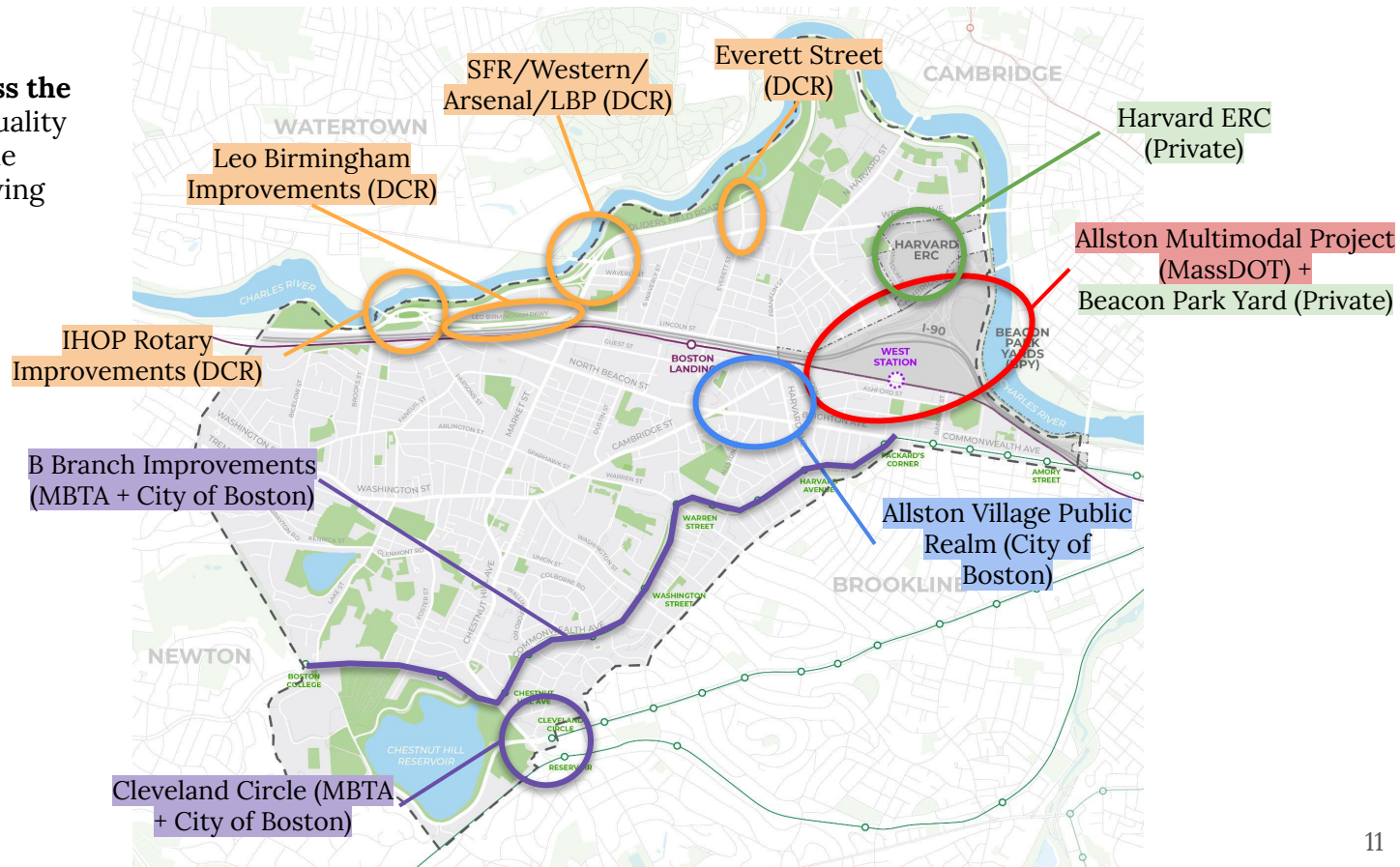
**Distinct focus areas across Allston-Brighton** range from preservation-oriented places like Oak Square to long-term transformation areas like Packard's Corner, where public realm improvements and mixed-use growth at varying scales support community life.





# Infrastructure Investment

**Short- and long-term infrastructure projects across the neighborhood** will improve quality of life, unlock new developable land, and help support a growing Allston-Brighton.



# What's Next?

*In-Progress*

**City writing Draft Plan  
and Zoning**

*Spring through Summer 2026*

**Draft Plan + Zoning Release**

## **Upcoming Office Hours:**

- *Thurs 2/19 12:00-1:00 pm Virtual*
- *Tue 2/24 6:00-7:30 pm In-Person*
- *Fri 2/27 9:30-11:30am In-Person*
- *Mon 3/2 6:00-7:30 pm Virtual*

- Releasing materials including:
  - ◆ Draft Plan document
  - ◆ Draft zoning map
  - ◆ Draft zoning articles
- Public engagement in both large and small settings
- Neighborhood-wide conversations in addition to targeted geographies



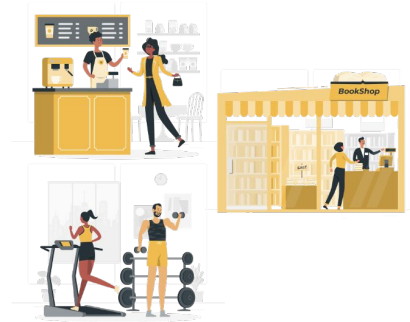


# What is Zoning?



# Basics of Zoning

**Zoning is a set of laws** that are used to guide development by dictating the **allowed land 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*



## Building Dimensions

*how much space a building takes up, its height, and the open space around it*



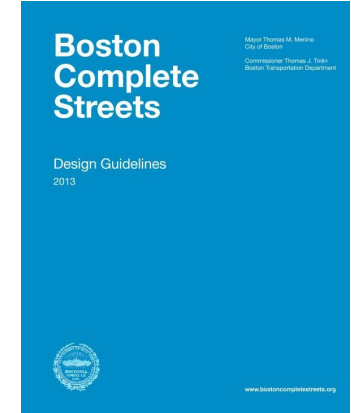
## Other Regulations

*parking and loading, signage requirements, roof deck allowances, and many more*

**Zoning doesn't build or demolish anything; it acts as guides and limits to what people can build.**

# Zoning as a Tool

- Zoning sets rules for development, but **cannot** resolve every problem associated with it
- Other policies and programs **pair with zoning** to support cities in meeting local needs
- Tools like housing funds, community processes for large projects, legal protections, design review, external funding and more **help shape the impact of land use policies**



# Zoning Components - Text and Maps

## Zoning text...

is the written text of the Zoning Code that includes rules for any type of development.

