

# Public Feedback on January 8, 2025 Draft Downtown Zoning and Planning Department Responses

The City of Boston's Planning Department released a Draft Downtown Zoning amendment and Draft Zoning Map on January 8, 2025. This document contains individual responses written by Planning Department staff to comments received during the public comment period from January 8, 2025, to March 7, 2025.

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**Letter Date:** 1/15/2025 10:58:27 PM

**Letter Subject:** Public Comment

Hi there,

I am a resident of the downtown area and I wanted to give my support for the updated downtown plan. I think more housing is needed and encouragement for developers to build more housing in the area is a critical necessity. I know there is a lot of vocal complaints about the height but with plan to keep the facades of buildings the same I think it will continue to keep the street level feeling the same. This is an area needing development for housing and would do wonders to improve the community by bringing more neighbors into the area and bringing more life to downtown. Thank you for this great plan and I hope for the best for it moving forward.

\*Spencer Phillips\*

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for participating in the process! We believe this revised draft will help enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood while addressing Boston's housing needs. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/18/2025 4:55:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Plan Downtown

As a resident of One Charles Condominiums, I am very concerned about the plan presented in the January 15th meeting.

To me, this plan represents the "Manhattanization" of Boston, and am strongly opposed to that happening in a city with a totally different history, character, and size from that of New York, where I grew up and lived for many years before moving to Massachusetts.

I fully understand the need for additional housing in this city - especially affordable housing; however, Back Bay and the area along Tremont Street is not the place for it based on the lack of services (e.g. supermarkets), the density of traffic that exists already, an old and inadequate trolley system, and the presence of historic buildings and monuments that would be adversely affected by the addition of buildings triple the height of anything in the area now.

Park Plaza and Statler Park, a historic area, already struggles with loss of light, shadows, increased wind, and massive traffic jams due to deliveries at the surrounding hotels and restaurants. When leaving my garage on any given morning during the week, it is common to have to sit for at least ten minutes in a line of cars waiting to get by all of the delivery trucks. The addition of another high rise building in this location would be ludicrous for it's lack of consideration for those already living in this tightly-packed area.

The Planning Department should be attempting to create and maintain the feeling of "neighborhoods" that characterize Boston and contribute to the

beauty and charm of the city that brings so many visitors here. The ambience of the city is important to maintain. In addition, there should be an attempt to support and expand green spaces within any new development and I fail to see anything like that being proposed.

Regards,

Esther Messing

**Response:** We have made changes to the draft based on the feedback received during the public process. Notably, we have eliminated the SKY-R district and expanded the SKY-LOW-D district to better preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including Washington Street and the area around the Old South Meeting House. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 8:21:44 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident and voter. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer more luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Maya Samara

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 8:24:13 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposing PLAN: Downtown

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sarah Mooradian

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 8:45:25 AM

**Letter Subject:** Vehement SUPPORT for the new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials et al,

I feel compelled to register my unequivocal support of recent changes to PLAN: Downtown. It's unfortunate that Rishi and others in the Downtown Boston Neighborhood Association are riling up opposition to what is ultimately a necessary improvement to the zoning and density of Downtown Boston.

When the two most prominent sticking points involve "neighborhood character" and "shadows", you can be sure you've struck a nerve in people who are frozen and time and do not appreciate the urgency of our housing crisis nor the needs of our city and its residents.

While this kind of change shouldn't be brave, in the face of angry mobs like the one that seems to be forming, I should thank you nonetheless for the brave decision to further increase the height and density of our downtown.

Thank you for your work, Jack (John) Perry

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and for participating in the process. We believe this revised draft will help enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood while addressing Boston's housing needs.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 8:52:11 AM

**Letter Subject:** OPPOSITION TO NEW PLAN; DOWNTOWN CHANGES

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**\*Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**\*Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**\*Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Margaret Richardson

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and

enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 9:02:55 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**\*Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks,

which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**\*Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities

of construction and development costs.

**\*Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing

height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference.

Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without

consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Elik Fooks

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 9:28:00 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Izabela Malinowska

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 9:49:55 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident at 2 Avery Street. I am also a mother of two young children (4yr old & 5 month old). I am writing to express my extreme frustration and opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. I believe that the latest revised PLAN is extremely harmful to our neighborhood and frankly makes me reconsider our plans to live downtown.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding

containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I do hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Greer DiPietro

--

Thank you,

Greer DiPietro

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 10:06:04 AM

**Letter Subject:** Major Concerns Regarding Revised Proposal for PLAN: Downtown

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a resident of Downtown Boston, and I am writing to formally express my opposition to the newly revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown. The current iteration significantly deviates from the plan outlined by the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) in December 2023.

**Zoning:** The proposed allowance for developments reaching 500 feet in height along Washington Street and extending into the Back Bay area risks affecting the character of these historic districts, affecting landmark buildings and open spaces. Such developments could also negatively impact tourism in the Ladder Blocks, an area renowned for its concentration of historically significant structures.

**Housing:** Introducing projects up to 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington and Stuart Streets does not align with the city's objective of increasing affordable housing. Considering construction and development costs, affordable housing experts affirm that these towers will likely prioritize luxury residences and unnecessary office spaces.

**Community Input:** Over the past six years, residents, preservationists, non-profit organizations, and the majority of Advisory Group members have consistently provided feedback emphasizing the need to limit building heights in character areas and focus on affordable housing.

Despite this, the Planning Department has disregarded this input with the latest revisions.

These significant changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, presented with a limited public comment period, and submitted to the BPDA Board as a finalized version, which is set for approval within a month.

I respectfully urge the City's Planning Department to consider the following actions:

1. Extend the public comment period by 30 days until March 7th.
2. Honor the plan ratified in December 2023 by expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to encompass Washington and Stuart Streets.

3. Prioritize community feedback and preserve the historical integrity of our neighborhoods while addressing housing needs effectively.

Thank you for considering these concerns.

Sincerely,

Adam Omansky and Family

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 10:28:57 AM

**Letter Subject:** PLAN: Downtown revision

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

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3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jean Wood

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 10:56:17 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Peter Kutz

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

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**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 10:58:24 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

-

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

-

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

-

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely, Nina Truong.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City,

Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 11:10:26 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Pat Cutter

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

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**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 11:23:46 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**\*Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**\*Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

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a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

\*Kathryn Jacob\*

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 11:24:54 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the proposed Downtown zoning

Hello,

I live with my young family in Downtown Crossing. I'm very concerned about the vacant shops in the neighborhood and I'm a huge proponent of revitalizing the area. Washington street and Winter street are such a missed opportunity for the city. I'd love to see more shops, more housing, more people!

However, I'm very concerned with the revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that the BPDA adopted in December 2023. The proposed zoning will dramatically change the area and I'm worried about its impact. I'm a proponent of change, but I'd love it to be thoughtful. I'm also a little shocked about the process of getting to this zoning. From my understanding, there's been a 5+ year process with neighborhood input that's been trumped by the new zoning. It feels premature to approve this zoning I'd really encourage a longer discussion/evaluation period.

Thank you for taking the time to read these concerns, and if you are ever looking for a mom's perspective on Downtown Crossing, please let me know.

Ashley Volwiler.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and emphasizing the need to activate Downtown and encourage more housing! In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations.

We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process. We believe the update is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, while protecting its historic assets. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 11:31:12 AM

**Letter Subject:** Plan Downtown

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Thurer

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

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**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 11:32:53 AM

**Letter Subject:** Subject: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**\*Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

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2.

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3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Joel Berger

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

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**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 11:42:27 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I work in Downtown Boston and am a Back Bay resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic

changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

- Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
- Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
- Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Gregory Heald

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include

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**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 12:17:35 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support of PLAN: Downtown Changes

I've lived in downtown crossing since 2009 and in that time the factor that has made the area nicer and safer is more people. This comes in the form of residential towers - even though they're private enclaves that aren't really part of the social fabric, they still create political attention and some foot traffic. Denser, cheaper housing would be better and the only solution I've ever read about is building more. Supply & Demand 101

I'm delighted that your PLAN: Downtown vision, though conservative and not nearly ambitious enough to dent Boston's housing and affordability crisis, at least did not totally cave to local NIMBYs, most of whom moved here very recently into newly built towers and are now pulling the ladders up behind them to prevent anyone from getting to enjoy what a livable city is.

Now let's get some congestion taxes and start closing more and more roads to vehicular traffic so this walkable core becomes a true neighborhood people can experience instead of huddling on crowded sidewalks. Cars treat stop signs and red lights as optional suggestions, and it's infuriating for those of us who live, work, and play here.

I would say, in the future you should hand hold the advisory body more, as I think their outrage is around not being included enough. Their whining over their hurt feelings created a conduit for people seeking to change the heart of Boston into a suburban oasis to voice their inchoate fury at others' needs being considered. At least their predictable complaints about shadows was shown to be disingenuous due to superseding state laws during the public comment meeting.

Anyway, thanks for trying to continue to improve Downtown Crossing, and for considering that the loudest voices aren't by any stretch the most representative.

-Eric Klose

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and enthusiasm for the process. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 12:50:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

**Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I have been living downtown since 2011 and am a Downtown Boston resident at 1 Franklin Street. I have also been a real estate developer since 1987—so I understand the process and need for good planning for development.

Therefore, based on my background, I am writing to oppose the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Egregious Zoning:** The heights proposed in the PLAN are egregious and obscene. Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**New Affordable Housing for workforce won't be achieved:** Affordable housing experts agree that allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional more affordable housing, given the realities of high interest rates, construction costs and development costs. Instead, it encourages the development of more VERY TALL luxury residential towers while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**Need to respect Community Input:** Over the past 6 years or so, there has been repeated, consistent feedback from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this input, the Planning Department has seemingly unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest Plan proposal. Moreover, these drastic egregious changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short public comment window, and were presumptively presented as a

final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.  
HOW CAN THIS BE A GOOD PROCESS?

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
2. Reduce the size of allowable buildings to contain building heights within character areas.
3. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th and LISTEN to the input.
4. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances good growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Roberta G. Sydney

Roberta G. Sydney

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and

enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 1:32:37 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I have been a Downtown Boston resident for the past 25 years. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic

changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Nazli Erbay, MD

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as

Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 2:12:08 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

**Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 2:14:04 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition Letter

**Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Harvey Leong

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 2:47:53 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to New Plan: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Barry Fidelman

Sent from my iPad

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 4:10:11 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

- 1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

- 2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely

Joseph Kulinets

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 4:38:28 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

- 1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

- 2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Karim Salem MD

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 4:57:27 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Karen Treanton

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 7:48:04 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Bryan Meckley

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 7:59:13 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Elie Balesh

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 10:02:54 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Giuseppe Portoricco

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This message is the property of International Game Technology PLC and/or its subsidiaries and may contain proprietary, confidential or trade secret information. This message is intended solely for the use of the addressee. If you are not the intended recipient and have received this message in error, please delete this message from your system. Any unauthorized reading, distribution, copying, or other use of this message or its attachments is strictly prohibited.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 1/24/2025 11:33:56 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Eileen Drooker

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 5:18:34 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

- Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
- Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

- Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Catherine Mazzacco

Sent from my iPad

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 6:04:17 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Gilles Beaudoin

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 7:44:31 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goals of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made with out consulting the Advisory Group, were offered a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period to 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable house through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Mattoon

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 10:28:44 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Lina H. Hristova

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 11:27:56 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to Plan Downtown and Community Engagement Process

Dear Elected Officials and Planning Department Staff

I have been a Downtown Boston resident for 24 years. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, because it is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street endangers the character of this historic area, landmark buildings and what few open spaces that exist. The proposed zoning change increases the likelihood of demolition of these historic buildings to make room for new high rise construction. This change promotes disinvestment in the affected existing buildings and their consequent deterioration. This deterioration is already happening, especially along the street level. Since Covid, there has been very little investment in retail, for example, at street level especially on Washington Street and the Ladder Blocks.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of high construction and development costs. Instead, it encourages towers that are likely to offer luxury residences and unneeded office space. Instead, zoning should maintain the heights of existing buildings that respect Washington's Street's unique historic character and encourage reinvestment in them.

**Community Input:** The proposed plan ignores community input in the recent past. There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a

month for approval. This type of community engagement is insulting and arrogant on the part of city planning staff and its officials.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to make certain that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Allan A. Hodges. FAICP

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 11:27:56 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to Plan Downtown and Community Engagement Process

Dear Elected Officials and Planning Department Staff

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**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street endangers the character of this historic area, landmark buildings and what few open spaces that exist. The proposed zoning change increases the likelihood of demolition of these historic buildings to make room for new high rise construction. This change promotes disinvestment in the affected existing buildings and their consequent deterioration. This deterioration is already happening, especially along the street level. Since Covid, there has been very little investment in retail, for example, at street level especially on Washington Street and the Ladder Blocks.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of high construction and development costs. Instead, it encourages towers that are likely to offer luxury residences and unneeded office space. Instead, zoning should maintain the heights of existing buildings that respect Washington's Street's unique historic character and encourage reinvestment in them.

**Community Input:** The proposed plan ignores community input in the recent past. There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

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I hope these concerns are addressed to make certain that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Allan A. Hodges. FAICP

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by

formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 11:40:13 AM

**Letter Subject:** PLAN: Downtown

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to join the chorus of opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which seems to be significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

- Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
- Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
- Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Cordially

Robert Jacob

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 11:47:32 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I live in Downtown Boston. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

**Shadows:** Our cities Boston Common and Public gardens are center pieces of the Famed Emerald Necklace. Placing 500' buildings adjacent to these open spaces will result in new shadows which will leave these parks in the dark most of the day.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Mark Iafrati MD

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale

not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 12:28:00 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Dorene and Alan Nemeth

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 2:34:42 PM

**Letter Subject:** OPPOSITION TO DOWNTOWN BOSTON PLAN--Surprise zoning change!

Dear Elected Leaders,

I am a resident of Downtown Crossing at 1 Franklin Street, Millennium Tower and a member of the Millennium Tower Board as well. I am an active community resident and met with several of your offices during the past few years about the state bottle bill and other environmental issues.

Today, I am calling on you to stop a plan that was shockingly made public last week at a Zoning hearing that hosted more than 200 residents. I voiced my opposition and have heard from more than 100 other residents in our building and other buildings in the neighborhood. The plan to make a radical change at the eleventh hour to alter the height of buildings from 150' to more than 500' is alarming. Mr. Shen, who hosted the meeting, seemed to plead ignorance of the plan that his office was proposing since he has only been in his job for 3 months. He had his staff answer questions. He never explained where this 35 story change came from or who was behind it. The entire Zoom call was an insult to residents who have actively participated in trying to shape this neighborhood for years. We have invested in make it a residential neighborhood with mixed use. We did not buy in a high rise tower in the Seaport, we chose to be in a neighborhood that we committed to making more of a community. This plan does the EXACT OPPOSITE of what we hoped. As voting residents and taxpayers, we call on all of you to respect the 155' height recommendation from the neighborhood and prioritize condo conversions with incentives instead of promoting luxury high rises and destroying the fabric of Downtown Crossing.

I would appreciate a response.

Thank you,

Anne Peacher

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the process. We have made changes to the draft based on the feedback received during the public process. Notably, we have eliminated the SKY-R district and expanded the SKY-LOW-D district to better preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including Washington Street and the area around the Old South Meeting House. Alongside safeguarding the unique character of some of Boston's most historic areas, we remain firmly committed to enabling inclusive growth and new housing in the heart of our City. This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address our housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 3:31:48 PM

**Letter Subject:** Strong Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Change-Betrayal of prior commitment

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees,

I am a Downtown Boston resident living on Franklin Street. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN:

Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will ruin the unique historical charm of the City which will lose its appeal to visitors and residents for good. I thought that the prior plan was finally giving full protection of the Washington character once for all for us and future generations. For residents, it gives the sense that nothing is off limit in Boston, so why invest in it?

Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. All experts agree that this "affordable housing" is a myth being pushed by developers, who are only waiting to get their hands on this opportunity to build luxury housing.

Again and again, Boston's city planners are caving in to the pressure from developers all that for quick money.

There are other more suitable sites for such development in Boston, which

would accomplish this affordable housing goal and protect the character of the City, the Gillette site for example, or that area.

Community Input: It is scandalous that all the prior input and feedback over 6+ years are being erased to cave to private interests or for political gains which won't solve even the real housing issue. This is a complete disregard of the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 3-6 months to allow proper review.
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives and considering better suited areas.
4. Push back on the pressure from developers

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Coralie Schwartz

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median

Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 3:40:05 PM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown Changes

<<https://bosdowntown.org/plan-downtown>>

I am a Downtown Boston taxpayer and resident.

I am writing to express my opposition to the latest unplanned revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown. Why do I say unplanned? I say this because this new plan is significantly different than the plan adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

Given the city's goals of having more affordable housing, the escalating costs for construction, and the already massive construction projects in the Sea Port, allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not address any of these issues. Instead, this plan invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

Many of us who attended the meeting where the new plan was announced felt unheard and left the meeting feeling that no matter what was said, this was a done deal. How is it possible that taxpayers feel this way? Feeling unheard is also consistent with a sense that downtown is all about taxes and not the establishment of a safe community with little if nothing done about concerns for personal safety.

There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval. The Downtown planning process, the first major master planning effort for Downtown Boston since 1989, is intended to inform how the neighborhood has been developed and shaped for decades. The PLAN: The Downtown Advisory Group worked with the City of Boston to develop a thoughtful master plan, which was adopted in December 2023. The City's Planning Department was then tasked with coming up with appropriate zoning and design guidelines to

codify these plans. On January 15th, 2025, the City's Planning Department introduced a dramatically different set of plans and zoning that calls for the development of towers that are up to 500 feet in height (instead of 155 feet) along the entirety of Washington Street and other parts of the neighborhood. The City is looking to push through these new plans without appropriate community and stakeholder engagement. The Downtown Boston community deserves to have a say in the future of the neighborhood.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs and safety.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Ives Erickson

**Response:**

**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 3:53:54 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

-

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

-

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

-

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Tigran Papazian.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 3:59:45 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes - Please HELP!

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**\*Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**\*Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**\*Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

\*Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th\*

2.

\*Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets\*

3.

\*Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives\*

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Peter Jones

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 4:54:37 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes Zoning Amendments

**RE:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes Zoning Amendment

I live in Millennium Tower. I have many concerns about your proposed changes. The speed with which they seem to be close to approval is the most immediate concern.

Several thoughts here come to mind:

You are steamrolling this through. And why?

The appearance is that graft is involved, all too often seen in our politics.

The new administrator seems unfamiliar with the history of Boston, the politics of urban planning in our American cities,

and the economics of high rise construction.

For many reasons this amendment is badly thought out. I will name the two that come first to mind.

1. Most of the streets in this area are one way. And Washington St. is a pedestrian street. How can these factors possibly

handle more traffic. One look at the corner of Park and Tremont should make that obvious. Not to mention School St.

Not to mention access to the building that might be built which would demand underground parking.

2. Very high new buildings are so very expensive to build to today's standards that they must contain luxury condos or

apartments or high end commercial tenants. And as far as street level businesses, I see far too many empty spaces now.

At the very least, more time must be allowed for community input. And I must hope that our objections will be heard.

Catharine Burke

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. We believe the update is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, while protecting its historic assets. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/25/2025 7:01:22 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown changes

Dear Mr. Nahamias,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I have owned a condominium in Millennium Tower for more than 8 years, and plan to live here for many, many more years. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. I attended the January 15 zoom call to discuss the new Plan: Downtown changes and this is my unique view on why I oppose the latest revision. This is not a cut and paste letter.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area. I am a member of, but Revolutionary Spaces and am especially concerned about the effect these high-rises will have on the structural health of the Old South Meeting House, as well as throwing shadow on the Boston Common.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable and offers diversity of housing, given the realities of construction and development costs, even with inclusionary zoning. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer more luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree that this is not going to achieve the city's affordable housing goal, including Ms. La Frazia, president of St. Francis House, who spoke out against the proposed revisions.

**Traffic and Parking:** Many people drive to their residences, many walk, and many take public transportation. Has there been any thought to how the area will be able to accommodate the additional car, pedestrian, and bus traffic needed for these new proposed residents? The downtown streets are already flooded with traffic daily, and there is always overflow traffic when there are accidents on the roads leading out of the city. How will additional residences affect traffic? Will the

pedestrian-only area of Washington Street have to begin to accommodate regular traffic of cars, ubers, lyfts, and even more delivery mopeds?

Quality of Life: Permitting high rises to be added to the top of the existing 100-year old buildings in our neighborhood will not make downtown more beautiful, but it will destroy the character of our historic area and these buildings. Instead, the high rises will create even more of a wind tunnel, and pedestrians will feel overwhelmed by the dense high rises. Downtown will have a dystopian feel. The sunlight will be blocked. We will be forced to traverse a dense steel and glass canyon just like in other easily forgettable cities. Downtown Boston will lose its charm, character, and appeal.

Creativity is Needed: We know there are vacant storefronts and commercial buildings downtown, as there are in many other downtowns. The solution to getting these buildings occupied isn't building high-rises, but rather renovation and retrofitting of the existing buildings to accommodate housing, retail, entertainment and offices. It will take creativity and site-specific solutions, such as the Wndr Museum, and other recent additions to downtown, to revitalize the downtown area.

Community Input: The January 15, 2025 community zoom call to discuss the PLAN: Downtown was not conducted in a way to give the community any real insight into what the latest revisions would look like, or time to absorb the revisions. There was no analysis offered explaining what the revisions would mean to the community, no drawings or scaled models of what the neighborhood would look like afterwards, and no analysis of the economic or environmental effect these revisions would have on the community. There was no effort made to explain what alternatives to these revisions had been considered before they were issued. I understand that there has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations. I also understand that the majority of the Advisory Group advocated for containing height in character areas while also advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, it appears that the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by at least 30 days to March 7th;

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155' height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets;

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives;

Provide drawings, models, and thorough reports on how the revisions will affect the community.

I hope my concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown includes an opportunity for true community involvement, by providing useful and constructive drawings and diagrams, offering both pros and cons to the proposed revisions, and balancing growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Alayne Green Shapiro

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The new draft also introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts

on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/26/2025 2:43:26 AM

**Letter Subject:** Statement in Opposition to PLAN: Downtown changes

Dear Fellow Bostonians,

This statement is submitted to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which was presented to our downtown community on a January 15th zoom call. From the near unanimous comments made on that zoom call, I learned that this proposal is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. My opposition to this proposal is both substantive and procedural - following are just a few of the reasons:

1. If the goal of city officials is to create additional housing that is more affordable and offers a greater diversity of housing options, allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street - as is a key feature of the changes made in this proposal - will not help achieve such goal, even with inclusionary zoning. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer more luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.
2. Increasing the permissible building height to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings and open spaces. This will adversely impact tourism in the area, which attracts countless tours and visitors to the many historically significant buildings in the area. As a member of Revolutionary Spaces, I am especially concerned about the effect these high-rises will have on the structural health of the Old South Meeting House and Old State House.
3. Even assuming the development of high-rise buildings in the new SKY-R Zone will attract affordable housing, the proposal gives no answer to how the area will be able to accommodate the additional car and pedestrian traffic, parking and public transportation needs. The downtown streets are already flooded with traffic daily, and there is always overflow traffic when there are accidents on the roads leading out of the city. Will the pedestrian-only area of Washington Street have to accommodate increased traffic from cars, taxis/Ubbers/Lyfts, and even more delivery mopeds?

4. Permitting high rises to be added to the top of the existing 100-year old buildings in our neighborhood will not make downtown more beautiful, but it will destroy the character of our historic area and these buildings. Instead, the high rises will create even more of a wind tunnel, and pedestrians will feel overwhelmed by the dense high rises. Downtown will have a dystopian feel. The sunlight will be blocked. Downtown Boston will lose its charm, character and appeal. We are not Midtown Manhattan, nor do we want to be.

5. It is clearly acknowledged that there are vacant storefronts and commercial buildings in the downtown area. However, the solution to getting these buildings occupied isn't building additional high-rises, but rather renovation and retrofitting of the existing buildings to accommodate housing, retail, entertainment and offices. It will take creativity and site-specific solutions, such as the Wndr Museum and other recent additions to downtown, to revitalize the downtown area.

6. Finally, on a procedural note, the January 15, 2025 community zoom call to discuss the PLAN: Downtown was not conducted in a way to give the community any real insight into what the latest revisions would look like, or time to absorb the revisions. There was no analysis offered explaining what the revisions would mean to the community, no drawings or scaled models of what the neighborhood would look like afterwards, and no analysis of the economic or environmental effect these revisions would have on the community. There was no effort made to explain what alternatives to these revisions had been considered before they were issued. I understand that there has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations. I also understand that the majority of the Advisory Group advocated for containing height in character areas while also advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, it appears that the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by at least 30 days to March 7, 2025;
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155' height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets;

3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives; and
4. When further revised per the above, to provide drawings, models and thorough reports on how the revisions will affect

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The new draft also introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/26/2025 9:11:44 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Adam Volwiler

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s)

and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/26/2025 10:08:01 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

-

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

-

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

-

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Xin Wang.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City,

Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/26/2025 11:12:07 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jane E. Freedman

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/26/2025 2:44:53 PM

**Letter Subject:** Subject: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Robert Klein

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/26/2025 4:18:43 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new downtown plan

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Eloise (Tweedy) Watkins

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/26/2025 4:20:25 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to Latest Downtown Plan-Sky District

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Carole Mathieson

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/26/2025 4:51:15 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston condo owner. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

- 1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

- 2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Susan Kessaram

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City,

Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 1/26/2025 7:21:37 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

- 1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

- 2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Louay Abrass, DMD

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/26/2025 7:56:14 PM

**Letter Subject:** Objection to Revised PLAN:Downtown

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am one of many Downtown Boston residents who have had the revised proposal for PLAN:Downtown bombshell dropped in my lap. Please register me as being opposed to the latest revised proposal. This new plan diverges wildly from what was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023, and diverges to such a degree that the plan effectively qualifies as having been produced without consultation with the relevant stakeholders. This does not appear to be a consultative process, but, in effect, an authoritarian one.

Because of the shockingly short discussion period, I have not time to do other than broadly agree with the points made in the template letter, a part of which follows. I feel that more than trebling the allowed height for buildings along the entire length of the Downtown Crossing portion of Washington Street, on its own, is an indication that consultation exists in name only, and that the residents and other stakeholders in this area are not to be seriously considered.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions.

Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Debra Davis

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

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**Letter Date:** 1/26/2025 8:14:25 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Pamela Carr

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/26/2025 8:59:07 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

-

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

-

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

-

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Michele Guzzi.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 6:27:23 AM

**Letter Subject:** OPPOSITION to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

-

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

-

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

-

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jill S. Silverstein.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 7:48:57 AM

**Letter Subject:** PLAN: Downtown

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

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I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

David Maister

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 8:42:21 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

- Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
- Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
- Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jim Ryan

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 10:45:41 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Mr. Huang,

I have been living downtown since 2011 and am a Downtown Boston resident at 1 Franklin Street. I have also been a real estate developer since 1987—so I understand the process and need for good planning for development. Therefore, based on my background, I am writing to oppose the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Egregious Zoning:** The heights proposed in the PLAN are egregious and obscene. Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**New Affordable Housing for workforce won't be achieved:** Affordable housing experts agree that allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional more affordable housing, given the realities of high interest rates, construction costs and development costs. Instead, it encourages the development of more VERY TALL luxury residential towers while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**Need to respect Community Input:** Over the past 6 years or so, there has

been repeated, consistent feedback from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this input, the Planning Department has seemingly unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest Plan proposal. Moreover, these drastic egregious changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short public comment window, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval. HOW CAN THIS BE A GOOD PROCESS?

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
2. Reduce the size of allowable buildings to contain building heights within character areas.
3. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th and LISTEN to the input.
4. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances good growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Roberta G. Sydney

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 10:48:32 AM

**Letter Subject:** Preserving Our Heritage, Envisioning Our Future

Dear Mayor Wu, Council President Louijeune and Esteemed City Officials,

Writing to express deep concern regarding the recent zoning proposals under PLAN Downtown, which suggest permitting building heights up to 700 feet in the vicinity of the Old South Meeting House. This significant increase from the previously agreed-upon 155-foot limit threatens to overshadow one of our nation's most cherished historic sites.

The Old South Meeting House stands as a testament to our enduring struggle for liberty and justice. Erecting towering structures in its immediate surroundings risks not only the physical integrity of this landmark but also the rich historical narrative it embodies.

Respectfully urge the Boston Planning Department to:

- \* Reinstatement of the 155-foot height restriction along the Washington Street corridor, especially between Milk and State Streets, to safeguard our Revolutionary-era architecture.
- \* Promote development projects that prioritize the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures while ensuring affordable housing solutions for our rising diverse community.
- \* Extend the public comment period and postpone the Board's decision to allow for comprehensive community engagement and thoughtful deliberation on these pivotal changes.

As we envision a greater Boston's future, let us draw inspiration from the best of our past, ensuring that progress and preservation walk hand in hand. By honoring our historical treasures, we can create a cityscape that reflects both our rich heritage and our aspirations for a vibrant, fair future.

Thanks for your attention to this matter. Look forward to our collaboration in honoring Boston's unique legacy as the birthplace of America and so many others, including my own.

Sincerely,

Toby Chaudhuri

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The new draft also introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 11:45:11 AM

**Letter Subject:** PLAN: Downtown Changes Feedback

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

As a Downtown Boston resident of two years, I strongly oppose the latest revisions to PLAN: Downtown. These changes threaten the quality of life for residents and the unique character of the Boston Common area, which must remain a welcoming, open space for everyone to enjoy.

Allowing 500-foot developments along Washington Street and into Back Bay will disrupt the balance of these historic neighborhoods, overshadowing landmark buildings and public spaces. The Boston Common and surrounding areas are not just central to Boston's identity but serve as vital spaces for connection, recreation, and tourism. Sacrificing this balance in favor of towering luxury developments prioritizes commercial interests over the needs of the people who live here.

The revised plan also disregards years of community feedback and was presented without meaningful consultation or adequate time for public input.

I urge the Planning Department to reconsider these revisions, extend the comment period by 30 days, and work toward a plan that preserves the Boston Common area as a livable, vibrant space that serves all residents and visitors.

Sincerely,

Robbie Ashton

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The new draft also introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 11:47:53 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to New Plan:Downtown changes

Dear Members,

We are Downtown Boston residents. We are writing to express our opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

The only thing worse than not asking for community feedback is to ask for that feedback for years and then completely ignore it. There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

Moreover, allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

We urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D

boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

We hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

David & Mary Hawkins

Sent from my iPad

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density,

where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 12:00:15 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered

with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Lisa Conti

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 12:32:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Feedback and concerns to Downtown Zoning Update

Dear Boston Planning Department,

I am writing to voice my concern on the latest PLAN: Downtown and Downtown Zoning Update. I attended the open Zoom meeting held on January 15th at 6PM and was quite surprised how lackadaisical the meeting was handled with regard to community concern. Furthermore, the updated plan did not show the residents the benefits of what you are proposing. To date, nothing in this update explains why a resident would find this new zoning beneficial. We cannot trust a planning department that doesn't solve current issues by piling on more problems.

Here are my concerns:

1) Historically significant buildings

Unlike most of America, Boston is a unique city with many parts of town having historical value, which also adds to the charm of the city. If you are so inclined to repurpose the downtown zoning to change the skyline, what is to stop you from continuing to do so, at some point, in the Back Bay, Beacon Hill and the North End? This zoning update will be the start of a domino effect across all of Boston where historical buildings will be eradicated. The city has other spots that can endure skyscrapers. Sky-R Zone is not one of them.

2) Housing

What is the goal here, affordable housing or high end real estate to continue to fund the lion's share of the city's expenses? These are two distinct goals which are being conflated. Your messaging conflicts with the supposed goals.

3) Adult Entertainment expansion

I asked about this very issue in the Zoom call, as it affects me directly as a mother. The answer given was that by law the city is required to have this available. Why expand it to mingle with residential housing with conditional permission? This puts the onus on the residents to prove why adult entertainment and families with children should not mix - an exercise unfathomable to any parent. Why wouldn't you contain it to one block with no housing if it is so required? It is obvious children and family welfare are being disregarded. We already have enough issues with

sexual assaulters living in the homeless shelters in this area. This is like putting milk in front of a cat and not expecting it to taste or drink the milk.

#### 4) Services

You fail to address how you will solve issues that currently plague the city:

##### a) Parking

Residents and staff who live and will work in these high rises need somewhere to park. If the T and public transportation were reliable, more people would use it and the MBTA wouldn't be in debt. Adding more bike lanes to compress the already exacerbated traffic issue does not address the problem. The few parking garages will raise their rates and create a monopoly on parking, let alone the congestion which already creates a liability for emergency services.

##### b) Trash and Rodent issues

Collecting trash is currently not done efficiently. The rats have not only bred colonies vying for dominance, they are a health hazard to the residents of Boston. You cannot control the current situation by adding more food sources and homes for those rodents to proliferate and hid in. Present a viable and practical solution to the current rat problem. They're no longer afraid of humans!

#### 5) Comment period

Lastly, I kindly ask that you extend the comment period to show good faith that you are serious about community input. Bulldozing forward states the opposite.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Zouncourides-Lull

**Response:** Thank you for sharing your feedback. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and take important steps to

strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update focuses on zoning tools to support Downtown, building off of PLAN: Downtown's policy recommendations for the area. It is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods.

Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

Boston is required to have an Adult Entertainment District. The proposed zoning change does not expand the district but rather adjusts its boundaries to align with existing parcels and removes the district from buildings along Stuart St.

Boston is actively working to mitigate the rodent population through the Boston Rodent Action Plan, a coordinated initiative involving multiple agencies. This plan aims to collaborate on rodent mitigation strategies and leverage a wide range of expertise to effectively address the issue.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 12:43:37 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new Plan: Downtown Changes

27 January 2025

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders:

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, The Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as the final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval:

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th.
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets.

3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives.

I hope these concert are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Barbara M. Ginader

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median

Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 12:47:38 PM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown Zoning Plan

Dear Committee members:

I have given downtown walking tours for over 15 years: Tourism in Boston depends upon retaining not just isolated buildings, but the street-scape of the past. If we continue an earlier mayor's policy of high-rise "glass boxes" as a source of bigger taxes, we will lose the whole character of the city.

We Boston voters need more input from all those affected by the current plan.

Sincerely,

Martha Vicinus

BostonbyFoot guide

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and giving such wonderful tours of the City, especially the Ladder Blocks! We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process. This includes eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to help maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The zoning includes additional measures to reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and incentivize conversion.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 12:56:57 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

\*Dear City of Boston members and representatives of PLAN: Downtown, \*  
I'm writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period.\* I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan \*and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters \*and to push back the Board vote\* where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Hannah Spicher

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 1:01:17 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

(Don't forget to cc your city councilors and add your name and address at the end)

Dear [NAME],

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Thomas Damigella

President North End Historical Society

PS the same historic consideration should also be given to the Bulginch Triangle. The new plans are not suitable to the neighborhood

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 1:21:16 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

To whom it may concern,

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully draft comment letters, and for the BPD to digest that feedback and incorporate improvements to reflect those concerns...along those lines, the Board vote should be pushed back to allow for a full, fair, and meaningful community process.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. However, adding housing and other types of buildings should not be a blank check for destroying historic architecture and the historic character of Boston's neighborhoods. Buildings can be renovated and reused instead of replaced by lesser quality contemporary structures, which would not only preserve the city's history, but is more environmentally friendly because less demolition waste goes into landfills. The more Boston cannibalizes its history, the less it will appeal to residents and tourists alike who live and visit here because of Boston's long, important history. Tourism is a huge part of Boston's economy, and history tourism, especially, should not be taken lightly.

I hope the BPD will ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect the values and needs of our community, while also maintaining Boston's key claim to fame: its history.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jennifer Uhrhane

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 1:22:37 PM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown Zoning Amendment is Unexpected and Rushed

This came across my desk this morning - I'm very concerned that these changes are being rammed through the system without proper time for comment, community input and changes to serve all stakeholders - especially us residents who already live and pay taxes in the city and treasure the historic character of our downtown buildings.

\*The accelerated evaluation and comment period for the latest Downtown zoning text amendment is unacceptable.\*

I stand with the The Boston Preservation Alliance. We are disappointed that the City issued a surprise amendment

<<https://bostonpreservation.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=de0ef0e6aa8d9d174f0dc6d91&id=0e86c61b3c&e=ec59a1395f>>

to

the Downtown Zoning draft on January 8, 2025, with only a three-week comment period. We have been actively engaged in the PLAN:Downtown

<<https://bostonpreservation.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=de0ef0e6aa8d9d174f0dc6d91&id=f3b4585fba&e=ec59a1395f>>planning

initiative for over six years. This plan is intended to inform zoning updates for downtown. This amendment and the breakneck speed of the public comment process are critically out of step with the carefully built consensus coming out of the PLAN:Downtown effort. We are collaborating with other stakeholders to ask for both an extended deadline and an opportunity for meaningful dialogue with the Mayor and the Planning Department.

The Alliance's Concerns:

The proposed amendment alleges to protect historic resources. It does not. It facilitates the construction of up to 500 residential buildings in the Ladder District and adjacent to historic landmarked sites such as the Old South Meeting House and Old State House.

While acknowledging that over 90% of the building stock in the downtown study area is historic, much of the zoning and guidelines address new construction without enough emphasis on adaptive reuse as a preferred development strategy. Instead, the language repeatedly references "historic façades."

Facadism, the practice of keeping the front wall of a historic building while constructing an entirely new building behind it is not building reuse. It is a strategy of last resort once other methods of working with the current building are ruled out, not a starting point. And it is certainly not to be encouraged in the zoning at a time when existing buildings all over the city are being renovated to create more affordable housing in a sustainable way.

We are not opposed to initiatives that create housing that is affordable for all types of residents and families, nor increased height in our neighborhoods in general. But there are smarter ways to encourage affordable housing than zoning for 500' luxury residential towers. The City's Office to Residential Conversion

<<https://bostonpreservation.us3.list-manage.com/track/click?u=de0ef0e6aa8d9d174f0dc6d91&id=40bd2914a8&e=ec59a1395f>>

incentive

program is an example of a creative solution to an immediate problem.

\*The Alliance and people like you can demand 1) protection of landmarked structures, the Ladder Districts' unique character, and the 19th-century character of Washington Street; and 2) increased focus on adaptive reuse and continued use – actually saving our historic buildings for the City and residents rather than just creating a Disneyesque facade.\*

We join with our fellow PLAN:Downtown Advisory Group members, the public, and downtown stakeholders – 230 of whom attended a tense public meeting in which nearly every commenter (verbal and in the chat) expressed their opposition to the proposed zoning changes and incredibly short comment period. Their voices were clear, saying this process is unacceptable. We echo the concerns of our community partners that the most drastic change in the amendment – the introduction of a third height zone (called SKY-R) along Washington Street and Stuart Street which would allow new towers up to 500' high – cannot be vetted on an accelerated timeline. This is a substantial increase from the previous 155' height limit.

By clearly asserting that the proposed zoning will be presented to the BPD Board in February, Chief Kairos Shen has demonstrated that the public process will not be meaningful; the outcome is a foregone conclusion, and the limited comment period is merely a way to check a box.

Thank you for your consideration and hopefully change to your timing of the review period for this amendment.

Respectively yours,

Jill Christians

Boston Resident since 1990

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The new draft also introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 1:25:02 PM

**Letter Subject:** Plan Downtown Zoning Amendment

**SUBJECT:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Ellen Lipsey,

Member of the Board, Revolutionary Spaces

and Boston resident

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 1:26:41 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding

containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs. THANK YOU.

Sincerely,

Robin

Robin S. Weinberger

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 1:43:33 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear Sirs, Madams

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community Peter Ioannilli

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 1:51:37 PM

**Letter Subject:** Plan Downtown

**Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

-

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

-

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Janel S. Wong

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 1:53:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Hello,

As a new Boston resident deeply interested in historic preservation, climate mitigation, and fair housing, I am writing to ask that the comment deadline for the Downtown Zoning amendment be extended beyond February 5th. I feel that the proposed changes to our downtown zoning will have major preservation, climate, and housing impacts that I simply haven't had time to process or comment upon.

I'm eager to get involved in shaping my new city's future, and I would very much appreciate a good-faith effort to hear my voice and the voices of my neighbors.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Sonya Terjanian

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 1:54:06 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City Officials,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible and my concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal. The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period.

I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters. Since the plan as submitted for the Board vote is expected to be approved at that time, an extension will allow more time for a thoroughly considered response.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and the way people experience our city can and must grow together. I believe we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sally Ebeling.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important

steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 2:25:42 PM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown Zoning Amendment comment period

\*I ask that the city extend the evaluation and comment deadline for the latest Downtown zoning text amendment and push back the Board vote.

The new\*\* accelerated timeline is unacceptable.\*

\*I am a long time resident of Boston and fully support responsible development, with fair and honest oversight, and always with an eye towards preservation where possible.\*

--

Joseph Fallon

A referral to a friend or family member is the best compliment I can hope for. If you know someone who has real estate questions or needs—pass my name along!

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 2:37:47 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

I am writing in support of the Preservation Alliance's request to extend the comment period on the Downton Plan, which is reproduced below. Downtown is the heart of Boston, and as a lifetime resident, I believe that, if it is not to end up resembling Houston, it needs stricter guidelines that emphasize adaptive reuse over new construction. Although the revised plan is an improvement over the first iteration, it will still allow buildings that will irreversibly alter the downtown area without sufficiently encouraging the housing the city so desperately needs.

From the Preservation Alliance:

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Susan Prindle

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 2:46:24 PM

**Letter Subject:** Plan Downtown Zoning

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

We are Downtown Boston residents. We are writing to express opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

We urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

We hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Our detailed comments are also enclosed.

Sincerely,

Maren Anderson

Duke Collier

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential

projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 2:49:29 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident and property owner. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Theresa Ward

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median

Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 2:53:06 PM

**Letter Subject:** SUBJECT: Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Ray Hoefling, Treasurer

Revolutionary Spaces, Inc.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting

Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 4:18:25 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Jeff Marr

Boston, Ma

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 4:36:28 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions.

Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Bingfang Song

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as

Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 5:09:01 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I have lived and worked in the ladder district for more than 5 years and I am now writing to express my strongest opposition to the recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Steven Pearson, MD45

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density,

where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 5:43:58 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

My best,

John M. Ferrara

Resident

Internal Use

Business communications via text message are permitted only on Capstone Partners business numbers approved for that purpose. Texting or use of other unapproved messaging applications for business purposes on personal numbers of Capstone Partners employees is strictly prohibited.

This message and any attachments are for the designated recipient only and may contain privileged, proprietary, or otherwise private information. If you have received it in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete the original. Any other use of the email by you is prohibited. Email is electronically archived and subject to review and disclosure to someone other than the recipient. Capstone Partners is a trade name under which financial advisory and investment banking services of Capstone Enterprises LLC and its subsidiaries are marketed. Securities products and services are offered by licensed securities representatives of Capstone Capital Markets LLC, a broker-dealer registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission and member, FINRA and SIPC. Capstone Capital Markets LLC provides financial advisory services and does not accept deposits, extend credit or engage in trading activity. For additional information and disclosures please visit our website at <https://www.capstonepartners.com/>.