### E.x. Allston-Brighton Zoning Text

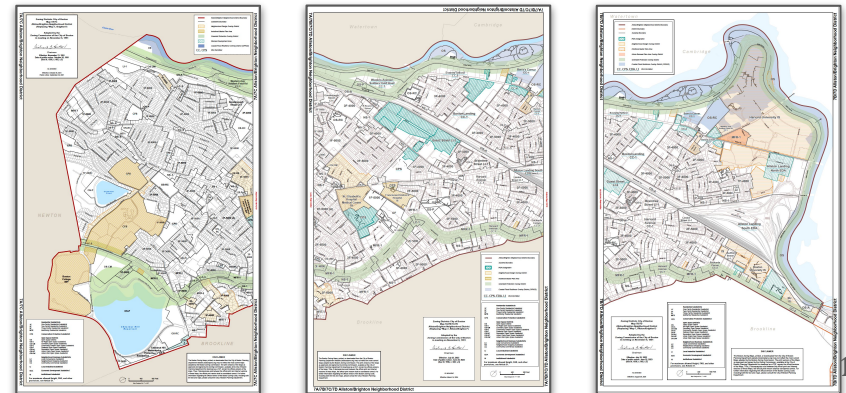
#### Section 51-1. - Statement of Purpose, Goals, and Objectives.

The purpose of this Article is to establish the zoning regulations for a neighborhood plan for the Allston-Brighton Neighborhood District as required by the provisions of the Allston-Brighton Interim Planning Overlay District, Article 27F of this Code. The goals and objectives of this Article, and the Allston-Brighton Neighborhood Plan, and the Western Avenue Corridor Study and Rezoning Report are to provide adequate density controls that protect established residential areas and direct growth to areas where it can be accommodated; to promote mixed-income residential development; to provide for affordable and market rate housing for individuals and families; to promote a viable neighborhood economy; to encourage economic growth, including manufacturing, commercial and research and development, and encourage the diversification of Boston's and Allston-Brighton's economy, with special emphasis on creating and retaining job opportunities; to provide for the well-planned development of institutions to enhance their public service and economic development role in the neighborhood; to preserve, enhance and create open space; to protect the environment and improve the quality of life; to promote the most desirable use of land in accordance with the Allston-Brighton Neighborhood Plan and the Western Avenue Corridor Study and Rezoning Report; and to promote the public safety, health, and welfare of the people of Boston.

## Zoning maps...

include boundaries for the geographic location and application of specific zoning rules in one or more areas of the City.

### E.x. Allston-Brighton Zoning Maps





# Who Does Zoning Apply To?

*Article 80 refers to a section of the zoning code, with rules for the review of larger projects. It also describes how the community learns and shares their feedback about projects.*

## SUB-ARTICLE 80

Changing the use of a property

Constructing an addition on your building

Adding take-out to your restaurant

Construction under 20,000 sf

Other building changes...

## ARTICLE 80 SMALL PROJECTS

Projects between 20,000 sf and 50,000 sf

15 or more housing units



212-214 Market Street

## ARTICLE 80 LARGE PROJECTS

Projects over 50,000 sf



119 Braintree Street

# Land Uses

Within zoning, land “uses” are categorized as **allowed, conditional, or forbidden.**

- Allowed uses are permitted “by-right.”
- Conditional uses are required to meet certain conditions for approval and are only allowed via the granting of a “conditional use permit.”
- Forbidden uses require proof of substantial hardship to be developed and are only allowed via the granting of a “variance.”

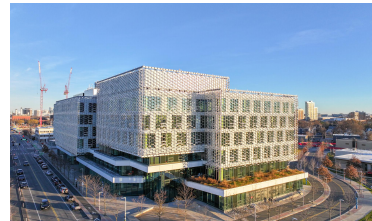
**Different zoning districts allow for different types of uses to be developed.**



Retail / Commercial



Residential



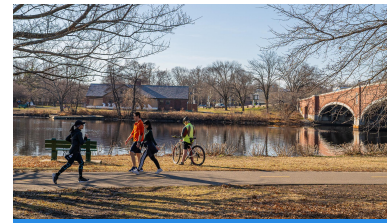
Education



Health Care



Civic



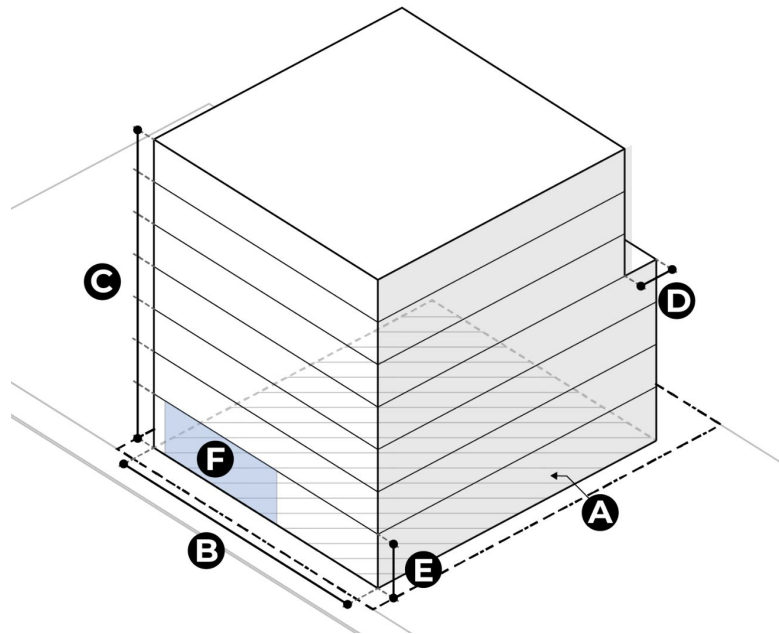
Open Space

Zoning regulates the scale of buildings by **setting limits on dimensions**, including:

- Building lot coverage
- Yards
- Building height
- And more...

These dimensional limits create a maximum potential building scale, known as a “*zoning envelope*.”

**Different zoning districts allow for different scales of buildings to be developed.**





# What if a Project Does Follow Zoning?

**Allowed or As-of-Right:** Uses and dimensional regulations that are allowed by the zoning code, meaning a project can move forward without ZBA appeal if it follows an area's zoning rules.

\*The ZBA (Zoning Board of Appeals) is a 10-member body that reviews and makes decisions on applications seeking zoning relief



62 Antwerp Street, Brighton – **Existing one-unit home** that added an addition and interior improvements without needing zoning relief

# What if a Project Doesn't Follow Zoning?

- **Conditional Use Permit:** A land use that is allowed only if the Zoning Board of Appeal decides that it follows certain conditions set out in the Code
- **Variance:** Permission provided by the Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA\*) for a project that does not follow a specific requirement of the Zoning Code.

*\*Appealing and navigating ZBA approval is a costly process that adds time and financial burden to building new housing, frequently driving up price*



40 Lake Street  
Brighton - **Conditional use** to have community center for young adults with autism



50 Gardner Street  
Allston - **Variance** to convert a one-unit building into a two-unit building





# Why Update Zoning in Allston-Brighton?

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# History of Zoning

Over the past 100 years, each update to zoning has implemented stricter rules and requirements than what existed previously.



(Above): 418 Market St (Washington Building - Imperial Hotel)) was built in 1910. The building's scale would be forbidden using today's zoning.

(Below): 1189 Comm Ave (@ Harvard Ave station) was built in 1930. It's front and rear yards would be illegal under current zoning.



## ZONING TIMELINE

1924

First Iteration of Citywide Zoning in Boston Adopted

1964

Boston Zoning Code first adopted - "base code"

1991

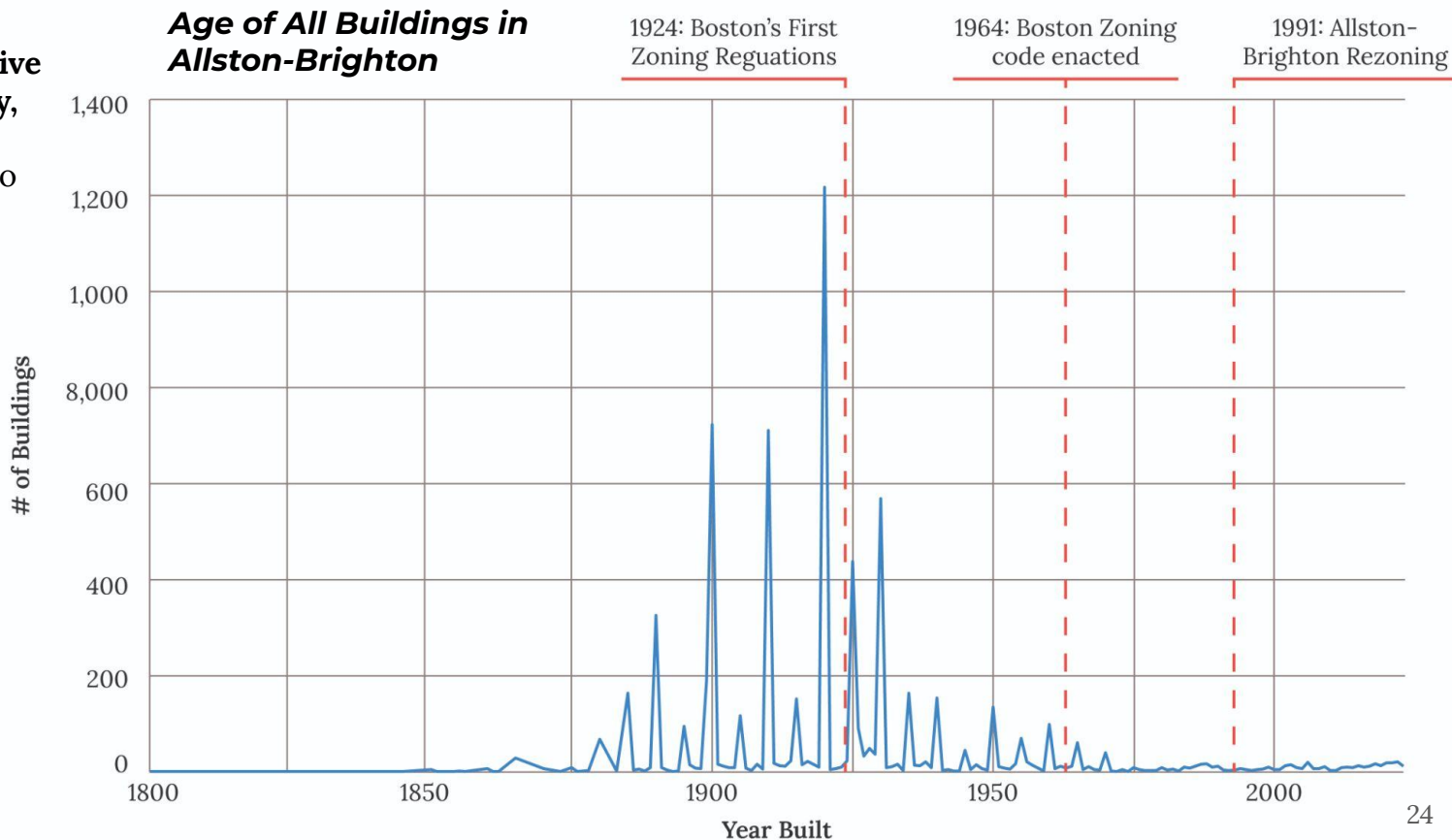
New chapter was added (known as "articles") for Allston and Brighton neighborhoods