Internal Use

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important

steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 6:49:46 PM

**Letter Subject:** Action Alert - Request for Extension of PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Boston Planning Department Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials,

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations

and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Tim Cook

Boston

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 6:56:46 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Valerie Burns

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 7:10:44 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Jeanette Lee

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density,

where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 7:12:32 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

To whom it may concern,

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Carey Erdman

President, Erdman Design Inc.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders,

preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 7:41:50 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

\*I am writing to express my opposition\* to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Brennan White

Resident and Business Owner in the Ladder Blocks

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as

Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 7:48:10 PM

**Letter Subject:** OPPOSITION to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area. There is no American city like Boston. Boston, especially the Downtown Area, Back Bay, Beacon Hill, and the areas around the Common and Public Garden, have a European character and special charm that draws tourists because it's so unique. The new Plan destroys this special character.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Linda Stone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale

not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 7:50:35 PM

**Letter Subject:** Respect the Plan!!!

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I have been living downtown since 2014 and am a Downtown Boston resident at  
Like so many of my neighbors and fellow taxpayers, am writing to oppose the  
latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different  
than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Egregious Zoning:** The heights proposed in the PLAN are egregious and  
obscene. Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and  
into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark  
buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder  
Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density  
of historically significant buildings in the area.

**New Affordable Housing for workforce won't be achieved:** Affordable housing  
experts agree that allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone  
along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the  
city's goal of creating additional more affordable housing, given the  
realities of high interest rates, construction costs and development costs.  
Instead, it encourages the development of more VERY TALL luxury residential  
towers while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office  
space.

**Need to respect Community Input:** Over the past 6 years or so, there has been  
repeated, consistent feedback from the community's residents, preservation  
and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group  
members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a

strong housing preference. Despite this input, the Planning Department has seemingly unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest Plan proposal. Moreover, these drastic egregious changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short public comment window, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval. HOW CAN THIS BE A GOOD PROCESS?

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
2. Reduce the size of allowable buildings to contain building heights within character areas.
3. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th and LISTEN to the input.
4. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances good growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jordan Rich

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 8:26:12 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear Mayor Wu & Mr. Shen,

I am writing today in opposition to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Donna Blythe-McColgan

Sent from my iPad

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 9:27:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am writing today to express some concern related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I must ask that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved. To rush this through with such a brief comment period is precipitate and, in my view, unwise.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing more about how the upcoming developments will truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Yours respectfully,

/Robert B. Dimmick

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 9:51:37 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

All Involved with PLAN: Downtown

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share comments on the City's welcome efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes. However, I have serious concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents many issues and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback which was collected over a nearly six-year period. I am asking that the comment deadline be extended a minimum of 90 days beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan allowing 500' structures and other significant changes in the Washington Street corridor "as a matter of right". This time will allow thoughtful feedback collected from public comment letters and other agency feedback - such as the Boston Landmarks Commission - to inform the BPDA Board BEFORE the plan is voted upon. This public input communicated to the Zoning Board and all parties can also prevent future legal challenges resulting from a hastily drawn and reviewed Plan.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and define the experience of our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for Bostonians and preserving historic streetscapes and buildings in our city. Promoting reasonable, sustainable growth while preserving the natural environmental factors that keep our parks healthy must be supported by this new planning effort.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming Plan: Downtown truly reflects the values and needs of all Bostonians.

James Alexander, FAIA

cc. Julia Mejia

Erin Murphy

Ed Flynn

Henry Santana

Tania Fernandez Anderson

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 9:58:03 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Annagret Sacerdote

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect

additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 10:12:43 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**\*Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**\*Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**\*Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

\*Extend the comment period\* by 30 days to March 7th

2.

\*Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023\* and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

\*Prioritize affordable housing\* through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Lisa Lehan,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include

a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 10:18:33 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Officials and Staff,

I am writing today to share my concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The plan itself places too much emphasis on "facadism," promoting this as an acceptable solution when, in fact, it should be a matter of last resort. It is anathema to historic preservation in Boston. We should be seeking 1) protection of landmarked structures, the Ladder Districts' unique character, and the 19th-century character of Washington Street; and 2) increased focus on adaptive reuse and continued use – actually saving our historic buildings for the City and residents rather than just creating a Disneyesque facade. The proposal fails to do this.

It is Boston's reputation for its historic buildings that draw people from away to move to, visit, and invest in the city. They come to see a real live city, not a Potemkin village.

Further, the accelerated comment period makes the February BPD Board vote a slap in the face to the concept of public participation. Please extend the evaluation and comment deadline for the latest Downtown zoning text amendment and push back the Board vote.

I do not live in the City of Boston, but in a neighboring town. However, my interest in the downtown district exists because I shop there, I eat there, I use it, and I give walking tours there. Boston is the engine that drives the region, and is of importance to all of us in Eastern Massachusetts.

Thank you for your consideration.

Harry Friedman

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect

additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The draft zoning includes incentives to reuse existing buildings and disincentivize demolition. New downtown design guidelines that will be enforced through the Article 80 development review process dictate that projects should foremost prioritize the adaptive reuse of existing buildings to maintain not only the area's historic fabric and character but also lower embodied carbon and significantly further sustainable development.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 10:45:06 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 10:51:56 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

katherine okeeffe

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect

additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 11:02:58 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/27/2025 11:21:46 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

\*I am writing to express my opposition\* to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Sumit Mehra

Founder/CIO - Snowball Capital

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as

Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 1:47:48 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Ahmad AlKhaled

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density,

where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 5:30:12 AM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City and State Representatives

Thank you for your efforts to revitalize the areas in our city that require attention to create a more vibrant environment. I agree with planning that encourages use of underutilized buildings and the supportive efforts for the adaptive reuse of existing buildings. While I appreciate the ability to relax zoning to encourage building, there are some sites that require a thoughtful analysis. It may be instrumental to utilize other tools to attract developers while maintaining lower heights. For example, the city tax abatement level and timeframe may need to be higher and longer in order for the developer to realize similar gains in a smaller footprint.

Our park space is our city's biggest asset and the access to this space is key to its attractiveness. The parks provide a serene environment that requires careful consideration when planning to increase building heights that cast shadows on these treasured parks. An increase in building heights in the surrounding areas will negatively impact many more residents for generations-than the benefit of the relatively few who will occupy those spaces.

Please engage with active resident groups who have partnered and supported the city efforts for many years. These groups, like the Friends of the Public Garden, are well suited to work with the city to find optimal solutions. As residents, we admire the planning process when it is clear that all voices are at the table and involved in planning.

Thank you

Diana Coldren

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 8:00:55 AM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Jeff

Jeff Jarczyk

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 8:17:54 AM

**Letter Subject:** PLAN:Downtown

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the

BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the

density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D

boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Christopher Conti

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City,

Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 8:38:09 AM

**Letter Subject:** OPPOSITION to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

We are downtown property owners. We are writing to express our opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area. There is no American city like Boston. Boston, especially the Downtown Area, Back Bay, Beacon Hill, and the areas around the Common and Public Garden, have a European character and special charm that draws tourists because it's so unique. The new Plan destroys this special character.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

We urge the City's Planning Department to:

-

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

-

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

-

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

We hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Karen Diamond & John Giblin.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:00:18 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:01:26 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

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**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Michael Mansour

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:01:36 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

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**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

David Gomes

Get Outlook for iOS<<https://aka.ms/o0ukef>>

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:03:53 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Andrea Levitt

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:05:01 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**\*Zoning: \***

Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**\*Housing: \***

Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**\*Community Input: \***

There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the

Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

\*I urge the City's Planning Department to:\*

- Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th.
- Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets.
- Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives.
- I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Spencer Jallali

J.D. Candidate, 2026

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:10:54 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Adrienne Frene

Office Whisperer

Bergstresser & Pollock PC

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**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:11:31 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Alex

□

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:13:52 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Christine Vaillancourt

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:14:56 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

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**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:16:07 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jane Fooks

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:17:21 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely, Kevin & Lynn Brennan

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:17:54 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

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Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:18:38 AM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations

and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:21:13 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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**Community Input:** There has been re

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:24:00 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

- Carolina Pierry

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:24:40 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Laura Brennan

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:29:08 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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Sincerely,

Rgds, Hari

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:36:07 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:36:44 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I have been a Downtown Boston resident since 2016. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sibel Bessim

Sibel Bessim MD FACOG, MSCP

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:41:18 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Deborah S. Stein

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:41:34 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

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**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Fabio Petrocca, MD

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:47:36 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Karen Treanton

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:50:50 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

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**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Mariolis

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:51:04 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I was a member of the Plan: Downtown Advisory Group and could not be more disturbed about this usurping of all the work we did to develop a viable plan that respects the unique character of the downtown.

I am also a Downtown Boston resident, writing in BOTH ROLES to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

AnnTeixeira

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:55:27 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

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Sincerely,

Juan Pablo Fernández, Ph.D..

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:59:31 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

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I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs. Mayor Wu needs to start listening to her constituents!!!!

Sincerely,

Susan Donnelly

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:59:34 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Kind regards,

Mary Mouradian, MD

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City,

Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 10:19:06 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Vineeta Kapoor

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 10:33:18 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Myrna Rothman

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 10:55:35 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Joseph Mendelsohn

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 10:57:37 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Brenda R. Turgeon, CMCA, AMS

Director of Residences

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 10:58:35 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear elected officials appointees and stakeholders we appreciate your efforts to improve the downtown crossing area. We recognize there may be differing opinions on the best approach. We believe that further development such as additional Towers similar to the Frankly Tower, can contribute positively to the area.

Sincerely,

Ed Friedman P.E.

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 11:06:14 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs. It is disheartening to learn that despite active neighborhood engagement AND approval of a plan over a year ago, the City's Planning Department opted to change it in ways that go against the shared goals and agreements.

Sincerely,

Ellen Scerbo

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 11:12:35 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

- Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
- Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
- Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Warmly,

Rachael

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 11:25:18 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

-

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

-

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

-

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sally Rosenberg

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 11:25:47 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Brad Conicello

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 11:29:01 AM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear Mayor Wu and city officials,

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

I am the founder and principal of Communication via Design, in the Seaport District for over 30 years. During that time, I have been actively involved in the initiatives involving development in my neighborhood, and those throughout Boston. I love this city, its architecture and its ability to properly preserve its historical fiber. It is not just rooted in the past, but with integrity and relevance for the future.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Vicki Adjami

Without inner change there can be no outer change, without collective change, no change matters.

– Angel Kyodo Williams

As a M/WBE business, CviaD unequivocally advocates for equality, fairness, and opportunity for all.

Vicki Adjami

Principal :: Chief Strategist

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 11:36:37 AM

**Letter Subject:** Plan Downtown Master Plan

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

Please register my strong objection to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department.

I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

The proposal allows development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area. Such development would

- \* threaten the character of the historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces.
- \* have a detrimental impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings
- \* literally choke traffic in the downtown area without any effective possibility for mitigation
- \* not achieve the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it would invite towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

The proposal as presented, being a fundamental departure from the previously presented plans, lacks diligence with respect to a number of respects, including, without limitation, traffic patterns, protection of historic buildings, and economic impact on existing stakeholders. The fact that such

a radical proposal is pushed through in haste makes a mockery of the planning process, the mandate to acknowledge and respect community stakeholder feedback, and the very mission of PLAN: Downtown's master planning process..

There has been repeated, consistent feedback over the years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended, and a serious evaluation of this radical new plan should be undertaken. The Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Moritz Schlenzig

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This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.

[www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The new draft also introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 11:39:29 AM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

To whom it may concern,

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Nicole Voss

Nicole Voss, AIA, LEED AP, WELL AP

Associate Principal & Director of Sustainability, CLF Boston | NE Co-Chair

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders,

preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 11:58:18 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Merrily S. Gerrish

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 12:03:04 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN; Downtown Changes.

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, Stakeholders,

We have been a resident of One Charles for over 20 years. We enjoy the historic feel of the area as do the tourists. We feel that the rezoning will be a detriment to the historic nature and livelihood of the people who are currently living in the city. It will impact negatively future population growth. Other notable concerns of this plan will be the impact on the strain of traffic, transportation, and community services. All will be impacted by the latest revised PLAN especially those needing affordable housing. We feel it's imperative to respect the PLAN that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the Sky -Low D boundaries ( 155' height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets to discourage having modern day skyscrapers next to historic landmarks. We also feel it's imperative to prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives .

Sincerely, M/M S. Zogg

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback. We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process. This includes eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to help maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 12:37:43 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Greetings Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.  
**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.  
**Community**

**Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

**Request:** Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th  
Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets  
Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives  
I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Boston Resident and Registered Voter: Sheila Thorne

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 1:08:56 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 1:10:08 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 1:27:40 PM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Department of Neighborhood Development Service Request:  
Case# 101005873022

**Description:** Constituent states that the zoning plan for the downtown Boston area is being rushed through and should not happen if the current timeline is kept in place.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 1:28:15 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

(Don't forget to cc your city councilors and add your name and address at the end)

Dear Sirs/Madams,

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Jacqueline Kuss

Formerly 18-year resident of Boston

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 1:55:52 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I've been a Downtown Boston resident and voter for >15 years. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

Approval of oversized developments is short sighted; this will destroy the historical character and scale of downtown Boston, the likes of which are rarely seen in other American cities, and have been a huge tourism driver.

Please consider the legacy of your decision as you evaluate this insensitive proposal -- consider what it will mean not just for our neighborhood, but for what you believe Boston deserves.

\*Zoning: \*Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

\*Housing: \*Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

\*Community Input: \*There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

- Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
- Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
- Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Valentine Oldham

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\*Valentine Oldham\*

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders,

preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 2:03:14 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 2:09:39 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Anita Shukla

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 2:28:01 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

- Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.
- Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree that what you have proposed is a bad idea.
- Community Input: There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered

with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Balaji and Kiran Chakravarthy

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include

a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 2:29:43 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 2:38:19 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

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I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Saulet

SAULET AMIRBEKOVA

Director of Residences, W Boston

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 2:38:19 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 2:40:46 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Creelea Pangaro

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 2:44:26 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Felice Frankel

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 2:50:31 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Boston resident and PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group member. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

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**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Josh Leffler

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 2:53:19 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark

buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder

Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density

of historically significant buildings in the area. **Housing:** Allowing

projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington

Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of

creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of

tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that

are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to

offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years

from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of

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character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite

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Sincerely,

Elliot Mazza

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 2:56:24 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders, I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area. Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree. Community Input: There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. I urge the City's Planning Department to: Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives. I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Mark Bloom.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 2:56:55 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Marla Jalbut, MD MBA

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 3:01:41 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sharri Harmel

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 3:02:34 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Gerard A. Halpin, III

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 3:03:10 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Rgds, Hari

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 3:13:11 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Peg Gaillard

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 3:14:32 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am an ally of the Downtown Boston community. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Rachel Nicole Miselman

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 3:19:05 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders, I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area. Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree. Community Input: There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be

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**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 3:26:31 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Mary Rivet

“We are all just walking each other home.”

—Ram Dass

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential

projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 3:27:38 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Christine Dunn

Sent from my iPad

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 3:46:53 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 3:53:41 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

We are new residents to Downtown Boston. Moved to Boston from Colorado and recently purchased a lovely renovated condo at the Ritz 2 Avery St. we chose Boston and this neighborhood because of its proximity to the parks, winding small streets and charming buildings. I am writing to express our opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023 and we were told about when we purchased.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree. It also will have a shadow effect on the two sacred parks that we love and support, The Common and Public Garden.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

We urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

We hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Respectfully,

Kim E. Carlson and Jeanne Graham

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City,

Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 3:55:50 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, \*which is significantly differe\*\*n\*\*t\* from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

Community Input: There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (\*155 foot height limit\*) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely, Jonae Barnes

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 3:57:44 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Saira Dayal

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:04:40 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Cheers,

Kathy

Kathy Maister

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:09:31 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Corinne Larson

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:13:11 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Martha Joumas

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:23:11 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Barbara Reyes Lopez

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:27:19 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Darren

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:28:11 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Josh Yannix

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:29:38 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

\*I am writing to express my opposition\* to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**\*ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Edward Barry

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:37:53 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark

buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder

Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density

of historically significant buildings in the area. **Housing:** Allowing

projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington

Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of

creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of

tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that

are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to

offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years

from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of

PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in

character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite

this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with

the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without

consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be

brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. I urge the City's Planning Department to: Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City,

Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:40:00 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:44:30 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders, I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area. Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree. Community Input: There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be

brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. I urge the City's Planning Department to: Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs. Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:44:44 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

William G. Burrill

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median

Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:48:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident and an active participant in Plan: Downtown for the past 6+ years. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the latest revised zoning proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Consensus View:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height at 155 feet in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

**Success:** Successful development can, and has happened recently, at lower heights respecting the existing zoning in the important character areas of Downtown Boston including at The Godfrey Hotel, Millenium Place, and the Boulevard on the Greenway (110 Broad Street). Significantly, in view of the prior evolution of Plan: Downtown which appeared to be nearing finalization, which protected the height in

the Ladder Blocks, development was starting to occur in the Ladder Blocks consistent with that outcome. There are 2 new residential projects in development on Bromfield Street (44 Bromfield and the corner of Bromfield & Tremont). These projects are being developed through the reuse of existing historic buildings and respect the current zoning framework. This sort of adaptive reuse will yield more affordable housing in a shorter period of time and preserves the historic fabric of the area. The recent zoning Amendment which encourages Towers undermines this goal.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

- \* Provide a meaningful extension of the Plan: Downtown process in order to arrive at a solution that is consistent with the community consensus view
- \* Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023, remove the Sky-R zone and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to include all of the Ladder Blocks, Washington Street and Stuart Streets ("Protected Zone") creating a neighborhood with buildings at human scale
- \* Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives and the adoption of consistent, predictable zoning in the Protected Zone

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Best regards,

Kimberlytrask

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:51:12 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Friedman

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 4:53:04 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

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I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Anne Altmeyer

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 5:02:43 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Alicia Reines-Leo

Via iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median

Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 5:07:48 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sanjay Kapoor

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 5:19:55 PM

**Letter Subject:** Please extend PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote Greetings,

I am grateful for all the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes to ensure the vibrancy and accessibility of all our neighborhoods. I am also very grateful for the hard work that all of you, as civic leaders, do to enhance our lives and to meet the challenges that political and governmental work present.

However, I have some concerns about the most recent version of PLAN: Downtown. The latest iteration of the plan represents a significant departure from earlier versions that reflected community feedback that was collected over a six-year period.

I am therefore requesting that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and collect feedback for the Board to consider before it takes a final vote.

I join with PLAN:Downtown Advisory Group members, the public, and downtown stakeholders who attended a public meeting in which nearly every commenter (oral and in the chat) expressed opposition to the proposed zoning changes \*and\* incredibly short comment period. Their voices were clear: this process is unacceptable. I share the concerns of these community members and partners that the most drastic change in the amendment is the introduction of a third height zone (called SKY-R) along Washington and Stuart Streets, which would allow new towers up to 500' high. This is a substantial increase from the previous 155' height limit. It cannot be vetted on such an accelerated timeline.

I am confident that we share similar goals for enhancing the public good to benefit all the people and places in Boston, to promote sustainable growth, and to preserve natural advantages, such as sunlight and air to keep our parks and streets welcoming and healthy.

Boston's \*urban landscape is an important asset\* for the city, the region, and the country. It is the \*backbone of our tourist economy\* and a matter of national pride. As an area resident and as an architectural historian, I want to emphasize the economic and cultural value of our experience of the city's streets.

Please consider \*extending the comment period\* to ensure the \*best outcome\* of this process, to build \*consensus\* for the final project, and to create \*support\* for future planning projects.

Thank you for your consideration,

Judith Hull

Newton, Massachusetts

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 5:22:22 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 5:27:15 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 5:37:17 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

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**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives and also focus on working towards making this area more of a neighborhood like other areas of the city including creating resident parking that is unavailable to us although we pay the same taxes as anyone else in the city.

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely, Alyssa Zonghetti

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 6:08:46 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you very much for your time at a particularly difficult moment in governance. Your obligations are huge! However do not rush on this crucial issue of historic preservation of the integrity of the city. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations

and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Virginia C. Raguin

Distinguished Professor of Humanities, Emeritus

College of the Holy Cross

\*The Illuminated Window: Stories across Time,\* Raguin

<<https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/distributed/I/bo208670026.html>>

\*Style, Status, and Religion America's Pictorial Windows 1840-1950\*

(online)

<https://college.holycross.edu/RaguinStainedGlassInAmerica/Home/index.html>

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 6:09:45 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters. It is imperative that the final plan heights reflect the important goals of the PLAN to protect the greenspace and historical assets of the neighborhood. In fact, the genesis of the planning process was a result of agreements made during the Winthrop Square negotiations. The planning process was intended to protect the irreplaceable parks in the neighborhood while the downtown grew.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and make our city livable can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural values like

sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Liz Vizza

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 6:11:04 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Haley Cutter

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 6:11:39 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sarah

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 6:14:18 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

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window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Additionally there are so many homeless and criminals all over the neighborhood. Can you guys please figure out a way to fix this. Maybe hire Mayor Giuliani he certainly needs the money and you guys can't figure it out on your own. Sorry that's a fact the neighborhood has been constantly going into the gutter despite my numerous emails and unreturned phone calls.

Sincerely,

Thomas Mitchell

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as

Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 6:21:25 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident and property owner at 170 Tremont Street. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without

consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Roby

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 6:49:14 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Rayce Anselmo

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 6:51:09 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jasmine Wilder

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 7:17:30 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders, I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area. Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree. Community Input: There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. I urge the City's Planning Department to: Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives. I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs. Sincerely, Virginia Colburn.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 7:19:08 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders, I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area. Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree. Community Input: There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. I urge the City's Planning Department to: Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives. I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs. Sincerely, Kenneth

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 7:57:30 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Lu

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 8:12:11 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I live on Avery Street in Downtown Boston and am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Evangelos Geraniotis

Sent via the Samsung Galaxy S23 5G, an AT&T 5G smartphone

Get Outlook for Android<[>](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__aka.ms_AAb9ysg&d=DwIF-g&c=jHPIKdF3zLuO12CD8lDt5g&r=EcnfLnz_kau5oT3L_Vt5r9_OwtFs5hfbzseYLBan aPo&m=lSoveLBxTXIbMF5IYmtwH9AmPcdIrHonL13xRO7nHPhnq5btNo0AYGSLFmQ PgJds&s=w8wCT64Km1FfYRX5vGn6VuGjjqT9N4Hd2y7ir4sTCZ0&e=)

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by

formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 8:16:38 PM

**Letter Subject:** Zoning proposal

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 8:19:06 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a resident of downtown Boston and am writing to express my \*opposition \*to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown. \*This plan is significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.\*

Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay \*endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces\*.

Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the proposed "SKY-R zone" along Washington Street and Stuart Street will mean that there will be even \*more towers filled with luxury residences and absentee owners who use the luxury condos for tax purposes, not home living. This is the opposite of affordable housing.\*

\*There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference.\*

--\*WHY has the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions????????? \*

\*--WHY were these drastic changes made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month?????????\*

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

\*Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets\*and

\*Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives\*

Thank you,

Lee Ann Michelson

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density,

where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 8:19:43 PM

**Letter Subject:** re: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Aparna Upadhyay

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 8:33:58 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sanjay

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 8:38:05 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 8:45:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 8:45:57 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Mark Biscoe

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 8:46:06 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

\*I am writing to express my opposition\* to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Ann Bakun

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 8:47:00 PM

**Letter Subject:** Please stop the New Plan for Downtown

To the individuals involved in the New Downtown Plan, ,

I live in downtown Boston near the Boston Common.

I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for  
PLAN: Downtown.

Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay will ruin the character of these historic areas and open spaces which will harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks. Tourist come to Boston because of the beautiful historically significant buildings in the area.

Also, allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not create affordable housing, It will likely bring more luxury residences as has happened all over Boston.

\*Please stop this plan that will ruin the character of our beautiful and unique city\*

Please extend the comment period, revert to the plan that was adopted in December 2023, and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Allene Diaz

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback. We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process. This includes eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to help maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:29:16 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Lynn I Bogle

Sent from Lynn's Mobile

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:38:03 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Louis A. Goodman

This email may contain confidential or privileged material and is for use solely by the intended recipient. Any review, copying, printing, disclosure, distribution, or other use by any other person or entity is strictly prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, or believe you have received this email in error, please immediately notify me at (617) 573-4830<tel:(617)%20573-4830> and delete the copy you received. Thank you.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 9:38:32 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Joseph Giangrosso Jr.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 10:26:47 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Yong Jeon

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 10:42:22 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Lorie K. Komlyn

Roslindale, MA

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 10:45:59 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations

and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 10:56:50 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Judith Tuck

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median

Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 11:09:42 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

28 January 2025

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

\*I am writing to express my opposition\* to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic

changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes

\*expanding

the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height\*.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Thank you for your consideration,

Brett Leav, MD

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 11:35:46 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Poonam Patni

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/28/2025 11:41:27 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

David Silverstein

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 4:19:29 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Barbara Feldscher

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 6:01:56 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning

Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

I would also like to see more interactive activities for kids like an art center or interesting shops like Eataly. The WNDR Museum is a great addition.

Sincerely,

Barbara Miller

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median

Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 6:53:45 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Debra Ankeles

Sent from my iPad

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 6:55:26 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Robert Freedman

Sent from my iPad

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 7:34:42 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders, I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area. Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree. Community Input: There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. I urge the City's Planning Department to: Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives. I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs. Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 8:24:21 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

\*I am writing to express my opposition\* to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Nour Al-Sultan

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 8:29:54 AM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important

steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 9:07:26 AM

**Letter Subject:** The troubling revised PLAN: Downtown proposal.

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

As a resident of Downtown Boston, I am concerned about the recently revised PLAN: Downtown proposal. I find myself deeply troubled by the significant departure from the plan approved by the BPDA just last month.

The proposed zoning changes, permitting 500-foot developments along Washington Street and into Back Bay, pose a direct threat to the historical integrity of these cherished neighborhoods. The unique character of our landmark buildings and open spaces is at risk, as is the tourism that thrives on the historical significance of areas like the Ladder Blocks.

Furthermore, the notion that allowing 500-foot towers in the SKY-R zone will contribute to affordable housing solutions is simply not supported by the realities of high-rise development. Experience tells us that these projects tend to prioritize luxury residences and unnecessary office space, rather than truly addressing the city's need for affordable housing. This view is widely shared by housing experts.

It is equally concerning that the years of consistent community input, diligently provided by residents, stakeholders, and the PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group, has been seemingly disregarded. The Planning Department's decision to introduce such drastic revisions without meaningful consultation, coupled with an unreasonably short public comment period and the presumption of swift BPDA Board approval, is unacceptable.

Therefore, I strongly urge the City's Planning Department to:

- \*Extend the public comment period by 30 days, to March 7th\*, allowing

for adequate review and feedback.

- \*Honor the integrity of the plan adopted in December 2023\* by expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (with its 155-foot height limit) to encompass Washington and Stuart Streets.
- \*Ensure the prioritization of affordable housing\* through the implementation of targeted incentives.

PLAN: Downtown must strike a balance between responsible development and the preservation of our community's needs and character. I trust that these concerns will be given due consideration.

Sincerely,

Joseph A Fisher

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 9:23:31 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**\*Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**\*Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**\*Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these

drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

\*Extend the comment period\* by 30 days to March 7th

2.

\*Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023\* and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

\*Prioritize affordable housing\* through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Alan J. Grodzinsky

Professor Emeritus of Biological, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering

MIT Biological Engineering Department

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important

steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 10:04:57 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Janice M. Morris

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 10:14:45 AM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Catherine Bordon

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect

additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 10:24:02 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

-

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

-

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

-

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Peng-Siu Mei.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City,

Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 10:45:35 AM

**Letter Subject:** endorsement of to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected officials,

I live downtown and want to endorse the zoning changes for the following reasons.

1. This area is already costly, so it could attract more rich people for tax revenue and add affordable units. Any number of affordable units is greater than zero. This would also reduce demand in other areas. Housing demand is a problem metro-wide.
2. I understand historical concerns, but honestly, that sounds like the problems of rich people. We can make the new buildings have some of the old features.
3. It's pro-growth. If a city refuses to adapt, it will die. I lived in the Bay Area, and even though San Francisco has beautiful Victorian houses, their unaffordability ruined the city. What's the point of having beautiful buildings if homeless people surround them?
4. We already took this neighborhood away from what was a historic black community. Why should we stop to keep the rich from seeing their property value go up another 100k?

Thanks ,

Grant Gealy

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for emphasizing Boston's housing crisis. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and

housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant neighborhood and address Boston's housing needs. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 10:57:12 AM

**Letter Subject:** SUPPORT OF new PLAN: Downtown Changes

I support building new housing. I accidentally said "opposition" in my last email, but I fully support building new housing!

Hi Elected Officials,

My husband and I have lived (and owned a place) downtown for over 15 years and strongly support aggressive building of more housing.

Towers are perfectly appropriate and I want to ensure that the NIMBYs complaining don't get their way. I'm pretty sure most of them just care about the value of their asset which is best done by restricting supply.

I want to live in a vibrant area and that requires more people.

Beyond that, increasing the housing supply and giving more people access to housing goes a long way toward positive social change. Please support the building of more housing.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Holly Klose

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your perspective on density and housing downtown. We believe this revised draft will help enable Downtown to grow as a more vibrant and inclusive neighborhood while also addressing Boston's housing needs. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 10:57:56 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 10:58:44 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 11:08:16 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Helaine Silverman

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 11:35:14 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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Sincerely,

Lucia Giangrosso

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 11:40:40 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

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Sincerely,

David J. Driscoll

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**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 1:09:35 PM

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I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 1:31:57 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Margaret Coorssen

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 1:45:01 PM

**Letter Subject:** Strong Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. I chose my unit/building precisely because of the juxtaposition of the historic old buildings- including a beautiful façade I look onto- and the lower rise new buildings that don't overshadow the open spaces.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in

character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Heidi B. Kummer M.D.,MPH, BCPA

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This email has been checked for viruses by AVG antivirus software.

[www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com)

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 1:54:02 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these

drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s)

and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 1:55:52 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

\*I am writing to express my opposition\* to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Raj Tekchandani

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 1:57:21 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these

drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

This is of extreme importance!!

Sincerely,

George Coorssen

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and

enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 2:16:55 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I ask that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Stacey Sloboda

Paul H. Tucker Professor of Art History

UMass Boston

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 3:23:06 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jonathan

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 5:06:29 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Please know that the narrow one way roads in downtown can't accommodate more traffic and more high rises. A school trip to downtown or a show in theater district will backup traffic or create a gridlock all the way to south station, south Boston and beyond. Not driving is not an option because public transportation is not reliable and inefficient.

Sincerely,

Atusa Fattahi

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City,

Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 5:32:58 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Beth

Elizabeth Eisenstein

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 5:44:21 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City of Boston Planning Department and City Officials, hello, and thank you for your time.

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark, and unexpected, departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking, with urgency, that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the February Board vote where the zoning amendments are expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of people and places in our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks, including the Common and Public Garden, healthy and welcoming to all through smart and community supported development in downtown.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the zoning amendments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 7:08:14 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I work at the W hotel as the Director of Risk where we have both hotel guests and Residents who lives in the building. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mohamed Jalloh

Director of Risk, W Boston

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential

projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 8:29:44 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

In addition, building the housing as proposed does not ensure creating a “neighborhood.” There is nothing in this plan that provides the services, greenery, or other features that help create a sense of community.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Esther Messing

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City,

Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/29/2025 10:30:46 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Mary Rajkumar

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 6:07:47 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Mammen

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**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City,

Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 6:53:41 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sherry Krause-Mazza

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 9:13:34 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. As a longtime resident of Beacon Hill and board member of Revolutionary Spaces, I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Alex Hastings

Director, Revolutionary Spaces

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate

impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 9:42:40 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, having lived on Avery Street since 2008. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

**Finally:** downtown traffic is already making life difficult for residents, in large part due to bike lanes that no residents use. They were clearly put in without input from residents of Downtown Boston. How do you envision building new residential buildings will affect the traffic which is already making Downtown living difficult for existing residents?

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

-Andrej Barbic

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 10:43:53 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Allison Hartstone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 11:13:39 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Cynthia B. Malm

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 11:25:08 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 12:12:39 PM

**Letter Subject:** Historic Preservation and Downtown Zoning

Good afternoon,

I am an historian with Revolutionary Spaces' Old State House and Old South Meeting House museums, and a resident of the City of Boston. About an hour ago, I received an email sent to staff and paying members of our organization asking that they send to Mayor Wu, the City Council, and other relevant officials a pre-written objection to the latest iteration of the PLAN Downtown zoning proposal. What my organization had to say to the aforementioned parties, and what they requested be sent to you have been pasted at the end of this email, but can be summarized as less concerned with historic preservation than with contemporary stagnation.

The Old State House and Old South Meeting House have received countless beatings and threats over their respective 311 and 295-year legacies as Boston landmarks and one-of-a-kind hosts to national founding moments. For the Old State House, these have included a gutting internal fire, renovations which stripped away stories since lost, and the installation of a rapid-transit headhouse in a building constructed before the invention of the internal combustion engine. For the Old South Meeting House, these have included a catastrophic occupation by British cavalymen, extended use as a massive post office, and a brush with demolition for new development in the nineteenth century. Why I mention these tales from our city's past is to demonstrate this: that whatever these historic sites may witness should these new zoning plans take effect, they have proven themselves able to survive worse a thousand times over. Having taller neighbors to help reinvigorate our downtown economy and alleviate our housing crisis poses no structural or operational threat to our buildings whatsoever, and to pretend otherwise is not only ahistorical, but so far removed from the practice of history which I know Mr. Shiedley and Ms. McNamara to be so familiar with that I can only imagine their sentiment comes from personal grievance or an unfortunate ignorance of contemporary urban realities.

My own opinion is that the proposed zoning changes for the Downtown neighborhood are absolutely necessary for its prosperity, as is surely that of many of my colleagues, and of all those aware of the historic reality that urban cores

thrive only when people are permitted to live and do business in them en masse. The infrastructure and the plans are in place;

we need only the will. (My only caveat might be that I would prefer shadows not encroach too far into the Common or the Public Garden, particularly the latter, but some lining the Tremont and Boylston corridors of the former are just about inevitable and would not detract in any way from the safety, enjoyability, or historic character of the park.)

Your humble and obedient servant, Silence Dogood

-

\*All of the following is copied from an email sent by [info@revolutionaryspaces.org](mailto:info@revolutionaryspaces.org) <[info@revolutionaryspaces.org](mailto:info@revolutionaryspaces.org)> at 10:45 AM on Thursday, January 30th.\*

Dear Members of Revolutionary Spaces:

Revolutionary Spaces needs your help! The latest zoning proposals for PLAN

Downtown presented by the Boston Planning Department at a public meeting on January 15th, would allow building heights up to approximately 700' feet

(70 stories) to be constructed in the blocks surrounding the Old South Meeting House. This is a stark departure from the 155-foot height that emerged from a six-year process of stakeholder engagement and public discussion on the plan. Tall towers built at these heights will cause irreversible damage to the Old South Meeting House and other historic structures in the neighborhood. We're asking you to join us in opposing this plan by contacting city agency leaders and elected officials with the templated letter below. The deadline for public comment on the PLAN

Downtown zoning amendment is Wednesday, February 5th. The proposal is scheduled to go before the BPD board for approval at their February meeting.

The Downtown neighborhood needs a plan that prioritizes rehabilitation and reuse, sympathetic development, community cohesion, and preservation of the City's iconic Revolutionary-era buildings and other historic structures.

Others opposing the changes include Boston Preservation Alliance, Friends of the Public Garden, and Downtown Boston Neighborhood Association.

We thank you for your support and continued advocacy on behalf of Revolutionary Spaces as we work to foster a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, affordable, and historically rich Downtown neighborhood. Please forward this Alert to others who may be interested in joining us. If you have any questions, please reach out to Martha McNamara, Nat Sheidley, Ellen Lipsey, or Judy McDonough.

Sincerely, Nat Sheidley and Martha McNamara

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the layered built history that makes downtown unique. We hope the revised zoning will help activate the streetscape and enable more investment in the neighborhood. The updated draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. Please continue to participate in the process. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 12:37:36 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals. As an architectural historian and a tour guide in Boston, I am alarmed to see the lack of understanding about the value of the existing built environment to Boston's economy and livability that this amendment reveals.

1. The surprise amendment to the Downtown Zoning draft on January 8, 2025, with only a three-week comment period are critically out of step with the carefully built consensus coming out of the PLAN:Downtown effort. The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

2. The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18

th C buildings and other historic structures that attract tourism to the city as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

3. While acknowledging that over 90% of the building stock in the downtown study area is historic, much of the zoning and guidelines address new construction without enough emphasis on adaptive reuse as a preferred development strategy. Instead, the language repeatedly references “historic façades.” Facadism, the practice of keeping the front wall of a historic building while constructing an entirely new building behind it is not building reuse. It will create a streetscape of false fronts and lead to the Disneyfication of the downtown. The demolition of existing structures only to build new ones is also a tremendous waste of existing resources and is environmentally unsound.

Therefore I am asking the BPD 1) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 2) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

Sincerely,

Dayl Cohen

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 12:38:51 PM

**Letter Subject:** SUBJECT: Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Joan Keutzer

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 12:45:17 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Daniel Macklin

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 1:58:32 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Cheri Meckley

Cheri Meckley

Realtor | ABR | CLHMS | CRS | Million Dollar Guild

The Steve Bremis Realty Group

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 2:21:35 PM

**Letter Subject:** Please do not allow Boston's Revolutionary-Era buildings to be decimated

Please work to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor, specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings.

Please do not be on the wrong side of history by being on the side of profiteering developers. Please do not recklessly endanger revolutionary-period structures in Boston.

Regards,

Laura Monrad

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback. We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process. This includes eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to help maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 3:12:17 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

1) Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

2) Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

3) Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Best Regards,

\*Brett DeRocker \*

Partner

First Boston Realty International

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 4:13:35 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Susan Clare

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 5:02:53 PM

**Letter Subject:** OPPOSITION TO THE NEW PROPOSED PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston Resident and have enjoyed living here for the past 20+ years. I also work nearby in the financial district and attended the recent BPDA zoom meeting.

I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which includes significantly higher building height limits, than what was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** I am opposed to Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay. This endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also extend shadows on the Boston Common, endangering our precious green space. There are better ways to provide for healthy development of this area than allowing developers to build skyscrapers in the name of providing 'affordable housing'. The Godfrey Hotel is a good example of combining updated building services while maintaining the historical character and not imposing shadows on the Boston Common.

**Traffic Congestion:** The PLAN presented did NOT include a Traffic input Study. It is critical to include plans for parking and traffic flow in what is already a very congested area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the

Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives and conversion of underutilized Commercial buildings to residential properties.

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Until the height limits in the SKY-LOW-D boundaries are reduced to 155 foot, I ask that the PROPOSED PLAN is REJECTED.

Sincerely,

Faith R. Arter

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**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 6:19:35 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Boston Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to share my concerns about the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I appreciate the efforts made by the Planning Department to address urban development, but I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

Zoning Concerns:

- The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

Housing Implications:

- Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

Community Feedback:

- There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has not fully incorporated this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these changes seem to have been made without sufficient consultation with the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I look forward to working together to find a solution that benefits all stakeholders. I trust the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Sara Moreno

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**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by

formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 7:33:39 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18th century buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Best,

Lauren Strack

Boston Resident

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate

impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 9:30:44 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Amy Siegel

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 9:37:24 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Nina Frusztajer, MD

Nina Frusztajer, MD, MS, DipABLM

Dr. Nina MD: Nutrition & Weight Loss Coaching

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential

projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/30/2025 9:40:10 PM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

As a 17-year, Downtown Boston resident. I am strongly opposed to the latest proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is incredibly different from the December 2023 BPDA plan. Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay simply encourages unprecedented high rise development.

**\*Housing\*:** Walking along the Washington Street SKY-R zone reveals BOTH the paucity of realistically developable sites and the special treatment afforded to 600 Washington Street, a building currently owned by Northland Investments, a skilled developer. Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not yield additional, affordable housing given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites luxury residential and office towers.

**\*Community Input\*:** This new SKY-R plan rejects 6+ years of feedback from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. The Planning Department has

- unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions without the courtesy of consulting the Advisory Group
- providing a minimal opportunity for public comment window,
- presenting SKY-R as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA

Board for approval

\*Please \*

1: Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2: Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3: Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

Sincerely,

Mark Winkeller

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 8:13:38 AM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear City Officials,

Please extend the comment deadline beyond February 5 for PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote.

As the Boston Preservation Alliance has written: "The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development."

Thank you.

Aniko Nagy

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 9:15:55 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Tom Gaillard

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 9:33:49 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support more housing downtown: Vote YES on PLAN: Downtown zoning changes

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown, particularly its focus on increasing housing density in this transit-rich area. As an Allston resident who regularly commutes downtown, I understand how vital it is to create more housing near our city's economic core. The proposed Sky-R district's emphasis on residential development is exactly what Boston needs to address our housing crisis while maintaining the area's historic character. By allowing taller residential buildings in strategic locations, we can welcome more neighbors to enjoy and support our downtown businesses, cultural institutions, and public spaces. This balanced approach to growth will help create a more vibrant, accessible downtown for everyone.

Sincerely,

Andrew Giannino-Curtis

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 9:37:28 AM

**Letter Subject:** ● Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

~Katie Lyon-Pingree

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 9:59:38 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Ron Akanowicz

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 10:10:28 AM

**Letter Subject:**

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Ford Englander

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 10:14:58 AM

**Letter Subject:** Approve new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my approval to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay is needed!

Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street is awesome. More housing brings down costs period. Please further reduce development costs!

I urge the City's Planning Department to proceed!!

Sincerely,

Rob

Sent from my mobile, please excuse any typographical errors.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need and benefits of increased housing and density Downtown. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 10:43:30 AM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

I am also confident that all of you receiving this email are concerned about how development affects the people living and working in the city of Boston. A major concern with major developments is how they are displacing long-time residents and families especially, because the housing in new developments is too expensive for long-time residents to stay. This is a major problem that is not usually considered, and it is a real slap in the face of those of us who consider Boston our home.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Lee Ridgway

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 11:06:23 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident and I live directly across from the South Station Tower Project. I have seen first hand how construction of a large tower can devastate a local neighborhood. Five years of construction related disturbances have not improved my neighborhood or added value to my home. In fact, the opposite is true; prices have stagnated and units in my building are not selling.

At present, South Station Tower hasn't a single commercial tenant and the residential units are luxury residences that most people cannot afford. Is this what Boston residents, those who \_actually live and work here\_, truly need, or is it a folly born of greed and avarice?

Honestly, I am thinking of leaving Boston, my home for the past 40 years because commercial development is destroying the look and feel of Boston. In my opinion, Boston is on track to become an \_unlivable city\_ at the expense of shiny new towers that cater to investors and corporations instead of people.

Therefore, I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**\*Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of

the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**\*Housing:\*** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs.

Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree. See my comments above.

**\*Community Input:\*** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. This is bald-faced corruption with a capital "C".

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. **\*Extend the comment period\*** by 30 days to March 7th
2. **\*Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023\*** and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. **\*Prioritize affordable housing\*** through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown

balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Robert Qua

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 11:07:52 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Dan Drzymalski

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 11:10:41 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

I am a more recent resident and before we decided to move to the area, one of the many things I researched was the BPDA plans. Had I known that these would be completely ignored by the zoning department, I would have chosen a different area. I was also disheartened to learn that my building was also supposed to have affordable housing, but the developer was able to not follow through and just pay a fine (one that has been passed on to me).

What stops this from continuing to happen? I know that 20% has to be set aside, but is there a loophole?? I literally look into a building with an empty space- I assume that is commercial. It's been that way for the 1.5 years I've owned my condo. Why aren't we doing something to fill the existing buildings rather than build another tower that will just sit empty because the person who buys it doesn't even live in this country and never will.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone

along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

Community Input: There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Seifert-Gerney

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 11:42:29 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

--

\*Joseph Bocchicchio\*

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 1:57:57 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Zoning for More Housing + Transit-Rich Growth

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of Roslindale, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as crucial steps toward addressing our housing crisis. The proposal's emphasis on incentivizing residential development through the new Sky-R district is particularly important, as it will create much-needed housing in an area rich with transit, employment, and cultural resources.

Downtown development can help alleviate housing pressure across all Boston neighborhoods while revitalizing our city center with more foot traffic for local businesses still recovering from the pandemic. The careful consideration of historic preservation and building height transitions demonstrates a balanced approach that will enhance downtown's vibrancy while respecting its character.

Sincerely,

Nate Stell

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need and benefits of increased housing and density Downtown. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 2:10:12 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support smart growth: Back Downtown Boston's housing-friendly zoning plan

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I am writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of Boston who has witnessed the challenges of our housing market firsthand, I believe these changes represent a crucial step toward addressing our city's housing affordability crisis.

The proposed Sky-R district, which requires 60% residential use for increased height allowances, is particularly promising. By creating this targeted zone west of Washington Street, we can add much-needed housing units while thoughtfully transitioning from downtown's tallest buildings to the lower-rise areas near the Boston Common. This approach maintains downtown's character while expanding housing opportunities.

Downtown Boston's unmatched access to public transit, employment centers, and cultural amenities makes it an ideal location for additional housing development. More residents in this area will support local businesses still recovering from pandemic-related changes, enhance street-level vitality, and maximize use of our existing transit infrastructure.

Importantly, increasing housing supply in downtown helps reduce pressure on housing costs throughout Boston's neighborhoods.

The amendment's careful balance of growth and preservation through clear dimensional requirements and historic context guidelines demonstrates sound planning principles. I appreciate that the proposal maintains crucial protections like the Boston Common Shadow Law while creating new opportunities for adaptive reuse of existing buildings. These thoughtful provisions will help ensure new development enhances rather than diminishes downtown's unique character while addressing our critical need for more housing options.

Sincerely,

Daylan Kelting

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 2:12:15 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for plan to increase building height along Washington street

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my SUPPORT for the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown to allow buildings up to 500

feet along Washington street and Stuart street. We need more housing!

Sincerely, Dustin Rogers

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 2:23:37 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders, I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area. Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree. Community Input: There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. I urge the City's Planning Department to: Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives. I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs. Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 2:28:17 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark

buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder

Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density

of historically significant buildings in the area. **Housing:** Allowing

projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington

Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of

creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of

tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that

are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to

offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years

from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of

PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in

character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite

this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with

the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without

consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be

brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. I urge the City's Planning Department to: Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives. I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. David John DeFranco

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 2:28:34 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Tejdeep Bawa

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

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**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 2:33:23 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

As a Boston-born resident of greater Boston and longtime landscape architect focused on public space, I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create an unsettling street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the

plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Paine MLA MBA

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**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 2:35:51 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders:

As a young professional who works in downtown Boston and cares deeply about the vibrancy, accessibility, and economic vitality of our city, I want to express both my support for revitalization efforts and my concerns about how the latest iteration of PLAN Downtown has taken shape.

Boston's downtown should be a thriving, welcoming place where businesses, residents, and visitors alike can enjoy a well-planned and dynamic urban environment. However, the recent PLAN Downtown revisions feel like a departure from meaningful community engagement, where stakeholder input was gathered but not truly reflected in the latest changes. A planning process that values transparency and genuine collaboration is key to ensuring that development is not only forward-thinking but also respectful of the voices that shape our city's future.

In particular, the dramatic height increases along the Washington Street corridor—up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and over 700' (Sky zone)—disregard concerns about the impacts on the neighborhood's character, historic structures, and street-level experience. Tall buildings can contribute to growth, but when they create excessive wind, shadows, and an uninviting pedestrian experience, they undermine the very vitality that makes a city livable.

I urge the BPD to:

- Reconsider zoning height restrictions in key areas to balance growth with preservation and thoughtful urban design.

- Prioritize affordable and moderate-income housing development that integrates historic preservation and rehabilitation efforts rather than solely focusing on high-rise expansion.
- Extend the comment deadline and delay the Board vote to allow for more meaningful public input, ensuring that the final plan is shaped by those who live, work, and invest in this community.

Revitalization and economic development should go hand in hand with inclusive planning that genuinely considers stakeholder perspectives. I hope to see a renewed commitment to transparency and collaboration so that PLAN Downtown reflects a future that truly benefits all who call Boston home.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to continued dialogue and a planning process that fully embraces community voices.

Best,

Lauren Sottile

Greater Boston Resident and Downtown Office Employee

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 2:44:40 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Shazad and Mahbi Chikliwala

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:07:01 PM

**Letter Subject:** Please oppose PLAN: downtown zoning amendments

Dear elected officials and agency leaders,

We are writing on behalf of the Partnership of Historic Bostons <<https://historicbostons.org>>, a public history non-profit focusing on the history of Boston in the 17th century, from the arrival of English colonists to the survivance of Massachusetts' Indigenous people. We are linked to Boston, Lincolnshire, our sister city in the UK. Our connections there led to our founding 25 years ago.

Every year, thousands of people join our public history events and our walking tours of the historic center of our city. These include people from Massachusetts for whom the early story of the state is unknown, people from across the US, and visitors from the UK and elsewhere. They come because Boston offers, as few cities do, a sense of our deep history and, to date, respect for historic preservation. They want to see Old South Meeting House, where Samuel Sewall apologized for his role in the Salem witch trials, and an unshadowed Boston Common, where Indigenous people lived and worked and where English colonists grazed their cattle.

As a history society, we are strongly opposed to the downtown zoning amendments that would enable the construction of 700'/70-story buildings. Not only would they overshadow the Public Gardens and the Boston Common, but they could disrupt archeological sites, testament to Massachusetts' Indigenous heritage. Equally concerning is the changing of the character of the center of Boston. It's now a place where people can appreciate the site of the first public school in the US, experience the reading of the

Declaration of Independence from the Old State House, and the vibrant community of today's downtown Boston.

Many more people will want to learn about Boston's history as we approach the 250th anniversary of the Revolution and the 400th anniversary of the arrival of English colonists. This brings tourism and revenue, not just to small groups like us, but to all of Boston. Both tourism and revenue from history would be undermined by the current proposal. We are a relatively unique city in the US because of our historic nature - let's build on that, not undermine it.

Please vote against the zoning amendment and preserve Boston's history, tourism and revenue. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sidney Levitsky, president

Sarah Stewart, vice-president

[historicbostons.org](http://historicbostons.org)

Partnership of Historic Bostons

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for hosting so many events and walking tours in our city center! We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process. This includes eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to help maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The new draft also introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve

Landmark(s) and historic buildings. The plan also includes Downtown Design Guidelines that will be enforced through the Article 80 development review process to ensure projects respect the surrounding area, especially historic sites and the public realm.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:07:07 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kathleen Sciarappa

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:09:06 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support smart growth & housing in downtown Boston's transit-rich core

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as steps toward creating a more vibrant, sustainable downtown Boston. As someone who believes in reducing car dependency, I'm particularly excited about the opportunity to welcome more residents to an area rich in public transit options and walkable amenities.

The proposed changes thoughtfully balance growth with preservation, creating clear dimensional requirements while protecting historic landmarks and public spaces. I'm especially encouraged by the new Sky-R district, which prioritizes residential development west of Washington Street. This smart approach will enable more people to live in an area where they can walk to work, enjoy cultural attractions, and support local businesses -

all without depending on cars. The provision for adaptive reuse of existing buildings further demonstrates how we can grow while maintaining downtown's unique character.

By allowing more housing in this transit-rich, amenity-rich area, we can help address our region's housing crisis while creating a more sustainable city. More downtown residents means more customers for local businesses still recovering from the pandemic, more public transit riders, and more people able to live car-free lifestyles. This is exactly the kind of forward-thinking development we need to build a more accessible, climate-friendly Boston for everyone.

Sincerely,

William Navarre

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and

livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:10:08 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Mina and Nancy Kaddis

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:12:14 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Beth Houston

Watertown, MA

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:12:20 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to let you know my opinion and opposition.

I think we need buildings higher than 500 feet. We need a jolt to renovate the rundown downtown crossing..

Ed Friedman

\*TeleType Co., Inc\*

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:12:20 PM

**Letter Subject:** In FAVOR of 500' Towers

Hi – My family and I have lived in downtown Boston at Tremont on the Common for over 35 years. My office is in downtown crossing. I have a masters degree in urban planning. Contrary to the public opinions voiced so far at a recent meeting, I am in favor of anything that will make downtown crossing vibrant. The new zoning will allow developers to create nice spaces, bring in much needed tax revenue, and remove the homeless and bums out of the area. The intersection of Bromfield and Washington Streets is deplorable. By contrast, 1 Franklin Street improved the area. It's unfortunate that a few vocal advocates in the area are opposed to the new zoning plan.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Marleen K Winer

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your experience living and working Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing to the area, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting!

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:14:09 PM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown Boston Height Regulation

**SUBJECT:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a departure from earlier versions. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will impact the neighborhood's 18th century buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Frances Karttunen

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:15:59 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Julie Donnell

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:16:00 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Rachel Ahearn

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:18:19 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

StuartStreet and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Carmen and David Shum

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density,

where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:20:28 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Claudia Gragnoli, MD, PhD

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:24:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Expansion on the PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Hello, and thank you for your time.

As a former Boston citizen and lover of the city, I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration.

Nancy Bartlett

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:24:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

While the City's intent to encourage making Boston's neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible, certain changes in the current PLAN Downtown proposals are disturbing in their departure from six years-worth of community feedback.

A major reason that people visit Boston is for its history. Yet the recommended increase in building heights - up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor with its concentration of iconic 18th century buildings would relegate these sites to the darkened bottom of an architectural cavern more conducive to wind than to foot traffic.

I ask the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

While change is continuous, it is possible to enhance the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places by promoting sustainable growth, and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect Boston's needs and values.

Respectfully,

Marilynne K. Roach

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:26:19 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals. As an architectural historian and a tour guide in Boston, I am alarmed to see the lack of understanding about the value of the existing built environment to Boston's economy and livability that this amendment reveals.

1. The surprise amendment to the Downtown Zoning draft on January 8, 2025, with only a three-week comment period are critically out of step with the carefully built consensus coming out of the PLAN:Downtown effort. The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

2. The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18

th C buildings and other historic structures that attract tourism to the city as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

3. While acknowledging that over 90% of the building stock in the downtown study area is historic, much of the zoning and guidelines address new construction without enough emphasis on adaptive reuse as a preferred development strategy. Instead, the language repeatedly references “historic façades.” Facadism, the practice of keeping the front wall of a historic building while constructing an entirely new building behind it is not building reuse. It will create a streetscape of false fronts and lead to the Disneyfication of the downtown. The demolition of existing structures only to build new ones is also a tremendous waste of existing resources and is environmentally unsound.

Therefore I am asking the BPD 1) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 2) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

Sincerely,

Dayl Cohen--

Dayl Cohen

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:30:47 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Basil Hamayel

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density,

where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:30:59 PM

**Letter Subject:** Protect Boston's historical district

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

I have a great many family members who were residents of Boston and the surrounding area going back to the /Mayflower /down to and including my grandfather's family. Many of my family members were active in town affairs in Massachusetts and the New England states so I care deeply about preserving their legacy and making it available to current and future generations in a respectful way.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18th century buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the Boston Planning Department

1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings,

2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and

3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development. On behalf of my ancestors and family, thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Barbara Taylor

My family names in Massachusetts include: Abbe, Abbot, Adams, Akin, Alcock, Alden, Alexander, Allen, Allerton, Ambrose, Andrews, Armstrong, Arnold, Austin, Bacon, Bailey, Baker, Baldwin, Ball, Barber, Barker, Barnard, Barrett, Barstow, Bartholomew, Bartlett, Bates, Beals, Bedell, Beers, Belknap, Bellows, Bennett, Bentley, Bickford, Bigelow, Blake, Blanchard, Blaney, Blodgett, Blood, Bosworth, Bourne, Boyle, Boylston,

Bradford, Brewster, Bridges, Briggs, Brooks, Brown, Bryant, Buck, Buckingham, Buckminster, Bunker, Burbank, Burgess, Burns, Burrill, Bushnell, Butterfield, Buzell, Caldwell, Carpenter, Carter, Chamberlain, Champney, Chase, Cheney, Churchill, Clapp, Clark, Clement, Clough, Coggin, Cogswell, Colby, Coleman, Converse, Cook, Coolidge, Corning, Cotton, Cox, Crocker, Cromwell, Crosby, Crozer, Cummings, Currier, Curtis, Cushman, Cutter, Davis... Fowle, ... Richardson.... You get the picture by now I'm sure, so I won't add the many hundreds more family names that I could to this list.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:36:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Karen B Krause

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median

Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:46:19 PM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown Changes Opposition to new Plan:

January 31, 2025

Subject: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes Opposition to new Plan:

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155- foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Anne H. Fitzpatrick

Anne Fitzpatrick

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 3:49:11 PM

**Letter Subject:** Please stop the height of the proposed plan that overshadows historic Boston

**SUBJECT:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD

- 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings,
- 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and
- 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board

vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

\*Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.\*

\*Joining many other citizens in this urgent request for your sincere consideration,\*

\*Shawn Z Larsen \*

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:00:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Housing Growth: Make Downtown Boston Accessible for All

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I'm writing regarding the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of Boston, I'm deeply concerned about the future vibrancy and accessibility of our city. The current housing situation has created an environment where middle-class families struggle to maintain a foothold in our communities, gradually eroding the diverse fabric that makes Boston unique and vibrant.

The proposed Sky-R district, which incentivizes residential development west of Washington Street, represents a crucial step toward addressing our housing crisis. By requiring 60% residential use for increased height allowances, this amendment thoughtfully balances growth with historic preservation while prioritizing much-needed housing development.

Downtown Boston, with its rich transit infrastructure, cultural landmarks, and employment opportunities, is ideally positioned for increased residential density. More housing in this area would not only support local businesses still recovering from pandemic-related challenges but would also create a more sustainable urban environment where people can live close to their workplaces and enjoy our city's historical heritage.

However, I urge you to consider strengthening these provisions further. The success of our city depends on creating communities where people of varying income levels and family structures can thrive, not just survive. Without bold action to increase housing availability, we risk transforming Boston into a city of commuters and part-time luxury residents, losing the dynamic, lived-in character that has defined our neighborhoods for generations. This zoning amendment is a start, but we must ensure it truly delivers on the promise of a more inclusive and vibrant Boston.

Sincerely,

Kristin Shoemaker Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need and benefits of increased housing and density Downtown. This zoning update is a start and just one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:09:51 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support smarter downtown zoning for a more vibrant, livable Boston

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write in strong support of the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of the Greater Boston area who frequently visits downtown for work and leisure, I believe these changes are crucial for creating a more vibrant, accessible, and sustainable urban core.

The proposed amendments thoughtfully balance growth with preservation, creating clear dimensional requirements while protecting historic landmarks. I'm particularly excited about the new Sky-R district, which incentivizes residential development west of Washington Street. By requiring 60% residential use for increased height allowances, this zone will help address our region's housing shortage while maintaining appropriate transitions to the Boston Common. The flexible provisions for adaptive reuse of existing buildings demonstrate a smart approach to urban development that honors our architectural heritage while meeting current needs.

These changes will bring more residents to an area rich in transit, employment, and cultural resources. More downtown housing means more people walking to work, supporting local businesses, and enjoying our historic landmarks and public spaces. This is especially important as downtown businesses continue recovering from pandemic-related changes in work patterns. Most importantly, every new housing unit downtown helps relieve pressure on other neighborhoods, making our entire region more affordable and accessible. This comprehensive approach to downtown development represents exactly the kind of forward-thinking planning Boston needs to remain a vibrant, inclusive city.

Sincerely,

Shreyas Inamdar

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:12:23 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Brenda Hudson

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:15:33 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a taxpayer and a lifelong Boston resident Boston. I was born at City Hospital and grew up in the South End and Roslindale. In my adult life I've lived in Brighton, Allston, Beacon Hill, Back Bay and the South End, and I now live in the Downtown neighborhood. I love this city and I'm writing to express my strong opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown. I attended the zoning update meeting on January 15th, and the plan presented is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. I have numerous concerns with this proposed plan:

**Zoning and Neighborhood Impact:** The plan allows for developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay. This is over three times the current limit, and would have a huge negative impact on the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. Developments of this size would surely have a negative impact on the day to day quality of life for residents in this neighborhood, specifically with respect to wind, shadows, and traffic. I'd expect the proposed changes would also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** In the January 15th meeting the BPD officials stated that the proposed plan would support critical housing growth for the city. It won't support the kind of housing that's truly needed in the city. Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. The realities of tower construction and development costs make that impossible. Instead, it invites towers that are very likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree. It's extremely unlikely that the proposed plan would deliver the kind of housing that's needed, and it won't foster a more diverse and mixed community; in fact it would have the opposite effect.

**Community Input:** This proposed plan has been presented without regard for feedback provided by the impacted community. For over 6 years residents,

stakeholders, and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members have provided repeated and consistent feedback regarding containing height in character areas, and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. It is disenfranchising. In my work I strive to listen to and incorporate feedback from my customers and my employees....the people I serve. I'd expect that the BPD would approach their work in the same way, listening to community residents and making decisions that take their feedback into account. That is not the case with this plan, nor was it evident in the January 15th meeting. I ask for your help to change that.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Street.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives.

We must do so much better than this plan, and I know we can. I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Robert Cummings

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:19:40 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Sincerely, Elizabeth Levin

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by

formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:23:25 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Zoning Changes for More Housing & Affordability

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I'm writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident who has witnessed Boston's housing affordability challenges firsthand, I believe these changes are crucial for creating a more accessible city for all.

The proposed Sky-R district's focus on incentivizing residential development west of Washington Street is particularly promising. By allowing additional height for projects that are primarily residential, we can add much-needed housing supply in an area already rich with transit, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities. This thoughtful approach not only helps address our housing crisis but does so while respecting the historic character of downtown and protecting treasured spaces like the Boston Common. Encouraging more housing development downtown will reduce competition for existing units throughout the city, helping to moderate housing costs across all neighborhoods. The amendment's emphasis on context-sensitive design and adaptive reuse of existing buildings ensures we can grow sustainably while preserving what makes Boston unique.

Sincerely,

Robin Shen

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:24:54 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support sustainable growth: Yes on Downtown Boston zoning changes

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of Boston who deeply values our city's vibrancy and accessibility, I believe these changes represent a crucial step toward creating a more inclusive and sustainable urban environment.

The proposed zoning changes thoughtfully balance growth with preservation, particularly in establishing the new Sky-R district. By incentivizing residential development while respecting historic buildings and public spaces, this amendment addresses our urgent housing needs without compromising Downtown's unique character. The requirement that increased height allowances must primarily serve residential use is especially important, as it directly targets our housing shortage while maintaining appropriate scale near the Boston Common.

What excites me most about this plan is how it will enhance Downtown's role as a true community hub. More housing in this transit-rich, culturally vibrant area means more people can walk to work, support local businesses, and enjoy our historic landmarks and public spaces. This isn't just about adding buildings – it's about creating a more dynamic, 24/7 neighborhood that helps address our housing crisis while strengthening Downtown's economic resilience. The emphasis on adaptive reuse and context-sensitive design ensures we can grow sustainably while preserving the architectural heritage that makes Boston special.

Sincerely,

Ellen Troyer

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the

Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:25:38 PM

**Letter Subject:** Act Now: Support Downtown Zoning Changes for a More Affordable Boston

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a longtime Boston resident, I've witnessed firsthand how skyrocketing housing costs have pushed many of my neighbors out of our city. The proposed downtown zoning amendments offer a vital opportunity to address our housing crisis by creating more homes where they're needed most. The Sky-R district's focus on residential development near transit and employment hubs is particularly promising, as it will help reduce housing pressure across all Boston neighborhoods. By allowing taller residential buildings while respecting historic landmarks and the Boston Common's character, these changes strike the right balance between preservation and progress. I urge you to approve these amendments to help keep Boston accessible to residents of all income levels.

Sincerely,

Alex Sollers

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:28:06 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to Planned Changes in Downtown Zoning

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders:

As downtown Boston residents, we write today in regard to a meeting that we attended on January 15 held by the city's Planning Department regarding rezoning of the downtown ladder blocks and adjacent areas for very tall high-rise buildings. About 250 people attended this meeting with three days notice, which we consider to be an amazing feat of participation. We listened for the entire hour and a half, and during that time only one person spoke in favor of the zoning change. Moreover, the attitude of the Planning Department was unacceptable. Chief of Planning Kairos Shen displayed a paternalistic and dismissive attitude that signaled that our comments would be ignored. Nothing would stop the march to adoption, which was imminent within the month.

\* We heard from many members of the Downtown Advisory Group who were firmly against the plan and were upset to find that the new plan would supersede the master plan of December 2023. They were not consulted after more than six years of working with many stakeholders to develop that approach to zoning in the area.

\* We heard pleas from historical preservation proponents that the new residential towers would turn Washington Street into a narrow canyon rarely receiving even sunlight. Small historic buildings would be dwarfed and hidden from view by surrounding development. The character of the streets would be altered unacceptably. Tourist visits would most likely decline within this iconic region of our historic city.

\* We saw that the new zoning plan would develop high rise buildings up to 500 feet in the Sky-R area that would invite development of condominiums with affordable housing on the lower stories and market rate luxury housing above. The designation itself would encourage present owners to disinvest in their existing buildings in anticipation of a huge payoff in the future, greatly impacting the nature of Washington Street and the tail onto Stuart Street. A decade of new construction would severely disrupt the street environment, making Downtown Crossing an unattractive destination and impacting present businesses.

\* We saw that no planning or concern was shown for traffic patterns and parking that this development would strongly impact. Where will the traffic go? New lane restrictions have already impacted the zone. Where will pedestrians go? Sidewalks on Tremont Street, Washington Street, and the Ladder Blocks' cross-streets are narrow, and even with present levels of development it is difficult to walk at crowded times of day. With heavy traffic and limited pedestrian space, safety will deteriorate.

Accordingly, we strongly support the position of the Downtown Boston Neighborhood Association:

1. Extend the public comment period until March 7
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

Sincerely,

Alan and Kristi Strahler

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for joining the January public meeting. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The new draft also introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The

draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:38:56 PM

**Letter Subject:** Allowable Heights of Buildings

To Elected Officials and Agency Leaders:

I ask for the restoration of a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings.

Joyce J. Walker

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback. We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process. This includes eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to help maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:41:54 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Boston Zoning Changes to Create More Housing & Lower Costs

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a lifelong Bostonian, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. The housing crisis has made it increasingly difficult for native Bostonians like myself to remain in our city, and these changes represent a crucial step toward addressing this challenge. The proposed Sky-R district's focus on residential development, particularly west of Washington Street, will create vital housing opportunities while respecting our historic landscape. By encouraging adaptive reuse and implementing thoughtful dimensional requirements, we can preserve Boston's character while expanding housing access. This plan's emphasis on transit-rich downtown development will also strengthen local businesses and create a more vibrant community, all while reducing pressure on housing costs throughout Boston's neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Kendra Allen

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:49:56 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This plan will erect a “wall” next to the beautiful Boston Common and disturbs the surrounding characteristics that is quintessential Boston. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree. Much housing can be developed away from the ultra-densely populated Downtown Crossing area to provide reasonably priced homes and family-oriented residential environment.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN:Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Rae Cheng.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale

not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:54:42 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Housing: Critical Zoning Changes for Boston's Future

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write regarding the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment with deep concern about our city's housing crisis and its impact on our community's future.

As a resident of Boston, I witness daily how the shortage of housing affects our neighbors and local businesses. The limited housing options downtown have pushed many to seek homes in outlying areas, leading to increased traffic, longer commutes, and a weakening of our downtown's vitality. This situation particularly worries me as we try to recover from the pandemic's impact on our local economy.

The proposed Sky-R district, which would incentivize residential development while respecting height limitations near historic areas, represents a crucial opportunity we cannot afford to miss. By requiring 60% residential use for increased height allowances, this amendment thoughtfully balances growth with preservation. However, I'm concerned that without swift implementation, we risk losing more potential residents who contribute to our downtown's vibrancy and support our local businesses.

The housing crisis threatens not just individual families but our entire urban ecosystem. Every delay in addressing this challenge makes it harder for Boston to maintain its character as a diverse, dynamic city. While the proposed amendments maintain important protections like the Boston Common Shadow Law and historic preservation guidelines, they also create clear, predictable rules for development that could help accelerate much-needed housing construction. We must act now to prevent further displacement and ensure downtown Boston remains accessible to all who wish to call it home.

Sincerely,

Rebecca O'Rourke

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:56:09 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, originally from Brooklyn New York and I've lived here in Boston over 50 years. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. My opposition is based on the following considerations.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. It would lead to “canyonization” of the area similar to what I and many others dislike about Manhattan....depriving pedestrians of the ability to see the sun and sky openly. Undoubtedly it would create wind pockets like around the Hancock Tower in Copley Square. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. This is beyond disappointing. My fellow Boston citizens and I have a right to know what's being proposed and have the chance to weigh in on it, as it will change the feel and fabric of our downtown....and not in a good way.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Dennis Condon

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 4:58:55 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my strong support for the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay will help mitigate the housing crisis in Boston and improve affordability of housing.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, as any new units created will ultimately help provide supply to meet the demand. When luxury housing is created, it allows for a spring effect that reduces demand on non-luxury housing and ultimately improves access for everyone.

**Community Input:** I believe strongly the best thing we can do is build and encourage building in the city. This is a great initiative and one I hope continues.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Move as quickly as possible to adopt this.

Prioritize affordable housing through all means possible, but first and foremost - building more housing.

I hope this is taken into consideration, and thank you for working to improve housing affordability in Boston.

Sincerely,

Andrew A. Dykman

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and

livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 5:06:08 PM

**Letter Subject:** Please rethink PLAN Downtown Zoning Amendments

Hello everyone,

I have been following the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes and while there's much to applaud, I wanted to voice my opposition to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

In particular, I'd like to add my voice to those opposed to the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor. Setting aside the environmental costs of that type of scale, the size alone will swamp the historic human-centric scale of downtown's priceless 18thc buildings and make conditions unpleasant for the people who work and live in and near the area.

Please join with me in urging the Boston Planning Department

- 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor
- 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic properties, and
- 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline as well as delay the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, and prepare thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community consensus.

Thanks for taking in my comments. I look forward to helping form a plan that is thoughtful, humane and forward looking.

Suzy

Suzy Buchanan

Executive Director

Shirley-Eustis House Association

(she, her, hers)

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 5:15:32 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by

formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 5:24:33 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very

short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Mike Sullivan

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as

Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 5:38:58 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for PLAN: Downtown - Smart Growth for a More Vibrant Boston

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of Allerton Road, I strongly support the proposed zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment, which will help create a more vibrant and accessible downtown Boston while preserving its historic character.

The proposed changes thoughtfully balance growth with preservation, establishing clear dimensional requirements that ensure new development complements existing architecture. I'm particularly encouraged by the creation of the Sky-R district, which prioritizes housing development through smart height incentives. This approach will help address our region's housing shortage while maintaining appropriate transitions between downtown's tallest buildings and the Boston Common area.

The location of these new homes couldn't be better - downtown Boston offers unparalleled access to transit, employment, and cultural amenities. More residents in this area will strengthen our local businesses still recovering from pandemic impacts, enhance street-level vitality, and create a more sustainable city with more people walking, biking, and using public transportation. These changes represent a crucial step toward making downtown Boston more inclusive and accessible while protecting the historic fabric that makes our city unique. The careful consideration of shadow impacts on the Boston Common and Public Garden demonstrates how we can grow responsibly while preserving our most treasured public spaces.

Sincerely,

Josh Lewis

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and

livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 5:44:40 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

\*I am writing to express my opposition\* to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Elizabeth Spang

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 6:04:38 PM

**Letter Subject:** SUBJECT: Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders, I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals. The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18th-century buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings. I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback. The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community. Joyce Cranford

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 6:13:04 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Boston's smart housing growth - critical zoning vote ahead

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of Dorchester, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. These changes represent a crucial step toward addressing our city's housing crisis while strengthening downtown Boston's vitality.

The proposed Sky-R district is particularly promising, as it thoughtfully balances growth with preservation. By allowing greater height specifically for residential projects while maintaining strict controls on non-residential development, this amendment will help create much-needed housing in an area already rich with transit, employment, and cultural amenities. The requirement that buildings in this zone be at least 60% residential ensures we're prioritizing homes where they're needed most.

I'm especially encouraged by how the plan promotes contextual development through clear dimensional requirements and design guidelines. The provisions for adaptive reuse of existing buildings demonstrate a commitment to preserving Boston's architectural heritage while meeting modern needs. These measures, combined with existing protections like the Boston Common Shadow Law, will ensure new development enhances rather than diminishes downtown's historic character.

More housing downtown means more people walking to work, supporting local businesses, and enjoying our world-class public spaces. As someone who lives and works in Boston, I see firsthand how the housing shortage affects our communities. Every neighborhood must contribute to solving this crisis, and downtown – with its unmatched access to transit and jobs – is ideally positioned to help lead the way. This plan provides a clear framework for responsible growth that will benefit all Bostonians.

Sincerely,

Gladys Obenewa

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 6:34:04 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

4. I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Annalise

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 7:29:06 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Talia Shire

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by

formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 7:39:09 PM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown Boston zoning.

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

Appealing to you with the fervent hope that the city of Boston with clamp down on landlords that have empty space that is now deteriorated and abandoned in our neighborhood. We need to get them to fill those vacancies and renovate according to the current zoning.

Force them to clean up BROMFIELD street. I live at 45 Province St and am embarrassed at what has been allowed by the city.

I also want to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Jane Mancini Puliafico

Lifelong democratic donor and Suffolk university Trustee

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by

formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 8:08:43 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for Downtown Boston Zoning Changes: More Housing, Smart Growth

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I am writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of Boston, I recognize the critical importance of developing our downtown area thoughtfully and efficiently to address our region's pressing housing needs.

The proposed amendments strike an intelligent balance between growth and preservation. By creating clear dimensional requirements and thoughtfully tailored rules, we can ensure new development complements our historic architecture while meeting modern needs. The creation of the Sky-R

district, with its focus on residential development, is particularly promising. By incentivizing housing production through targeted height allowances, we can add vital housing stock where it's needed most.

Downtown Boston's unparalleled access to transit, employment opportunities, and cultural institutions makes it the ideal location for increased housing density. More residents in this area will strengthen our local businesses, many of which are still recovering from pandemic-related challenges.

Additionally, expanding housing in transit-rich downtown will reduce car dependency and allow more people to live near their workplaces.

As our region grapples with an unprecedented housing crisis, these amendments offer a practical path forward. By encouraging adaptive reuse of existing buildings and implementing context-sensitive design guidelines, we can grow responsibly while preserving the character that makes downtown Boston special. The proposed changes maintain crucial protections like the Boston Common Shadow Law while creating new opportunities for housing development that our city desperately needs.

Sincerely,

Sam Eckert

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 8:26:31 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area. Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree. Community Input: There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. I urge the City's Planning Department to: Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives. I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs. Sincerely,

Tao Wang

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect

additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 8:49:24 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Zoning Changes to Keep Boston Affordable & Diverse

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of Jamaica Plain, I am deeply concerned about Boston's worsening housing crisis and its impact on our communities. Every week, I witness more of my neighbors being priced out of their homes, forced to leave the city they've called home for years. This crisis threatens the very fabric of our diverse neighborhoods.

The proposed downtown zoning amendment offers a critical opportunity to address this challenge. By creating the Sky-R district and incentivizing residential development west of Washington Street, we can add desperately needed housing in an area already rich with transit options and employment opportunities. This thoughtful approach not only respects the historic character of downtown but also helps relieve housing pressure in other neighborhoods. Without bold action like this, we risk becoming a city accessible only to the wealthy. The additional housing units this amendment would enable are essential for maintaining Boston's diversity and economic vitality. I urge you to support these zoning changes as a crucial step toward a more equitable housing future.

Sincerely,

Olivia Rose

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 9:41:09 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

January 31, 2025

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18th-century buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the

public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Brian West

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City,

Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 1/31/2025 11:49:48 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and value the needs of our community.

Sarah

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by

formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 9:10:27 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Boston Zoning Changes for Housing & Economic Growth

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of the greater Boston area, I've witnessed firsthand how the housing crisis has destabilized our communities and forced long-time residents to leave their neighborhoods. The proposed zoning amendments for downtown Boston represent a crucial step toward addressing this urgent challenge.

The draft amendments thoughtfully balance growth with preservation, creating clear dimensional requirements while protecting historic landmarks and public spaces. I'm particularly encouraged by the new Sky-R district, which intelligently incentivizes residential development west of Washington Street. This provision will help ease housing pressure across the city while ensuring new construction respects the existing urban fabric and transitions appropriately to lower-height zones near the Boston Common.

Downtown Boston, with its rich transit connections, cultural institutions, and employment opportunities, is ideally positioned to accommodate more housing. Increasing the residential population in this area will not only help address our housing shortage but will also strengthen the economic vitality of our downtown businesses still recovering from the pandemic.

More residents mean more customers for local shops, more patrons for cultural venues, and more people enjoying our historic landmarks and world-class public spaces. I strongly urge you to move forward with these amendments to create a more vibrant, accessible, and affordable downtown for all.

Sincerely,

Ha Vu

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the

Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 9:12:25 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support smart growth: Back the Downtown Boston zoning changes

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as vital steps toward revitalizing our city center. As a resident of Boston, I've witnessed the potential of our downtown area, which sits at the convergence of our transit system and holds incredible promise for creating a more vibrant, accessible community.

The proposed changes, particularly the new Sky-R district that incentivizes residential development, represent a smart approach to urban planning. By encouraging more housing near transit hubs and employment centers, we can create a more sustainable and economically resilient downtown. The amendment's careful consideration of historic preservation while allowing for strategic growth demonstrates thoughtful urban planning. Increasing the residential population downtown will provide much-needed support for local businesses still recovering from pandemic-related challenges, while making efficient use of our existing transit infrastructure. The proposed dimensional requirements and historic context guidelines ensure new development will enhance rather than detract from downtown's unique character. Most importantly, this plan addresses our region's housing crisis by adding homes in an area rich with jobs, transit access, and cultural amenities, helping to reduce housing pressure across all Boston neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Andrew D. Murray

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 9:17:17 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by

formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 9:27:20 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support downtown Boston's transformation into a vibrant 24/7 neighborhood

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown initiative, which represent crucial steps toward revitalizing downtown Boston and addressing our housing crisis.

As a resident who frequently travels through downtown, I've witnessed firsthand how the traditional "central business district" model has limited our city's potential. The current landscape, dominated by office spaces that empty after business hours, undermines the vibrant, 24/7 community our downtown could become. This zoning amendment offers a path to transform this dynamic by encouraging residential development in an area already rich with transit connections, cultural institutions, and historic landmarks.

The proposed Sky-R district is particularly promising, as it thoughtfully balances growth with preservation. By allowing increased height for primarily residential projects while maintaining lower heights for non-residential development, the plan creates meaningful incentives for housing construction while respecting the historic character of the area. This approach will help create the population density needed to support local businesses, enhance street-level activity, and reduce car dependency – all while preserving the unique character that makes downtown Boston special.

The housing created through these changes will benefit our entire city. More residential options downtown means fewer people competing for housing in other neighborhoods, helping to address our region's affordability crisis. Additionally, increasing the number of residents in our downtown core will support local businesses still recovering from pandemic-related changes to work patterns, while creating a more sustainable, walkable city center that serves all Bostonians.

Sincerely,

Kyler Murray

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 9:29:20 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jane Li

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 10:04:22 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**\*Zoning:\*** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**\*Housing:\*** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**\*Community Input:\*** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. \*Extend the comment period\* by 30 days to March 7th
2. \*Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023\* and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. \*Prioritize affordable housing\* through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Karen Tokos

Leather District Homeowner

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s)

and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 10:32:23 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support More Housing Downtown: Yes on PLAN Amendment

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I'm writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of Greater Boston who hopes to build a long-term future here, I'm deeply concerned about our region's housing affordability crisis. The continuously rising rents are making it increasingly difficult for people like me to remain in the area we call home.

The proposed Sky-R district, which would incentivize residential development west of Washington Street, represents a smart approach to addressing our housing shortage. By allowing greater height specifically for buildings that are primarily residential, we can add much-needed housing stock in an area that's already rich in transit access, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities. This location makes perfect sense - it provides a thoughtful transition from downtown's tallest buildings while respecting the Boston Common's character through existing shadow protection laws. Most importantly, any new housing in downtown Boston, regardless of price point, helps relieve pressure on our existing housing stock throughout the city and region. The proposed amendments also demonstrate careful consideration of downtown's historic character through design guidelines and the preservation of landmark buildings. These changes would help create a more vibrant, accessible downtown while maintaining the area's unique character and charm.

Sincerely,

Kerry Mahony

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 10:37:32 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

\*I am writing to express my opposition\* to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

--

Elaine Yen

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as

Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 10:38:17 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Mr. Nahmias,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect \*community feedback.\*

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through \*smart development.\*

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments\* truly reflect the values and needs of our community.\*

Sincerely,

Helen O'Neil

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 10:47:25 AM

**Letter Subject:** Comment on the Boston Plan to Increase Downtown Housing Density

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a small business owner in Downtown Boston, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. The pandemic and shift to remote work have dramatically impacted our downtown business community, and we urgently need more residential density to revitalize our neighborhood's economic vitality.

The proposed zoning changes, particularly the new Sky-R district that incentivizes housing development, are crucial steps toward creating a more vibrant downtown. By allowing increased height for predominantly residential projects while maintaining contextual design requirements, we can add much-needed housing while preserving the area's historic character.

More residents mean more customers for local businesses throughout the day and evening, not just during traditional office hours. This sustainable approach to urban development will help Downtown Boston recover and thrive, supporting small businesses like mine while creating a more dynamic, 24/7

neighborhood that makes the most of our excellent transit connections and cultural amenities.

Sincerely, Lee Morgan Silver Dove Afternoon Tea

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and for adding to Downtown's vibrancy as a part of its small business community! We believe this zoning update is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing to the area, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood while protecting its historic and cultural assets and addressing Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 10:52:59 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support for Downtown Boston zoning changes to expand housing options

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of Jamaica Plain, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. These changes represent a critical step toward addressing our housing crisis while enhancing downtown Boston's vitality.

The proposed Sky-R district is particularly promising, as it strategically incentivizes residential development in an area perfectly suited for growth. By requiring 60% residential use for increased height allowances, this amendment will help create much-needed housing while maintaining appropriate transitions to historic areas and the Boston Common. This balanced approach demonstrates thoughtful urban planning that respects our architectural heritage while embracing necessary growth.

Downtown Boston's unparalleled access to transit, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities makes it ideal for increased housing density. More residents in this area will strengthen our local businesses still recovering from pandemic-related challenges, reduce car dependency through walkable lifestyles, and create a more vibrant downtown environment. The proposed dimensional requirements will ensure new development complements existing structures while maximizing the potential of this crucial neighborhood.

The housing shortage affects every neighborhood in Boston, and downtown must play its part in the solution. These zoning changes will help ease housing pressure across the city by adding inventory where it makes the most sense – near jobs, transit, and amenities. The amendment's focus on adaptive reuse and context-sensitive design guidelines shows we can grow responsibly while preserving the character that makes Boston unique. I urge you to approve these forward-thinking changes that will benefit all Bostonians.

Sincerely,

Marcos Rodriguez

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 10:59:19 AM

**Letter Subject:** Zoning changes support -PLAN Downtown

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a Boston homeowner, I've witnessed firsthand how the housing crisis affects our community, limiting opportunities for countless individuals and families seeking to put down roots in our city.

It also economically limits our city and our state.

The proposed changes, particularly the creation of the Sky-R district with its emphasis on residential development, represent a thoughtful approach to addressing our housing shortage. By allowing increased height for buildings that are predominantly residential while maintaining compatibility with historic areas, this plan strikes an intelligent balance between growth and preservation. The requirement that taller buildings must be at least 60%

residential ensures we're focusing on what our city needs most: homes for people.

Downtown Boston's unparalleled access to transit, employment opportunities, and cultural institutions makes it an ideal location for housing expansion.

More residents in this area will strengthen our local businesses still recovering from pandemic impacts, enhance public safety through increased foot traffic, and create a more vibrant urban core. Additionally, increasing housing supply in downtown helps reduce pressure on other neighborhoods, making housing more attainable throughout the city.

As someone deeply concerned about housing affordability and a homeowner myself, I appreciate how these amendments provide clear, predictable requirements for development while protecting spaces like the Boston Common. The provisions for adaptive reuse of existing buildings demonstrate foresight in preserving our architectural heritage while meeting current needs. These changes represent a crucial step toward ensuring Boston remains accessible to all who wish to call it home.

Sincerely,

Patrick Himes

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 11:01:58 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Boston's Housing & Revitalization Plan: Vote Yes on Zoning Update

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as a vital step toward addressing our region's housing crisis while revitalizing downtown Boston. As someone who works in the Financial District, I've witnessed firsthand how the area becomes eerily quiet after business hours. The proposed Sky-R district's focus on residential development, particularly west of Washington Street, would transform downtown into a vibrant 24/7 neighborhood. By enabling more housing near transit and jobs, we can reduce car dependency, support local businesses, and create a more sustainable urban core. The plan thoughtfully balances growth with historic preservation through smart design guidelines and shadow protection for our cherished public spaces.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Labinger

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 11:24:43 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Hello,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. This new proposal will allow developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay that will endanger the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces.

The actions of the current administration are reminiscent of those executed by the Boston officials of the 1950's when community leaders succumbed to the pressure and will of private developers to demolish the West End of Boston in the spirit of redevelopment. As we see today the results are a far cry from what was promised to the residents and business establishments at that time.