**Most of the new neighborhood articles retained or down zoned the scale of allowed development**

# Most of Allston-Brighton Was Built Prior to Modern Zoning

Allston-Brighton's **zoning is not reflective of what is built today**, making it difficult to even build similarly to what is existing.

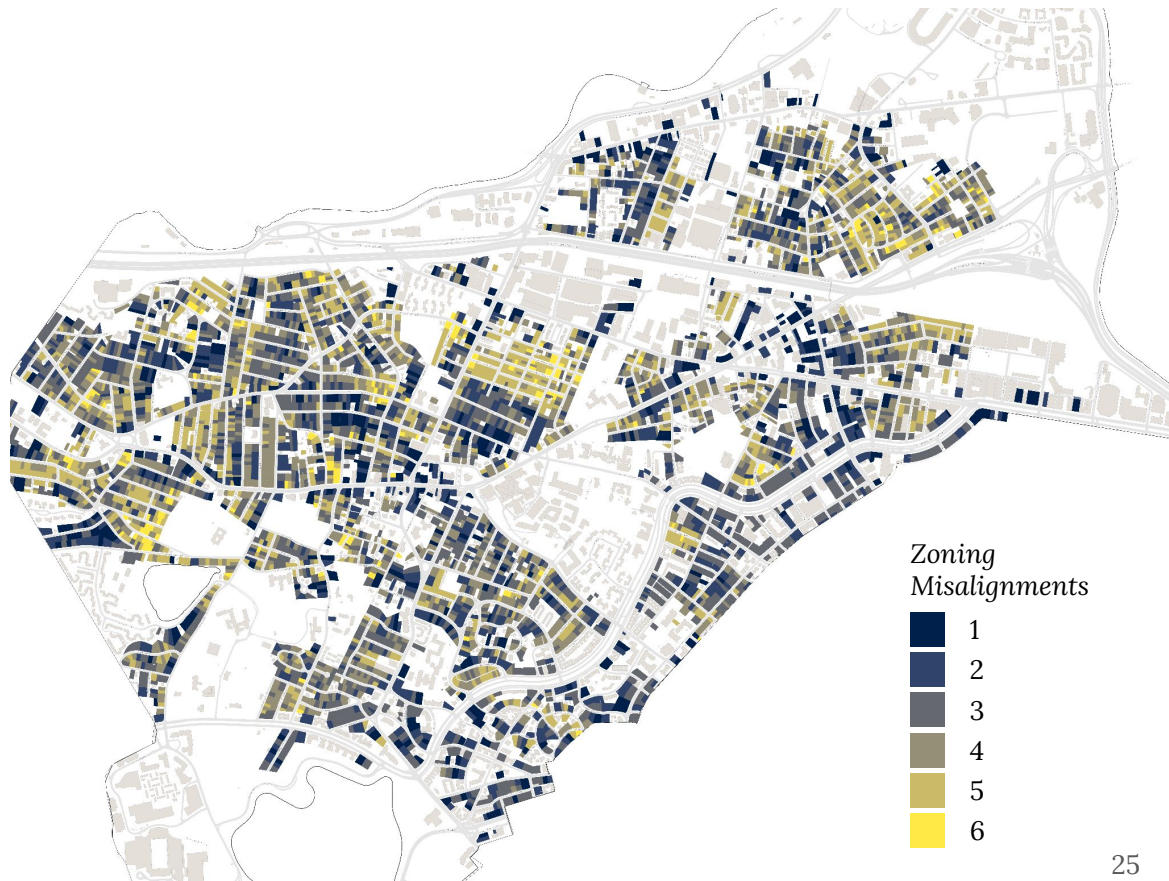
*"I think changes to zoning to downzone areas in the past should definitely be reversed to allow speedier approvals of denser construction in order to fix the housing crisis."*



# Zoning is Poorly Aligned with Small-Scale Residential Properties

Looking at the 6 most common zoning violations, **most small-scale residential properties\*** in Allston-Brighton have zoning that doesn't match what's there today.

The zoning mismatch makes it **challenging, especially at a smaller scale, to do very minor changes**, such as finishing a basement, adding a deck, splitting a unit into two, and many more.



\*Analysis run on “typical” parcel shapes



# Approved New Housing Units

Article 80 and PDA projects constitute the largest share of approved new housing in Allston-Brighton, but the **smaller-scale projects are also crucial** for new housing across the neighborhood.

Since 2022, there have been **2,583 units of housing approved by the ZBA** across 85 projects, including:

**61 additional units**, where property owners are making minor changes, like additions, converting attics and basements, and constructing ADUs.

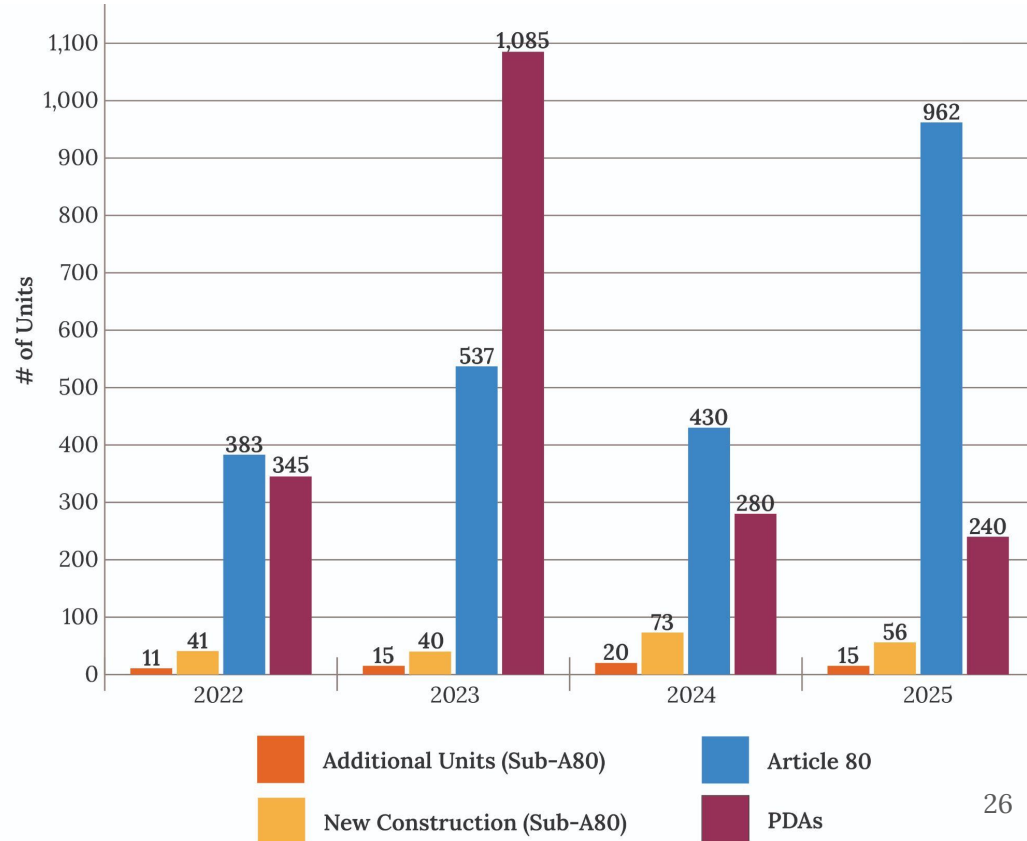
**210 units from small new construction**, including new 1-, 2-, and 3- unit homes, and small multifamily projects up to 14 units.

**2,312 units from Article 80 Small + Large**

An additional 1,950 units have been approved through the Planned Development Area Process (PDAs).

\*Roughly 85% of projects approved by the ZBA receive their building permits.

## Approved\* Units 2022-2025





# How Zoning Advances Planning in A-B

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# Additional Housing Throughout Residential A-B

## Meeting Allston-Brighton's housing needs will take different forms in different places:

- Internal renovations to improve buildings, sometimes adding more units
- Additions to existing buildings that are in line with the surrounding context
- New construction that fits into the surrounding context
- Providing pathways for townhouses, which provide additional units on oddly shaped lots and are more likely to be homeownership units.
- Embracing small multifamily buildings (6-14 units) that include required affordable units and accessible units.



*Addition to Change from 1 to 3 Units - 26 Arlington St*



*Approved Townhouses at 1-7 Selkirk Road*



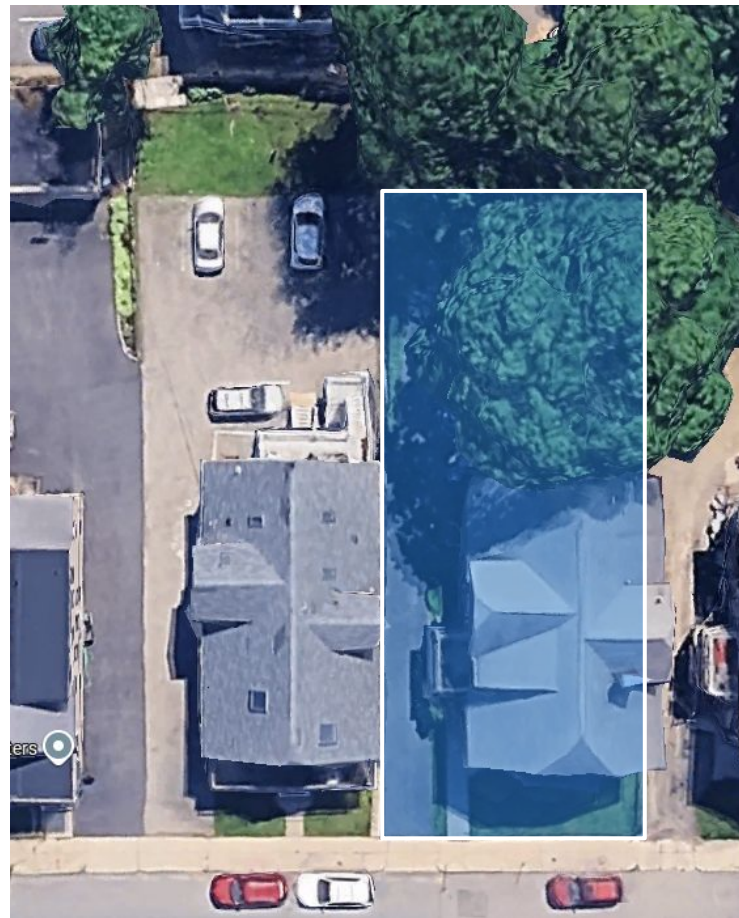


# Residential Zoning Tradeoffs

In smaller residential areas, people **often need to replace green space** and tear down trees **to create required off-street parking**.