I would recommend to our current administration and public officials to review the proposal of the previous Thomas Menino Mayor Administration to redevelop Government Center. The plan called for new private commercial and residential development at the Center but was put on hold due to depressed land value at that time. It is quite a different economical environment today. I strongly recommend evaluating this option as a way to give back to the Boston residents that which was taken from them by eminent domain many decades ago. This would be a great location to realize Boston's vision of new development in downtown Boston.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Aldo D'Amico

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting

Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 11:49:51 AM

**Letter Subject:** PLAN Downtown

Dear Elected Officials and Community Leaders,

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18th buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

Sincerely,

Judy Matthews

Haverhill, MA

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 12:50:22 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Zoning Changes: More Housing, Stronger Community

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I am writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of Washington Street, I witness daily how our downtown area could better serve our community through thoughtful development that preserves historic character while meeting urgent housing needs.

The proposed Sky-R district particularly excites me as it creates a smart transition between downtown's tallest buildings and the Boston Common area, while prioritizing residential development. By requiring 60% residential use for increased height allowances, this plan directly addresses our housing crisis while maintaining neighborhood character. The flexible dimensional requirements for projects that preserve existing buildings show foresight in balancing growth with historic preservation – something I

value deeply as a downtown resident.

More housing downtown isn't just about adding units – it's about creating a more vibrant, sustainable community. With our extensive transit infrastructure, cultural attractions, and employment opportunities, downtown Boston is perfectly positioned to welcome more residents. This increased density will support our local businesses still recovering from COVID-19 impacts, reduce car dependency, and create more foot traffic for our historic landmarks and public spaces. Most importantly, by adding housing stock in our transit-rich downtown, we can help ease pressure on housing availability throughout Boston's other neighborhoods, making our entire city more accessible and equitable.

Sincerely,

Brendan OConnor

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and

livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 3:43:24 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

I have a strong connection with the Downtown area and these historic sites as I worked for the Boston National Historical Park for 15 years giving historic tours along the Freedom Trail. As a supervisory park ranger and the education specialist for the park, I worked closely with the Bostonian Society Staff and the Old South Meeting House staff. I feel that your PLAN needs to respect the integrity of these historic sites and the historic significance of Washington St.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the

public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Sincerely, Sheila Cooke-Kayser

Retired National Park Service Ranger/Educator

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density,

where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 4:21:39 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Smart Growth: New Downtown Boston Zoning Plan

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of Dorchester Center, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. These changes represent a crucial step toward addressing our region's housing crisis while strengthening downtown Boston's vitality. The proposed Sky-R district particularly excites me as it creates a smart framework for new housing development while respecting the historic character of downtown. By requiring 60%

residential use for increased height allowances, this amendment directly tackles our housing shortage while maintaining appropriate transitions to the Boston Common and historic areas.

This balanced approach demonstrates thoughtful urban planning that will benefit our entire city. Downtown Boston's unmatched access to transit, employment, and cultural amenities makes it ideal for increased housing density. More residents in this area will support local businesses still recovering from pandemic impacts, reduce car dependency through transit usage, and create a more vibrant street life.

The amendment's design guidelines ensure new development will enhance rather than detract from downtown's historic fabric. The housing crisis affects all of us, whether directly or indirectly, and requires bold action across every Boston neighborhood. This amendment provides a clear pathway for creating needed housing in an area perfectly suited for growth.

The predictable requirements and incentives for adaptive reuse will help accelerate housing production while preserving what makes downtown special.

I urge you to approve these changes promptly to begin addressing our critical housing needs.

Boston has been my home for over 15 years now and I'm committed to staying here and advocating for policies that allow others to call it home as well.

Sincerely,

Trevor Crean

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 4:57:40 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 5:38:47 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear Chief Shen:

,Thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the propose zoning to implement PLAN Downtown presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Beatrice Nessen

Sent from B. Nessen

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders,

preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 5:56:18 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for Downtown Zoning Changes to Create More Housing in Boston

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I am writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of Woodstock Avenue, I've witnessed firsthand how our housing shortage affects Boston's vitality and accessibility.

The proposed amendments make thoughtful improvements to our downtown zoning, particularly through the creation of the Sky-R district. By incentivizing residential development while maintaining respect for historic buildings and public spaces, this plan strikes an intelligent balance between growth and preservation. The requirement that increased height allowances must be tied to residential use ensures we're focusing on what Boston needs most: more homes.

Downtown Boston, with its extensive transit network, cultural institutions, and employment opportunities, is ideally positioned to accommodate more housing. More residents in this area will strengthen our local businesses still recovering from the pandemic, reduce car dependency through transit-oriented development, and help preserve the character of other neighborhoods by absorbing housing demand. Most importantly, these changes provide a clear, predictable framework for development while protecting cherished spaces like the Boston Common and Public Garden. This is exactly the kind of forward-thinking policy we need to address our housing crisis while enhancing downtown's unique character.

Sincerely,

Shelby Young

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 5:57:25 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Boston's Smart Growth: Allow More Downtown Housing Now

Dear City of Boston Planning Department, As a lifelong Boston resident and someone deeply invested in our city's future, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. These changes represent a thoughtful approach to growing our downtown while preserving its historic character. Living near the Stony Brook T station, I've experienced firsthand how transit-rich neighborhoods can thrive when we build more housing nearby. Downtown Boston, with its extensive public transportation network and walkable streets, is perfectly positioned to welcome more residents. The proposed Sky-R district, which incentivizes residential development through additional height allowances, is particularly exciting as it will help address our region's pressing housing needs while maintaining appropriate scale transitions to historic areas. I'm especially encouraged by how these amendments balance growth with preservation. The new dimensional requirements will ensure future developments complement existing architecture, while the adaptive reuse provisions will help preserve historic buildings. These thoughtful guidelines demonstrate that we can add needed housing while protecting the character that makes Boston special. More housing downtown will bring numerous benefits to our city.

New residents will support local businesses still recovering from the pandemic's impact, contribute to a more vibrant street life, and take advantage of sustainable transportation options. Most importantly, by adding housing in this transit-rich, amenity-rich area, we can help ease pressure on housing costs throughout Boston's neighborhoods, making our entire city more affordable and accessible to all.

Sincerely, Carly Merritt

248 Amory St

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and

livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 5:59:21 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Boston zoning changes for housing affordability

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write regarding the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment with both hope and concern for our city's future. As a Boston resident, I've witnessed firsthand how the housing shortage has transformed our city into an increasingly exclusive enclave for the wealthy, pushing out long-time residents and making it nearly impossible for newcomers to establish roots here.

The proposed Sky-R district, which would incentivize residential development west of Washington Street, is a step in the right direction. By requiring 60% residential use for increased height allowances, this plan could help address our desperate need for more housing units. However, I

believe we must be even more ambitious in our approach. The housing crisis facing our region demands bold action, and while this plan offers some progress, it may not be enough to meaningfully impact housing accessibility.

Downtown Boston, with its robust public transportation, cultural institutions, and employment opportunities, is ideally situated for increased housing density. More residents in this area would not only support local businesses still recovering from the pandemic but would also create a more vibrant, 24-hour neighborhood. Additionally, concentrating housing development near transit and employment hubs is environmentally responsible and reduces pressure on housing in other neighborhoods. I urge the Planning Department to consider expanding the areas where increased residential density is permitted and to strengthen incentives for affordable housing creation. The future of Boston as a diverse, equitable city depends on our ability to create housing opportunities for all income levels.

Sincerely,

DECLAN MCKEOWN

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need and benefits of increased housing and density Downtown. This zoning update is a start and just

one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 6:01:42 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for PLAN Downtown

Dear City of Boston Planning Department, I am writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of the Greater Boston area who deeply cares about our city's future, I am increasingly concerned about the housing affordability crisis that threatens to reshape the very character of our community. The proposed zoning changes, particularly the creation of the Sky-R district with its emphasis on residential development, represent a crucial step toward addressing our housing shortage. By allowing additional height for buildings that are predominantly residential while maintaining strict controls for non-residential projects, this plan thoughtfully balances growth with preservation. The requirement that new developments must be at least 60% residential ensures that we're actually creating the housing our region desperately needs, not just more office space. What makes this plan particularly compelling is how it aligns with Downtown Boston's existing strengths. The area's unparalleled access to public transportation, cultural institutions, and employment opportunities makes it ideal for increased housing density. More residents in Downtown would not only help alleviate housing pressure across the entire region but would also support local businesses still recovering from the pandemic's impact. Without meaningful action to increase our housing supply, Boston risks becoming a city accessible only to the wealthy, losing the diversity and vibrancy that makes it special. This plan offers a path forward that respects our architectural heritage while ensuring Boston remains a city for everyone.

Sincerely, Prashant Swami

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 6:05:30 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Mark Corrigan MD

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 6:42:01 PM

**Letter Subject:** PLAN Downtown: Support Downtown Housing Zoning

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the proposed downtown zoning amendment as a critical step toward addressing Boston's housing crisis. Living in Boston, I've personally known people forced to relocate due to rising costs, and heard of many other such situations second-hand. This forced migration fragments our communities but increases regional traffic and pollution as people move further from the city center. The amendment's focus on incentivizing residential development through the Sky-R district is particularly important, as it will create more housing options in an area rich with transit, employment, and cultural amenities. By allowing targeted height increases specifically for residential projects while maintaining contextual design requirements, this plan thoughtfully balances growth with preservation of Downtown's historic character.

Please take decisive and meaningful action to improve the state of housing in all neighborhoods of the city.

Sincerely,

Sarah Randall

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 6:47:12 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Zoning Changes for More Housing & Vibrant Boston Streets

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I'm writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of Boston, I believe these changes are crucial steps toward creating a more vibrant and accessible downtown area that serves all residents.

The proposed amendments thoughtfully balance growth with preservation, creating clear dimensional requirements while protecting our historic landmarks. I'm particularly excited about the new Sky-R district, which prioritizes housing development west of Washington Street. By incentivizing residential projects in this transit-rich area, we can help address our region's housing shortage while maintaining the character of our historic downtown. This approach will bring more pedestrian activity to our streets, support local businesses still recovering from the pandemic, and allow more people to live within walking distance of employment opportunities and cultural amenities. The plan's emphasis on context-sensitive design and compliance with existing protections, such as the Boston Common Shadow Law, demonstrates a commitment to responsible development that respects our city's heritage while meeting our current needs.

Sincerely,

samantha marihart

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 6:51:18 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support For Increase of Housing Density in Downton Boston

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of East Boston, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. Living in a city grappling with severe housing affordability challenges, I see these changes as crucial steps toward addressing our housing crisis.

The proposed Sky-R district is particularly promising, as it intelligently incentivizes residential development in an area perfectly suited for growth. By requiring 60% residential use for increased height allowances, this plan directly targets our housing shortage while maintaining sensitivity to the historic fabric of downtown. The location's exceptional access to public transit, employment centers, and cultural amenities makes it ideal for new housing development, which will help reduce competition for housing in other neighborhoods while bringing more vitality to our downtown area.

These zoning changes will create predictable development guidelines while protecting historic landmarks and public spaces like the Boston Common. The emphasis on adaptive reuse and context-sensitive design ensures new development will enhance rather than detract from downtown's character. Most importantly, this plan recognizes that downtown Boston, with its robust infrastructure and amenities, must play a central role in addressing our regional housing shortage. By allowing more people to live in this transit-rich, amenity-rich area, we can create a more affordable, sustainable, and vibrant city for everyone.

Sincerely,

Collin McFarlane

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 7:08:10 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Boston Zoning Changes for More Housing + Transit Growth

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the proposed zoning amendments for downtown Boston, particularly the creation of the Sky-R district that prioritizes residential development. As someone who lives downtown, I see firsthand how vital it is to bring more housing to this transit-rich, amenity-filled area. The amendments will create predictable development standards while respecting historic character, but I believe we could go even further in allowing housing density near transit. More residents downtown means more pedestrian activity, stronger local businesses, and reduced pressure on housing in other neighborhoods. These changes are essential steps toward addressing our region's housing crisis, though I encourage exploring additional opportunities to maximize the rights of property developers and owners to choose what to build within FAA height limits.

In short, this plan is good but should go even further.

Sincerely,

Nishant Juneja

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need and benefits of increased housing and density Downtown. This zoning update is a start and just one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 7:10:15 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Boston zoning changes for more housing & livable community

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as vital steps toward addressing Boston's housing needs and strengthening our vibrant downtown community.

As a resident who cherishes Boston's unique character and diversity, I believe these zoning changes will help preserve what makes our city special while creating opportunities for more people to call downtown home. The proposed Sky-R district thoughtfully balances new housing development with historic preservation, ensuring that growth respects our architectural heritage while meeting crucial housing demands. By incentivizing residential projects through increased height allowances in carefully selected areas, we can welcome more neighbors to enjoy downtown's exceptional transit access, cultural institutions, and public spaces. This will not only support local businesses still recovering from the pandemic but also create a more sustainable, walkable community.

These amendments represent smart planning that will benefit all of Boston. By encouraging housing production in our downtown core, we reduce pressure on other neighborhoods while creating homes near jobs, transit, and amenities. The dimensional requirements and design guidelines will ensure new development enhances rather than overwhelms our historic streetscapes. I urge you to approve these amendments and help build a more inclusive, accessible downtown Boston for current and future generations.

Thank you,

Jiahong Long

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and

livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 7:32:37 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

G Andersen

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by

formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 7:39:18 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Boston Zoning Changes: More Homes for Essential Workers

Dear City of Boston Planning Department, As a public servant working in Boston, I witness firsthand how the housing crisis affects our community's ability to retain essential workers. The proposed zoning amendments for downtown represent a crucial step toward addressing this challenge while creating a more vibrant urban core. The creation of the Sky-R district, which incentivizes residential development through additional height allowances, is particularly promising. By requiring 60% residential use for these height bonuses, we can expand housing options in an area already rich with transit access, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities. This smart growth approach will help reduce competition for housing in other neighborhoods while supporting downtown businesses that have struggled since the pandemic. I'm especially encouraged by how the proposal balances growth with preservation. The dimensional requirements are thoughtfully designed to complement existing historic buildings, and the new provisions supporting adaptive reuse demonstrate a commitment to maintaining downtown's unique character. The maintenance of shadow protection for the Boston Common shows we can increase density while protecting our cherished public spaces. These changes will help transform downtown into a true

24-hour neighborhood, where people can live, work, and enjoy the area's tremendous resources. As someone who serves this community, I know that creating more housing options in downtown will help attract and retain public servants and other essential workers who currently struggle to afford living in the city they serve. This isn't just about building more units – it's about strengthening our community by ensuring those who work here can afford to live here too.  
Sincerely, Miranda Fernandez

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the

Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 7:43:31 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for PLAN: Downtown - Smart Housing Growth for Boston's Future

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of East Boston, I strongly support the proposed zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown initiative. Living near downtown, I've witnessed firsthand how vital it is to have a thriving city center that serves everyone, and these changes represent a thoughtful approach to achieving that goal.

The proposed Sky-R district particularly stands out as a smart solution to our housing challenges. By incentivizing residential development while respecting historic contexts and existing shadow laws, this amendment strikes the right balance between growth and preservation. The requirement that new height allowances must be primarily used for housing helps address our region's pressing housing needs. Additionally, the plan's emphasis on adaptive reuse and context-sensitive design guidelines ensures that new development will enhance, rather than detract from, Downtown's unique character. The dimensional requirements are clear and predictable, which will help streamline the development process while maintaining appropriate scale transitions between different areas of downtown. These changes will bring more residents to an area rich in transit, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities, helping to create a more vibrant, sustainable, and economically resilient downtown for everyone.

Sincerely,

Kaitlyn Haselton

- Kate

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 8:03:42 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear Downtown Initiate,

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

a concerned citizen,

Karen Bidwell.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 8:08:59 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for Downtown Boston Zoning Changes - More Housing, Smart Growth

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of Back Bay, I've witnessed firsthand how our housing shortage affects Boston's vitality and accessibility.

The proposed changes, particularly the creation of the Sky-R district west of Washington Street, represent a thoughtful approach to increasing housing while preserving downtown's historic character. By allowing greater height specifically for residential projects, we can add desperately needed homes in an area rich with transit, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities. This strategic development will bring more life to our downtown, supporting local businesses still recovering from the pandemic's impact while ensuring new construction respects existing landmarks and public spaces. The dimensional requirements are well-calculated to maintain the area's character while creating clear guidelines for future development. This balanced approach addressing both growth and preservation is exactly what Boston needs to remain vibrant and accessible to all residents.

Sincerely,

Alison Rohan

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 8:13:45 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for Downtown Boston zoning changes to create more housing

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of Downtown Boston, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. Living steps away from the heart of our city, I see firsthand how vital it is to create more housing opportunities in this transit-rich, culturally vibrant area. The proposed zoning changes thoughtfully balance growth with preservation. I'm particularly encouraged by the new Sky-R district, which incentivizes residential development while respecting the historic character of our neighborhood. By allowing additional height specifically for housing projects west of Washington Street, we can create more homes where they're needed most, while maintaining appropriate transitions to the Boston Common and historic areas. The amendment's emphasis on adaptive reuse and context-sensitive design guidelines ensures new development will enhance, not detract from, our architectural heritage. More housing downtown will bring multiple benefits to our community. Additional residents will support our local businesses still recovering from pandemic-related challenges, enhance public safety through increased foot traffic, and make better use of our extensive public transit infrastructure. Most importantly, by adding housing supply in downtown Boston, we can help address our region's housing crisis while reducing development pressure on other neighborhoods. This is a smart, forward-thinking approach to growing our city sustainably.

Sincerely,

Harry Lo

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the

Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 8:22:10 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for housing in downtown Boston

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as someone who hopes to build a long-term future in the Greater Boston Area.

1. Adding more people to the neighborhood will increase city vitality and safety, as there will be more street traffic at all times of day and residents will frequent local businesses.
2. Massachusetts has an extreme housing shortage that is leading to a net decrease in population year-after-year as people leave for cheaper locales in the South and Southwest. Building more housing is the only way to solve it.
3. On a personal note, I want to stay in the inner core of Boston, but housing is so darn expensive that even on a professional's salary it's very hard to justify. Most of my peers who want to own a home have moved 1+ hours out of the city to afford it. More housing is the only way to allow people who want to live in Boston, stay in Boston.

Sincerely,

Brennan Waters

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 8:53:56 PM

**Letter Subject:** PLAN Downtown

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a downtown worker and nearby resident for the past decade, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. These changes represent a crucial step toward addressing our region's housing crisis while revitalizing our city's core.

The proposed Sky-R district is particularly promising, as it intelligently incentivizes residential development in an area perfectly suited for growth. By requiring 60% residential use for maximum height allowances, this amendment will help create the homes our community desperately needs.

As someone struggling with the crushing burden of housing costs while raising a family here, I've seen firsthand how the shortage of housing affects working families.

The thoughtful approach to context-sensitive development is also commendable. By maintaining existing protections for the Boston Common and Public Garden while establishing clear dimensional requirements, these changes will allow downtown to grow while preserving its historic character. The flexibility for adaptive reuse of existing buildings demonstrates a balanced approach to development.

Increasing housing downtown will bring multiple benefits beyond just addressing affordability. More residents will support local businesses still recovering from pandemic impacts, reduce car dependency through transit access, and create a more vibrant neighborhood. As someone who has watched downtown evolve over the years, I believe these changes are essential for ensuring Boston remains a city where families like mine can thrive. I urge you to approve these amendments and take this important step toward a more affordable, accessible downtown.

Sincerely,

Sam R

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 9:01:32 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Smart Growth: Downtown Residential Zoning Changes

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I am writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident who regularly walks through downtown Boston in the evenings on my way back home from work, I've noticed how these streets become empty and deserted after business hours. The proposed Sky-R district, which incentivizes residential development west of Washington Street, would enliven the neighbourhood. Downtown should be a place where people live and work, not only a place where office workers commute in and then out. More housing downtown would not only address our severe housing shortage but would also create a more sustainable city by allowing people to live closer to their workplaces, reducing commute times and traffic congestion. The thoughtful height restrictions and historic preservation guidelines ensure this growth respects Boston's architectural heritage while meeting our pressing housing needs.

Sincerely,

Serena Huang

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 9:04:39 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 9:34:02 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

We are Downtown Boston residents. We are writing to express our opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

We urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

We hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Bin Zhou and Zheng Zhu

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate

impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 10:43:48 PM

**Letter Subject:** Washington St. Planning Board proposed changes

To those whose emails are listed above...

I am opposed to the suggested changes by the Planning Commission that would dramatically change the historic nature of Washington St., Chinatown, Theatre District and Financial areas of Boston. Further, the last thing Boston needs is another developer constructing a building that is nothing but plain, uninspiring walls of light gray cement and glass as is the building arising at the corner of Arlington and Boylston Streets and the loss of that beautifully detailed edifice of the old Shreve & Co. It hurts every time I pass by and I still do not understand why it was allowed to happen. What a loss on a prominent corner.

Nothing would please me more than for every person to have a place they can call home, but more towers resulting in the razing of these historic buildings is not the way to get it accomplished. I for one, in my daily walks, so enjoy stopping and admiring the beauty that exists if one takes the time to look up rather than down on phones. The gargoyles, the elegant doors, the inscriptions and plaques depicting history abound but will all be lost if this change is allowed to occur. More high

rises will result in more wind tunnels already making walking in Boston unenjoyable on many days. Not a positive for Boston.

Why is it that this section of town is the section targeted for such a plan? This would never happen in the Back Bay and should not happen on Washington St.! Why not instead target the landlords of buildings that are a blight to this city, such as the Felt building next to the Opera House or the Tannery on Newbury Street. Raze those types of buildings and replace with construction that blends in with the historic nature at more affordable pricing. Take what is ugly and replace with beauty, not the reverse!

Transparency would be nice as to explain, along with the proposed height changes, WHO is responsible for this push. I am suspecting it is our Mayor who is also intent on ruining the city with the push of so many bike lanes totally making driving and living here less desirable and more frustrating every day and even more frustrating

when, for example, you drive on Comm. Ave. from Mass Ave. to Arlington St. and do not see one bike on it! My experience is that this is more the norm than not. Along with the limited space in our roadways, high rises take years to build thus adding to the congestion we already face. Again, not a positive.

I urge you all to go back to the drawing table and think this through more thoroughly, Do not ruin what makes Boston Boston! It will be hard to convince many that putting up more high rises will be affordable to those that need the housing.

Thank you for taking this into consideration. Your decision will impact Boston for decades to come!

Beverly Barlow

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback. We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process. This includes eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to help maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. This zoning process is based on the multi-year planning initiative PLAN: Downtown that started in 2018 to address development pressure Downtown and develop tools to revitalize the neighborhood. Approved in 2023, the plan's zoning recommendations include eliminating outdated barriers for businesses and creating updated zoning districts that help maintain the scale of historic areas and enable density and housing opportunities. The plan also includes Downtown Design Guidelines that will be enforced through the Article 80 development review process to ensure projects respect the surrounding area, especially historic sites and the public realm.

**Letter Date:** 2/1/2025 10:43:48 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

Thank you for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes to foster vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods. However I also have some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown did not reflect the community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor. The weight alone will stress the bedrock while we are already working about rising ties. I believe there is a way to save worthy 18thc buildings and other historic structures while also creating new ones with housing at a reasonable height.

There are economic stability and benefits of preservation. The jobs are better jobs, they elevate workers into higher skill sets, they pay more and they last longer.

Developers of preservation projects tend to be more invested in a community than the big developers who just want to build, get their profit, and get out.

Unfortunately lots of cities see these huge initial investments as a win because it's a lot of money up front but the long term benefits are few because the growth model becomes a vicious cycle. Big picture: more and more economists are arguing against endless growth and pushing for economic stability.

I am asking you to please:

- 1) restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings,
- 2) encourage affordable and moderate-income housing
- 3) extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to encourage change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion.
- 4) create a livable, stable downtown that also creates long term, well paying skills and jobs.

Thank you for your consideration. Let's keep Boston the walkable, livable city that draws residents and tourists year round.

- Nina Garfnkle

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The new draft also introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 12:23:52 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Boston zoning for housing: Working families need affordability

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of Brighton witnessing the impacts of Boston's housing crisis firsthand, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. The current housing situation in our city has reached a critical point where working-class residents like myself struggle to maintain stable housing in the face of rising costs that far outpace wage growth.

The proposed Sky-R district, which would incentivize residential development west of Washington Street, represents a crucial step toward addressing our housing shortage. By requiring at least 60% residential use for increased height allowances, this amendment directly targets our need for more housing units while respecting the area's historic character and existing shadow protection laws for the Boston Common.

Downtown Boston's unparalleled access to public transit, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities makes it an ideal location for housing expansion. More residents in this area would help revitalize local businesses still recovering from pandemic-related challenges, while simultaneously reducing pressure on housing markets in other neighborhoods.

This is particularly important for working-class families who increasingly find themselves priced out of the city they call home.

The dimensional requirements proposed in this amendment would create clear, predictable standards for development while preserving downtown's historic fabric. This balanced approach would allow our city to grow sustainably while maintaining its unique character. Without meaningful action to increase our housing supply, Boston risks becoming a city accessible only to the wealthy, pushing out the diverse workforce that makes our city function.

Sincerely,

Marlon Stanfield-Pazmiño

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 8:26:47 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders:

I am a Downtown Boston homeowner and resident. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which as you know is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and public open spaces. Imagine the Boston Common without sunlight! This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with

the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to: Extend the comment period by at least 30 days to March 7th. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives. I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Olivia Offner

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate

impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 8:56:33 AM

**Letter Subject:** Boston's Downtown Housing Future: Support Smart Growth and Lower Costs

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a Boston resident, I witness firsthand how our severe housing shortage drives astronomical living costs that push out talented individuals and fracture established communities. When I compare housing costs with friends across the country, the disparity is stark and concerning for our city's future.

The proposed Sky-R district represents a smart, targeted approach to increasing housing supply where it's needed most - in our transit-rich downtown core. By requiring 60% residential use for maximum height allowances, this plan prioritizes housing creation while respecting the historic character that makes Boston special. The amendment's emphasis on context-sensitive design and compliance with existing protections like the Boston Common Shadow Law demonstrates a thoughtful balance between growth and preservation. Most importantly, expanding housing downtown will reduce pressure on other neighborhoods while bringing more vitality to our city center through increased foot traffic, transit use, and support for local businesses still recovering from pandemic impacts.

Sincerely,

Joshua Werblin

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 9:33:48 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Donald P. Lee

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 9:37:50 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Housing: Vital for Workers, Transit & Livable Boston

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As someone who works in the Leather District, I've experienced firsthand how the scarcity of housing near downtown impacts both workers and the vitality of our city center. The current situation forces many like myself to commute from distant neighborhoods, diminishing the potential for a more vibrant, 24/7 downtown community.

The proposed zoning amendments, particularly the creation of the Sky-R district, represent a crucial step toward addressing this challenge. By incentivizing residential development through increased height allowances for projects with at least 60% residential use, these changes will help create the housing our region desperately needs. The thoughtful approach to dimensional requirements ensures new development will respect historic landmarks while maximizing the potential of downtown's unparalleled access to transit, employment, and cultural resources. More housing in this area means more people walking to work, supporting local businesses, and contributing to the economic recovery of our downtown core. Most importantly, every new housing unit built downtown reduces pressure on housing costs throughout Greater Boston's neighborhoods, making our entire region more affordable and accessible to all.

Sincerely,

Shawn Bonneau

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 9:57:52 AM

**Letter Subject:** Concerns about the revised PLAN for downtown Boston

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Concerned Citizens,

I am a property owner and resident in Back Bay Boston. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

Some things are important to maintain, and the revised zoning puts very important characteristics of the city in danger. Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces.

There is no American city like Boston, especially the Downtown Area, Back Bay, Beacon Hill, and the areas around the Common and Public Garden. These areas have an historic and unique European character with a special charm that draws tourists. The new Plan endangers this special character.

The plan needs to be rational and realistic about what it will accomplish. Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Given the realities of tower construction and development costs, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing in the area would be nice but is it realistic. Wind and light studies are a necessity to assure that the changes don't destroy the natural elements that make the area unique.

There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I respectfully request the City's Planning Department to extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th, reconsider the plan that was adopted in December 2023, and prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives. I hope that community concerns are properly weighted and respected in this planning.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Lee

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as

Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 10:21:01 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Boston Zoning Changes for More Housing & Vitality

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I am writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of the Greater Boston area who frequently works and spends time downtown, I am deeply concerned about the future vitality of our city center and the mounting housing crisis affecting our region.

The current housing shortage is pushing many residents to the breaking point, with rising rents forcing people farther from their jobs and communities. Downtown Boston, with its extensive transit connections and abundant amenities, is ideally positioned to help address this crisis. The proposed Sky-R district, which incentivizes residential development through increased height allowances, represents a crucial step toward meeting our urgent housing needs while preserving the area's historic character.

I am particularly encouraged by how the amendment balances growth with preservation. The thoughtful dimensional requirements ensure new construction will complement existing architecture, while the adaptive reuse provisions help maintain downtown's unique character. The plan's alignment with the Boston Common Shadow Law demonstrates a commitment to protecting our cherished public spaces even as we grow.

However, we must act decisively. Every delay in implementing these changes means more families struggling to find affordable homes, more businesses struggling to retain workers, and more missed opportunities to revitalize our downtown. The economic impacts of COVID-19 have shown us how crucial it is to maintain a vibrant city center with a strong residential population.

This amendment provides a clear framework to achieve that goal while respecting the area's historic significance and ensuring sustainable, transit-oriented growth.

Sincerely,

Matthew Lau

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 10:27:24 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support vital downtown housing: Vote YES on PLAN zoning changes

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I am writing regarding the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident who has witnessed the increasing housing crisis in our city, I am deeply concerned about maintaining Boston's vitality and accessibility for future generations.

The proposed zoning changes, particularly the creation of the Sky-R district with its 60% residential use requirement, represent a crucial step toward addressing our severe housing shortage. By incentivizing housing development in an area well-served by transit and rich in amenities, we can help ease the mounting pressure on housing availability throughout Boston's neighborhoods. The dimensional requirements that ensure new buildings complement existing architecture while allowing for necessary growth demonstrate thoughtful planning that respects our city's character.

However, time is of the essence. Every day we delay implementing these changes, more residents struggle to find affordable housing options, and more businesses downtown suffer from reduced foot traffic. The housing crisis threatens to fundamentally alter the fabric of our community, pushing out long-time residents and deterring newcomers who could contribute to our city's vibrancy. I strongly urge you to move forward with these zoning changes, which will help preserve Boston's role as an inclusive, dynamic city while protecting its historic character and most cherished public spaces.

Sincerely, Mark Vecchione

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the

Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 10:29:44 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support Chinatown-Downtown Zoning: More Housing While Preserving Character

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of Chinatown, I'm writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. Living in the heart of downtown Boston has shown me firsthand how vital it is to create more housing opportunities in this vibrant area.

The proposed Sky-R district, which would incentivize residential development while respecting the historic character of our neighborhood, represents a thoughtful approach to addressing our housing needs. By requiring that new height allowances be used primarily for residential purposes, this amendment helps ensure that downtown Boston remains a living, breathing community rather than just a business district.

I'm particularly excited about how this plan could strengthen our downtown neighborhood. More residents means more regular customers for our local businesses, especially our cherished restaurants and shops that have struggled since the pandemic. It means more people enjoying our cultural institutions, using public transit, and contributing to the around-the-clock vitality that makes downtown Boston special.

What I appreciate most about this proposal is how it balances growth with preservation. The dimensional requirements and historic context guidelines will help new development complement our existing architectural heritage, while the Boston Common Shadow Law continues to protect our precious public spaces. This thoughtful approach to increasing housing density in a transit-rich area is exactly what our city needs to address its housing crisis while maintaining the character that makes downtown Boston unique.

Sincerely,

Meghan Klaric

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 11:16:58 AM

**Letter Subject:** Yes on PLAN Housing Amendment

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I am writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of Boston living near downtown, I've seen how our severe housing shortage affects our community's vitality and economic health.

The proposed Sky-R district, which would incentivize residential development west of Washington Street, represents a thoughtful approach to increasing our housing supply while respecting the area's historic character. By requiring 60% residential use for increased height allowances, this plan prioritizes what Boston needs most: more homes for our residents.

The current situation downtown is concerning. We see vacant storefronts, reduced foot traffic, and struggling local businesses. This plan addresses these issues by encouraging more residential development in an area rich with transit options, cultural attractions, and employment opportunities.

More residents downtown means more customers for local businesses, more efficient use of our transit infrastructure, and a more vibrant urban core.

While some may resist change citing vague concerns (such as neighborhood character), we cannot allow such opposition to prevent us from addressing our housing crisis. The proposed amendments include careful considerations for historic preservation and contextual design, while still enabling the growth we desperately need. By concentrating development in transit-rich downtown, we can reduce housing pressure on other neighborhoods while creating a more sustainable, accessible city. I urge you to approve these amendments and take this crucial step toward a more affordable, vibrant Boston.

While I used AI to help put my thoughts into words, the sentiment is entirely my own.

Sincerely, Steven Bingler

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 11:36:02 AM

**Letter Subject:** Supporting downtown Boston rezoning

Hello Mayor Wu and the PLAN committee for downtown Boston.

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed Downtown Zoning Plan. For far too long, our city has been constrained by outdated zoning policies that no longer reflect the current needs and realities of Boston.

These restrictive frameworks have hindered our ability to address the growing demand for housing, resulting in a cumbersome development process where nearly every project requires variances and extensive public hearings. This process often delays progress and subjects proposals to criticism rooted in laws crafted for a different era with different challenges.

My primary concern is the escalating cost of living in the Boston area, which is contributing to an unsettling disparity in housing accessibility.

According to the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Boston's median home price has risen by over 50% in the past decade, outpacing income growth and making homeownership increasingly unattainable for many families. This disparity, while not driven by malicious intent, exacerbates socioeconomic inequality and limits opportunities for a diverse range of residents to thrive in our city.

Moreover, the sluggish pace of housing inventory growth, combined with the influence of private real estate investment interests, has contributed to rising property taxes for residents and left significant commercial spaces vacant downtown. Data from the Boston Planning & Development Agency indicates that commercial vacancy rates have increased sharply since the pandemic, highlighting the urgent need for adaptive reuse and mixed-use development that can revitalize these areas.

As a resident raising a family in Boston, I believe these changes are not just necessary—they are imperative. The proposed zoning updates offer a path toward a more vibrant, equitable, and sustainable future for Boston, ensuring that our city remains a place where families can flourish, businesses can grow, and communities can thrive. I would like my kids to have access to the place where they were raised, and change is needed to enable that.

I urge you to support the Downtown Zoning Plan and help pave the way for a more inclusive and dynamic Boston.

You have my full support.

--

Daniel Rheault

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 11:57:36 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown.

Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces and will significantly harm tourism in this architecturally historical area.

Moreover, the development rights granted by this plan to 500-ft.-tall residential buildings seem to ignore the essential matter of environmental impact, especially with respect to traffic along Stuart, Tremont, and Washington Streets. The amount of time it takes to drive from the I-90 Copley Plaza Exit to Charles St. S. has doubled since I first moved here a year and a half ago. Aside from the environmental impact and inconvenience to residents and tourists, significant additional traffic in this area is a disaster waiting to happen with respect to access by emergency vehicles.

Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating affordable housing; rather, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences and additional, unneeded office space.

I urge the City's Planning Department to extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th; respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets; and prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration of my input.

Sincerely,

Alice Levine

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The new draft also introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 12:05:56 PM

**Letter Subject:** zoning

restore limited zoning heights

caron golder

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. We have made changes to the draft zoning based on feedback.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 12:13:36 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Catharine-Mary Donovan

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 2:44:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Boston's Housing Emergency Requires Bigger Solutions

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I am writing regarding the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. While I appreciate the City's efforts to address housing needs, I have significant concerns about whether the current proposal goes far enough to address our severe housing crisis.

As a Roxbury resident, I witness firsthand how the shortage of housing downtown impacts our neighborhood. When people cannot find homes in transit-rich areas like downtown, they are forced to compete for housing in other neighborhoods, driving up costs and displacement pressures across the city. While the proposed Sky-R district that incentivizes residential development is a step in the right direction, its limited scope to just a small strip west of Washington Street seems inadequate given the scale of our housing emergency.

The downtown area, with its abundance of transit options, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities, is ideally positioned to accommodate more housing density. While I appreciate the attention to historic preservation and contextual design in the proposal, I believe we must be bolder in allowing residential development throughout downtown. More residents downtown would help revitalize our post-pandemic economy, support local businesses, and reduce car dependency. Most importantly, it would help ease housing pressure on other neighborhoods like Roxbury. I urge you to expand the areas where additional housing density is encouraged and to consider stronger incentives for residential development across all of downtown. Our housing crisis demands more ambitious action.

Sincerely,

Peter Gray

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need and benefits of increased housing and density Downtown. This zoning update is one part of the

city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 3:16:22 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Housing Growth Downtown: A More Vibrant & Accessible Boston

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a Boston homeowner, I've witnessed firsthand how our housing shortage affects our community's vitality and accessibility. The proposed changes represent a thoughtful approach to addressing this critical need while preserving downtown's historic character.

The creation of the Sky-R district is particularly promising, as it strategically enables taller buildings for residential use while maintaining appropriate transitions to historic areas and the Boston Common. By requiring 60% residential use for maximum height allowances, this amendment directly addresses our housing crisis while respecting the area's architectural heritage. The flexibility for adaptive reuse of existing buildings demonstrates a balanced approach to growth and preservation.

Downtown Boston's unparalleled access to transit, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities makes it ideal for housing expansion. More residents in this area will support local businesses still recovering from pandemic impacts, reduce car dependency through transit use, and create a more vibrant street life. Most importantly, increasing housing supply in downtown will help alleviate pressure on housing costs throughout Boston's neighborhoods, making our city more accessible to all. This is not just about adding buildings – it's about strengthening our community and ensuring Boston remains a city where people from all walks of life can make their home.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Allen

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring

new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 4:33:46 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Walter Krause

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median

Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 4:50:08 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

David Holzman

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 5:07:56 PM

**Letter Subject:** I support the Boston Plan to Increase Downtown Housing Density in the Downtown

Also everywhere else.

You guys are smart, the plan is good. Keep the fight going.

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Dan Merrow

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting!

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 5:38:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

As residents of the city of Boston, who resides in the downtown area, my wife and I write to express our deep opposition to, and ire with, the latest version of PLAN: Downtown and the draft zoning amendments posted by the BPDA on January 8, 2025. It must be noted at the start of this comment letter, that the residents of the Downtown area have been whip-sawed through what seems like a decade of chaotic, conflicting and ever-changing proposals from the BPDA regarding this neighborhood. Each of those efforts has been consistently met with strong objections about the height and density of each proposal from the people who live here, who walk and drive the streets of downtown Boston and who vote and pay taxes in the City. The longer the planning process has gone on, and with each new plan and proposal, the more the BPDA ignores the proposals of the PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group and the community and weights its proposals toward the developer class. In early 2024 a generally sensible plan seemed to be in the offing, one that recognized the historic nature of upper Washington Street and the potential impacts that very tall buildings would have on the community, and the Boston Common. There were certainly objections, such as the spot zoning at One Bromfield and the Pi Ally Garage. But with better height limits on those two locations, the plan would likely have received strong community support. The surprise rejection of the core of that plan and the new and radical proposals of PLAN: Downtown that city officials now seek to force down our throats is shameful and inappropriate. We oppose this new PLAN: Downtown for the following reasons:

1. FIVE-HUNDRED-FOOT-TALL RESIDENTIAL TOWERS ARE INAPPROPRIATE FOR WASHINGTON STREET AND AREAS AROUND BOSTON COMMON. The proposal to designate Washington Street and Stuart Street into the SKY-R zone will allow residential development projects up to 500 feet along Washington Street (and into the Back Bay area as well) is practically unrealistic and would threaten the character of these areas. Washington Street in particular is a pedestrian designated area with limited traffic. It is also a narrow roadway with only a single lane of traffic. Adding high rise residential towers along this stretch of roadway will add enormous amounts of traffic to flow along Washinton Street for deliveries, residential access,

and the provision of residential services. We are looking at significant congestion, auto exhaust, blocked sidewalks and general chaos. Five-hundred foot tall buildings will block out the sun along these streets and side streets; streets that are already cast in shadows for large parts of the day. And these tall buildings will create wind tunnels that make it unpleasant to walk the streets, carry on conversations and be present in these spaces. In short, it will make the area dark, windy, congested and unpleasant. Moreover, 500-foot residential towers in the new SKY-R zone proposed along Washington Street and Stuart Street will certainly cast shadows on the Boston Common, the only real green space in the entire area; an area that we use for recreation, open space, dog walking and enjoying the outdoors.

1. THE PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES WILL NOT CREATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING. Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. The whole point of residential zoning is to create attractive spaces that exist on a human scale and that are welcoming and livable spaces. Five-hundred foot tall towers do not create such spaces and that it especially true for the narrow strip of buildings along Washington Street. Buildings in this area will be narrow and high. And such limited physical space hardly allows for needed open space and green areas. It is also hard to imagine such towers to be affordable housing. Buildings at that scale are going to have to be priced as luxury housing. The whole concept undermines affordable, human scale housing which is what is needed. The community spoke strongly toward housing. But 150-foot tall office buildings are sounding a lot better than a string of 500 foot tall residential towers along Washington Street; even if office space is not a present need in the downtown Boston. In short the proposal for 500-foot tall residential towers is not going to assist the need for affordable housing and if built will just bring the congestion, fumes, chaos identified above. Lower building heights that allow for more human scale structures, that are not so expensive to build so as to foster affordable housing and that do not bring chaos to Washington Street is what is needed. A maximum height of 155 feet should be the limit along Washington Street. That is, this area should be designated as an area within the SKY-LOW-D zone. To encourage development of these lower heights

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-

D district to preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including areas along Washington Street and around the Old South Meeting House. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 6:05:15 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support smart downtown rezoning for housing & vibrant neighborhoods

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I'm writing in support of the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment, particularly regarding its emphasis on residential development in the downtown area.

As someone who has witnessed the dramatic shift in downtown Boston's vitality since the widespread adoption of remote work, I am deeply concerned about the future of our city's core. The current abundance of office space no longer aligns with modern workplace trends, while our severe housing shortage continues to worsen. The proposed Sky-R district, which incentivizes residential development through height bonuses for buildings with 60% or more residential use, directly addresses both these critical issues.

The amendment's thoughtful approach to increasing housing density while preserving downtown's historic character is particularly compelling. By focusing residential growth in areas west of Washington Street and maintaining existing protections for landmarks and the Boston Common, we can revitalize downtown without compromising its unique identity. More residents in this transit-rich, culturally vibrant area would support local businesses struggling with reduced weekday foot traffic, while simultaneously alleviating housing pressure throughout Greater Boston. This strategic rezoning represents a crucial step toward ensuring downtown Boston remains a vibrant, inclusive neighborhood rather than a collection of underutilized office buildings.

Sincerely,

David Keyworth

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the

Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 6:21:55 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support crucial downtown Boston zoning changes for more housing & vibrancy

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of the Greater Boston area, I am writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. Living just outside Boston, I see daily how the housing crisis affects our entire region, and I believe these changes represent a crucial step toward addressing this challenge.