ADUs will also take up additional space on the lot, requiring an additional tradeoff in many places between: **ADUs vs. parking vs. trees**.

*“Additional dwelling units! Encourage landowners to partition their lots and create a program to support people who are unable to stay housed in the area to finance small plots and build individual dwelling units that give people independence and support financial health.”*



## ZBA Example

**7 Tip Top Street** near Oak Square got ZBA approval to renovate a two-unit building into four units by adding a basement and building out the attic.

These **two additional units are important incremental infill** to address housing across all scales of the neighborhood, while preserving neighborhood character and built form.





## ZBA Example

**1-7 Selkirk Road** by Cleveland Circle got ZBA approval to construct 4 townhouses on a vacant property.

Townhouses are a **critical pathway towards homeownership**, and provide additional housing within a smaller residential context by maintaining important yards, open space, and in many cases, parking.





## Small Multifamily (6-14 Units)

**Small multifamily** buildings are projects with **6-14 units** of housing.

This scale of housing:

- Can be more **financially feasible for ownership**
- Requires **fire safety** measures and **accessible units**
- Requires **affordable housing** through inclusionary zoning (7+ net units)

*Small multifamily projects can vary in scale and fit into smaller residential contexts.*

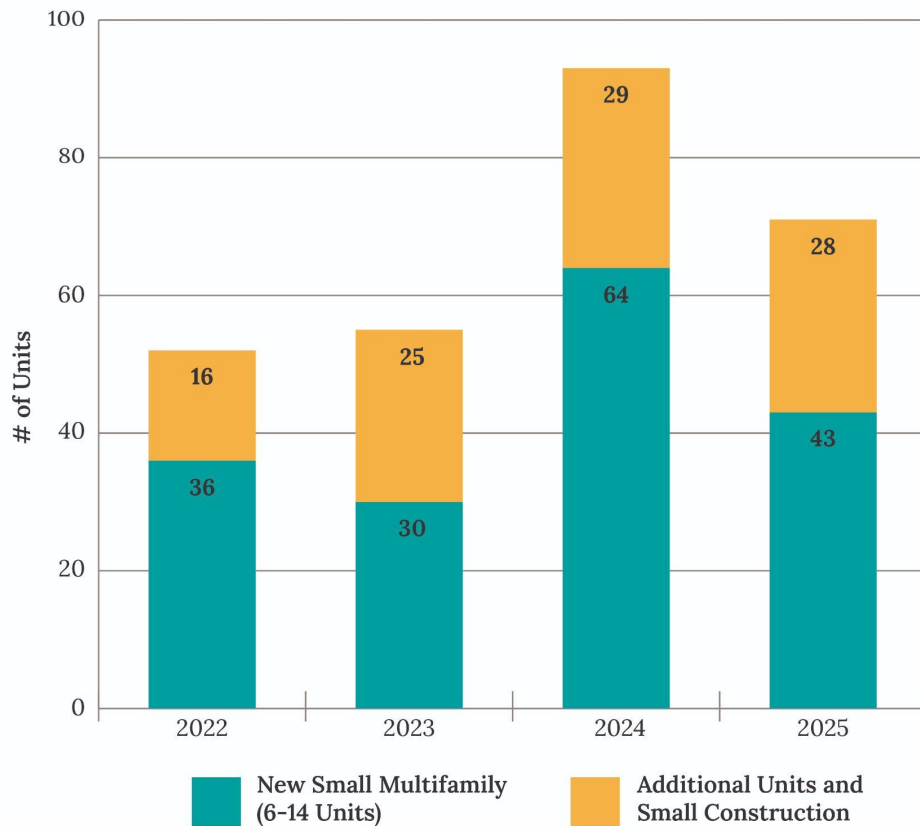


## Small Multifamily are Already Important Projects in A-B

Small Multifamily-scale projects (6-14 units) make up the majority of new approved units in Allston-Brighton (not including Article 80).

**173 units in Small Multifamily buildings have been approved since 2022 across 17 projects.**

*Small Multifamily vs Other Non-Article 80*



## Small Multifamily - Small Residential Context

**Small multifamily** projects exist throughout the neighborhood today, and is a **context-sensitive approach to providing safer and accessible housing** within smaller residential fabric.



*Mansfield Street, Allston*



## ZBA Example

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**27 Shepard Street**, currently under construction, is building 6 new units, **including 4 three-bedroom units**.

The site is also able to support 6 parking spaces, while retaining some tree canopy due to the depth of the parcel.



## Small Multifamily - Denser Context

Small multifamily buildings **also exist in denser parts of the neighborhood**, especially where there are older masonry buildings, like along Commonwealth Avenue.

Small multifamily buildings here have smaller yards, may be built taller, and often don't provide off-street parking.



Park Vale Ave



## ZBA Example

**25 Gardner Street** is a recently-constructed 14-unit building near Allston Village, including **3 income-restricted housing units**.

Projects like this increase the number of **accessible units** by requiring an elevator, and provide additional needed **affordable housing units**.





# Parking

Additional housing density without additional parking can put pressure on already-limited on-street parking spaces.

Strategies to accommodate more parking throughout the neighborhood could include:

- **Adjusting on-street parking regulations**
- In more mixed-use areas, like Brighton Center, Allston Village, and Western Ave, explore **district parking facilities to make curbside space more available**
- Encourage conversion of private parking lots to **publicly-accessible lots**
- Concentrate greater **growth and density around transit** to reduce a reliance on private vehicles



*Surface Lot with Landscaping and Buffers*



*280 Western Ave - Parking Garage Open to Public*

# Mixed-Use Areas

New zoning for mixed-use centers and corridors in the neighborhood can encourage more vibrancy and activation by:

- Requiring active ground floor uses in some locations
- Allowing a diverse range of land uses as-of-right
- Requiring outdoor amenity space for visitors, customers, and residents
- Allowing more housing to bring in more residents to support local businesses

*“Street front, artist work space ought to be encouraged, to bring life and activity to the street, and to support the arts.”*



## Example: Take-Out Restaurants

New zoning regulations can make **opening new businesses**, including restaurants with take-out, **take less time and be less expensive**.

Large **takeout restaurants are conditional in Allston Village today**, meaning they need additional time and approvals to open up.

Opening up Hobson's Bar & Kitchen at the former Regina Pizza site took **4 additional months due to this requirement**. New zoning can alleviate that hurdle.





# Arts + Creative Uses

Arts and creative uses are essential to Allston-Brighton's identity today, and should be going into the future.

**Allowing more uses** like performance venues, artist studios, production spaces, throughout A-B's mixed-use areas **will reduce barriers** for new operators to open or existing ones to expand.

New land use definitions have sizes for entertainment/events uses, meaning **very small performance venues could be allowed in more places.**



Studio 52



Proposed Great Scott



Brighton Music Hall



EXIT Galleries (source: EXIT)

*"Art center for visual  
+ performing arts"*

*"Under 250 capacity  
venues!"*

## Article 80-Scale and PDAs

In more transformative parts of the neighborhood (*not the smaller-scale residential areas*), zoning for **large-scale development can take multiple pathways**:

- Setting **maximum zoning regulations** and delivering projects through **Article 80**.

This can be more predictable in terms of what gets built, because the Article 80 projects would need to adhere to the set zoning regulations.

- Acknowledging that some projects are best suited as **Planned Development Areas (PDAs)**, that set their own zoning through a separate process.

PDAs are much more flexible and only work for large properties (1+ acre), and often include more substantial benefits for public realm, infrastructure, additional housing and more.



E.x. Boston Landing PDA

*“Packard’s Corner is a place where [there is] an opportunity to go big with density [which] would also drive down rents for students and local families who want to live in the area.”*

# What's Next?

*In-Progress*

**City writing Draft Plan  
and Zoning**

*Spring through Summer 2026*

**Draft Plan + Zoning Release**

## **Upcoming Office Hours:**

- **Fri 2/19 12:00-1:00 pm Virtual**
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- Releasing materials including:
  - ◆ Draft Plan document
  - ◆ Draft zoning map
  - ◆ Draft zoning articles
- Public engagement in both large and small settings
- Neighborhood-wide conversations in addition to targeted geographies



# Breakout Groups / Discussion

These 4 breakout groups are an opportunity for open-ended discussion around specific topic areas.

## **Small-Scale Residential (2-3 Groups)**

Strategies for housing in the small-scale resi. parts of A-B

Priorities for existing land/home owners

Trade offs for different types of housing

## **Mixed-Use Areas + Non-Residential (1 Group)**

What land uses should be encouraged in mixed-use areas

How Article 80 and PDA projects work

Priorities for new mixed-use projects and where

## **General Zoning Questions (1 Group)**

What zoning is and clarifying zoning terms

Zoning Board of Appeal process

Understanding zoning reform

## **General ABCP Questions (1 Group)**

What the planning process has been so far

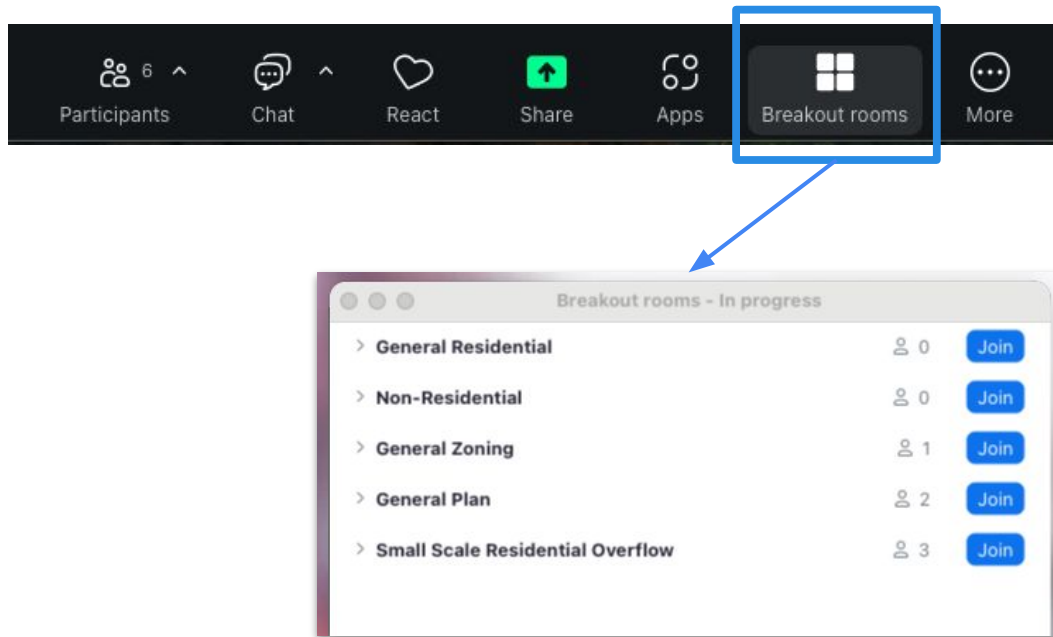
Recap of previous engagement efforts

What's next for the planning process

More info about infrastructure projects

## Breakout Groups / Discussion

- Please move to your small group of choice. If any of the groups are too dense, please let us know and we will create overflow groups.
- If you need interpretation in Cantonese or Spanish please stay in the main room for planning and zoning questions
- If you would like to switch rooms please return to the main room first and then join your desired group.



# THANK YOU

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## HAVE QUESTIONS?