The proposed Sky-R district is particularly promising, as it thoughtfully balances the need for new housing with preservation of downtown's historic character. By incentivizing residential development while maintaining strict height limitations near historic landmarks and the Boston Common, the plan creates a framework for sustainable growth. The emphasis on transit-oriented development and pedestrian-friendly spaces aligns perfectly with downtown's role as our region's economic and cultural hub. Enabling more people to live in this transit-rich area will not only support local businesses still recovering from the pandemic but also reduce car dependency and create a more vibrant urban environment that benefits everyone in Greater Boston.

Sincerely,

Gregory Barrett

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/2/2025 7:40:50 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments & Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Kristin Nelson

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density,

where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 6:24:02 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Maureen Maas

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 10:00:48 AM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown zoning proposal

My fellow citizens and esteemed Boston city employees:

I write to express my anger and profound disappointment about the abrupt and autocratic end to the previously collegial creation of a Downtown Development Plan and associated zoning changes. The previously exemplary cooperative process had reflected many hours of community engagement and had been progressing toward reasonable compromise before the recent autocratic power grab. The precipitous decision to rush into a final vote with minimal review time despite the evident dismay of the community affected was shocking, high handed and reflects a callous contempt of the resident community. The recent choice to let the nonresident “experts” run roughshod over the discussion because they (and the developers?) “know better” than the citizens reflects a “progressive” government gone rogue and is likely to cost the administration substantial support in future elections.

The content of the zoning changes presented at the public meeting had little resemblance to the prior discussions held with my neighborhood representatives and seems to be a formula for the destruction of a major part of Boston’s historical center which represents a powerful tourism engine for all of us. It is not clear why large portions of Washington Street need to be rezoned for 500 foot monsters when other parts of the downtown neighborhood are already zoned for such development. The proposed rezoning seems a remarkable windfall for current owners of these properties, some of whom have apparently willfully neglected their buildings to detriment of the neighborhood.

The analysis of the proposed major increase in density along Washington Street has, thus far, been surprisingly casual and lacking in professional rigor. To state just a few of the obvious questions and concerns:

- 1) Where are the infrastructure studies supporting a large increase in population? How will traffic be affected in an area that already enjoys gridlock Fridays? How much additional capacity is present in the Park Street / Downtown Crossing T facilities? Water? Sewer? Electrical? School Buildings? Parking? Trash collection?

- 2) How did Chinatown receive a special exempt status?
- 3) How many “zombie” facades masking 40 story building can be tolerated along the Washington Street pedestrian mall before the microenvironmental changes to light, wind and access make the street undesirable to pedestrians? Are there studies that have been done?
- 4) What is the expected rate of increased density and how will it be evaluated and, if necessary controlled?
- 5) What is the urgency to complete this process within the next 30 days. Is there a concern that opposition will actually create an inconvenient popular pushback?

It seems clear that the Zoning plan requires substantially more discussion with input from the neighborhood’s elected representatives including the Mayor. I respectfully request a pause in this headlong rush into an inadequately discussed zoning proposal.

Thank you

David Spriggs

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns. This includes eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to help maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. At the center of the City’s transportation network, with some of the best access to City resources and infrastructure, Downtown is one of the most suitable areas in the City to accommodate additional density. Given the complexity of sites and the scale of potential projects in the area, large developments are subject to rigorous review through the Article 80 Development Review process. This process evaluates projects on a site-by-site basis and ensures that they mitigate site- and use-

specific impacts, including those on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm.

As recommended by PLAN: Downtown, Chinatown is undergoing its own separate rezoning process to address community needs. More details can be found on the Chinatown Rezoning Process website.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 10:05:42 AM

**Letter Subject:** New Proposed Zoning

2 February 2025

To Whom it May Concern

As a resident and apartment owner in Downtown (151 Tremont Street, 26L/M) I am strongly opposed to the new zoning proposal presented at the January 15th planning/community meeting. My opposition is not a self-serving NIMBY opposition. I am 75 years old, and the effects of this zoning will not impact my daily life, nor will it affect my property values. My opposition is based on my experience of living in New York City for 30 years. More high-rise development may enrich developers but often does not improve the quality of life for residents, businesses, or visitors.

I am not opposed to more residents and businesses Downtown. I am not opposed to affordable housing Downtown. I welcome a mix of housing types and residents with different incomes. It is part of what makes city life wonderful and will bring vitality to the neighborhood and stability to businesses. My opposition is based on the fact that important questions have not been addressed in community meetings regarding the effects of the density of this proposed zoning. I would appreciate your responding to them. (My contact information is in the signature at the bottom of this email.)

Much of Downtown is currently zoned SKY. Why is SKY-R zoning needed when areas already zoned for high-rises are not built out and their impacts evaluated?

Why was the owner of the property at Bromfield and Washington rewarded for vacating the buildings and allowing them to deteriorate and become a blight? Even the potential "carve out" for this developer was an affront. This new proposed

zoning is like revenge for those of us who opposed that blatant disregard for the valid arguments against special treatment.

Describing SKY-R zoning as "transitional zoning" puzzles me. If the facades of 19th and 20thC buildings in a canyon of 40 story buildings is transitional architecture, are you considering this type of zoning along Charles Street as a transition to the high-rise MGH medical campus or along Newbury Street as a transition to the Prudential, Hancock, and Dalton buildings?

I disagree that SKY-R zoning can be considered historic preservation. The buildings themselves would be destroyed and some of the facades would be damaged beyond repair during construction. Any new high-rise will devalue existing buildings further deteriorating the historic value of the neighborhood. Today's intact historic neighborhoods have survived economic downturns before again increasing in value. Why is creative re-use rather than wholesale destruction and re-development not the priority?

I am shocked by the lack of information about what this proposed zoning would be like when built out. Please send images of successful examples of this kind of development in other cities. Please send a summary of the estimated economic impact of this zoning (including estimated profits for developers.) Please outline how this development will improve the quality of life of Downtown residents, workers, and visitors.

My additional questions are as follows:

1. If zoning for 500 feet is not allowed on certain lots/certain areas along Washington and other streets because of shadows or flight paths, why not zone to those restricted heights? Please map which lots would be fully developed to the maximum height allowed in SKY-R.

2. What will the maximum density be when fully built out along Washington Street and the rest of the SKY-R zone (number of residents, estimated influx of the day-use population generated by commercial activity?)

3. Please outline the anticipated impacts this development will have on the following:

- water
- sewer
- utilities
- police
- fire
- schools
- health care system
- public transit system
- parking
- traffic
- deliveries/trash removal
- environmental impacts such as
  - air quality
  - wind conditions
  - sunlight/shade conditions

4. What are the anticipated effects of the construction itself on the above? What is the expected rate of the building development and corresponding infrastructure upgrades?

5. Is the 20% affordable housing requirement 20% of the total floor area? 20% of the required 60% residential development or 12%? (If most of the development is luxury housing, automobile traffic will be significantly increased. See above "parking" etc.)

6. And finally, what were the criteria used for the special Chinatown zone? What is the procedure I and others may engage in to win an exemption from the Downtown zoning plan?

This proposed zoning plan and the process leading up to it is an insult to all who worked on PLAN: Downtown as well as

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process. This includes eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to help maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. At the center of the City's transportation network, with some of the best access to City resources and infrastructure, Downtown is uniquely positioned to accommodate density. Current development trends indicate that only two to three large-scale projects are likely to emerge over the next few market cycles. A full build-out model of every site is not a standard component of zoning initiatives as zoning establishes a general development framework and building envelope but does not dictate specific outcomes. This is especially true in Downtown, where the complexity of sites and the scale of potential projects require rigorous review through the Article 80 Development Review process, which evaluates impacts on a site-by-site basis. As projects move forward, Article 80 requires developers to assess and mitigate some of the site- and use-specific impacts you mentioned, including effects on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm.

Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to have 17 percent income-restricted units at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

As recommended by PLAN: Downtown, Chinatown is undergoing its own separate rezoning process to address community needs. More details can be found on the Chinatown Rezoning Process website.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 10:17:52 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support Boston's Downtown Housing Plan & Smart Growth Amendment

Dear City of Boston Planning Department, As a resident of the Greater Boston area, I'm writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. These changes represent a crucial step toward addressing our region's housing crisis while thoughtfully preserving the historic character that makes Downtown Boston special. I'm particularly excited about the creation of the Sky-R district, which intelligently balances the need for new housing with contextual development. By requiring 60% residential use for maximum height allowances, this amendment will help create homes where they're needed most – in an area rich with transit, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities. This approach not only helps address our housing shortage but also contributes to a more vibrant downtown. More residents means more customers for local businesses still recovering from the pandemic, more people enjoying our historic landmarks and public spaces, and more neighbors using sustainable transportation options. The proposed dimensional requirements and historic context guidelines ensure new development will enhance rather than detract from Downtown's unique character, while the maintenance of existing protections like the Boston Common Shadow Law demonstrates a commitment to preserving our cherished public spaces. Sincerely, Jonathan Chisholm

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 10:59:30 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Georgiana Tam

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 11:12:09 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect

community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Sincerely,

Mark Millman

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s)

and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 11:42:22 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

We are Downtown Boston residents, we are writing to express our strong opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more AFFORDABLE, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without

consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

We urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

We hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jing Xu & Geoff MacKay

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate

impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 11:47:25 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident for the last 9 years. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Julian Wu

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 11:49:30 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Scott Gaudreau

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 11:54:44 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Iman El-hariry

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 11:59:44 AM

**Letter Subject:** Washington Street

>

>

> Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

> I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

>

> The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

>

> I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

>

> The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of

enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

>

> Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

>

> Thank you,

>

>

> Edmund P. DeLaCour

>

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 12:03:27 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Lynch, MD

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 12:03:48 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston home owner. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and is a radical departure from what was just agreed upon.

Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Short of current residents /gov subsidizing more housing the numbers don't work.

There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents and stakeholder, dispute this, the Planning Department has unilaterally ignored, and deliberately gone against the will of the community Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets.

Sincerely,

Harry Keegan

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important

steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 12:09:47 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Joe

Rauchuck

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 12:14:48 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for PLAN: Downtown

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a proud Downtown Boston resident writing to express my wholehearted support for the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown. I applaud the courage and vision of our city officials in embracing bold new developments that not only pave the way for growth but also foster a more inclusive and vibrant urban community.

**\*Zoning:\***

The decision to allow developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay is a forward-thinking move that balances our rich historic character with the needs of a modern, expanding city. This approach not only respects our cherished landmarks and open spaces but also welcomes innovative design that can enhance our neighborhoods and drive economic growth.

**\*Housing:\***

The proposal's support for projects within the SKY-R zone along Washington and Stuart Streets is an important step toward addressing Boston's housing needs. By opening the door to a broader range of residential options, including affordable housing through targeted incentives, we are taking meaningful strides to increase the housing supply. This development strategy will enable us to meet the city's goal of providing diverse housing opportunities for residents from all walks of life.

**\*Community Engagement:\***

I also want to commend the Planning Department for actively engaging with community members, stakeholders, and the PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group during the revision process. It is clear that their valuable insights have helped shape a plan that honors our historic context while boldly charting a path forward for a more dynamic and inclusive Downtown Boston.

I encourage the City's Planning Department to continue its transparent and responsive engagement with the community as these developments move forward. Your willingness to adapt and lead in these transformative times is commendable,

and I look forward to seeing our city thrive as a result of these courageous decisions.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to creating a more vibrant, sustainable, and affordable Downtown Boston.

Lukasz Kowalik

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 12:16:37 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN : Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 12:31:52 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

**Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

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**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without

consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jane Fine

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 12:35:33 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to Proposed 500-Foot Zoning Changes on Washington Street

Hi Team, I'm resending this to ensure it's well received. Thanks in advance for your careful consideration!

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Dear Boston Planning & Development Agency, City Council,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the proposal permitting buildings up to 500 feet tall on the side of Washington Street closest to Boston Common. I appreciate the City's commitment to growth and development, but I believe this particular zoning change would have serious negative consequences for historic downtown Boston, our beloved Common, and the broader community. My chief concerns are as follows:

1. Increased Traffic Congestion

This area of Boston is already heavily traveled and serves as a key route for commuters and visitors. Introducing such tall residential towers—along with their accompanying retail, service, and construction traffic—would exacerbate congestion in a corridor that has very limited alternative routes. Gridlock not only inconveniences residents and discourages visitors, but it also impedes emergency services, public transit, and local businesses who depend on smooth traffic flow.

2. Impact on Historic Character

One of Boston's greatest assets is its unique historic charm, characterized by classic low-rise architecture around Downtown Crossing and along Washington Street. Dramatically taller buildings would disrupt this cohesive aesthetic, undermining the area's historic appeal and diminishing the very essence that draws millions of visitors—and their economic contributions—to Boston each year. Preserving the architectural character of downtown helps maintain a vibrant cultural identity and ensures longevity of Boston's historic brand.

3. Shadows on the Boston Common

Boston has a proud tradition of protecting the Common from excessive shadows. Previous city policies have tried to limit tall buildings precisely to prevent overshadowing this important public green space. The Boston Common is a vital recreational and cultural site; it deserves protection not just for its historic value, but also for the health and enjoyment of our residents, workers, and visitors who come to relax, exercise, and attend events. Casting lengthy shadows over the Common would degrade its function and hinder public enjoyment.

#### 4. Wind Tunnel & Safety

Parts of Downtown Crossing already experience strong wind tunnels due to tall buildings. Adding a 500-foot tower closer to the Common could exacerbate these conditions—impacting pedestrian comfort and even public safety.

#### 5. Blocking Views & Decreasing Property Values

Taller buildings along Washington Street will inevitably block the views of existing properties—many of which have already experienced significant drops in value since the pandemic. This decline in property values undercuts local business owners and homeowners who rely on stable or appreciating values for their livelihoods and investments. When large, out-of-scale developments loom over existing properties, it can depress the character of the area and discourage smaller-scale, neighborhood-focused improvements.

#### 6. Preserving Economic & Cultural Interests

Downtown Boston thrives on a balance between modern development and historic preservation. Tourists, students, and residents cherish the city's walkable streetscapes and the eclectic mixture of architecture reflecting different eras in Boston's evolution. Projects of disproportionate scale could erode this delicate balance. By allowing towers of up to 500 feet immediately adjacent to Boston Common, we risk damaging one of our most iconic public spaces and the tourist draw that fuels so much of our local economy.

While I acknowledge that a demand for residential housing remains a priority, Boston should pursue development that respects both the needs of residents and the historic, cultural, and economic fabric that makes our city truly special. Encouraging moderate-scale projects with thoughtful design, robust transit planning, and firm shadow protections would be a more equitable and sustainable approach.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these concerns. I respectfully urge you to reconsider and reject the proposed zoning change in its current form to preserve Boston's historical integrity, protect property values, and maintain a vibrant, welcoming, and accessible city for all.

Sincerely,

Carl Yao

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

In addition to these changes, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm—including conducting wind analysis and addressing conditions that could create uncomfortable or unsafe wind speeds.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 12:50:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 1:00:28 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Alex and Rumena Senchak

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 1:20:35 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Anne Lo

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 1:26:44 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Dr. Alise Reicin

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 1:36:17 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to Downtown Plan!

To whom it may concern,

I am a current Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my strong opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown. Moreover, I hope that you will all consider invoking more standard procedural steps to address such dramatic changes by having a sufficient public comment period that lasts until March.

My major concern regarding the plan is the expansion to allow developments of up to 500 ft along Washington street. There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.vv

I hope you will extend the public commenting period to March at the earliest and to respect the original plan that was very recently adopted in December of 2023 instead of this new highly rushed plan.

Sincerely,

Brian Chang

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 1:45:59 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a downtown Boston resident and own a unit at 1 Franklin st. I am writing to express my strong support for the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown.

I think increasing the density of development downtown by allowing is clearly in the long-term interest of the city of Boston, and the vast majority of the city's residents. Further development downtown, whether or not a given building contains a substantial number of affordable units, will help to moderate the price of housing across the city as a whole.

Sincerely, Isaiah Andrews

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 2:24:17 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Boston resident (south end). I am writing to express my sincere support for the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which differs significantly from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

It reflects an important effort to revitalize a section of the downtown that has fallen on hard times since Covid-19, to address the severe housing shortage in the city and to look to the future needs of the city.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives throughout the downtown.

Limit parking in these buildings and focus on taking advantage of the proximity to mass transit in order to address severe traffic issues.

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Caroline Constant Professor Emerita of Architecture, University of Michigan

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 2:31:47 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to change in Downtown Zoning Amendments

To the Members of the Boston City Government,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth, and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

\*Ever to Serve.\*

Thank you,

Scott P. McKenzie

President

\*Scots' Charitable Society\*

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include

a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 2:56:44 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition (AGAIN) to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing for a second time to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without

consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Greer DiPietro

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 3:30:16 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear BPDA leaders and City Councilors,

I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. I am kindly asking that the comment deadline be extended beyond February 5th to allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters and to push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development. The recent addition to the Plan: Downtown that would allow 500' residential development the "Ladder District" violates the spirit of public good and tramples a unique Boston neighborhood. The proposal recalls the mean spiritedness of the Urban Renewal Plan that leveled the West End, a mistake that should not be repeated.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Michael Epp FAIA

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 3:35:33 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jack (Yu-Chi) Cheng

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 3:50:28 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Kelly Patel

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 3:53:27 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 3:53:50 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Howard Goldman

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 3:54:48 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Sincerely,

MaryLee Halpin

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 4:00:16 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Xiru Zhang & Hongmei Li

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 4:07:56 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

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**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Hannah Park

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 4:09:54 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I received an email from the Downtown Boston Neighborhood Association raising concerns around a proposed PLAN: Downtown rezoning for the SKY-R zone.

As a student and a part-time Downtown resident, I firmly disagree with that stance. Downtown will not be my 'forever home'; the economic situation will never work. It can, however house the successful Bostonians that I'll soon be competing with in rental markets like Allston, Somerville, and other areas of Greater Boston.

As a member of the Belmont Conservation Commission, I know the value of building up in existing developed areas is what allows us to maintain conservation land and all of the benefits to air quality, education, and mental and physical health that come with, within a reasonable distance of our city center.

As Chairman of the Greater Boston Young Democrats, I view it as crucial that Democrat-run cities prove that we CAN govern. We can build vibrant, affordable, nimble communities. Moving forward with this plan is how we set an example and prove to voters in Boston and across the country that our values and policies result in good outcomes for our residents.

This plan is good for affordability, it is good for the environment, and it is good for those of you who have elections to win.

Sincerely,

Angus Abercrombie

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and perspective on the process! We believe this zoning update is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing Downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood while protecting its historic and cultural assets and addressing Boston's housing crisis.

We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 4:09:57 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension of PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Boston Planning Department Board Vote

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without

consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Tim Cook

Boston

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 4:24:10 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Sincerely,

Julie McKenna

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 4:30:14 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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Sincerely,

David McKenna

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**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 5:08:07 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder

Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area. **Housing:** Allowing

projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of

creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that

are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to

offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of

PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite

this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without

consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be

brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. I urge the City's Planning Department to: Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives. I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jim Ross

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 5:19:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Chapman

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 6:41:26 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

~NKA

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 6:46:38 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Jordan Martinez

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 8:02:41 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Boston's Downtown Housing Plan: More Homes, Smart Growth

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as essential steps toward addressing Boston's housing affordability crisis.

As someone deeply concerned about housing costs in our city, I believe increasing residential density in Downtown Boston is crucial for making the city more affordable and accessible to all.

The proposed Sky-R district is particularly promising, as it thoughtfully incentivizes housing development while respecting the historic character of downtown. By requiring that increased height allowances be used primarily for residential development, this plan will help create more homes in an area already rich with transit, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities. More housing downtown will not only provide direct housing options but will also help reduce pressure on housing costs throughout Boston's neighborhoods. Additionally, the plan's emphasis on contextual design and preservation of historic buildings demonstrates a balanced approach to growth that will maintain downtown's unique character while allowing it to evolve to meet our current needs. The proposed amendments create clear, predictable requirements for development while protecting important public spaces like the Boston Common, ensuring that new growth enhances rather than diminishes what makes downtown special.

Sincerely,

Joshua Michel

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 8:07:28 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the new PLAN: Downtown Changes

February 3, 2025

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees and Stakeholders,

We are Downtown Boston owners. We are writing to express our opposition to the latest revised proposal for the new PLAN. It is significantly different from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023 and this concerns us greatly.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks because of the density of historic buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Rather, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding height containment in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered

a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

We urge the City's Planning Department to:

- 1) Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
- 2) Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
- 3) Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives.

We hope our concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Thank you,

Bryan and Kara Tulley

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s)

and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 8:25:26 PM

**Letter Subject:** opposition to new PLAN: Downtown changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

I am glad that the Mayor Michelle Wu has the mission of building Boston's future around affordable housing and addressing homelessness. However, allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, instead, it invites the developers to build towers that are likely to offer luxury residences! Only a small percentage of the new residential building will be allocated as affordable housing isn't enough to meet the tremendous needs. I would like to see plans to support the commercial-to-housing conversions and to provide incentives for affordable housing construction, instead of building more luxury buildings. Also, the traffic in the downtown area has been very congested since the creation of the bike lanes and narrowing roads for cars. So allowing projects as high as 500 feet means more residents, more cars and more traffic jams. It may deter visitors from coming to the downtown area. We would definitely need more time to make better changes.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the

SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart  
Streets

3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Choi Chow

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density,

where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 10:29:37 PM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown Zoning

Hi,

I would like to express my support for more housing downtown. I live in the North End and would appreciate more housing to: Help decrease the very high housing costs. Create a more vibrant neighborhood and city by allowing more businesses to thrive with increased customer bases.

I think it is very unfair that a few loud people can prevent societal progress by blocking housing. It is very selfish since unless you have been here since Boston's founding there have always been people complaining about more housing being built. It turns out there is plenty of space for everyone and there still is plenty more room especially compared to world class cities like NYC and Tokyo.

As the population grows so should housing supplies.

We should be on the right side of history and move for progress. Anything else would be anti-American and against the spirit of the city of Boston.

~Ben Ledoux

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 10:50:50 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to strongly object to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which deviates significantly from the plan adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

### Zoning

Allowing buildings up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay will undermine the character of these historic areas, including landmark buildings and open spaces. This move also threatens tourism in the Ladder Blocks—an area that attracts countless visitors due to its concentration of historically significant buildings.

### Housing

Authorizing towers up to 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone on Washington and Stuart Streets will not address the city's need for more affordable housing. The high cost of tower construction typically results in luxury units, not attainable homes. Furthermore, the proposal would allow for additional office space, which fails to advance affordable housing objectives—a conclusion supported by affordable housing experts.

### Community Input

Over the past six years, the community—residents, stakeholders, and a majority of the PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members, has consistently emphasized the need to limit building heights in character areas. Despite this feedback, the Planning Department disregarded these recommendations when introducing the latest revisions, offering minimal public notice and labeling them as final before seeking BPDA Board approval.

I strongly urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7

Uphold the December 2023 plan by expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to include Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

It is vital that PLAN: Downtown protect our historic neighborhoods, respect meaningful community engagement, and enable the creation of affordable housing. I look forward to seeing substantial revisions that reflect these critical concerns.

Sincerely,

Marshella Tjandra

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 11:05:46 PM

**Letter Subject:** My opposition to the PLAN zoning amendments in downtown Boston

Dear Elected Officials and Boston Administrators,

I am writing to express my opposition to the zoning amendment along the Washington Street corridor that would permit the construction of buildings 500-feet high, as outlined in the January 2025 PLAN: Downtown and Downtown draft zoning amendments.

Although I believe modernization and development in Boston are essential to keep the city affordable and vibrant, the proposed height limit would allow buildings so tall, they would ruin the livability of the area by shrouding it in darkness and wind tunnels, obliterate its renowned and unique historic character, and perhaps most important, overload land that will be stressed enough by rising sea levels in the coming years. It's well known that many neighborhoods adjacent to downtown already are showing signs of sinkage. I don't see how huge skyscrapers along Washington Street could possibly do anything but exacerbate that serious problem.

Given the massive opposition that has been expressed to PLAN proposal, I hope you will do as much as possible to oppose it and insist on a compromise that allows a creative integration of some of the historic characteristics of the region while fostering new housing and economic growth through the construction of buildings with a height limit of 150 feet.

Thank you for taking my comment into consideration. I have also submitted an abbreviated version of this comment through the official form on the PLAN website.

Sincerely,

Franklin Soultis

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including areas along Washington Street and around the Old South Meeting House. With the

exception of the northeast and southwest corners of the zoning area, most of the area within the zoning initiative is not in the Coastal Flood Resilience Overlay District (CFROD), as it consists of Boston's original Shawmut Peninsula. The CFROD relates to areas of the City anticipated to be flooded with a 1% chance storm event in 2070 with 40-inches of sea level rise. Projects within the area must adhere to Coastal Flood Resilience Design Guidelines and sea level rise design flood elevations for new construction and retrofits.

**Letter Date:** 2/3/2025 11:08:31 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 12:13:17 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to: Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Xin Lu

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by

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**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 10:04:13 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Ms. Andrea Smith

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 10:17:03 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Haley Chartoff

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 10:19:24 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 11:38:54 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

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I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Mary Mulloy

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 1:57:38 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

Best,

MJ Zelk

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 3:44:59 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 4:12:38 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

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Sincerely,

Sean Murphy

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 5:59:31 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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Sincerely,

John Schiffmann

John Schiffmann

Shareholder

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential

projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 6:59:22 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders:

I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts to reform the City's planning and zoning processes with the goal of fostering vibrant, thriving, and accessible Boston neighborhoods as well as to share some concerns related to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

The latest iteration of PLAN Downtown represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. In particular, the allowance for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor will severely impact the neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures as well as create a dismal street-level experience due to the wind and shadows created by tall buildings.

I am asking the BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

The built and natural environments that shape our neighborhoods and how people experience our city can and must grow and change in a thoughtfully planned and considered fashion. I am confident that we share similar goals of enhancing the public good for the benefit of our city's people and places; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving historic structures and natural environments through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure that the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

David Achenbach

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 7:37:41 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders, I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area. Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree. Community Input: There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month. I urge the City's Planning Department to: Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives. I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs. Sincerely, Babak Eliassi-Rad

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates

many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 8:55:03 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

John Berenson

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 9:44:53 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

ZJ Ren

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 11:05:05 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

John Boyce

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/4/2025 11:05:40 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

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Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Maryann Boyce

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 12:27:16 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Lam, Resident

Sent from my iPad

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 9:15:00 AM

**Letter Subject:** Plan: Downtown

**Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

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I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN:Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

William and Elizabeth Hackenson –

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 10:55:22 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

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Sincerely,

Adrian

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 12:42:24 PM

**Letter Subject:** Plan Downtown

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

\*I am writing to express my opposition\* to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively

presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Shari L. Thurer

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and

enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 1:21:05 PM

**Letter Subject:** Halt PLAN Downtown: Preserve Boston's historic streetscape!

The heart of Boston resides in everyone's heart. The way it appears to the world matters. Please revisit the PLAN Downtown and incorporate the extensive community feedback and advisory group recommendations you received, so the city of Boston can foster vibrant, thriving neighborhoods throughout the entire city rather than permitting the destruction of our historic downtown's 400 years of built history.

I teach Massachusetts history at Charlestown's Cambridge College. I lead walking tours of historic Boston for the non-profit, Partnership of Historic Bostons. At the core of each is experiencing Boston history through physically exploring its historic, built environment.

Residential towers marching along Washington Street will destroy the remaining 18th century streetscape we have, a streetscape and buildings that tourists come from around the world to experience, especially around the Common, from Milky Way Street to State Street and about the original heart of Boston, Dock Square/Faneuil Hall.

Yes, Boston absolutely needs housing but together with — rather than at the expense of — its historical, downtown environment. I have also worked for over 29 years at Action for Boston Community Development, coordinating a coalition-driven, advocacy conference on the city's housing crisis as far back as 1998. 500' & 700' residential towers looming over downtown are not the answer. Transit-accessible housing in the neighborhoods is what our city needs.

Please bring the PLAN Downtown planning process back to the community; respect and preserve our historic downtown streetscape (not just the individual buildings) and keep Boston a city where people — world over — can experience our 400 years of history!

Roxanne Reddington-Wilde, PhD

Senior Faculty, Cambridge College, Charlestown

Secretary, Partnership of Historic Bostons

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including areas along Washington Street and around the Old South Meeting House. Alongside safeguarding the unique character of some of Boston's most historic areas, we remain firmly committed to enabling inclusive growth and new housing in the heart of our City. This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address our housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City.

**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 1:54:55 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**\*Zoning\*:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**\*Housing\*:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**\*Community Input\*:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

- Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
- Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
- Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Linda McLaughlin

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate

impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 3:33:26 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to most recent proposal for PLAN: Downtown

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

As a Downtown Boston resident, I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

I am particularly concerned about the Zoning changes which would allow developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay. This will change the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. I am concerned about changing the scale of these neighborhoods and creating urban canyons – there is a reason I left NYC for Boston 14 years ago. Seeing the sky is important to me!

Additionally, allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street is unlikely to accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the current realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences. Affordable housing experts agree.

My understanding is that there has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval. Though I was not part of this process – it feels disrespectful to those that were.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

- 1.

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

- 2.

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3.

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rebecca Roth

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City,

Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 4:12:14 PM

**Letter Subject:** Strongly OPPOSE new changes to PLAN:Downtown

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, Stakeholders and Neighbors,

I have lived in Downtown Crossing since 2009. Before that I lived in both Beacon Hill and Back Bay. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal of PLAN:Downtown presented on January 15th and the dramatic changes from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in late 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

David Urell

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median

Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 4:55:16 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**\*Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**\*Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**\*Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period\* by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023\* and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing\* through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Justin Aminian

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 5:03:51 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Stephen Hnat

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 6:08:46 PM

**Letter Subject:** Strongly OPPOSE new changes to PLAN: Downtown

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, Stakeholders and Neighbors,

I have lived in Downtown Crossing since 2009. Before that I lived in both Beacon Hill and Back Bay. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal of PLAN:Downtown presented on January 15th and the dramatic changes from the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in late 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 7:30:08 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sarah Boyce

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 10:33:43 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

The following is my previous experience with the BRA which influences my concerns with the BPDA and proposed Washington St development now. We bought our unit at 88 Kingston in 2005 when the zoning height limit for surrounding buildings was approx 100 ft. We purchased the unit pre-construction and specifically confirmed this high limit for 120 Kingston St. (the building formerly known as the Dainty Dot) prior to closing on our unit since our unit located on the top floor faces South and we had an unobstructed Southern view which included the Blue Hills. Unfortunately, the developer received a zoning variance and was permitted to develop 120 Kingston at an approximate height of 300 ft including mechanicals.

Planning to build 500' towers on Washington St is exponentially more extreme than the 120 Kingston zoning variance. However, the proposed Washington St development is reminiscent in that concerns/comments from our building as well as adjacent buildings regarding shadowing, wind tunnels, obstructed views were ignored by the BRA as well as the Zoning Board. With the proposal of 500' towers on Washington St., the BPDA is ignoring the concerns of a majority of residents and stakeholders and is not only going ahead with the proposal, but proceeding at an extremely accelerated pace.

Sincerely,

Carmen Patti

Downtown resident since 2005

Sent from my iPad

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 10:44:22 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

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Sincerely,

Margaret Nelson

Downtown resident since 2005

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/5/2025 10:47:19 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposed to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments

Dear Elected Officials and Agency Leaders,

I am an historian of the Pre-Revolutionary Era to the early years of Nationhood. I absolutely love Boston, but also can appreciate that at times, things need to change. I am writing to share both my appreciation for the efforts that the City of Boston takes in planning and zoning to make the most of all that Boston has to offer, but want to share some concerns pertaining to the latest PLAN Downtown proposals.

What is missing from the latest iteration of PLAN Downtown is a focus on maintaining the historical integrity of what is so precious about the City Upon a Hill. This plan presents an alarming change that allows for building heights up to 500' (Sky-R zone) and 700+ feet (Sky zone) along the Washington Street corridor. This will be much to the detriment of this neighborhood's iconic 18thc buildings and other historic structures.

Tourists and historians, as well as locals, place such a high value on the preservation of this area. For the sake of preservation and aesthetics, not to mention livability, tall buildings completely erode the efforts of stewardship that time that your City predecessors and inhabitants have so carefully held dear.

Please rethink this current iteration and consider the following: BPD 1) to restore a zoning height restriction of 155' along the Washington Street corridor and specifically in the stretch between Milk and State Streets where there is a dense cluster of Revolutionary-era buildings, 2) to encourage affordable and moderate-income housing development that also

prioritizes the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures, and 3) to extend the PLAN Downtown comment deadline and push back the Board vote to give stakeholders a chance to understand the latest changes, to develop thoughtful comments, and to work collectively with the BPD to seek a return to earlier iterations of the plan that better reflect community feedback.

Boston is a cornerstone of our country. Its roots must be protected such that the continuity and vitality of Boston's neighborhoods can be appreciated by all who walk those hallowed streets. I am confident that there are more organic options that can be considered in order to strike a balance between progress and preservation. I am sure that is the intended goal of the city, and the path it means to take to the benefit of all.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jill Bouchillon

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include

a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/6/2025 1:01:47 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/6/2025 9:17:22 AM

**Letter Subject:** Comment on the Boston Plan to Increase Downtown Housing Density

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as vital steps toward addressing our region's housing crisis and creating a more vibrant downtown Boston. As a nearby resident who frequently visits downtown for work and leisure, I've witnessed how the area's potential is limited by insufficient housing and excessive car infrastructure. The proposed Sky-R district particularly excites me, as it thoughtfully balances new housing development with historic preservation. By incentivizing projects with at least 60% residential use, we can bring more residents to this transit-rich area while maintaining downtown's unique character. More housing downtown means more people walking to work, supporting local businesses, and enjoying our world-class public spaces and cultural institutions. This isn't just about adding housing units – it's about creating a more sustainable, equitable, and economically resilient downtown core that serves everyone in our region.

Sincerely, Zachary Maiorana

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/6/2025 12:39:57 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. \*Extend the comment period\* by 30 days to March 7th
2. \*Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023\* and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. \*Prioritize affordable housing\* through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Eric Gerney

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate

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By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/6/2025 2:02:18 PM

**Letter Subject:** More density downtown, please

Good afternoon,

I have heard there is debate about how much housing should be downtown. The answer is - more. I am a JP resident, and am always surprised when I visit downtown to see how low the buildings are and how little hustle and bustle there is at night. Bringing more housing and density downtown would make it livelier \*and\* add housing stock that Boston needs so badly.

Thank you for your consideration, Jean Capizzi

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/6/2025 3:22:40 PM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear Kairos Shen

I am writing today to share the City's efforts to consider the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible \*as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.\*

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. The comment deadline should be extended. This would allow community members more time to digest the latest plan and thoughtfully collect their feedback for comment letters. Please push back the Board vote where the plan is expected to be approved.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together. I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect the values and needs of our community.

JoAnn Robinson, Chair of the Park Advisors

## Emerald Necklace Conservancy

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 2/7/2025 1:05:17 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Smart Growth: New Downtown Zoning Will Boost Housing + Vibrancy

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write in strong support of the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a Boston resident watching our housing crisis deepen, I

believe these changes are crucial and long overdue.

The proposed Sky-R district is particularly promising, as it intelligently incentivizes residential development while respecting the historic character of downtown Boston. By requiring 60% residential use for increased height allowances, we can add desperately needed housing in an area rich with transit, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities.

This will bring more life to our downtown, supporting local businesses still recovering from the pandemic's impact, while reducing car dependency through transit-oriented development. Importantly, these changes maintain protections for historic landmarks and beloved spaces like the Boston Common while creating clear, predictable requirements for future development. We simply cannot allow our city's growth and vitality to be stifled by outdated zoning restrictions when so many residents and workers struggle to find affordable homes near their jobs and communities.

Sincerely,

Karin pawluk

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/7/2025 2:36:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Boston's Smart Growth: More Housing, Vibrant Future

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the proposed zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as a resident of Downtown Boston. Living here has shown me firsthand how our neighborhood can thrive with increased density and residential development, and these changes represent a crucial step toward achieving that vision.

The proposed Sky-R district particularly excites me, as it thoughtfully balances the need for new housing with respect for our historic architecture. By requiring 60% residential use for maximum height allowances, this plan prioritizes housing creation where it's needed most - in a transit-rich, amenity-filled downtown core. The careful consideration of building heights, transitioning from taller structures to lower zones near the Boston Common, demonstrates sound urban planning that will enhance rather than detract from our historic landscape.

These changes will help transform Downtown Boston into a more vibrant, 24-hour neighborhood. More residents means more support for local businesses, restaurants, and cultural institutions that have struggled since the pandemic. It means more people walking to work, using public transit, and enjoying our world-class public spaces. Most importantly, it means more housing options in an area perfectly suited for density, helping to ease pressure on housing availability throughout Boston. This plan represents a thoughtful approach to growth that will benefit not just Downtown, but our entire city.

Sincerely,

Nathan Borgogni

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and

livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/7/2025 3:36:13 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

Traffic: Construction of so many additional units will have an adverse effect on the traffic on Washington and Stuart Streets, both streets already highly congested

Environmental impact: Such tall buildings in a narrow street like Washington Street will block the sunlight in the street itself and for adjacent buildings. It might also create a "wind tunnel", having an adverse impact on the businesses in the neighborhood on the quality of life of the residents.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Natalia Sternberg

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important

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The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/7/2025 3:39:34 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

**Traffic:** Construction of so many additional units will have an adverse effect on the traffic on Washington and Stuart Streets, both streets already highly congested

**Environmental impact:** Such tall buildings in a narrow street like Washington Street will block the sunlight in the street itself and for adjacent buildings. It might also create a "wind tunnel", having an adverse impact on the businesses in the

neighborhood on the quality of life of the residents. I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Josef Sternberg.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/7/2025 5:14:55 PM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown plan

Good afternoon,

I just wanted to voice my support for the increased highly and density limits downtown. Wish there was a way to go above 500 feet in specific areas where it would make sense.

It's long overdue that Boston adds density in the core. That would make for a more vibrant & safe downtown. Hopefully this will have the knock on effect of filling in some of those pesky empty store fronts that are depressing to look at.

Thank you & keep up the good work!!

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/7/2025 5:17:37 PM

**Letter Subject:** Expand Boston's Downtown Housing Plan to Meet Growing Crisis

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

The proposed changes in the draft zoning amendment for downtown Boston represent a missed opportunity to fully address our city's severe housing crisis. While I appreciate the steps being taken to create more predictable dimensional requirements and incentivize housing through the new Sky-R district, I believe we need to be significantly more ambitious in our approach.

As a resident of Harrison Avenue, I witness daily how the lack of adequate housing supply affects our community. I've seen neighbors forced to move away due to rising costs, and local businesses struggling without a consistent residential customer base. The current proposal's modest height allowances and restricted zones for residential development, while maintaining extensive historic preservation requirements, may not generate the substantial housing stock we desperately need. While I understand the importance of preserving Boston's historic character, we must balance this with the urgent need to house our growing population. I strongly encourage the Planning Department to consider expanding the Sky-R district and increasing height allowances for residential projects, particularly in areas well-served by public transit. Our downtown area, with its abundant transit options and proximity to jobs, could support much more housing density while maintaining its essential character.

Sincerely,

Harold Schaut

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets. and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/7/2025 9:02:00 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support zoning changes for more downtown housing & balanced growth

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a Boston resident concerned about our housing crisis, I believe these changes represent critical steps toward creating a more vibrant and accessible downtown.

The proposed Sky-R district west of Washington Street is particularly promising, as it thoughtfully balances growth with preservation. By limiting additional height to primarily residential projects, we can add desperately needed housing while protecting the historic character that makes our downtown unique. This approach will help ease housing pressure across all Boston neighborhoods while ensuring new development respects existing landmarks and public spaces like the Boston Common.

Downtown Boston, with its unparalleled access to transit, employment, and cultural amenities, is ideally positioned to welcome more residents. More housing here means more people walking to work, supporting local businesses, and enjoying our world-class public spaces. This isn't just about adding units – it's about strengthening the very fabric of our downtown community while helping address our region's housing crisis. The clear dimensional requirements and context-sensitive design guidelines will ensure new development enhances rather than detracts from what makes downtown special. I urge you to move forward with these vital zoning changes.

Sincerely,

David Boudrot

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and

livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/7/2025 9:53:30 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support housing affordability: Back downtown zoning changes for a better Boston

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of Jamaica Plain who has watched housing costs skyrocket across Boston, I'm deeply concerned about the future affordability of our city. That's why I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN:

Downtown amendment, which represent crucial steps toward addressing our housing crisis.

The current housing shortage affects everyone in Boston, from young professionals to working families to longtime residents. By creating the new Sky-R district that incentivizes residential development through additional height allowances, while maintaining contextual sensitivity near historic areas, we can add desperately needed housing where it makes the most sense – in our transit-rich downtown core. This smart approach to growth will help relieve pressure on housing costs throughout Boston's neighborhoods while ensuring new development respects the character of downtown.

I'm particularly encouraged by how these amendments will help revitalize downtown Boston. More housing means more people living near jobs, cultural institutions, and public transit. This increased foot traffic will support local businesses still recovering from the pandemic's impact, while the proposed design guidelines will preserve the historic fabric that makes downtown special. Most importantly, by adding housing supply in this prime location, we can help moderate costs across the entire city. I urge you to approve these amendments to create a more affordable, vibrant, and sustainable downtown for all Bostonians.

Sincerely,

Daniel Houwen

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and

livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/8/2025 12:24:46 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support PLAN: Downtown - Smart Growth for Boston's Future

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I'm writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a young professional planning to start a family in Boston, I'm deeply invested in our city's future and believe these changes are crucial for creating a more vibrant, accessible downtown.

We are fighting battles around the city to build more housing, and our beautiful downtown with all of its cultural and urbanist amenities is the most ideal and obvious place in the region for dense residential.

I urge you to approve these amendments that will help create the livable, dynamic downtown our city needs for the future residents of this city.

Sincerely,

Samsudeen Sallah

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need and benefits of increased housing and density Downtown. This zoning update is a start and just one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/8/2025 9:27:27 AM

**Letter Subject:** my view on downtown plan

To Boston official involved in city planning,

I am a downtown resident and write concerning the new plan to allow an unspecified number of high rises along Washington Street.

My view is that the open plan to allow an entire length of Washington Street from School Street to Washington Street will ruin the historic character of the city, harm tourism, and not provide affordable housing that the city needs. Boston should not follow the example of Vancouver Canada where excessive towers led to foreign speculators purchasing units left empty. It led to luxury housing costs spiraling out of control, actually worsening a housing crisis.

Other cities, such as Panama City, Panama have focused on restoring their historic areas to keep the colonial charm and character with great success.

I urge the planning council to reconsider a new plan, restricting new towers and focusing on restoring historic buildings for residential use. In my view, the only region acceptable for a new tower would be along Bromfield avenue, a street full of empty buildings that need attention.

Yours Sincerely,

Lisa McKerracher

**Response:** We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to preserve

the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including areas along Washington Street and around the Old South Meeting House.

**Letter Date:** 2/9/2025 3:56:26 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement.

I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback. Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark.

Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and

unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Elliot Mazza

**Response:**

**Letter Date:** 2/9/2025 4:01:30 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Sherry Krause-Mazza

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for

Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/9/2025 4:22:42 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, I have lived here for the last three years and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. It will only create an excess of luxury homes and excess commercial office space. It doesn't solve our problems. Do not give in to developers who don't live here!!

The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the

character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Kristine Artello, PhD/JD/MSW

Consultant

Please forgive brevity & spelling as this communication was sent via cell phone.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown’s potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/9/2025 4:36:36 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/9/2025 4:53:37 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Susan Donnelly

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/9/2025 4:57:32 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city’s attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Peter Kutz

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for

Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/9/2025 5:02:14 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders, I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback. Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors. Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs. The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach. I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials

to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Nina Truong

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown’s potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/9/2025 5:02:16 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/9/2025 6:18:34 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders, I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback. Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors. Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs. The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach. I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials

to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right. Sincerely,

Janel Wong

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 2/9/2025 9:03:19 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support downtown Boston zoning changes for more equitable housing

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I am writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of Roxbury, I've witnessed firsthand how the housing shortage has impacted our communities, particularly our Black and brown neighbors who are being displaced due to rising costs and limited housing options.

The proposed amendments, particularly the creation of the Sky-R district that incentivizes residential development, represent a critical step toward addressing our housing crisis. By allowing additional height for buildings with at least 60% residential use, we can transform underutilized downtown spaces into vibrant residential areas. This is especially timely given the shift to remote work that has left many downtown office spaces vacant. The plan's emphasis on adaptive reuse of existing buildings further supports this transformation while preserving the area's historic character.

I particularly appreciate how the amendments consider Downtown's unique position as a transit-rich, culturally significant area. More housing here means more people can live within walking distance of jobs, cultural institutions, and public transportation. This not only reduces car dependency but also helps sustain local businesses that have struggled since the pandemic. However, I encourage you to consider removing the conditional use requirement for smaller residential projects and dormitories, as these restrictions could unnecessarily limit housing growth. Every unit matters in our current crisis, and we should be making it easier, not harder, to create homes in such a well-resourced area. This plan could be a powerful tool for creating a more equitable and accessible Boston for all residents.

Sincerely,

Talya Levitz

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need and benefits of increased housing and density Downtown. This zoning update is a start and just

one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/9/2025 10:37:28 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders, I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback. Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors. Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers

also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs. The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city’s attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach. I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right. Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

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not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 2/9/2025 10:38:45 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

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Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

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neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Julian Wu

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/10/2025 8:06:07 AM

**Letter Subject:** More tall residential buildings downtown

Hi,

I'd like to write to register my support for the latest BPDA zoning proposal for downtown Boston. Boston's downtown is the ideal place to build more 500-tall residential buildings--the only downside is some obstructed views for current residents of tall buildings, and I think we as a city can live with that.

Thanks,

--

Micah Sachs

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/10/2025 8:59:49 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Pram Townsend

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 2/10/2025 9:44:32 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston commercial property owner, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

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I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Thank you!!

Sincerely-

Kerri Spurr Gallaway

Executive Vice President,

Property Management, RPA

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic

character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/10/2025 10:05:50 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing once again to oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Roby

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for

Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/10/2025 10:25:46 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback. Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors. Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers

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Sincerely,

Joel Berger

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

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Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 2/10/2025 12:23:18 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Martha

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/10/2025 1:14:22 PM

**Letter Subject:** Strong Support for Downtown Zoning Amendment

Good afternoon,

I'm writing to express my strong support for proposed amendments to the new downtown zoning, particularly the SKY-R district. This amendment should be adopted as quickly as possible.

Boston is dealing with dual but related challenges: increasing housing prices and a downtown business district being buffeted by post-pandemic declines in office occupancy. A vital aspect of the solution to both problems is aggressive development of housing downtown. More housing means more patronage for downtown businesses, more residents who have access to transit and jobs, and a more vibrant and safe atmosphere for residents and visitors alike.

The density of transit, jobs, and amenities downtown is unparalleled anywhere else in the city or region. This means that downtown is a more appropriate location than anywhere else for the most amount of housing development. If the most possible housing doesn't go downtown, where will it go? To outlying neighborhoods and towns that are less well-equipped to handle the amount of new housing units we need to satisfy regional demand.

I live in Dorchester and commute downtown for work every day. I remember the fierce debates about the planning for Millennium Tower and Winthrop Center, and the fears that such tall buildings would overwhelm infrastructure and loom menacingly over Boston Common. None of these fears came to pass. As someone that walks through downtown and Boston Common every day, I can attest that the physical impacts of these buildings are imperceptible, except for their beneficial aesthetic addition to Boston's skyline.

The Boston Planning Department, the Zoning Commission, and the Mayor's Office would do well to remember that in this case and countless others, the horror stories invented by the vocal minority of opponents to development always turn out to be just that: stories and inventions. We have many extremely talented planners, designers, and engineers on the city staff who know what is effective when it comes to zoning and development:

we should listen to them.

Tim Czerwienski

**Response:** Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/10/2025 1:48:31 PM

**Letter Subject:** Why would the city want to build a wall (of 500' towers) around the Common?

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. It seems to be a wall around the Common. I cannot think of anything more out of sync with our beautiful green spaces and human scaled buildings in the area. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely, Rebecca G Campbell

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential

projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/10/2025 4:12:58 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to us long term residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Corrigan, MD

Lifelong back bay resident

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the

draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/10/2025 7:17:35 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

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I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Balaji & Kiran Chakravarthy

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for

Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/11/2025

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

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The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all

stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Nina Frusztajer

Nina Frusztajer, MD, MS, DipABLM

Dr. Nina MD: Nutrition & Weight Loss Coaching

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/11/2025 10:37:48 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Zoning Changes for Housing Affordability & Inclusive Growth

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I'm writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment, while also sharing some concerns about our city's future. As parents raising our children in Boston, we worry about whether they'll be able to afford to stay in the only home they've known when they grow up.

The proposed changes offer promising steps forward, particularly the expanded housing capacity in the Financial District and incentives for adaptive reuse of existing buildings. I'm especially encouraged by the Sky-R district proposal allowing additional height for predominantly residential developments. However, I believe the plan could be more ambitious. The requirement for conditional use approval for projects under

9 units could stifle the incremental growth we desperately need.

Additionally, conditioning college and large hotel uses may inadvertently complicate efforts to expand student housing and regulate short-term rentals.

Downtown Boston, with its unparalleled transit access and cultural significance, is ideally positioned to help address our housing crisis. As Cambridge demonstrates with its recent citywide zoning reforms, bold action is possible. Downtown belongs to all of us - it's where we work, gather, and celebrate our city's heritage. By enabling more people to live there, we can create a more vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive Boston while preserving opportunities for future generations.

Sincerely,

Maddie & Zack DeClerck

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how

projects impact and activate the public realm. Universities are regulated by Institutional Master Plans that ensure that university uses enhance the area and that their expansion occurs thoughtfully and transparently. Large hotel uses are conditional in the draft zoning to allow for the evaluation of site-specific impacts, particularly related to loading and pick-up/drop-off activity that may impact this pedestrian-first environment. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/11/2025 10:55:03 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to Proposed Zoning Plan Change of January 15, 2025

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively

expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Deborah Brown

Deborah L. Brown

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/11/2025 11:02:25 AM

**Letter Subject:** \*\*\*\*\*Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

My wife is a Downtown Boston resident, and we oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback. \*This new proposal would allow for buildings that directly impact our view and property value\*!

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively

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Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city’s attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Christopher and Marianne Smith

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the

draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 2/11/2025 12:44:40 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

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Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

D. Reed Dickinson

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for

Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/11/2025 1:04:45 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

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Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result

in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Alan J. Grodzinsky, Sc.D.

Professor of Biological, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Emeritus  
MIT Department of Biological Engineering

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/11/2025 1:41:36 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

William G. Burrill

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/11/2025 3:35:11 PM

**Letter Subject:** Re: Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

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expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Best Regards,

Gail M. Grodzinsky

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intended recipient or the employee or agent responsible for delivering the message to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error or it was forwarded to you without permission from Dr. Grodzinsky, please forward this message back to the email address above, delete this message from all mailboxes and any other electronic storage medium and destroy all copies. Thank you.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/12/2025

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

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Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

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I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Izabela Malinowska

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/12/2025

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

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I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

S. Allen Fagenholz MD

Linda S. Fagenholz MD

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/12/2025 10:44:37 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

We moved to downtown Boston recently and I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. We selected Boston as our retirement city due to its preservation of history, its commitment to public park areas, its walkability and its feel of community without the forced density of, say NYC. Please, please reconsider your plan for multiple, tall, luxury highrises in our neighborhood along Washington or near the beautiful public parks.

We have lived in other cities in the USA and traveled to other cities in Europe. What drew us to Boston was its recognition of the beauty found in maintaining history, unencumbered green spaces and small neighborhoods. It was truly visionary to recognize that the public green spaces of this neighborhood should not be shaded. Both figuratively and literally, these historical parks should remain in full sunlight for all.

Boston has a phenomenal feel of the US and Europe like no other! We see The Common and Garden, as well as the Charles. We see the historical church steeples, the statues and the tourists admiring the uniqueness that is Boston. We walk through Chinatown and BackBay, by the historic theaters and we marvel at how wonderful it is that Boston has kept its sense of authenticity. We congratulate ourselves every day that we were smart enough to choose Boston and this neighborhood over any other in the U.S.! Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens Boston's beloved character to the very core.

We are new to Boston. Maybe our words/views do not have as much pull as native Bostonians. But you should know what we see. Sometimes living in a city for a long time lessens one's appreciation for what you have here! It just makes us so sad to think Boston will succumb to the cookie-cutter approach of so many US cities. Boston is extraordinary in its vision. Please don't decimate what those of us with fresh eyes see in this beautiful city of history, sunny parks, sparkling water, and diverse small neighborhoods.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and the City officials to take the necessary time to reconsider this plan and to closely listen to all stakeholders— not just developers. Please. We really have something special here.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Graham

Sent from my iPad

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for participating in the process. It is great to hear you recently made Boston your home, and we value your feedback! Based on comments, we have made changes to the draft, strengthening protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to grow.

**Letter Date:** 2/12/2025 11:48:55 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of tower construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents; stakeholders; and the large majority of PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, offered with a very short public comment

window, and presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board for approval within a month.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th

Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets

Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

~NKA

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public

realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 2/12/2025 6:16:27 PM

**Letter Subject:** Public comment on PLAN and downtown zoning

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write in strong support of the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment, while urging some critical improvements to maximize its effectiveness.

As a tenant attorney, I witness daily the devastating impact of Boston's housing shortage on families and individuals. I've seen clients forced to choose between paying rent and buying groceries, and others pushed out of neighborhoods they've called home for generations. The human cost of our housing crisis is both immediate and far-reaching, affecting not just current residents but future generations of Bostonians.

The proposed amendments offer promising solutions, particularly through the new Sky-R district allowing additional height for predominantly residential projects and expanded housing capacity in the Financial District. I'm encouraged by provisions that incentivize the adaptive reuse of existing buildings for housing while maintaining contextual design guidelines that respect our city's historic character. These changes could help transform downtown into a more vibrant, accessible neighborhood while boosting our local economy and public transit utilization.

However, to truly address our housing crisis, the plan needs strengthening.

I strongly urge you to create an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet and remove the conditional use restriction on housing projects with nine units or less. These limitations could inadvertently hinder the incremental growth we desperately need, particularly in areas with smaller lots. Additionally, the conditional uses for college and hotel purposes should be reconsidered as they may undermine efforts to regulate short-term rentals and expand student housing. Making these adjustments would significantly enhance the plan's effectiveness in addressing our critical housing needs.

Sincerely,

Lin Wang, Esq.

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm. Universities are regulated by Institutional Master Plans that ensure that university uses enhance the area and that their expansion occurs thoughtfully and transparently. Large hotel uses are conditional in the draft zoning to allow for the evaluation of site-specific impacts, particularly related to loading and pick-up/drop-off activity that may impact this pedestrian-first environment. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/13/2025 3:11:23 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support bold downtown zoning changes to create more housing in Boston

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment, which represent crucial steps toward addressing our region's housing crisis.

As a Massachusetts resident, I am deeply concerned about maintaining housing affordability and preserving the American Dream of homeownership in our state. The proposed changes to downtown Boston's zoning, particularly the creation of a Sky-R district allowing additional height for predominantly residential projects and the expanded capacity for new housing in the Financial District, are exactly the kind of bold measures we need. These changes will not only create more housing opportunities but will also energize downtown areas, support local businesses, and maximize the use of our existing public transit infrastructure.

While I applaud the overall direction of these amendments, I believe some adjustments could make them even more effective. Specifically, I urge you to create an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet and remove the conditional use restriction on housing projects with nine units or less. These modifications would eliminate unnecessary barriers to incremental growth, particularly in areas with smaller lots. Additionally, the conditional uses for "College or University Use" and "Hotel - Large" should be reconsidered, as they may undermine efforts to regulate short-term rentals and expand dormitory construction. These changes would help ensure that the amendments fully achieve their potential in addressing our housing needs while maintaining the character and vitality of downtown Boston.

Sincerely,

Michael Schwartz

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm. Universities are regulated by Institutional Master Plans that ensure that university uses enhance the area and that their expansion occurs thoughtfully and transparently. Large hotel uses are conditional in the draft zoning to allow for the evaluation of site-specific impacts, particularly related to loading and pick-up/drop-off activity that may impact this pedestrian-first environment. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/13/2025 3:17:11 PM

**Letter Subject:** Comments on Proposed Downtown Zoning Changes

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I am writing to show my firm support of the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment, which will serve as essential steps toward addressing Boston's dramatic housing shortage while simultaneously formalizing rules to preserve our city's unique character.

As a resident of Allston who uses the commuter rail for work, I would love to be able to afford to live closer to the transit I depend on. However, as limited housing supply has driven up costs across our city with pressure being especially extreme around Back Bay and South Station, that is currently not practical. The proposed amendments, particularly the new Sky-R district allowing additional height for predominantly residential developments, will help create much-needed housing in areas perfectly suited for growth. By focusing density in the Financial District, we can protect historic neighborhoods while still meeting our city's growing housing needs.

The plan thoughtfully balances growth with preservation through predictable dimensional requirements and historic context design guidelines. I

particularly appreciate the formalization of the Boston Common Shadow Law, ensuring new development respects our cherished public spaces. More housing downtown will naturally boost local businesses, increase transit ridership, and create more vibrant street life – all while helping to stabilize housing costs across the city.

However, I urge you to strengthen these amendments further. Creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet would streamline development of much-needed housing. Additionally, the conditional use restriction on projects with 9 units or fewer should be removed, as it could impede incremental growth in areas with smaller lots. These changes would help maximize the positive impact of these otherwise excellent amendments while maintaining appropriate oversight of larger developments.

I strongly encourage you to adopt these amendments with the suggested improvements to help ensure Boston remains vibrant and accessible to all.

Sincerely,

Toby Arment

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/13/2025 5:00:41 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support PLAN: Downtown - We need more housing options in Boston's core

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment, particularly the provisions that incentivize residential development through the new Sky-R district and expanded housing capacity in the Financial District.

As a Jamaica Plain resident sharing an apartment with five housemates, I understand firsthand how crucial it is to increase housing availability across Boston. Despite being in a long-term relationship, my partner and I continue living separately with multiple roommates because we cannot afford our own apartment. This personal experience has shown me why we need to maximize housing development opportunities, especially in transit-rich areas like downtown.

The proposed changes are a step in the right direction, particularly the predictable dimensional requirements and incentives for adaptive reuse of existing buildings. Downtown's proximity to public transit and employment makes it an ideal location for increased housing density. However, I

believe the plan could go further. Creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet and removing conditional use restrictions on smaller housing projects would help accelerate much-needed housing development.

I'm also concerned about the conditional use requirements for hotels and university housing. As someone working in tourism, I've seen how limited hotel capacity drives up room rates, making it difficult for visitors to afford staying in Boston. Rather than restricting these uses, we should embrace their potential to complement residential development and support our local economy. I urge you to consider modifications that would streamline the approval process and maximize housing production potential in this vital area of our city.

Sincerely,

Rachel Lay

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/14/2025 10:34:40 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Boston's 24/7 future: Remove housing development barriers

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I am writing regarding the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As someone who works in downtown Boston, I am concerned about the current state of our wonderful city center and its future vitality. The lack of housing options in downtown has resulted in an area that becomes eerily quiet after business hours, limiting its potential as a vibrant, 24/7 neighborhood, especially after the covid 19 pandemic. I would love to see downtown as a place people visit all times of day, not just between the hours of 9-5.

The proposed changes, particularly the creation of the Sky-R district with its housing incentives, represent a crucial step toward addressing this issue. By requiring 60% residential use for additional height allowances, we can transform downtown from a mere office district into a living, breathing neighborhood. This transformation is essential not only for downtown's economic recovery post-pandemic but also for addressing our region's severe housing shortage. However, I urge you to consider removing the conditional use requirements for smaller residential projects and dormitories, as these restrictions could unnecessarily hinder the gradual, organic growth we need. The success of downtown Boston depends on creating a diverse, accessible neighborhood where people can both work and live.

Sincerely,

Thomas Hentschel

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential

uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Universities are regulated by Institutional Master Plans that ensure that university uses enhance the area and that their expansion occurs thoughtfully and transparently. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/18/2025 5:55:39 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for Boston Downtown Zoning: Create Housing & Remove Development Barriers

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as crucial steps toward creating a more vibrant and accessible downtown Boston. As a resident who wants to see our city center thrive, I'm particularly excited about the potential for increased housing density and the creation of a more dynamic urban environment.

The proposed Sky-R district and expanded housing capacity in the Financial District are excellent initiatives that will help address our housing crisis. However, I urge you to strengthen these reforms by creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet and removing the conditional use restriction on housing projects with nine units or less.

These modifications would significantly enhance the plan's effectiveness in promoting housing growth. Additionally, the current conditional uses for college and hotel purposes could potentially undermine efforts to regulate short-term rentals and expand dormitory construction. By addressing these concerns, we can ensure that downtown Boston becomes a more inclusive and affordable neighborhood while maintaining its historic character and enhancing its economic vitality.

Sincerely,

Nathaniel Davis

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm. Universities are regulated by

Institutional Master Plans that ensure that university uses enhance the area and that their expansion occurs thoughtfully and transparently. Large hotel uses are conditional in the draft zoning to allow for the evaluation of site-specific impacts, particularly related to loading and pick-up/drop-off activity that may impact this pedestrian-first environment. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/19/2025 4:21:30 PM

**Letter Subject:** Historic Boston

Please limit high rise construction in historic Boston areas

Caron and Fred golder

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 2/19/2025 5:41:17 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

\*Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. \*The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. \*Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs. \*

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Molly Harper, Boston

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Molly Harper

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders,

preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/19/2025 8:15:42 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was

adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Jan Mangal

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/19/2025 8:53:46 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN for downtown changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Greater Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach. I myself live in a housing unit that was designed in the 1960's by a Harvard architect. It blends into the beautiful area, and provides housing to many people. Boston's historical area deserves to be preserved. The short sightedness of temporary financial gain for a few should not determine the city's beauty and purpose.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Heather Stewart

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/20/2025 9:48:37 AM

**Letter Subject:** Request for Extension on PLAN: Downtown Comment Deadline and Board Vote

Dear, Mayor Wu, Erin J. Murphy, Ben Weber and planning and zoning communities

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal. I have commented personally and via my work on other requests, but feel this is too important an issue to not continue again.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. A preservation-first plan for Downtown presents our historic streetscapes as an asset, and creates naturally occurring affordable housing utilizing the buildings that already exist! In fact, there are at least 46 buildings built before 1948 in the study area, some of which exclusively serve section-8 tenants. Adapting or expanding a building is a much quicker process than building new, supplying much needed housing at a faster rate. A nearby example includes the 44 Bromfield Street conversion from office to residential with 44 units ranging from studios to two bedroom apartments. Adapting our historic spaces, balanced with new construction, will honor our unique, tourist-worthy streetscapes and continue to add housing for many income levels.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

Kenneth Dietz

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The zoning continues to help maximize incentives for adaptive reuse and reduce barriers for building conversion, supporting the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The program has successfully created 762 housing units across 20 buildings, converting over 600,000 square feet of office space. However, given the smaller scale of suitable buildings, limited inventory, and the specific alignment of form, condition, and market conditions required to make projects viable, the program has also shown that conversion alone cannot deliver the scale of housing needed Downtown. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward— protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/20/2025 5:41:13 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Zoning Changes for More Housing & Vibrant Neighborhoods

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as steps toward making our downtown more vibrant and accessible to all. As a resident of the South End, I've witnessed how mixed-use, dense neighborhoods create vibrant communities where people can live, work, and thrive.

The proposed changes offer thoughtful solutions to our housing challenges while respecting Boston's unique character. I'm particularly encouraged by the new Sky-R district allowing additional height for predominantly residential projects and the incentives for adaptive reuse of existing buildings. These measures will help create more homes while maintaining the architectural fabric that makes Boston special. The formalization of the Boston Common Shadow Law also demonstrates a commitment to protecting our cherished public spaces.

However, I believe the plan could go further to achieve its housing goals.

Creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet would streamline development of much-needed housing. Additionally, the conditional use restriction on smaller housing projects with 9 units or less seems counterproductive and could hinder incremental growth in areas with smaller lots. These modifications would strengthen an already promising plan and help create a more inclusive downtown where more Bostonians can make their home.

Sincerely,

Jacob Oppenheim

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the

draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/21/2025 5:09:58 PM

**Letter Subject:** Strengthen Downtown Boston's Housing Plan for a More Affordable Future

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I am writing regarding the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As someone who has watched the housing crisis unfold across Greater Boston, I am deeply concerned about the future affordability and accessibility of our region. The rising costs of housing are pushing out long-time residents and making it impossible for essential workers to live near their jobs.

The proposed changes to downtown zoning offer some promising steps forward.

I appreciate the emphasis on predictable dimensional requirements that will help new buildings complement existing architecture while maximizing housing potential. The creation of the Sky-R district, allowing additional height for primarily residential projects, could significantly expand housing capacity, particularly in the Financial District. These changes would help bring more residents downtown, supporting local businesses and creating a more vibrant urban environment while alleviating housing pressure across the region.

However, I believe some aspects of the plan could be strengthened to better achieve its goals. The conditional use restriction on smaller housing projects (9 units or less) seems counterproductive and could block important incremental growth in areas with smaller lots. I strongly encourage creating a completely as-of-right pathway for projects under

50,000 square feet to streamline the development of much-needed housing.

Additionally, the conditional uses for college/university and large hotel projects may undermine efforts to regulate short-term rentals and expand student housing. These adjustments would help ensure the plan fully delivers on its promise to create a more affordable, accessible downtown Boston.

Sincerely,

Minoa Strauss

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm. Large hotel uses are conditional in the draft zoning to allow for the evaluation of site-specific impacts, particularly related to loading and pick-up/drop-off activity that may impact this pedestrian-first environment.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/23/2025 10:28:03 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Do you know why people travel to visit Boston? And pay for overpriced hotels and meals? Because of its history. Boston is the only major city in America that still has a European feel, where, in unique corners of the city, people can picture and slip back into the past. It is our trademark. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens Boston's character and beauty. And it threatens tourists' experiences here.

Do we really need more luxury residential towers that the average person can't afford? The city needs affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help anyone but the wealthy. And with the reality of high inflation or even a recession looming in the near future, who will be buying those luxury homes? With the removal of federal grants, this city is about to see massive layoffs in the medical industry, academia, and biomedical research... and more empty buildings.

We already have plenty of empty buildings in the Downtown and Financial District. This is where your attention should be focused. There are plans to convert some to housing but it seems to be a slow process. With tower construction costs exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, why not use that money toward the development of unused office space to address real housing needs? The people who need housing are the people who make downtown run. Workers at stores and restaurants earn a wage that doesn't enable workers to afford a place to rent. Spend the city's money on converting unused towers into residential spaces specifically for downtown and Seaport minimum wage workers, meaning at rental rates that someone who is earning \$30,000-\$50,000/year can afford. Provide a three year lease with a fixed rent. That would provide people time to build up some savings and their job prospects. After three years, people's rents can increase to market value. It may not

be the most profitable idea, but it is a humane one. Can the city afford more unhoused people? Can the city afford to lose more young talent because it's too expensive to live here?

Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together and preserve the character of the neighborhood. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Lora De Salvo

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown’s potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/23/2025 1:02:23 PM

**Letter Subject:** SUPPORT Downtown Boston Housing: Create Homes, Build Community, Cut Costs!

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as someone who has watched Boston's housing crisis worsen year after year. As a resident of Jamaica Plain, I've seen friends and coworkers forced to move further from the city center due to rising costs, making their commutes longer and disconnecting them from their communities.

The proposed changes offer hope through expanded housing capacity in the Financial District and incentives for converting existing buildings into residential use. I particularly appreciate the thoughtful approach to dimensional requirements that will ensure new construction complements historic buildings while creating vibrant spaces. However, I urge you to strengthen the amendment by creating a completely as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet. Additionally, the conditional use restriction on housing projects with 9 units or less should be removed, as it could hinder the incremental growth needed in areas with smaller lots. These changes would make the plan more effective at addressing our housing needs while maintaining the character that makes Boston special. Building more housing downtown will not only help alleviate the housing crisis but will also enhance public transit usage and create more lively public spaces that benefit everyone.

Sincerely,

Kameron Kane

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/24/2025 1:52:54 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city’s attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Ellen Scerbo

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale

not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown’s potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/25/2025 9:14:35 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support PLAN: Downtown + Housing Amendment to Keep Boston Accessible & Affordable

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a parent raising daughters in Boston, I'm deeply concerned about their ability to remain in the city as adults given our severe housing shortage. The proposed changes, particularly the Sky-R district allowing additional height for residential use and expanded housing capacity in the Financial District, are crucial steps forward.

However, I urge you to strengthen the plan by creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet and removing the conditional use restriction on smaller housing projects. These modifications would help ensure that Boston remains accessible to future generations, including my children, while maintaining the city's character through predictable dimensional requirements and historic context design guidelines.

Sincerely,

Zachary Himmelsbach

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts

to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/25/2025 10:28:19 AM

**Letter Subject:** comment on Downtown Boston zoning plan

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I'm writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a parent in Dorchester, I'm deeply concerned about Boston's housing crisis and its impact on future generations. I worry that my children may be priced out of the city they call home unless we take decisive action to increase housing availability.

The proposed amendments offer promising solutions, particularly the new Sky-R district allowing additional height for primarily residential development and expanded housing capacity in the Financial District. I

appreciate the thoughtful approach to preserving historic context while enabling growth. However, I encourage you to strengthen the plan further by creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet and removing the conditional use restriction on smaller housing projects with 9

units or less. These modifications would foster the incremental growth needed to address our housing shortage while maintaining neighborhood character.

Downtown Boston's excellent transit access and amenities make it an ideal location for new housing that will benefit our entire community.

Sincerely, Sophia Snyder

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a

loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/25/2025 3:21:20 PM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown Boston

Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively

expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Having lived in Massachusetts, near Boston my whole life, I believe the proposed zoning changes to Boston will only serve to make the city more difficult and dangerous to navigate as a driver or pedestrian, or as a resident or employee. This proposed zoning is not a plan for affordable housing and denigrates the beauty and landscape of our beloved and historic city.

Antoinette M. Eosco

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/25/2025 4:15:45 PM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown Boston Housing Plan: Support with Key Enhancement Requests

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of Dorchester, I have witnessed the housing crisis firsthand.

I'm profoundly concerned about the future affordability of our city. I've seen neighbors and friends forced to move further away from Boston due to rising housing costs, weakening our community bonds as a whole, as well as the bonds in my own smaller communities. It is increasingly -- almost impossibly -- difficult for working families to build stable lives here.

I'm a musician with a family. I feel lucky to have found a way to afford living here, to have had the resources to buy in at the right time. Yet I

see younger musicians attempt to move into the area with no sustainable path to stay here long-term, especially with families. This weakens our community; the artistic vibrancy of Boston is at risk of fading without an aggressive approach to more housing.

I support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment --

although I also believe some aspects could be even stronger. The proposed changes, particularly the new Sky-R district allowing additional height for predominantly residential use and the expanded housing capacity in the Financial District, are meaningful steps toward addressing our unsustainable housing shortage.

I'm encouraged by the plan's approach to incentivizing the adaptive reuse of existing buildings for housing. These measures will help create more housing paired with a sensible approach to maintaining the character of Boston. An increased residential presence downtown will naturally support local businesses, enhance public transit utilization, and create more vibrant public spaces. And most importantly help make Boston a place people can continue to live, work, and enjoy.

We still need stronger measures to create more and better housing of all kinds. Among these, the conditional use restriction on projects with 9

units or less could meaningfully impede incremental growth in areas with smaller lots. Additionally, creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet would streamline the development process and accelerate housing production. These modifications would make the plan more effective at addressing our urgent housing needs while preserving (and enhancing) the special character Boston.

Sincerely,

Malcolm Maxwell A Newman

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 2/25/2025 7:18:12 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Get Outlook for iOS<<https://aka.ms/o0ukef>>

The content of this email and of any files transmitted may contain confidential, proprietary or legally privileged information and is intended solely for the use of the person/s or entity/ies to whom it is addressed. If you have received this email in error you have no permission whatsoever to use, copy, disclose or forward all or any of its contents. Please immediately notify the sender and thereafter delete this email and any attachments.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown’s potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/28/2025 2:28:22 PM

**Letter Subject:** \*\*\*VERY OPPOSED\*\*\* to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

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I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Peter A, Rombult

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/28/2025 2:54:52 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

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The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Sent from my iPad

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 2/28/2025 3:20:27 PM

**Letter Subject:** Plan Downtown

Hi,

I submitted comments about the plan already. But after the meeting at Millennium Tower I want to comment on a few things that I find ridiculous and extremely bad management.

1. We were told that new developers would be “encouraged” to keep the façade of historical buildings. A ten foot step back would help with that. That is ridiculous!!! Ten foot!!!!. Please read about regulations in other cities that have imposed regulations requiring developers to keep historical facades, not just suggest it. Montreal has been successful with that. The current Plan will lead to Boston looking like Shanghai, China not a historical town with a vibrant tourist industry.
2. Now we understand why landlords don't fix up their buildings. They are just waiting for permission to tear them down. The new plan has aggravated this problem.
3. I was not convinced that there was any planning to account for the increase in cars in the downtown crossing area that will arise with multiple 500 ft towers. Just politics at work.
4. Luxury housing downtown will not help the housing crisis, will even make it worse – builders will be too busy trying to get a luxury building permits rather than work on affordable housing.
5. There was no discussion on how a wall of towers will affect the

homeless problem in the area. Likely create unsafe alley ways between the high-rises?

Mayor WU – If this is not reversed immediately after the comment period, you have lost my vote!!!

Lisa McKerracher

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

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**Letter Date:** 2/28/2025 3:24:21 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Ann Marie McCarron

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 2/28/2025 3:26:11 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,  
I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

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I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Ping Chen

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for

Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/28/2025 3:49:23 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

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I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Stephanie & Charlie Schopp

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for

Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

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**Letter Date:** 2/28/2025 8:49:18 PM

**Letter Subject:** Upset and OPPOSED to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

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I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Sean N. Murphy

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for

Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 7:29:13 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support for the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials:

I am a Back Bay resident who supports the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. I learned of it through the NABB listserv. While I understand that NABB opposes the changes, to me, increasing the amount of residential housing available and improving foot traffic downtown are great goals.

My husband and I are searching for a studio or one-bedroom apartment for our parents. They own a lovely 2,000 sqft home in northern Maine and are kindly willing to downsize to be closer to us and to benefit from Boston's healthcare and public transit. But there are almost no affordable modern units. More high-rise apartment buildings would answer our needs perfectly. And family life is more important to me than the beauty of my neighborhood (which also seems like it would remain intact!).

Thank you for taking my perspective into consideration.

Sincerely,

Julia Reynolds

**Response:** Thank you for your comment, and I hope your parents can find a place closer to you! We strongly believe the zoning can help introduce density Downtown that increases housing and addresses Boston's needs while also activating and improving the beauty of the neighborhood. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 7:29:17 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 7:58:43 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together;

preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Rosemarie DeFalco

NABB Member

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Rosemarie DeFalco

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing

Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 8:38:28 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Michael Stonebraker

NABB Member

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 8:40:59 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Thank you.

Jeff Jarczyk

Jeff Jarczyk

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 9:13:19 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support downtown Boston zoning changes to create more housing

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a resident of Roslindale, I'm writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown. Living in Boston has shown me how crucial it is to create more housing opportunities throughout our city, especially in well-connected areas like downtown.

The proposed changes represent thoughtful planning that will benefit our entire city. I'm particularly encouraged by the new Sky-R district that incentivizes residential development through additional height allowances in areas with 60% or more residential use. The plan's emphasis on adaptive reuse of existing buildings for housing is also commendable, as it helps preserve Boston's architectural character while creating new homes. These changes will bring more vitality to downtown, support local businesses, and make better use of our public transit infrastructure.

However, I believe the plan could be even more effective with some adjustments. Creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000

square feet would streamline the development of much-needed housing.

Additionally, the conditional use restriction on projects with 9 units or less seems counterproductive and could hinder small-scale development that would help address our housing shortage. I encourage the Planning Department to consider removing these barriers to ensure we can maximize the positive impact of these zoning reforms. Boston's future depends on bold action to address our housing challenges, and this plan is an important step in the right direction.

Sincerely,

Thomas Littrell-Greenler

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to

the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 9:18:43 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Marie Lefton

NABB Member

Marie Lefton

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 9:28:17 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Steven Finn

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Steven Finn

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 10:22:37 AM

**Letter Subject:** please read!

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together;

preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Michele May

NABB Member

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary

Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 10:27:36 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Gail Gardner

NABB Member

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 10:42:32 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the early 1970's the fledgling Boston Properties proposed towers JUST OVER 400 FEET, NOW THE CITY PROPOSES 500 FEET IN HEIGHT. MORT ZUCKERMAN AND ED LINDE IN THEIR MARKETING CAMPAIGN CALLED IT CREATING AN "URBAN SPINE". FORTUNATELY FOR ALL, IT WAS DEFEATED, AND THE CURRENT PLAN SHOULD BE TABLED AS WELL.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the

planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely, Rob Radloff

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 10:54:30 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a 40 year resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Carol Monacelli

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 11:02:59 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together;

preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Laura Dunn,

NABB Member

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary

Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 11:12:42 AM

**Letter Subject:** Great concerns about the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and city representatives,

I am a resident of Boston, an architect, a member of the Boston Society for Architecture, and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay

The revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025, appears to contradict many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process.

I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

Open Space is a city priority. the impact of allowing increased height opportunities and towers in proximity to the Public Garden and Common adversely impact open spaces essential to city life.

NABB has worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, the historic Ladder District should be protected and redeveloped with great sensitivity.

I understand the need for additional housing, but new residential towers are NOT the solution. Mayor Wu has said so herself. Mayor Wu has emphasized the importance of our parks and our city's environmental quality. Retrofitting existing historic and existing structures creates desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's policies must not undermine the public's faith in the planning process and must not bring adverse impact on our open spaces, our urban environment and quality of life.

If changes are needed to the plan adopted in 2023, I urge you to continue to re-engage with stakeholders and incorporate MORE feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. And right is not the destruction or diminishing of urban and environmental quality.

Ann Beha FAIA

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 11:29:43 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Lotika Paintal

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 11:31:09 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. \*I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. \*This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together;

preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

\*Larry Rowland\*

\*NABB Member\*

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary

Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 11:50:02 AM

**Letter Subject:** Comments on PLAN: DOWNTOWN

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment.

As a Brighton resident who works downtown, I see firsthand how the area becomes vacant after business hours. More housing in this vibrant, transit-rich neighborhood would transform it into a 24/7 community while addressing our city's housing shortage.

The proposed changes make significant strides toward creating a more dynamic downtown. The new Sky-R district, which allows additional height for predominantly residential projects, is particularly promising. I

appreciate how the plan balances growth with context-sensitive design through predictable dimensional requirements and historic context guidelines. These changes will help ensure new development enhances rather than overwhelms the neighborhood's character. The formalization of the Boston Common Shadow Law in city zoning also demonstrates a thoughtful approach to preserving our public spaces.

However, I believe the plan could go further to facilitate housing production. The conditional use restriction on projects with 9 units or fewer seems unnecessarily restrictive and could prevent small-scale development on smaller lots. I urge you to remove this limitation.

Additionally, creating a completely as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet would streamline the development process for modest-sized buildings. These adjustments would help maximize the plan's potential to address our housing crisis while maintaining appropriate safeguards for neighborhood character.

Sincerely,

Tyler Swanson

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 11:58:05 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together;

preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

\*Sharon A. Stehman, NABB Member\*

\*The information in this email and in any attachments is intended solely for the attention and use of the named addressee(s) and may contain information that is considered privileged, proprietary, confidential, and/or exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient of this email or if you have otherwise received this email in error, please immediately notify me by replying to this message or by telephone (you may call me collect). Any use, dissemination, distribution or copying of this email is strictly prohibited without authorization.\*

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft

reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 12:28:54 PM

**Letter Subject:** Re: Opposition to the revised PLAN:Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am writing to oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on Jan. 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in Dec. 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN:Downtown.

I am particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and the Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. While I understand the need for housing, I do not think large apartment blocks/towers are the solution. A major goal for Boston is to make our downtown areas a successful mix of commercial and residential uses for a wonderful 24 hour city. For this to be successful do not lose sight of the importance of sunlight and open space.

Circumventing a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zoning large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with stakeholders and use their feedback in crafting a new or revised plan.

Thank you for your consideration,

Marjorie Greville

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to

the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 1:09:43 PM

**Letter Subject:** Expressing opposition!

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback. The process feels somewhat rigged.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Jordan Rich

Chart Productions, Inc/WBZ

[www.chartproductions.com](http://www.chartproductions.com/) <<http://www.chartproductions.com/>>

[www.jordanrich.com](http://www.jordanrich.com/) <<http://www.jordanrich.com/>>

On Mic with Jordan Rich podcast

Author of "On Air: My Fifty Year Love Affair with Radio

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 1:57:27 PM

**Letter Subject:** Proposed Master Plan for the Downtown Area

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together;

preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Carla Ricci

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—

protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 2:29:40 PM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown Master Plan

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a Back Bay resident and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I am very concerned about the proposed Master Plan for the Downtown area presented on January 15, 2025. This

new proposal rejects many aspects of the Master Plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023. It completely disregards the 6 years of discussion and negotiations by a large group of stakeholders

who worked on this plan. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted plan. Open spaces are vital to

city life in our area, especially the Public Garden and Common. These cherished parks must be protected from the effects of the proposed large towers.

While I applaud the effort to create additional housing, there are other options beyond newly built residential towers. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very

desirable housing with less disruption to the character of an area and ultimately providing more desirable place to live.

This proposed Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades, and damage, once inflicted, will be difficult to reverse. Master plans such as this one are meant to bring the community together,

preserve the character of the neighborhood, and improve conditions for residents and visitors alike.

I urge the city's leaders to take another look before disregarding a 6+ year planning process. This action could ultimately undermine the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan

that was adopted in 2023, Please consider reengaging with the stakeholders and incorporating their feedback into a new plan. You have an incredible opportunity to get the plan right and I hope you will take

the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Susan Baker

NABB Member

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 3:26:27 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I own a condo in the Dexter Ditson building on Washington Street in Downtown Crossing, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Kristin Caplice

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**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown’s potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 4:18:11 PM

**Letter Subject:** Oppose Revised Downtown Plan

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Pamela Oswald Louis

NABB Member

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 4:38:21 PM

**Letter Subject:** Master Plan for the Downtown area, which the BPDA put forward at the end of 2024.

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before

seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Joanne S Weil

NABB Member

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 7:08:47 PM

**Letter Subject:** PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay, a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay, and work in Downtown. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Gregory Heald

NABB Member

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/1/2025 9:01:49 PM

**Letter Subject:** Revised Plan for Downtown Zoning

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025.

This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders' group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And it creates a

more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 -

PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Valerie Masin

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive

reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/2/2025 8:19:22 AM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown zoning proposal

>> Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

>> I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

>> In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

>> Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

>> The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

>> The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

>> Sincerely,

>> Wendy Karkoska

>>

>> NABB Member

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/2/2025 9:09:45 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to revised downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

David N. Louis

NABB Member

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**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—

protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/2/2025 11:06:40 AM

**Letter Subject:** Tall buildings in the Back Bay will shadow the Public Garden

Dear Mayor Wu,

I voted for you because of your analysis of the BRA projects in Boston which do not serve our city well. Now you are proposing to allow buildings in the Park Square area which will violate all the work done in 2023 to be certain our public spaces were not in shadow. Please help me understand what I see as a slap in the face of those of us who spent hours in City Hall (not a comfortable place to sit or hear) protesting the tall buildings proposed in Downtown Boston.

Kristin C Field NABB Member

Sent from my iPad

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—

protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/2/2025 12:52:11 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Hello,

I attended the meeting a few days ago held at the Millenium Tower where I live, and I would like to renew my strong opposition to the revised PLAN.

None of the presenters explained the reasons for this sudden rush to change the master plan adopted in December 2023. Not only it is outrageous to see the prior formal Plan which had required a significant involvement with the Community erased without due process, but it is a betrayal to residents who were willing to make a large investment downtown based on the prior master zoning Plan. We are now at risk to see out of touch bureaucrats ruin the unique historical character of Boston and damage forever a place full of potential, if it was wisely managed and renovated.

With so much uncertainty and arbitrary changes to circumvents a prior agreement on which significant purchasing decisions were made, the trust in the City needed for investment and for a healthy community is being squandered along all other forms of support.

This proposal makes us extremely suspicious of who is pushing the City to suddenly push aside the prior agreement. We can only suspect developers who have slowly bought out large chunks of buildings lining Washinton street, intentionally letting them hollow out from commercial activity and decay to better convince you, City Planners and Councilors to give way to their influence and let them build another cold, overwhelming and undescriptive neighborhood.

The lack of foresight from the City is astonishing. It was obvious to see

how developers of luxury towers would insidiously advance their cause and now our generation, who should be stewards of our heritage, is letting the money win, again. In the mean time, even Emerson College was able to do a fantastic job renovating some of their properties to accommodate students, protecting the historical character of the buildings. So sensible, residential type redevelopment is possible, with the will to do it.

The city and the country has already plenty of these glass luxury towers, which have never solved the lack of affordable and moderate-income housing problem. You all know that high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and that developers can't possible recoup their costs with affordable housing. In addition, with already so much empty office space, the requirement of having 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers will incentivizes -at tax payer's cost! -, the development of additional unnecessary office space. It is easy to simply look at what is happening with the nearby new Winthorp tower with a low rate of occupancy, high prices and high property taxes.