JACK HALVERSON [Jack.Halverson@boston.gov](mailto:Jack.Halverson@boston.gov)

GREY BLACK [Grey.Black@boston.gov](mailto:Grey.Black@boston.gov)

OR VISIT:

[bosplans.org/ABCP](https://bosplans.org/ABCP)





- *General Q: Places where specific land uses should be required? - are there any land uses you'd like to see more or less of in Allston Brighton? Where?*

## 5 Breakout Groups

- Small-scale residential
  - Jack, Lindsay, Grey, Andrew
- Mixed-use areas
  - Ethan, Yewon (A80/PDA)
- General zoning Qs / ZBA process
  - Kathleen
- General plan questions
  - Ben, Matthew
- General questions about planned infrastructure projects
  - Colin

# Breakout Guided Questions

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- Small-scale residential - **3-4 staff**
  - What is important to you when thinking about the smaller-scale residential parts of Allston-Brighton?
  - What are your top priorities when thinking about where new housing should be built?
  - Are there any specific types of new housing you'd want to see in the neighborhood? Where? I.e. duplexes, townhouses, row houses, apartment buildings, etc.
  - What non-residential land uses would you like to have closer to you?
  - What aspects of your building/property do you love?
- Mixed-use areas, arts + culture - **1 staff**
  - What types of arts and culture related uses do you think Allston-Brighton needs more of?
    - Any specific places where those should be?
  - Why do you go to any of these areas? What would make them better in your opinion?
- Big ideas / General plan question - **1 staff**
  -
- Art. 80/PDA scale - **1 staff**
  - *Not directed questions for discussion, space for folks to ask questions about the Article 80 and PDA processes*
- General zoning Qs / ZBA process - **1 staff**

# Why Update Zoning?

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1

Current zoning regulations do not match what's built, what exists, or the ways we've planned to grow

2

Updated zoning sets clear standards for what can be built (and makes it harder to rely on variances)

3

Provide pathways for small scale residential and commercial development that reduce additional time and cost

4

Make the zoning code more legible, predictable, and easy to navigate



# Infrastructure Investment



Next ~5 Years

Next ~10 Years

Next ~15+ Years

**Leo B Parkway Improvements**

Construction →

**Cleveland Circle**

Design + Construction →

**IHOP Rotary Improvements**

Design → Construction? →

**Arsenal/SFR Improvements**

Design → Construction? →

**Allston Village Public Realm**

Design → Construction? →

**B Branch Improvements**

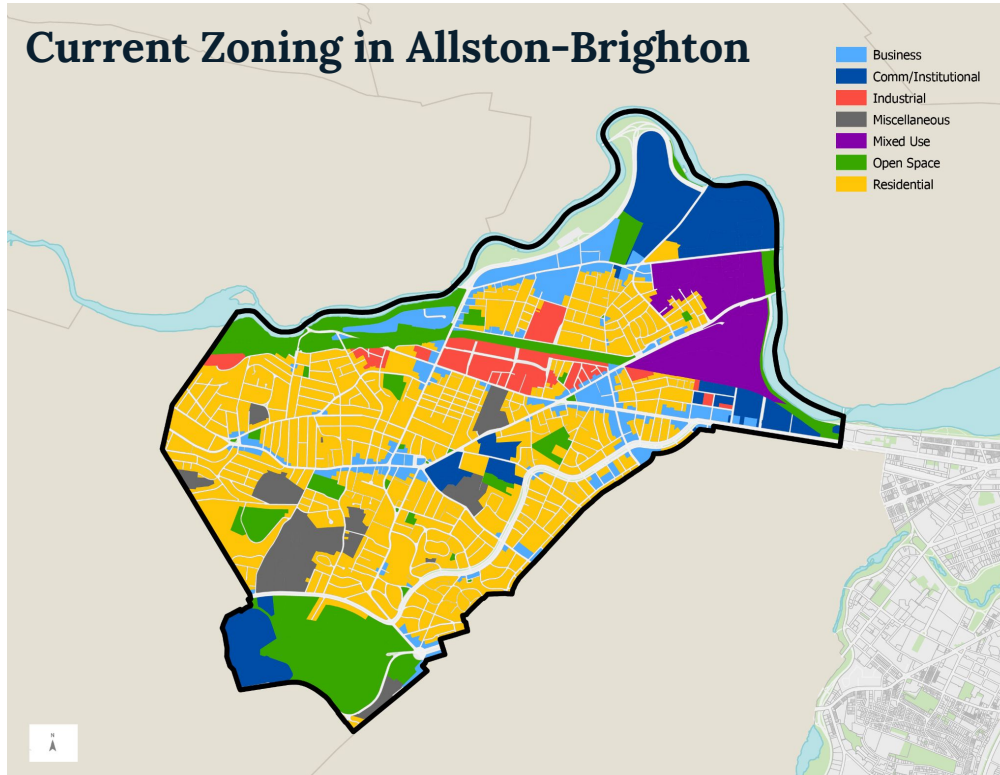
Design → Construction →

**Harvard ERC**

→ Ongoing Design and Construction →

**Beacon Park Yard**

→ Ongoing Design and Construction →



## Residential Zoning

- The **most common type of zoning** in Allston and Brighton is residential (~ 88% of lots)
- Only **17% of lots** (42% of land area square footage) in the neighborhood **allow for multifamily (4+ units) housing**

## Other Takeaways

- **Institutional land** cover ~12% of land area,
- Much of the **industrial land** is in Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for large-scale development like Boston Landing

## Focus Areas + Beyond

Previous engagement examined focus areas, specific places for change across the neighborhood.

There is a **range of envisioned transformation across them**, from little to no change, to significant redevelopment spurred by infrastructure projects.

These focus areas did not address more **residential parts of the neighborhood, which we'll talk more about tonight.**