What makes cities in the US and abroad stand out and attractive for visitors and residents? Cities with character, with renovated historical buildings and the major common element is the scale and the materials. Residents and visitors need light, sun and a human scale to not feel overwhelmed, they need to look at stone, bricks, glazed tiles and the skyline 100 ft high or less, not 500ft tall. A sterile environment of tall glass towers is unwelcoming, cold, often nothing more than a wind tunnel that we all want to escape.

If some changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and all stakeholders. We need data, not vague statements and "we hope", "possibly", we need forecasts of number of residents, parking solutions and pedestrian traffic planning. We need a sensible plan that focuses on human scale, on the protection of our heritage and incorporates all feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. And critically, the City officials need to detach themselves from any influence from wealthy developers wanting to build out of place and unneeded luxury towers.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Coralie Schwartz

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for attending the meeting. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 3/2/2025 12:53:46 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Mr. Nahmias,

I attended your meeting a few days ago at the Millenium Tower where I live, and I would like to renew my strong opposition to the revised PLAN.

None of you, presenters, explained the reasons for this sudden rush to change the master plan adopted in December 2023. Not only it is outrageous to see the prior formal Plan which had required a significant involvement with the Community erased without due process, but it is a betrayal to residents who were willing to make a large investment downtown based on the current zoning. We are now at risk to see out of touch bureaucrats ruin the unique historical character of Boston and damage forever a place full of potential, if it was wisely managed and renovated.

With so much uncertainty and arbitrary changes to circumvents a prior agreement on which significant purchasing decisions were made, the trust in the city needed for investment is being squandered, along with all forms of support.

This proposal makes us extremely suspicious of who is pushing the City to suddenly push aside the prior agreement. We can only suspect developers who have slowly bought out large chunks of buildings lining Washinton street, intentionally letting them hollow out from commercial activity and decay to better convince you, City Planners and Councilors to give way to their influence and let them build another cold, overwhelming and undescriptive neighborhood.

The lack of foresight from the City is astonishing. It was obvious to see

how developers of luxury towers would insidiously advance their cause and now our generation, who should be stewards of our heritage, is letting the money win, again. In the mean time, even Emerson College was able to do a fantastic job renovating some of their properties to accommodate students, protecting the historical character of the buildings. So sensible, residential type redevelopment is possible, with the will to do it.

The city and the country has already plenty of these glass luxury towers, which have never solved the lack of affordable and moderate-income housing problem. You all know that high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and that developers can't possible recoup their costs with affordable housing. In addition, with already so much empty office space, the requirement of having 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers will incentivizes -at tax payer's cost! -, the development of additional unnecessary office space. It is easy to simply look at what is happening with the nearby new Winthrop tower with a low rate of occupancy, high prices and high property taxes.

What makes cities in the US and abroad stand out and attractive for visitors and residents? Cities with character, with renovated historical buildings and the major common element is the scale and the materials. Residents and visitors need light, sun and a human scale to not feel overwhelmed, they need to look at stone, bricks, glazed tiles and the skyline 100 ft high or less, not 500ft tall. A sterile environment of tall glass towers is unwelcoming, cold, often nothing more than a wind tunnel we all want to escape.

If some changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and all stakeholders. We need data, not vague statements and "we hope","possibly", we need forecasts of number of residents, parking solutions and foot traffic planning. We need a sensible human scale plan that focuses on the protection of our heritage and incorporates all feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. And critically, the City officials need to detach themselves from any influence from wealthy developers wanting to build out of place and unneeded luxury towers.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Coralie Schwartz

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for attending the meeting. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 3/2/2025 2:51:04 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. I respectfully urge the City to have a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and engages the public and community feedback.

I am glad that the Mayor Michelle Wu has the mission of building Boston's future around affordable housing and addressing homelessness. However, allowing building towers as high as 500 feet along Washington street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating more affordable housing. In fact, only a small percentage of the new residential buildings will be allocated as affordable housing; it will not solve the housing crisis. I would like to see plans to support the commercial-to-housing conversions and to provide incentives for affordable housing construction.

Downtown Boston is a historic neighborhood that attracts tourists, visitors, residents and businesses. Building 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay will threaten its character.

Again, the Downtown zoning proposal will have a huge impact on the preservation of historic character, the community's economic growth for the next decades. I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to involve the community and stakeholders to get it done in the right direction.

Sincerely,

Choi Chow

**Response:** Thank you for your comments. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. This includes eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The zoning helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis has highlighted that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/2/2025 5:17:31 PM

**Letter Subject:** master plan for the Downtown area

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

John Wadlington NABB member

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/3/2025 1:02:32 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston business operator, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Maggie Doyle

Maggie Doyle | General Manager

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/3/2025 2:56:05 PM

**Letter Subject:**

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN:

Downtown.

My late father, Bernard Borman, devoted countless hours as a volunteer to preserve the unique beauty of Back Bay and Beacon Hill. Specifically, he worked to oppose aspects of the Park Plaza development that would cast shadows over the Public Garden. He would be heartbroken to know that very tall buildings are now permissible so close to the borders of the Public Garden and Common. I share the dismay and urge you to reconsider.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and

incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Borman

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/3/2025 4:56:20 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for Downtown Boston zoning changes to create vibrant 24/7 neighborhood

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I write to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment, which represent crucial steps toward creating a more vibrant and accessible downtown Boston.

As a Jamaica Plain resident and a law professor at Suffolk University, I

both work downtown and visit with my family. I also teach into the evening, often until 10 pm, and have observed how the area becomes eerily quiet after business hours. More housing downtown would create the round-the-clock activity needed to support local businesses and enhance public safety. The proposed amendments, particularly the new Sky-R district allowing additional height for predominantly residential buildings, will help transform downtown into a true 24/7 neighborhood.

The plan's emphasis on predictable dimensional requirements and historic context design guidelines will ensure new development complements existing architecture while significantly expanding housing capacity and reducing the need for time-consuming and costly requests for discretionary relief, a topic I have researched and written on extensively. I also appreciate the formalization of the Boston Common Shadow Law and the incentives for adaptive reuse of existing buildings, which will help preserve downtown's unique character while meeting our critical housing needs.

I believe the plan could be even more effective with some adjustments.

Creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet would streamline the development process for smaller projects. Additionally, the conditional use restriction on housing projects with nine units or less seems counterproductive to our housing goals and could prevent valuable incremental growth in areas with smaller lots. These modifications would strengthen an already promising plan and help create the diverse, active downtown Boston needs.

Sincerely,

John Infranca

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/3/2025 5:27:54 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I Ravijit Paintal am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Ravijit Paintal

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/3/2025 5:58:54 PM

**Letter Subject:** New Master Plan for Downtown

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together;

preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Susan O'Brien

NABB Member

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary

Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/3/2025 11:24:44 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city’s attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Paul Glazer MD

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median

Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown’s potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/3/2025 11:26:39 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city’s attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Svitlana Glazer

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for

Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/4/2025 2:00:47 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the Revised "PLAN: Downtown Zoning" dated Jan 15 2025

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

We are residents of Back Bay and members of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. We are writing to express our strong opposition to the revised "PLAN: Downtown zoning" proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. We urge the City to reopen the discussion with all stakeholders groups to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked for many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions once agreed upon. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only or correct solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989. "PLAN: Downtown zoning" will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like "PLAN: Downtown" are meant to bring the community together, preserve the character of the neighborhood, and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new

plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely yours,

Sarah and Jeffrey Beir

NABB Member

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/4/2025 3:36:27 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I'm writing to express my very strong opposition to the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I strongly urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989, so it's clear that PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Robert Cummings

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/4/2025 3:43:42 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Dennis Condon

Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/4/2025 8:50:56 PM

**Letter Subject:** Please Add More Housing in Downtown Boston

Dear friends at the City of Boston Planning Department, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as crucial steps toward creating a more vibrant, accessible Boston. As a resident of Allston, I've witnessed firsthand how the lack of housing options impacts our community, and I see tremendous potential in reimagining downtown Boston as a thriving residential neighborhood. The proposed changes, particularly the new Sky-R district allowing additional height for primarily residential buildings and expanded housing capacity in the Financial District, are exactly what Boston needs. However, I urge you to strengthen these reforms by creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet and removing the conditional use restriction on smaller housing projects with 9 units or less. These modifications would help maximize the unprecedented opportunity presented by vacant office spaces downtown. Converting these spaces into homes near public transit would not only address our housing crisis but also reduce car dependency and create a more sustainable city. The proposed adaptive reuse incentives and contextual design guidelines will ensure new development respects Boston's historic character while meeting our urgent need for housing.

Sincerely, Audrey Seraphin

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5

units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 5:17:12 AM

**Letter Subject:** Proposed Master Plan for the Downtown area

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together;

preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Lisa Leary

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—

protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 4:57:42 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing.

Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Alex

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\*Alexander Senchak\*

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders,

preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 5:08:33 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. I was one of many who provided feedback to the six years of multiple meetings and outreach and input efforts meant to compile and attempt align on the master plan adopted in December 2023. Not only was this new PLAN: Downtown introduced without ANY public process or community engagement, it made completely useless the hours of time, effort, money and progress on agreement the prior plan built. This new PLAN is an insult to the City residents who worked so hard on the 2023 presentation. It is the opposite of what voters, residents and business/building owners want for Boston. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. Worse, it will increase the impact of building "canyons" – a design element that has a big impact on livability, crime, drug use, homeless encampment, etc. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers

also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city’s attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown’s potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 5:32:08 PM

**Letter Subject:** Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

PLAN Boston,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Oisín McCormack

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 5:36:02 PM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

Director Jemison,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, John Russell

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 5:40:47 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support downtown zoning

PLAN Boston,

We are in a housing crisis. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits so that we can increase unit availability in Boston.

Sincerely, Jorge Aguirre-Alzate

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 5:50:31 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support downtown zoning

PLAN Boston,

We are in a housing crisis. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits so that we can increase unit availability in Boston.

Sincerely, Sean Gaughan

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 6:15:36 PM

**Letter Subject:** approve new downtown zoning

PLAN Boston,

New zoning will open development and help bring jobs to Boston. As a Carpenter, I would like to see that pipeline strengthened. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Luis Lara

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 6:16:54 PM

**Letter Subject:** approve new downtown zoning

PLAN Boston,

New zoning will open development and help bring jobs to Boston. As a Carpenter, I would like to see that pipeline strengthened. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Donata Wolterding

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 6:27:48 PM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

Director Jemison,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, William Anderson

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 7:34:51 PM

**Letter Subject:** Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

PLAN Boston,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Marcia Williams -White

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 7:38:01 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support downtown zoning

PLAN Boston,

We are in a housing crisis. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits so that we can increase unit availability in Boston.

Sincerely, Norman Salinas

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 7:50:14 PM

**Letter Subject:** Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

PLAN Boston,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Mike Munichiello

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 8:01:56 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support downtown zoning

PLAN Boston,

We are in a housing crisis. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits so that we can increase unit availability in Boston.

Sincerely, Charles Lane

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 8:08:45 PM

**Letter Subject:** Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

PLAN Boston,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Jonah Rodriguez

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 9:01:06 PM

**Letter Subject:** I support the Downtown zoning amendment

To Whom It May Concern, City of Boston Planning Department -

I have been working in Downtown Boston for nearly 20 years and I am happy to see an effort to update the zoning of the city center. I have attended a couple of the town hall/public comment meetings and am disheartened by all the opposition to the plan which seems to boil down simply to complaints about shadows and blocked views. I would love to see more housing and opportunities for new restaurants and meeting places. Downtown makes the most sense for taller buildings and higher density and the dynamism that would bring would help us be a premier city as well as tourist destination.

I support the zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment.

Eric Khatchadourian

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/5/2025 9:13:42 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to the new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I strongly urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

I have lived in Downtown Boston for more than 20 years and I love it here. Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors each year.

I recognize that Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent

a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Tracy Accardi

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 4:38:14 AM

**Letter Subject:** approve new downtown zoning

PLAN Boston,

New zoning will open development and help bring jobs to Boston. As a Carpenter, I would like to see that pipeline strengthened. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Leyanna Matthews

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 9:25:25 AM

**Letter Subject:** Strong Support for Downtown Zoning Changes

Hello,

As a BU graduate who has lived in Boston for 19 years, I'm excited to see the city taking steps to update the zoning.

We're facing a serious housing crisis in Boston, and Downtown is the perfect place to address it. More housing, especially at higher densities, is exactly what we need to meet the growing demand for living spaces. The new development will also bring more restaurants and places for people to connect, which will make the area even more vibrant and appealing. Tall buildings and higher density are essential if we want to keep up with the city's growth and create an environment that attracts new talent and retains residents.

This is not just about improving Downtown—it's about tackling the housing shortage in a smart, sustainable way, making Boston a more affordable and dynamic place to live. I'm fully behind the zoning amendment and the PLAN: Downtown proposal. Let's make these necessary changes happen.

Best,

Non Wachirajindakul

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:00:15 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

Director Jemison,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, John Russell

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:00:22 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

Director Jemison,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Gerald Cintron

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:00:31 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

Director Jemison,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Wen Chen

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:00:44 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: approve new downtown zoning

Director Jemison,

New zoning will open development and help bring jobs to Boston. As a Carpenter, I would like to see that pipeline strengthened. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Reynardo Rivera

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:00:51 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Support downtown zoning

Director Jemison,

We are in a housing crisis. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits so that we can increase unit availability in Boston.

Sincerely, Greg Poole

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:00:58 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

Director Jemison,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Oisín McCormack

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:01:06 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Support downtown zoning

Director Jemison,

We are in a housing crisis. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits so that we can increase unit availability in Boston.

Sincerely, Jorge Aguirre-Alzate

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:01:13 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Support downtown zoning

Director Jemison,

We are in a housing crisis. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits so that we can increase unit availability in Boston.

Sincerely, Sean Gaughan

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:01:18 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: approve new downtown zoning

Director Jemison,

New zoning will open development and help bring jobs to Boston. As a Carpenter, I would like to see that pipeline strengthened. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Luis Lara

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:01:25 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: approve new downtown zoning

Director Jemison,

New zoning will open development and help bring jobs to Boston. As a Carpenter, I would like to see that pipeline strengthened. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Donata Wolterding

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:01:31 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

Director Jemison,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Giuseppe Hock

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:01:38 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

Director Jemison,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Marcia Williams -White

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:01:47 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Support downtown zoning

Director Jemison,

We are in a housing crisis. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits so that we can increase unit availability in Boston.

Sincerely, Norman Salinas

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:01:56 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Support downtown zoning

Director Jemison,

We are in a housing crisis. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits so that we can increase unit availability in Boston.

Sincerely, Charles Lane

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:02:05 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

Director Jemison,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Jonah Rodriguez

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:02:13 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Support downtown zoning

Director Jemison,

We are in a housing crisis. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits so that we can increase unit availability in Boston.

Sincerely, John Fitzpatrick

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 3:51:36 PM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a Boston resident and frequent visitor to downtown Boston, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. I love being downtown, and bringing visitors there. It's a unique place that now needs to better serve current and future residents of Boston over the coming decades.

I believe the new zoning amendments, by allowing more housing, are a way to bring more people and businesses to downtown, while preserving much of its historic feel.

The proposed zoning amendments will help new buildings complement existing structures, and the creation of the Sky-R district will, I hope, incentivize more residential development. I like the fact that the height allowances in Sky-R are only if the building is 60% residential.

At the same time, the amendments extend the Sky-Low Zoning District along the Common and the Public Garden.

Because we also need to lower cost of housing construction, I encourage you to remove the requirement for Small Project review for projects under

50,000 square feet and likewise remove the conditional use restriction on smaller housing projects with 9 units or less. These modifications would help facilitate potential housing development.

Times are very tough. The more we can do to allow more housing in our downtown and across the city, the better off we and our city will be. I'm really hoping for a brighter future.

Sincerely, Barbara Parmenter

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to

the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 5:19:13 PM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

Director Jemison,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Robert Dye

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need for more investment and activation Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing to the area, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting!

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 5:33:18 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for PLAN Downtown zoning amendments

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a Boston resident and frequent visitor to downtown Boston, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. I love being downtown, and bringing visitors there. It's a unique place that now needs to better serve current and future residents of Boston over the coming decades.

I believe the new zoning amendments, by allowing more housing, are a way to bring more people and businesses to downtown, while preserving much of its historic feel.

The proposed zoning amendments will help new buildings complement existing structures, and the creation of the Sky-R district will, I hope, incentivize more residential development. I like the fact that the height allowances in Sky-R are only if the building is 60% residential.

At the same time, the amendments extend the Sky-Low Zoning District along the Common and the Public Garden.

Because we also need to lower cost of housing construction, I encourage you to remove the requirement for Small Project review for projects under

50,000 square feet and likewise remove the conditional use restriction on smaller housing projects with 9 units or less. These modifications would help facilitate potential housing development.

Times are very tough. The more we can do to allow more housing in our downtown and across the city, the better off we and our city will be. I'm really hoping for a brighter future.

Sincerely, Barbara Parmenter

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to

the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 6:33:30 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for Downtown Zoning Changes - Creating Housing Where Most Needed

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

As a Massachusetts resident and someone deeply concerned about housing affordability in our region, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. The predictable dimensional requirements and incentives for residential use through the Sky-R district are positive steps toward creating more housing opportunities in Boston's core, which currently allude many who many want to live within Boston's city limits

(including me). As the daughter of a historic preservation professional, I particularly appreciate the formalization of the Boston Common Shadow Law and the emphasis on historic context in design guidelines.

However, I urge you to strengthen the plan by creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet and removing the conditional use restriction on smaller housing projects. These changes would better support the incremental growth needed to address our housing crisis while maintaining downtown's character and vitality.

The expansion of housing capacity in the Financial District, combined with adaptive reuse incentives, will help transform downtown into a more vibrant, accessible neighborhood where more people can live near jobs and transit. These changes are crucial for building a more equitable and sustainable Boston.

Sincerely,

Laura Levitan

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the

draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 6:38:42 PM

**Letter Subject:** Support for PLAN: Downtown

Hello,

I love to see more rezoning efforts after cambridge's succesfull multifamily zoning. One city can't lower homeprices across the region so it's good to see Boston follow suit. I am looking forward to how more people able to live next to Boston's excellent public transit means fewer cars on the road and less traffic.

Sincerely, Ethan Frank

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 8:30:40 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

\*I am writing to express my opposition\* to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with

a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Natalie Kener

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It

introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 9:13:16 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown amendments and zoning changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

StuartStreet and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Adriana Flores

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density,

where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 9:32:06 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Jack Gorman

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density,

where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/6/2025 10:29:57 PM

**Letter Subject:** Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

PLAN Boston,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Christian Keller

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** approve new downtown zoning

PLAN Boston,

New zoning will open development and help bring jobs to Boston. As a Carpenter, I would like to see that pipeline strengthened. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely,

Michael Micklos

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** approve new downtown zoning

PLAN Boston,

New zoning will open development and help bring jobs to Boston. As a Carpenter, I would like to see that pipeline strengthened. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely,

John Cusack

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** Support downtown zoning

PLAN Boston,

We are in a housing crisis. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits so that we can increase unit availability in Boston.

Sincerely,

Nicole Thomas-Meade

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** Support for PLAN: Downtown - We need more housing options in Boston's core

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I'm writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of Boston who lives near downtown, I've witnessed firsthand how our city's housing shortage affects our community. The lack of available housing downtown not only drives up costs across the city but also prevents many from enjoying the benefits of living in this vibrant area.

The proposed changes offer several promising improvements, particularly the new Sky-R district allowing additional height for predominantly residential buildings and the expanded capacity for housing in the Financial District. I especially appreciate the emphasis on adaptive reuse of existing buildings for housing, which will help preserve our city's character while meeting current needs. However, I believe the plan could be even more effective with some adjustments. Specifically, I urge you to create an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet and remove the conditional use restriction on housing projects with nine units or less. These modifications would better facilitate the incremental growth our city needs while maintaining appropriate oversight of larger developments. These changes would help ensure that downtown Boston remains accessible to all residents while supporting sustainable urban development.

Sincerely,

Kyle Graesser

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the

downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:**

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I'm writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a Boston resident, I have witnessed firsthand how the housing shortage affects our community's vitality and economic health. The lack of housing options downtown has pushed many potential residents to seek homes elsewhere, diminishing the vibrancy that makes our city unique.

The proposed amendments offer thoughtful solutions to these challenges. I particularly appreciate the creation of the Sky-R district, which intelligently leverages height bonuses to encourage residential development. The formalization of the Boston Common Shadow Law and the enhanced historic context design guidelines demonstrate a balanced approach to growth while preserving our city's character. These changes will help transform our Financial District into a more dynamic, 24/7 neighborhood while protecting what makes Boston special.

However, I urge the Planning Department to strengthen these reforms further. Creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet would streamline development of much-needed housing. Additionally, the conditional use restriction on projects with 9 units or less could impede the small-scale development that historically shaped Boston's most beloved neighborhoods. These modifications would help ensure the amendments achieve their full potential in addressing our housing needs while maintaining Boston's unique character and livability.

Sincerely,

Cameron Allen McDonald

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:**

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely,

Alberto Rodriguez

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need for more investment and activation Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing to the area, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting!

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:**

We are in a housing crisis. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits so that we can increase unit availability in Boston.

Sincerely,

Nicole Thomas-Meade

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:**

New zoning will open development and help bring jobs to Boston. As a Carpenter, I would like to see that pipeline strengthened. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely,

John Cusack

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** approve new downtown zoning

New zoning will open development and help bring jobs to Boston. As a Carpenter, I would like to see that pipeline strengthened. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely,

George Dewey

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** Support for PLAN: Downtown - Make Boston housing work for everyone

Dear Planning Department,

I'm writing in strong support of the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a Dorchester resident, I've witnessed firsthand how the lack of affordable housing and commercial space affects our communities, particularly small business owners and families struggling to remain in Boston. The proposed changes to downtown zoning offer promising solutions to address these challenges. I'm particularly encouraged by the incentives for housing development through the new Sky-R district and the expanded capacity for new housing in the Financial District. The plan's emphasis on adaptive reuse of existing buildings for housing is especially important, as it helps preserve Boston's architectural character, reduces waste, conserves resources, and reduces the carbon footprint of construction.

However, I believe the plan could be even more effective with some adjustments. Creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet would streamline the development process and help bring more housing online faster. Additionally, a conditional use restriction on housing projects with nine units or less is counterproductive to our housing goals and will prevent the kind of incremental growth our city needs, and should be eliminated.

By increasing housing availability downtown, we can help ease pressure on housing costs throughout Boston's neighborhoods. More residents downtown will also support local businesses, enhance public transit usage, and create more vibrant public spaces. These changes represent an important step toward making Boston more accessible and affordable for everyone, from young families to small business owners. I urge you to consider strengthening these proposed changes to maximize their positive impact on our community.

Thanks for your work and attention to the public's input on the plan!

Lynn Sanders

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use

growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.

We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:**

(Don't forget to cc your city councilors and add your name and address at the end)

Dear [NAME],

Hello, and thank you for your time. I am writing today to share both my appreciation for the City's efforts to reform the planning and zoning processes in service of making our neighborhoods more vibrant and accessible as well as share some concerns related to the latest PLAN: Downtown proposal.

The latest iteration of the plan presents several concerns and represents a stark departure from earlier versions that more concretely reflected community feedback collected over a nearly six-year period. A preservation-first plan for Downtown presents our historic streetscapes as an asset, and creates naturally occurring affordable housing utilizing the buildings that already exist! In fact, there are at least 46 buildings built before 1948 in the study area, some of which exclusively serve section-8 tenants. Adapting or expanding a building is a much quicker process than building new, supplying much needed housing at a faster rate. A nearby example includes the 44 Bromfield Street conversion from office to residential with 44 units ranging from studios to two bedroom apartments. Adapting our historic spaces, balanced with new construction, will honor our unique, tourist-worthy streetscapes and continue to add housing for many income levels.

The built and natural environments that shape our skyline and how people experience our city can and must grow together I am confident that we share similar goals in enhancing the public good for the benefit of the people and places for our city; promoting sustainable growth; and preserving natural inputs like sunshine that help keep our parks healthy and welcoming through smart development.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continued conversations and collaborations to ensure the upcoming developments truly reflect and values and needs of our community.

irene.brennan

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** Opposing BPDA January 25 Plan Hijack

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

At a time when public trust in government and elected officials is at a historic low, as a Back Bay resident, taxpayer, and voter, I am shocked at and completely oppose the cynical and divisive downtown zoning proposal from the BPDA presented on 15 Jan 2025, specifically overriding many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process.

I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

As a city dweller for most of my life, I am particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the critical green spaces of Boston, the Public Garden and the Common. These open spaces are true public goods, essential not merely to the character of Boston but also to the well-being of Boston's residents and visitors.

The Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay (NABB), the Friends of the Public Garden (FOPG), and many other organizations have worked for many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The 'new' BPDA plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions and compromises the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

New housing supply is critical for addressing numerous social and economic issues in Boston, but additional residential towers, skewed toward 'luxury,' in central Boston with no schools and not well serviced by public transport are not the solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as has been done in Back Bay, for example, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area, and creates a more desirable place to live.

The planning changes proposed will impact our iconic public green spaces for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable, even desirable, for all stakeholders, including residents, visitors, and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood are ill-conceived, cynical, and undermine the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before moving forward with any new plan. Please take the time to get the plan right and recover some public faith.

Sincerely,

Anthony P. Morris

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** Proposed Master Plan for the Downtown area

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Christine B. Pratt

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I work in downtown Boston and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was

adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Ryan St Marie

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department.

I have several serious concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Lei Zhang

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential

projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Derek Zhang

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential

projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** The Comment Period Extension Has Allowed This Opposition to Downtown Zoning and PLAN:Downtown Amendment

Boston Planning & Development Agency

One City Hall Square, 9th Floor

Boston, MA 02201

07 March 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to object to the proposed “Downtown Zoning and PLAN:Downtown Amendment”, that was presented on January 15, 2025.

My primary objection is the lack of transparency and detail regarding the rationale for abandoning the original PLAN:Downtown. While some reservations concerning the original plan were alluded to in the January document, the absence of a comprehensive explanation outlining the deficiencies of the original plan, and why the proposed amendments are necessary, raises serious questions about the decision-making process.

Amongst the many omissions of the revised plan, one of the most significant is the lack of specific housing targets. The amendment states, “As a critical area for residential growth and adaptive reuse, the update to PLAN:Downtown introduces a housing focus growth area.” However, the plan does not specify:

- The target number of new housing units
- The type of housing being incentivized (e.g., affordable, market-rate, luxury)
- The expected income levels of prospective residents
- The projected traffic and infrastructure impacts
- Whether the original plan’s 155’ height allowance was insufficient for meeting housing demand
- The estimated number of units that could be realized through adaptive reuse alone, versus additional height allowances up to 500’

The public deserves access to detailed projections on how these changes will affect housing density, affordability, and the overall character of downtown Boston before any amendments are approved.

### Lack of Visual Representation

Another major deficiency in the proposal is the absence of visual representations of the potential scale of development, particularly along Washington Street. While we are told that buildings with 60% residential space may be permitted to reach 500 feet, we are not given any sense of how many such buildings might be constructed or the cumulative effect of such development.

Is there a risk that Washington Street could become a dark canyon, overshadowed by a continuous wall of high-rises on its western side? Without renderings, the public cannot fully grasp the spatial and aesthetic implications of these zoning changes. The Planning Department should provide:

- Renderings of hypothetical maximum development, showing the most aggressive case based on current market trends
- A mid-range development scenario, with a mix of building heights
- A minimal development scenario, reflecting the least intense outcome
- Simulations illustrating the impact of multiple 500' buildings next to one another, particularly regarding the 60' mandated spacing
- Sunlight and shadow studies showing how these changes will affect streetscapes at different times of day

Given the strong public reaction to this plan, it is imperative that all available digital tools be used to provide stakeholders with a clear, visual understanding of the possible outcomes.

### The Need for Transparency

A municipal planning department should not rely solely on verbal descriptions and policy documents to present a plan. A lack of visual and numerical clarity can lull the public into a false sense of security—until development is well underway, at which point it is too late to object. With today's digital modeling capabilities, there is no valid reason why the city cannot provide stakeholders with accurate, data-driven projections before decisions are finalized.

## Our Request

We formally request that the Boston Planning & Development Agency provide:

1. A clear explanation of why PLAN:Downtown was deemed inadequate and why the proposed changes are necessary.
2. Specific data on housing targets, including affordability metrics, income levels, and expected population growth.
3. Traffic impact assessments and infrastructure capacity studies.
4. Renderings of possible development scenarios, from least aggressive to most intense.
5. Sunlight and shadow studies for key areas impacted by the proposed height increases.

Boston residents and stakeholders deserve a transparent and informed planning process. I urge the Planning Department to provide these crucial details before any amendments are approved.

Sincerely,

Debra Davis and Ian Campbell

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the process. We have made changes to the draft based on the feedback received during the public process. Notably, we have eliminated the SKY-R district and expanded the SKY-LOW-D district to better preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including Washington Street and the area around the Old South Meeting House.

Downtown is uniquely positioned at the center of the City's transportation network, providing exceptional access to resources and infrastructure, which makes it suitable for increased density. While we anticipate only two to three large-scale projects in the coming market cycles, the zoning establishes a general framework and building envelope that will be refined through the development review process to assess site-specific impacts, rather than dictating specific outcomes or anticipating a full build-out scenario. Large-scale developments are required to undergo Article 80 Development Review. This process requires projects

to assess and mitigate impacts on the surrounding area, including traffic capacity and management, shadow and wind effects, and impacts on historic resources and the public realm, ensuring that site-specific concerns are thoroughly addressed.

Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to include 17 percent income-restricted units, averaging 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for individuals with housing vouchers.

We believe this refined draft provides a balanced approach to development in Downtown, enhancing its vibrancy while protecting its historic assets and addressing Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to discussing this further at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** PLAN: Downtown Boston Zoning Proposal

With this note I would like to add my comments to the record regarding the new zoning proposal for the creation of a “skyline district” between Tremont and Washington Street in downtown Boston.

I concur with the general tone of complaints expressed by many citizens and organizations during the recent Zoom presentation. I am pleased that the City has extended the comment period on the zoning proposal and I encourage its officials to continue the planning process revisiting the principles and planning objectives using a more holistic and inclusive approach. To that end I offer the following comments and observations.

1- The new zoning proposal ( increase height, etc. ) was introduced in the name of “progress”. The City should define what it means by progress in terms of quality of life for its residents and environmental quality for the community and improvement of services, not just height of buildings.

2- I am an advocate of densification of cities. I believe that Boston should explore other methods to densify the downtown areas that still warrant this. Height is not the best way to achieve densification in all places. I recommend that the staff of the City take a look at the body of research work that the late Professor Tunney Lee left at MIT on this subject.

3-Increasing the height of buildings in the “skyline district” will require a substantial upgrading of the city and state public transportation/transit services. These improvements must be agreed to and funding must be secured before the zoning reclassification is approved.

4-The built fabric between Washington Street and Tremont Street is in my opinion a national treasure, not a monument but definitely a repository of memory, urban transformation, and innovation. Let’s not rush the process of the next wave of transformation. We need to get it right and beautifully done.

5-Finally, each city aspires to change to become more attractive as a place to live. Remember that Boston is NOT New York City or Hong Kong or Chicago. Let’s not

copy these other cities but rather rediscover and build on the innate qualities of our “genius of place.”

I look forward to contributing to the next phase of the debate.

With best wishes,

Antonio Di Mambro, FAIA Emeritus

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. The zoning process strives to implement PLAN: Downtown's "framework for the growth, enhancement, and preservation of Downtown Boston as a 24-hour neighborhood, balancing livability, affordability, walkability, climate change preparedness, access to open space, and a dynamic mix of uses." Several tools are being used in the draft zoning to encourage new growth Downtown. The zoning modernizes outdated land uses to reduce barriers for new businesses, incentivizes the reuse of existing buildings, and reduces barriers to change building uses to encourage reinvestment and reuse of existing structures.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025

**Letter Subject:** Comment Letter in Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Chief Shen,

I write as a 65-year Boston resident in opposition to PLAN: Downtown as it is currently proposed. I write not as a lamentation for the loss of what Washington Street used to be. On the contrary, I write with an eye to what Washington Street can become, in an effort to divert the massive physical and cultural change which the recently revealed plan would bring about in an important hub of the city's economic activity - a change of a magnitude and type that nobody asked for and that the great majority of stakeholders oppose.

It is common knowledge that people come to Boston to visit and spend money, as well as to live, because of Boston's history and uniqueness. It is, as visitors tell us, the most European of American cities. Why throw all that good will away? Why seek to transform Boston, especially its downtown central area, into just another high-rise city indistinguishable from all the rest? What group of citizens or neighborhood organizations have asked you to do so?

I hear from various sources that Bostonians are tired of the attitude of "We know what's best for you so just get out of our way and let us do what we want to do," an attitude that many Bostonians see coming out of City Hall. As I understand it, the current planning proposal for the downtown area was sprung abruptly on stakeholders who had worked with City planners for over six years on a different plan. This surely exemplifies the offensive top-down attitude just noted. The result to the citizen-voter is a lack of trust in city decision-makers. It puzzles me to understand why, in an election year, trust is not being carefully cultivated by every city department having direct contact with the voting public, and especially by the Planning Department.

Doctors are told to listen to their patients. Architects are told to begin their projects by talking with their clients. I imagine that students of urban planning must receive the same instructions, but in the present case of PLAN: Downtown, although the talking took place for over six years, what the planners heard has now apparently fallen on deaf ears.

Please listen carefully to the position taken in opposition to the present plan by the Downtown Boston Neighborhood Association, and to the other stakeholders who look to collaborative planning as the route to the betterment of their downtown neighborhood.

To conclude, I have attached a letter of the Boston Preservation Alliance regarding planning for downtown. Although written over a year ago, the points it makes are even more pertinent to the PLAN: Downtown of today. I hope you will think carefully about what the letter has to say and, after having done so, withdraw the present plan from further consideration.

Victor Brogna

A North End Neighbor

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and sharing your concerns about the latest draft. The zoning process strives to implement PLAN: Downtown's "framework for the growth, enhancement, and preservation of Downtown Boston as a 24-hour neighborhood, balancing livability, affordability, walkability, climate change preparedness, access to open space, and a dynamic mix of uses." The approved plan called for the preservation of Downtown's historic areas and character alongside enabling growth and housing opportunities, especially near transit access, that could encourage much-needed investment.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025 7:34:24 AM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown Zoning Proposal Plan

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And it creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Thank you for reading this. I appreciate your service.

Marcy Maycock

NABB Member

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025 8:32:56 AM

**Letter Subject:** Proposed Downtown Zoning plan

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to sincerely re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. It has been my recent experience (in the bike lane process) that public input is simply performative. True collaboration from

different constituencies yields the best results. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Beth and Mark Kates

NABB Member

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025 8:35:35 AM

**Letter Subject:** Support Downtown Boston Zoning Changes to Create More Housing

Dear City of Boston Planning Department,

I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as critical steps toward addressing Boston's housing crisis. As someone deeply concerned about housing accessibility, I believe we must utilize every opportunity to create more homes in our city, particularly in well-connected areas like downtown.

The proposed changes offer several promising improvements, including expanded housing capacity in the Financial District and incentives for converting existing buildings into residential use. I particularly appreciate the new Sky-R district allowing additional height for predominantly residential projects, as this will help maximize housing production in areas that can support it. The predictable dimensional requirements will ensure new development respects the existing urban fabric while still enabling meaningful growth.

However, I encourage the Planning Department to strengthen these reforms further. Creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet would streamline the development of much-needed housing. Additionally, the conditional use restriction on projects with 9 units or fewer seems counterproductive and could hinder small-scale development that would help meet housing needs. Finally, I urge careful consideration of how conditional uses for college/university and large hotel projects might impact our goals for student housing and short-term rental regulation. These adjustments would help ensure the plan fully delivers on its promise to create more housing opportunities in downtown Boston.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Pavlik Sent from my iPhone

**Response:** Thank you for your comment and your enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Alongside encouraging increased density Downtown for housing and mixed-use growth, the zoning includes some restrictions to ensure projects are sensitive to

the needs of the surrounding area. The 20,000 sf design review threshold in the draft zoning helps ensure project designs relate to their context, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm. Universities are regulated by Institutional Master Plans that ensure that university uses enhance the area and that their expansion occurs thoughtfully and transparently. Large hotel uses are conditional in the draft zoning to allow for the evaluation of site-specific impacts, particularly related to loading and pick-up/drop-off activity that may impact this pedestrian-first environment. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025 9:03:39 AM

**Letter Subject:** Downtown zoning proposal

Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

We are residents of the Back Bay and members of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. We strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. We urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area. And creates a more desirable place to live.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023, I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

Sincerely,

Mary and Ron Aldridge

NABB Members

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025 9:09:12 AM

**Letter Subject:** Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

Director Jemison,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Omar Zapata

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025 9:09:18 AM

**Letter Subject:** Please approve higher Zoning limits downtown

Director Jemison,

We're at a point in time where people are concerned about deteriorating conditions in Downtown Boston, and this proposal allows for meaningful investment in the neighborhood that will result in more people living downtown, more businesses locating downtown, and ultimately more activity and foot traffic on the street. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely, Christian Keller

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025 9:25:36 AM

**Letter Subject:** Fwd: OPPOSITION to Revised PLAN:Downtown Proposal of January 15, 2025

Please see below.

> Begin forwarded message:

>

> Dear Mayor Wu and Elected Officials,

> I am a resident of Back Bay and a member of the Neighborhood Association of the Back Bay. I strongly oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts many aspects of the master plan adopted for the Downtown area in December 2023 after an extensive public process. I urge the City to reopen the discussion with the stakeholders group to develop a new zoning proposal that aligns better with the previously adopted PLAN: Downtown.

> In the Back Bay, we are particularly concerned with the effects of the proposed towers on the Public Garden and Common. These open spaces are so essential to city life in our area. NABB has also worked many years with the City to develop plans for the Park Plaza Urban Renewal District. The current plan does not respond to the issues in this area. It actually overwrites or negates important provisions. Moreover, we are concerned about the preservation of the historic Ladder District.

> Although we understand the need for additional housing, we do not think that newly built residential towers are the only solution. Retrofitting existing historic structures, as we have done in Back Bay, creates very desirable housing, with less disruption to the character of an area, and creates a more desirable place to live. The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 – PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers.

> The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily up-zone large corridors of the downtown neighborhood undermines the public's faith in the planning process. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted in 2023,

I urge you to re-engage with the stakeholders and incorporate their feedback before seeking approval for a new plan. This is the only opportunity to get the plan right. Please take the time to do that.

> Sincerely,

> Anne Swanson,

>

**Response:** Thank you for your comment. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning also helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The Office-to-Residential Program surpassed initial goals and has created 760 units of housing, converting over 667,000 sf of older office space. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis have shown that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025 10:26:41 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Carvelli

1 Franklin St Unit 1008

Boston, MA 02110

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PLEASE NOTE: This message is intended for the use of the person to whom it is addressed. It may contain information that is privileged, confidential and exempt from disclosure under applicable law. If you are not the intended recipient, your use of this message for any purpose is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please delete the message and notify the sender so that we may correct our records. See our web page at <http://www.bilh.org> for a full directory of Beth Israel Lahey Health sites, staff, services and career opportunities.

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale

not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown’s potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/7/2025 11:19:20 AM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

\*I am writing to express my opposition\* to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic

changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Simone and Tadeu Carneiro

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive. The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as

Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:** 3/8/2025

**Letter Subject:**

New zoning will open development and help bring jobs to Boston. As a Carpenter, I would like to see that pipeline strengthened. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits.

Sincerely,

Marcel Lieber

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/8/2025

**Letter Subject:**

We are in a housing crisis. Please support the initiative to increase building height limits so that we can increase unit availability in Boston.

Sincerely,

John Keane

**Response:** Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help address Boston's housing needs and enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

**Letter Date:** 3/12/2025 12:23:00 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Girija Verma

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Letter Date:** 3/12/2025 12:23:00 PM

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Amendments and Zoning Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am writing to express my opposition to the most recent revised proposal on PLAN: Downtown from the City of Boston's Planning Department. I have several concerns as it relates to the proposed zoning plan:

**ZONING:** The proposal to allow development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area threatens the character of these historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. It will also have an impact on tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.

**COMMUNITY VOICE:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, were offered with a very short window for comment from the public, and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

At a minimum, the comment period should be extended. More importantly, the Planning Department should incorporate the feedback from the broad consensus of those providing feedback on PLAN: Downtown. This includes expanding the SKY-LOW-D boundaries and associated height limit of 155 feet to Washington Street and

Stuart Street and making more affordable housing a clear preference in this area through financial and other incentives not related to height.

I sincerely hope the Planning Department will address my concerns and those of the community at large to reshape PLAN: Downtown as I've suggested so that it results in a future for Downtown that strikes the right balance for the entire community.

Regards,

Girija Verma

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density,

where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

**Letter Date:**

**Letter Subject:** Opposition to PLAN: Downtown Zoning Proposal

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident, and I oppose the revised PLAN: Downtown zoning proposal that was presented on January 15, 2025. This proposal contradicts the master plan adopted in December 2023 and was introduced without public process or community engagement. I urge the City to present a new zoning proposal that aligns with the adopted plan's intent and overwhelming community feedback.

Downtown Boston is a historic and vibrant neighborhood, home to 13,000+ residents, anchor and cultural institutions, large and small businesses, landmark buildings, shelters and churches, acclaimed restaurants, and iconic public spaces. Allowing 500-foot towers along Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens its character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

Boston is facing a housing crisis, but luxury residential towers are not the solution. The city needs more affordable and moderate-income housing. Building towers up to 500 feet along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not result in more affordable housing nor the type of density that is optimal for this area of Downtown. To take advantage of Downtown's rich transportation network, affordable housing needs to be located within Downtown - any off-site affordable housing and fee-in-lieu accommodations miss the mark. Housing experts agree. With tower construction costs alone exceeding \$1,000 per square foot, high-rise construction is prohibitively expensive and unlikely to result in any meaningful affordable housing. Requiring that just 60% of a building be residential for 500-foot towers also incentivizes the development of unnecessary office space rather than addressing real housing needs.

The last major planning effort for the Downtown area occurred in 1989 - PLAN: Downtown zoning will impact this neighborhood for decades. Master plans like PLAN: Downtown are meant to bring the community together; preserve the character of the neighborhood; and make things more predictable for all stakeholders, including residents and developers. The city's attempt to circumvent a 6+ year planning process and arbitrarily upzone large corridors of the

neighborhood undermines all of this. If changes are needed to the plan that was adopted by the BPDA, then the city must engage the community and stakeholders; make the case with real data; and incorporate feedback before going to the BPDA Board for approval. Rushing this through unilaterally erodes public trust and is not a sensible approach.

I respectfully urge Mayor Wu and City officials to take the necessary time to involve the community and stakeholders to get this right.

Sincerely,

M/M Zogg

**Response:** Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.

**Online Survey Responses**

Date	Name	What is your relationship to Downtown?	What do you like about the proposed zoning amendment for Downtown?	What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning amendment for Downtown?	Comments on the PLAN: Downtown amendment and updated design guidelines:	Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:	Response
2/12/2025	Hannah Lieber	I am a student Downtown	I agree with the proposed zoning for the Sky-R district. Downtown is a great place for a residential district. It has the best T access.	I'd like to see the height cap removed and see the restrictions on height based of FAA and shadow laws	Looks good		Thank you for your comments and support for mixed-use growth Downtown! We believe it's important to strike a thoughtful balance between preserving the character and scale of Downtown's historic areas and encouraging new, dense development, particularly near transit. Together, these approaches can help make Downtown a more vibrant and welcoming place to live, work, and visit. We look forward to sharing more details on the revised draft and continuing the conversation at the upcoming public meeting.
2/8/2025	Marc Llorens	I am a student Downtown, I often visit Downtown	Increased density and height zoning.	Even more increased height (700ft+) and density	Make it easier to construct high density residential.	Build more housing, build more skyscrapers.	Thank you for your comments and support of mixed-use growth Downtown! We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
1/29/2025	Patrick Snyder	I grew up in Boston and have spent a significant portion of my lived experience Downtown.	I like that it attempts to take historic preservation into account by incentivizing adaptive reuse and acknowledging state shadow limitations on Boston Common.	I don't think it adequately accounts for historic properties within the proposed districts. There are still small, but significant, historic properties in the medium and high density proposed districts that would be dwarfed and affected by buildings next to them of the proposed heights. Proposed developments in these areas should require a more thorough review of this historic context and to the extent such sites would be affected e.g., the old State House, Boston Opera House, Post Office Square. Please draw back the allowed height requirements and consider how they would affect not just the Common and Public Garden, but also Downtown Streets and the amount of sunlight they receive.	Please note I'm submitting comment as a member of the public. I only found out about this amendment today online on the Globe website: <a href="https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/01/29/opinion/downtown-boston-michelle-wu-luxury-towers/">https://www.bostonglobe.com/2025/01/29/opinion/downtown-boston-michelle-wu-luxury-towers/</a> I am shocked at the disregard this amendment shows for the historic character of Boston, a cozy Northeastern city with a reputation for European-leaning charm. Part of the unique character of our storied city (and, I'll note, my favorite city in the world) is our varied public spaces and streets that are nearly flooded with sunlight on nice days. If you open up developments on par with scale such that in New York, many Downtown historic streets would be cloaked in dark shadows for the better part of daylight hours. Thank you for considering this to an extent with the new, proposed SKY-R district, but I worry that is insufficient to protect the character of Boston. I acknowledge that a major goal of this amendment is to open up further housing development, but a large portion of that only stands to be dedicated to continued luxury development that does not serve everyone in the city, especially those who are being priced out. As housing is seemingly a priority for both this administration and the Planning Department, you could proceed with creating a comprehensive housing development plan that covers all Boston neighborhoods and incentivizes affordable housing development and gradual density increases that respect the context both of their respective environments and Boston itself.	A response is requested.	Thank you for sharing your feedback. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and take important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. This includes eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including areas along Washington Street, the Ladder Blocks, and around the Old South Meeting House. The revised draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. We believe this zoning is a more balanced approach to bring new density and housing to the area, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

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1/10/2025	Spencer Phillips	I live Downtown	<p>I think increasing the density of downtown with a major focus on residential is critical for downtown and to help add much needed housing supply to our most transit rich and highly sought after spots in Boston. Especially when the city is focusing on converting office space to housing, more housing instead of offices is critical to giving life to the downtown area and supporting business in the neighboring Chinatown as well. I also think modifying the adult entertainment district is a positive as well to minimize it. I have always wondered why there was not more high rise housing in the downtown district with all of the high rise offices in the Financial District nearby. Also changing zoning for the potential redevelopment of the Pi Alley parking structure is awesome as we need more housing for people, not cars (especially next to all MBTA lines as well!)</p>	<p>I think the addition of linkage fees for things that are within zoning rules already may discourage some development. The city needs to make it as easy as possible to build as much housing as possible to help fix the housing crisis in Boston, additional barriers like this could make the housing that is built more expensive in the long run I fear.</p>	<p>I think focusing on residential is critical and bringing density and more neighbors in such a transit and amenity rich part of the city is critical and these efforts should be applauded!</p>	<p>Thank you so much to the Planning department for your hard work to help with the housing shortage in Boston!</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and for supporting housing growth downtown. Linkage only applies to new commercial development Downtown to ensure that large-scale real estate development brings direct benefits to Boston's residents in the form of affordable housing and workforce training. Inclusionary Zoning requires market-rate housing developments with seven or more units to support the creation of income-restricted housing.</p>
1/10/2025	Patrick	I live Downtown	<p>I'm a big fan of increased density both residential and commercial. I think downtown should be Boston's densest, most walkable neighborhood given its central location on our public transportation network. Encouraging taller buildings and adaptive reuse of existing buildings through simplified zoning will hopefully encourage more development in this area.</p> <p>I also strongly support the addition of additional density, particularly residential density, along Washington St via the SKY-R zoning. I think it's also great that you're including 'historic preservation of buildings and facades' in this area. I think some of the best architecture in Boston (and many more examples in cities like London) use this technique to both respect the city's past and allow it to grow still so I think this is a great policy.</p>	<p>I can't think of anything.</p>	<p>All the updates make sense to me.</p>		<p>Thank you for your comments and support of mixed-use growth Downtown! We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.</p>

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1/13/2025	Laurie Salis	I live Downtown	Very little! I understand the need to clean up the downtown area, but this proposal goes much further than downtown and into areas adjacent to Back Bay which will negatively impact this area.	Limit this plan to the business district downtown.		I'm concerned that speeding up processing will lead to bad decisions. We have limited infrastructure that is already over-taxed for water, sewage, electricity, etc. We already have a rat problem - what is being proposed will make that problem MUCH worse. Natural spaces and existing residences will lose sunlight/daylight leading to diminished property values, and a cost in quality of life. Many of us moved to where we are and paid higher prices because we have light, it is not as dense as is being proposed, and the nature in the public garden and Common need and thrive with the existing light. Further, higher density in this area will contribute to even higher crime. Already we're starting to experience higher crime with phones, etc. getting stolen from pedestrians. Traffic is so compromised given the revisions for bicycles, and the vespas/motorbikes go the wrong way, run through lights and nearly knock us over. The Back Bay, Park Plaza, Downtown area, and Chinatown attract tourism and offer premium places to live. What is being proposed jeopardizes both the experience of living here, tourism experience, infrastructure, traffic, and city services (police, etc).	Thank you for your comments. We extended the comment period and process to gather more feedback and respond to concerns. The draft zoning has several provisions and incentives to help make Downtown a more active neighborhood with a more vibrant streetscape and dynamic mix of uses. Some changes include lifting outdated barriers for new businesses (like ice cream shops and yoga studios!), creating incentives to reuse existing buildings and create additional housing next to transit access, and active ground use requirements. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
1/15/2025	Aleeza Klarman	I live Downtown	Very little. The negative consequences changes proposed outweigh the positive.	The height restriction should not be increased. Traffic downtown is already a mess with the new bike lane changes; it would be virtually unlivable with such a large influx to the downtown population.	As I said, the traffic in downtown is already worsening due to the new bike line plans and poorly addressed currently. To add a huge population influx would be disastrous for transportation, not to mention the hospitals in the area that could see additional problems transporting emergent patients. Boston is simply not designed to accommodate this plan; the housing crisis should be addressed, but the only sensible plan is to address it in Andrea's that aren't already suffering badly from congestion.	Please do not approve this plan. It is poorly conceived and will have serious negative consequences.	Thank you for your comments. In regards to traffic concerns, residential projects have lower daily and peak-period trip generation than commercial projects of similar size. Incentivizing residential projects in SKY-R would result in lower trip generation than new commercial/office buildings built out under existing zoning or in a SKY-LOW district. Ideally located in the epicenter of Boston's transit network, projects will be encouraged to eliminate or have very low amounts of on-site parking and utilize the access to the robust MBTA transit services for longer trips, or walk to nearby destinations that a dense mixed-use environment affords.
1/15/2025	Judith	I live Downtown	I think its a very bad idea	I in the Park Plaza area in Back Bay and building housing that tall will positively obliterate my view and decrease the value of my property. The traffic here is already very congested bordering on dangerous in some crosswalks.	This plan doesn't take in account what this will do to the light and shadows , not only in our parks, but on existing buildings as well.	I'm concerned that speeding up processing will lead to bad decisions. We have limited infrastructure that is already over-taxed for water, sewage, electricity, etc. We already have a rat problem - what is being proposed will make that problem MUCH worse. Many of us moved to where we are and paid higher prices to be in a less dense area of the city. Higher density in this area will lead to more crime.	Thank you for your comments. We are currently considering modifications to the zoning and district based on feedback. The Downtown Revitalization Report and PLAN Downtown outline how increased residential density can help reactivate downtown and, in fact, help lower crime in the area.

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1/17/2025	Izabela Malinowska	I live Downtown	N/A	The new buildings or higher expansion on Washington street should stay as previously planned up to 150' not as the updated version 500'. That's a dramatic difference!	The new buildings or higher expansion on Washington street should stay as previously planned up to 150' not as the updated version 500'. The fact the developer is willing to pay penalty to the city for extended Boston Common shadow should not weight on the decision to increase the height. We do not want downtown to turn in a tasteless canyon of high rises. It's not adding any value to historical buildings (preserving the facades... but will the base not suffer?), moreover lowering value of residential places currently available (are we looking to replace Charles River million dollar view with constant construction and looking straight in somebody's else window?) This new constructions should only complement the adoption of office buildings for residences not replace it.	I am speaking in my name as I am resident on 21st floor of Millenium Tower (1 Franklin st) and I paid extra for the view on south-west side. We know all with every floor level it increases due to extend of the view... I absolutely cannot accept the change in downtown zoning plan for further development of buildings up to 500' on Washington street. But for the same reason I do not see that the new buildings would be of interest to move in for anybody if they will be right between other like Millenium Tower, Winthrop and Millenium Place and Ritz-Carlton... What's the point squeezing there?! This would rather repel interest in living in downtown and preference to buy for same money a house in suburbs...	Thank you for your comments. We are currently considering modifications to the draft zoning based on feedback. In the draft zoning, all buildings must comply with State Shadow Regulations limiting new shadows on the Public Garden and Boston Common. As the transportation hub for the region, downtown is a crucial area for new housing and mixed-use development that can thrive with direct access to public transit. Creating much-needed housing downtown through office-to-residential conversions, additions, and new development can address the city's housing crisis while also bringing new activity, vibrancy, and investment that benefits existing residents, visitors, and workers.
1/24/2025	Beatrice Nessen	I live Downtown	I like that the area along Boylston St. facing the Public Garden is now zoned Sky-Low D	Sky R height limit should be 155' not up to 600' for buildings >60% residential. Towers provide luxury housing. We need moderate income and affordable housing. Towers do not protect special character of the Ladder District, the landmarked Old South and Old State House structures. Facadism is not historic preservation.	See above. The condensed process is an affront to community engagement. There has not been any involvement since the 2024 comment period. Less than one month for comments without any opportunity for dialogue is an insult to the community, many of whom have been involved with the Plan:Downtown since its inception 6+ years ago. And to present to the BPDA Board mid February is further proof that the Planning Department disdains community input and transparency, totally contradictory to Mayor Wu's election platform.	The proposed zoning does not reflect or implement the approved PLAN; DOWNTOWN.	Thank you for your comments and for expressing your concerns. Creating a diverse, mixed-income community Downtown is a priority of the plan and zoning and Inclusionary Zoning requirements passed in 2024 will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of the project reserved for people with housing vouchers. The new design guidelines enforced through Article 80 development review will help ensure additions and new construction respond to their surrounding context.
1/25/2025	Ricardo Caballero	I live Downtown	I like the potential for more high-end buildings, which could enhance Downtown's appeal and attract businesses like upscale restaurants, retail shops, and entertainment venues. This would create a vibrant urban environment, boost the local economy, and offer more options for dining, shopping, and leisure.	Not much. My main concern is the amount of power the BLC (including public hearings) will have. Could its discretion be limited to avoid arbitrary or capricious decisions? Implementing clearer guidelines or aligning with median national standards for similar zoning processes could help ensure consistency, fairness, and transparency.	Perhaps more specificity for: Article 3L... This district allows taller heights only for predominantly residential projects.		Thank you for your comments. The new Downtown design guidelines provide clear guidelines for projects downtown, which will be enforced through Article 80 development. They also outline BLC's key roles and review procedures.
1/25/2025	Justin Smith	I live Downtown	nothing, it doesn't reflect what everyone worked on	revert to the Plan that was adopted in 2023 of December and propose zoning that's consistent with that Plan. Who asked you to come up with a new plan, aside from your own internal strategists?	Who did you consult prior to making these substantial changes? It doesn't seem like you consulted affordable housing experts, even those within your administration; plan downtown advisory group members; nor the downtown Boston neighborhood association. Special interests seem to have influenced the outcome.	Wasn't the whole point of bringing the former BRA/BPDA into City Hall to create transparency and trust, and to prevent decisions from being made in isolation? This feels exactly like the BRA all over again. Where's the community engagement that you ran on? Some things will never change.	The draft zoning implements PLAN: Downtown's "framework for the growth, enhancement, and preservation of Downtown Boston as a 24-hour neighborhood, balancing livability, affordability, walkability, climate change preparedness, access to open space, and a dynamic mix of uses." This draft is based off of an initial April 2024 that had a 3 month public comment period and 2 public meetings.
2/1/2025	Braden Gilleland	I live Downtown	I support increasing the amount of housing downtown, allowing more housing density, and allowing offices to be retrofitted into apartments.	It should be a general plan to allow all properties to be developed or redeveloped into housing. Limiting it to a narrow scope will hinder the pace of development and ensure that this city only continues to become more expensive, and it's citizens more rent burdened.		More housing. Disregard the privileged folks that use their money and power to the rest of poor and exclude us from the city. This shouldn't be nearly this hard, there is something fundamentally wrong with the system if you all need 7+ years to make this happen.	Thank you for your comments and support for increased housing Downtown. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
2/3/2025	Yun Chase	I live Downtown	I think it is a thoughtful approach to promote residential growth within the study area.	Nothing to change but may be add some details on the parking and transportation impacts as a result of this amendment.		I am a resident in Downtown Crossing and it pains to me to walk the Washington St everyday and see its unsettling condition. It is desperately in need of more investments to this area. However, we have a handful of folks that are more concerned about their views out their own high-rise windows than the investment this district desperately needs. That is selfish at best. We need more investment in Downtown Crossing and anyone to hold this Plan hostage is self-serving and does not represent everyone living in this area. The narrative that everyone is against this PLAN is simply false. Stop blocking the PLAN and let the city grow!	Thank you for your comments and for emphasizing the need for more investment and housing Downtown. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

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2/3/2025	Isaiah Andrews	I live Downtown	I strongly support the plan's proposal to increase density in downtown Boston. I think such increased density is great for the vitality of the neighborhood, and that the increase in housing will help make the city as a whole more affordable.	I do not think any changes are needed to the plan.			Thank you for your comments and for emphasizing the need for more housing Downtown. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
2/3/2025	Lukasz Kowalik	I live Downtown	I appreciate that the proposed zoning amendment boldly embraces growth and modern development while still recognizing the unique character of Downtown Boston. The amendment supports the creation of additional housing—including affordable options—which is crucial for a city as vibrant and diverse as ours. It signals a commitment to a balanced urban future, where historic areas are respected and new, thoughtfully-designed projects can thrive. Moreover, I applaud the city officials for their courageous vision in setting ambitious yet balanced goals, ensuring that Downtown Boston continues to evolve into an inclusive, economically robust community.	More outreach and communication to ensure people understand how crucial this is.			Thank you for your feedback and enthusiasm for the draft zoning! We extended the public comment period to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
2/4/2025	Rachel Ahearn	I live Downtown	Nothing	Return to the agreed-upon plan. The new plan will block light to existing structures and to the common and will destroy historic buildings.			Thank you for your comments. We are currently considering modifications to the draft zoning based on feedback. In the draft zoning, all buildings must comply with State Shadow Regulations limiting new shadows on the Public Garden and Boston Common. New dimensional regulations, design review threshold, and historic context design guidelines will help ensure projects respond to historic buildings and assess and mitigate any negative impacts.
2/7/2025	Ryan Fraleigh	I live Downtown	Taller buildings downtown, no blank walls, in filling empty lots.	More provision for housing and housing conversion. More support for empty retail, less restrictions to fill empty retail.	We live DOWNTOWN, more, taller buildings are essential to our neighborhood.		Thank you for your comments. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing to the area, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood.
2/7/2025	Noel V.	I live Downtown	It will increase housing density in the core of the city. This zoning is urgently needed to address the housing shortage and bring the area of downtown crossing back to life, especially outside of business hours. It's imperative that the heart of the city supports high density housing.	I would approve it as is. Concerns over height or shadows should not be taken into consideration. The place to build high density housing is downtown and the area down Washington St. is perfect. Preservation and incorporation of historical facades should also be considered if possible.	It is appropriate as is.	N/A	Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
2/7/2025	Deborah C. Hale	I live Downtown	I don't care for it at all	I prefer the original proposal made in December 2023	This plan is for taller building and shadowing all over our landmark parks	Boston is a historical city	Thank you for your comments. The draft zoning implements many of the recommendations of PLAN: Downtown, approved in December 2023. The PLAN did not include height recommendations for different areas, but identified "Growth Areas" where density should be maximized for mixed-use growth and "Enhance Areas" where maintaining a smaller historic scale is particularly important.
2/7/2025	Nikhil Gupta	I live Downtown	I have lived in downtown for 10 years and only recently moved to the South End because it did not feel like a 24 hour city. I still work in downtown. I support new housing and development in downtown. It is too quiet after 5pm and there is a lot of scope for mixed use buildings.	Nothing	Support it,		Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing to the area, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood.
2/7/2025	Megan	I live Downtown	It's fantastic and we should be building more large buildings in downtown	We should make more amendments like it and keep building more downtown and more housing			Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need and benefits of increased housing and density Downtown. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

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2/7/2025	Weston Quivey	I live Downtown	I want to see downtown grow and thrive. More buildings and zoning will help with that immensely.	We need to allow the use and zoning of tall structures and skyscrapers			Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need and benefits of increased housing and density Downtown. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
2/8/2025	Julie	I live Downtown	Improvements to downtown crossing and Park Street	Limited buildings along Washington, preserving historical landmarks like the theater			Thank you for your comments. We have made changes to the draft based on the feedback received during the public process. Notably, we have eliminated the SKY-R district and expanded the SKY-LOW-D district to better preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including Washington Street and the area around the Old South Meeting House.
2/8/2025	Dennis Keefe	I live Downtown	There is not enough information to form an opinion	There is not enough information to form an opinion	Please show in specific way how the State Shadow Regulations would modify the 500 foot height limit in the proposed Sky-R district along the entire length of Washington St from Boylston St to School St.		Thank you for your comments. The "Map Explainer" on the PLAN: Downtown website shows State Shadow Regulation Height limits. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
2/9/2025	John Mullin	I live Downtown	We need more height and density	Allow for more residential and larger floor plates for retail and restaurant spaces		Have developers offset the cost of the bridge to Long Island and move the wet shelters out of our central business district	Thank you for your comments. PLAN: Downtown outlines priority Downtown public realm and mobility projects for future projects to help support.
2/9/2025	Elizabeth	I live Downtown	Mixed use	Allow for taller buildings and increased density			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.

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2/10/2025	Stephanie Fletcher	I live Downtown	That you are willing to commit to the following: "projects should consult with the Office of Historic Preservation to determine the significance of historic buildings and facades and determine methods of adaptive reuse." Otherwise, I think I still need to learn more.	It is my understanding that, once again, there is an attempt to jam a last minute building height rule past those not paying attention. I have lived in downtown Boston for the past 25 years. Part of the reason we stay here, paying the city astronomical taxes to do so is because of downtown's rich history, culture and access to green spaces. As usual I feel like I am watching the latest attempt to push something through that will again look to add more shadows by constructing buildings that are not only going to take away from Boston's skyline, but also add shadows to green spaces that are imperative to both locals and visitors alike. I've been shocked at how quickly planners keep tossing aside one of the main draws of tourism, our history, only to knock down what we have in order to shove up tall buildings that go largely unoccupied because the spaces are sold to foreign investors who never use them. The lack of community in the area of concern is compounded by this. I'll quote something I found in your proposal: PLAN: Downtown started in 2018 in response to intense development pressure, exemplified by the 115 Winthrop Square development project. This project challenged state building height restrictions aimed at protecting the Boston Common and Public Garden from shadows. Massachusetts House Bill 3749 (2017), known as "An Act Protecting Sunlight and Promoting Economic Development in the City of Boston," modified shadow restrictions to accommodate the 115 Winthrop Square project and unlock its substantial public benefits. <---- I am still waiting to see what the "substantial" benefits of 115 Winthrop Square are to anyone other than the developers, foreign investors, and I assume, the City. I urge you to re-think allowing taller buildings that cast shadows over the Boston Common and Public Garden. Do I want to see more affordable housing, sure, but pushing something like what you are proposing does not harbor stronger community, which frankly, the city really needs to focus on now if it wants to survive long-term. Please stop running over the voices who live downtown and support it.			Thank you for sharing your feedback. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and take important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. This includes eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including areas along Washington Street, the Ladder Blocks, and around the Old South Meeting House. The revised draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. We believe this zoning is a more balanced approach to bring new density and housing to the area, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood.
2/3/2025	Erin Mullane	I live Downtown, I often visit Downtown	Additional housing, protecting historical buildings/landmarks, and stimulating the area as its becoming a ghost town for a city center	Nothing, I appreciate it		The average 1 bedroom is Boston is \$3,393. The average 2 bedroom is \$3,583. You need to be making \$135k min to afford a one bedroom at the recommended 30% of you pay going to rent. Which also makes things very tight so isn't ideal. The average salary is \$90k so you can see we're at a mismatch. Apart from the housing shortage, there is also a generational behavioral difference at play: more couples are moving in together before marriage, and driving up the costs of one bedrooms because they can afford it and the demand is there. This is making it even more difficult for single people to afford a one bedroom.	Thank you for your comments and for emphasizing the need for more housing options! This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

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2/7/2025	Joseph Rinaldi	I live Downtown, I often visit Downtown	Downtown Boston is a dense, vibrant part of our city with incredible transit access. I like that this amendment would allow for more development there, especially allowing taller buildings.	I think the city should loosen restrictions even further. If a residential or commercial property is economic to build, why shouldn't it?			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
2/8/2025	Chance Miller	I live Downtown, I often visit Downtown	We should allow people to build new and exciting things to rejuvenate the area. This is good.	We should also allow places to stay open later!			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning. While the zoning does not dictate open hours, it does reduce barriers for new businesses and entertainment uses to grow and thrive!
2/4/2025	Moritz Schlenzig	I live Downtown, I often visit Downtown, Downtown Apt temporarily rented.	Higher emphasis on residential (vs. commercial) space	Reduce the height zoning along Washington Street (the newly invented SKY-R district) to 155'	<p>The amended proposal allows development projects as high as 500 feet along Washington Street and into the Back Bay area. Such development would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- literally choke traffic in the downtown area without any effective possibility for mitigation. The current traffic situation is already dire, and their are no remedies proposed in the amendment.</li> <li>- threaten the character and very existence of the historically sensitive areas, as well as numerous landmarked buildings and open spaces. This impact is irreversible.</li> <li>- turn Washington Street into a dark, windy skyscraper alley, which would be unattractive to visitors and the very residents the proposed amendment is trying to attract</li> <li>- not achieve the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it would invite towers likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space.</li> <li>- compete with the current tax incentive program to convert commercial to residential space. While current taxpayers are footing the bill for tax incentives, the city creates additional incentives for commercial space to be developed.</li> </ul>	<p>The proposal as presented, being a fundamental departure from the previously presented plans, lacks diligence in several respects, including, without limitation, traffic patterns and mitigation planning, protection of historic buildings, and economic impact on existing stakeholders.</p> <p>The fact that such a radical proposal is pushed through in haste (even after taking account of the one-month extension of the public comment period) makes a mockery of the planning process, and the very mission of PLAN: Downtown's master planning process.</p> <p>There has been repeated, consistent feedback over the years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group.</p> <p>The previous plan was severely criticized for allowing 'spot zoning' of a single lot at 11-12 Bromfield, which was very obviously driven by a pending developer's proposal for building a 400ft commercial tower. The public outcry prompted the BPDA Board to postpone the zoning decisions. The current proposal, while sidestepping the unwanted optics of 'spot zoning', exacerbates all the issues associated with exorbitant building heights in the Ladder Block.</p> <p>What, then, is really driving the decision making? More than once did exasperated participants in the public meetings ask the question: "Are you wasting my time?" This form is requesting feedback on the amendment, feedback that has already been submitted many times and in many forms, whether at hearings, through the Advisory Group, in letters and emails to planning officials and city representatives. It is time for the BPDA to level with the community stakeholders and reflect their feedback in the planning process!</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft based on the feedback received during the public process. Notably, the revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to better preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including Washington Street and the area around the Old South Meeting House. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.</p> <p>This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.</p> <p>By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.</p>

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1/13/2025	Linda Stone	I live Downtown, I own a condominium in this area	NOT MUCH!! I'm very concerned.	I'm concerned that speeding up processing will lead to bad decisions. We have limited infrastructure that is already over-taxed for water, sewage, electricity, etc. We already have a rat problem - what is being proposed will make that problem MUCH worse. Natural spaces and existing residences will lose sunlight/daylight leading to diminished property values, and a cost in quality of life. Many of us moved to where we are and paid higher prices because we have light, it is not as dense as is being proposed, and the nature in the public garden and Common need and thrive with the existing light. Further, higher density in this area will contribute to even higher crime. Already we're starting to experience higher crime with phones, etc. getting stolen from pedestrians. Traffic is so compromised given the revisions for bicycles, and the vespas/motorbikes go the wrong way, run through lights and nearly knock us over. The Back Bay, Park Plaza, Downtown area, and Chinatown attract tourism and offer premium places to live. What is being proposed jeopardizes both the experience of living here, tourism experience, infrastructure, traffic, and city services (police, etc).		See above. I'm not able to attend the 1/15 meeting, but I'm DEEPLY concerned about the zoning plan changes. DO NOT RAM THIS THROUGH. We are already being slammed on property taxes. DO NOT ALSO DESTROY quality of life in Boston, in these neighborhoods. This is a POORLY THOUGHT OUT PROPOSAL/PLAN.	Thank you for your comments. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We have made changes to the draft that incorporate many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and take important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The draft zoning has several provisions and incentives to help make Downtown a more active and thus safer neighborhood. Some changes include lifting outdated barriers for new businesses to grow (like ice cream shops and yoga studios) and creating incentives to reuse existing buildings alongside new housing near to transit access.
1/11/2025	Creelea Pangaro	I live Downtown, I work Downtown	Nothing	Community concerns regarding shadows on Common and Public Garden, historic preservation of Ladder Blocks, and disinvestment in existing buildings addressed.	Public process upon which the mayor based her campaign was totally dispensed with in this process. This PLAN is being imposed on downtown residents without taking vital concerns into account: impacting the historic greenspaces on Boston Common and Public Garden, lowering the standard of living and downtown residential property values. If heights are raised by right, owners of existing buildings have no incentive to invest in and preserve their buildings and the historic structures will fall into decrepitude.	Downtown residents do NOT endorse this change.	Thank you for your comments. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. The revised draft reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. The zoning continues to help maximize incentives for adaptive reuse and reduce barriers for building conversion, supporting the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. The program has successfully created 762 housing units across 20 buildings, converting over 600,000 square feet of office space. However, the program has also shown that conversion alone cannot deliver the scale of housing needed Downtown. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced path forward— protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

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1/17/2025	Anne Peacher	I live Downtown, I work Downtown	Anything that encourages conversion from commercial use to condos.	leaving the height of building developments at 150 feet.. not raising to 500 feet	It will lead to luxury towers, even less affordable housing, no sense of community and damage historic structures and the fabric of Downtown Crossing	Please consider the feedback of current residents-particularly when you want to make the neighborhood more residential!	This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.  We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood.
1/20/2025	Jay	I live Downtown, I work Downtown	I like the increased allowed heights for the SKY-R district and especially the focus on residential. The buildings might block my current view, but we desperately need housing and this is a great place to build, that needs more than just people commuting in, to create a more vibrant community. Boston has evolved for centuries and huge amounts of land used to be bay	Increase the building height limits for SKY-LOW to at least 300 feet. This won't make a big difference for the common, especially with SKY-R not far behind	There's too much focus on preserving the current facades and not enough forward looking about what we want the neighborhood to look like. Yes, there are some beautiful buildings to preserve, but there are also buildings that are really showing their age that wouldn't be missed. Imagine a city where every building is historic on the bottom and modern on top - it will look out of place and will drive up building costs while limiting flexibility to make the building functional. At the same time, there's so much more that can be done, such as adding more pedestrian only streets and add vegetation to make streets greener. What about encouraging tearing down buildings to build a new skyscraper next to a new park? Or moving more traffic to tunnels underground to make downtown more pedestrian friendly? Or allowing streets to shift or get wider or narrower to accommodate more efficient usage and new buildings? How about mandating that parking garages be built underground with other uses such as housing or offices above? Cities like Paris have come so far in the past couple decades to become more livable for residents and Boston should follow in their footsteps.	I couldn't find section 13 to find details on parking, but there should be no parking minimums for buildings in such a dense area with so many public transit options. Existing street parking should be reduced to make more space for pedestrians and there should be more 15 minute parking so that cars don't have to park illegally to find a place to stop briefly. Also, find ways to simplify the approval process to help get new projects off the ground more quickly, bringing more housing sooner and reducing the cost.	Thank you for your comments and for encouraging creative approaches to improving the public realm. PLAN: Downtown proposes several potential mobility public realm improvement projects. The Downtown Crossing Street Improvement project that is underway is exploring ways to improve and possibly expand the pedestrian zone. The zoning does in fact remove parking minimums downtown! We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.

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1/22/2025	Ted Matwijc	I live Downtown, I work Downtown	<p>I support removing almost all restrictions that stand in the way of development in our neighborhood as I believe it is the most sure way to move toward the future and toward creating the best, most attractive version of Downtown to all parties. I support any development that leads to more Bostonians, suburbanites, business travelers, entertainment-seekers, or tourists coming to the neighborhood for work, restaurants, shows, meetings, hotels, etc. and then staying in our neighborhood because of all the great attractions therein. I grasp that the "historical buildings" matter to tourists but I do not think great cities stop pushing development for sake of overly preserving the past. As an aside, every time I join a Zoom hearing or call re: anything related to the development of the city, the folks in favor of historical buildings - is it Revolutionary Spaces (?) feel over-represented - I'm not even sure if they live in Boston. I'd personally trade three out of every four historical building in this neighborhood (and yes, potentially lose tourist revenue - keep some of the facades, sure) in exchange for a few more Winthrop Place / Millennium Tower situations - more condos and apartments built, more restaurants, more bars, more co-working space, more cafes, more unique shared public spaces. In fact I'd argue that for Boston to continue to remain competitive for corporations, high earners or other smart and talented people, we must continue to develop on all fronts and if our historical buildings have to adjust course or find a new way to tell the story, that will suffice - of course nobody is going to let the West End happen again... at the same time Downtown is not Beacon Hill or the South End, it's also not the Back Bay so continuing to build out a mix of tall multi-use structures, re-building behind the beautiful facades as the ladder streets have and not standing in the way of a few more tall buildings will make for a signature neighborhood that allows folks to live, work, tour etc. and spend their money here.</p>	Nothing at this time.	None at this time - I support the amendment and anything Boston can do to be bold in its aspirations of moving a city forward vs. clinging to the old way of doing things.	I would especially encourage any changes that allow for more outdoor space throughout the winter for folks to congregate - i.e. winter markets / beer gardens under heat lamps / outdoor play spaces - and similar experiences that can help feature downtown year-round that will also keep tourists / passers-through in the neighborhood for longer. I think we can look to the great European cities for inspiration - walking in Amsterdam, Lisbon, Venice etc. - these cities are alive even during the cold of winter and we would do well to emulate - imagine a "Washington St. Winter Walk" where storefronts and	Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm to see Downtown grow as a place for all! Millenium Tower is a great example of how a new large-scale residential development can bring new housing while also strategically providing reenvestment in nearby historic sites. The Downtown Crossing Street Improvement project which is underway, is exploring ways to better activate, improv, and possibly expand the pedestrian zone.

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2/1/2025	Brian French	I live Downtown, I work Downtown	It increases potential for housing in a city that desperately needs.	Single staircase reform	<p>Dear City of Boston Planning Department,</p> <p>I write in strong support of the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a resident of Boston experiencing firsthand the impact of our housing crisis through escalating rents, I believe these changes represent a crucial step toward addressing our city's housing challenges.</p> <p>The proposed Sky-R district is particularly promising, as it thoughtfully incentivizes residential development while respecting the historic character of downtown Boston. By requiring 60% residential use for increased height allowances, this amendment directly targets our housing shortage while maintaining appropriate transitions to lower-height zones near the Boston Common. This balanced approach demonstrates how we can increase housing supply while preserving the unique character that makes Boston special.</p>	<p>The evidence from other cities is clear – when we build more housing, we see positive results. Cities like Minneapolis and Austin have shown that allowing more housing construction helps stabilize and even reduce rental costs. Downtown Boston, with its extensive transit access and proximity to jobs, is an ideal location for new housing development. More residents in this area will support local businesses still recovering from the pandemic, while taking advantage of sustainable transportation options.</p> <p>The amendment's focus on adaptive reuse and context-sensitive design guidelines ensures that new development will enhance rather than detract from downtown's historic fabric. These carefully crafted regulations will create predictable standards for development while protecting our cherished public spaces like the Boston Common. I urge you to approve these amendments as a critical tool for addressing our housing crisis while strengthening downtown Boston's vibrant character.</p> <p>Sincerely, Brian C French</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Single staircase reform is governed by building code rather than zoning, so it's outside the scope of this process. That said, we recognize building code reforms potential to complement zoning efforts and support more housing!</p>
2/1/2025	Arturas Malinauskas	I live Downtown, I work Downtown	Preserving Boston's ritzy character is an important focus.	<p>1) It is confusing. Little clarity on Growth vs Enhance areas. Those are synonyms. Also I assume Sky-R district is Sky-Residential. Not immediately obvious to me that is the change implemented</p> <p>2) Unclear how much more housing could result from this plan.</p>	<p>Bostonians don't need hundreds of new units downtown, they need tens of thousands. Converting buildings and preserving structures is twice as expensive and slow as building from scratch. Please undo the landmark status of city hall, blow it up, and use the incredible large 5+ acre central lot to build thousands of units in the shortest time possible. Use money from selling city land to buy the McCormack Post Building from the feds for use as a new city hall.</p>		<p>Thank you for your comments. This process is one critical step towards creating more of the housing Boston needs, focusing on the downtown core for its proximity to transit and mix of uses.</p>

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2/4/2025	Kathrin Schlenzinger	I live Downtown, I work Downtown	I appreciate the prioritization of residential versus office space development and the retention of historic facades.	<p>Building heights should not be greater than 155' along Washington Street and within the historic Ladder blocks to preserve the historic character of Boston's downtown neighborhood.</p> <p>Historic Preservation Concerns Allowing development projects with heights up to 500 feet along Washington Street threatens the character of this historically significant area with numerous landmark buildings and open spaces. These heights would further restricts sunlight, increase wind channeling effects, and impact tourism in the historic Ladder Blocks. Historic preservation experts have been warning us about the additional challenges to protect the vanishing stock of some of the city's and the country's historically most significant buildings.</p> <p>Traffic Concerns Adding up to 500 ft. tall office and residential buildings defies logic and common sense. Existing access routes were never designed to support the traffic volume that will inevitably follow. The already massive congestion, delays for residents, commuters, and service traffic along Washington and Tremont Street will worsen. Pollution from traffic noise and exhaust fumes is already high and will permanently increase. The situation may be even worse during the construction phase. This will be detrimental for residents and small businesses alike.</p>	<p>Economic Impact Concerns Allowing 500 feet tall buildings in the SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable. Instead, it invites the development of luxury residential towers and additional, unneeded office space. The City is currently promoting conversion of office space to residential use by offering tax incentives to downtown landlords. Providing such incentives reduces the overall tax base, and therefore comes at the expense of all local taxpayers. It is difficult to stomach the thought that the City would encourage or enable additional development of office space by way of zoning exceptions (or otherwise, for that matter), thereby exacerbating the very problem it is trying to solve using local taxpayer money.</p> <p>Towers Instead of Neighborhoods In order to comprehensively evaluate this latest Plan: Downtown amendment we not only need visual models of what Boston's downtown could potentially look like under these new framework, but also an economic impact analysis that takes a close look at the plan's effect on land and property values of existing buildings, how it incentivize or disincentivize development or adaptive reuse, how local small businesses may be affected, and what impact this type of development would have on the environment. Which alternative solutions were studied that lead to the conclusion that the proposed amendment optimizes activation and revitalization Boston's downtown neighborhood.</p>	I strongly oppose the current Plan: Downtown amendment.	<p>Thank you for your comments. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, taking important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. This includes eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The zoning helps incentivize and reduce barriers for adaptive reuse and the ongoing Office-to-Residential Program. While a key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, the program and PLAN: Downtown analysis has highlighted that conversion alone cannot create the much-needed housing Downtown, including affordable rental units that would be required of larger projects.</p> <p>This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.</p>
1/16/2025	Arturo Campos-Rodriguez	I live Downtown, I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I love that it will make it easier to have more dense, mixed use development downtown.	I want more of downtown to be upzoned and height limits to be eliminated entirely. I also would like the city to get rid of minimum parking requirements like so many other cities have done.	I think it should do more to encourage more dense, mixed use development	I love these initiatives and I would like to see downtown be as vibrant and full of people as it can be, and for that we need to build more housing and remove rules that restrict the growth of downtown	Thank you for your comments. The zoning is in fact, eliminating minimum parking requirements. A key goal is to maximize growth for housing and mixed-use development Downtown. At the same time, it is important to maintain the scale of smaller historic areas that are unique to Downtown, important for both their history and character, but also as opportunities for adaptive reuse.
2/7/2025	John Heavisides	I live Downtown, I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	More density! We need more people living downtown full-time to make it come alive, and we need more entertainment at all hours.	As-of-right heights below 100' feel too low. This is valuable land, and any barriers to developing it to its actual value is counterproductive.		If this process wants to be useful, it should start by discarding out of hand the views of people who can't fathom the downtown of a major metropolitan area being dense. Instead of stalling the project, I suggest giving them a bus ticket to the most distant cornfield we can find, where they can enjoy an urban landscape more to their liking.	Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
2/7/2025	Sean Hegarty	I live Downtown, I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	The increase in highly and density. Much needed!	Allow for a higher limit in specific areas where possible.	N/a	N/a	Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.

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1/18/2025	Greg Selkoe	I live in Back Bay, lived in Downtown Crossing perviously (and left) and visit it often	I fully support the proposed zoning changes. Downtown Crossing was once America's busiest and most dense downtown shopping district. Because of this, all four subway lines have several stops in the area. It is now a hollowed-out shell. No place in New England is better suited for transit-oriented development. Height and density make logical sense here. I find it ironic that a number of the NIMBYs that oppose the zoning change live in high-rises in the vicinity. I can only assume they like height and views for them but oppose it for anyone new.	It is essential not to look to university housing as the solution to Downtown Crossing's woes. This is Boston's hub. It contains the theater district and the oldest commercial district in the country. It must be a vibrant, 24-hour, multi-use neighborhood welcoming everyone and a cultural and shopping destination for the region. If it feels like a glorified college campus, it will be a huge missed opportunity for the city. At this point, Emerson & Suffolk are starting to dominate the area. There needs to be balance. There are several examples of projects would have been residential or hotels that were ultimately purchased by the universities and removed from potential year-round residential housing or lodging. The retail mix is increasingly targeted toward college students, further eroding attractiveness for other demographics to want to frequent, live, open businesses, and work there.	If the Wu Administration is serious about building housing, we can't create a system where nothing can be built with scale. We should build thousands of units downtown, affordable, mid-range, and luxury. However, height and flexibility are key tools to make this economically feasible especially since preserving the many historic structure (which I of course support) does not leave a lot of good parcels / locations for height to begin with. I would continue to look at how to make the process predictable, easy and cost less.	At some point, you can't please everyone and build things especially in our City. In Boston, a minimal amount of housing has been built during the last four years. Even with these zoning changes, it will be a challenge to get any project in the ground in the current climate; without them, it will be impossible.	Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Creating a range of housing options alongside predicability is a key goal of the zoning and zoning reform citywide!
1/10/2025	S	I often visit Downtown	More skyscrapers and density	Even more density			Thank you for your comments.
1/10/2025	Colin Parmalee	I often visit Downtown	Adding substantial housing density downtown. To make a dent in our housing crisis we need a more more housing, and the downtown is a great spot to add lots of new housing to create a more vibrant neighborhood	I would like to see the housing requirement relaxed to 50%, as well as expanding the zone across the whole downtown core. Allowing building up to the FAA height limits across downtown would be good			Thank you for your comments supporting increasing housing opportunities Downtown. A key goal of this zoning proposal is to maximize growth for housing and mixed-use development, particularly in transit-accessible locations. At the same time, it is important to maintain the scale and character of smaller historic areas, which is why zoning balances higher-intensity growth in key corridors with more context-sensitive allowances elsewhere. The proposed framework seeks to encourage new residential development while preserving Downtown's unique architectural fabric.
1/10/2025	Jim Roberts	I often visit Downtown	We need more high density housing! If anything this zoning should be expanded to cover more area and buildings at greater heights. This will also help revitalize the downtown area on nights and weekends.	Expand the area impacted and approve higher buildings for more density.		We desperately need more high density housing in the city. Promote building anyway possible!	Thank you for your comments supporting housing opportunities Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis.
1/12/2025	Hamza	I often visit Downtown	The new Sky-R designations seems like a great way to prioritize building more housing especially in a part of the city that flourishes with density.	Out of scope: how affordability will be tackled			Thank you for your comments. Inclusionary Zoning requirements passed in 2024 will require all residential projects with seven or more units to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of the project reserved for people with housing vouchers.
1/12/2025	Nikolas Varga	I often visit Downtown	I like the addition of SKY-R. I like that the zoning appears to prioritize housing development in Downtown. It also seems like it simplifies overlap between zones and overlays, which is good. I also strongly support the removal of parking requirements for the SKY districts in Article 23.	Institute parking maximums in the zoning code that are more stringent than the parking freeze. I would also like to see any type of parking use be forbidden in SKY-LOW, including standalone parking garages.	It's pretty good. I like the addition that parking structures must have an active street-facing component. I like the addition of SKY-R, and its related use table seems reasonable.		Thank you for your comments and flagging. When it comes to parking, this is a start, and we are continuing to work on parking reform in the zoning code. Projects will be encouraged to adhere to the City's <a href="#">maximum parking ratio guidelines</a> that take into consideration Downtown's transit access.
1/28/2025	Olivia Huang	I often visit Downtown	It mentions adaptive reuse	It should clarify adaptive reuse further as retaining much of a building's structure (the "bones" - columns, beams, floor slabs), not just the facades. That's where much of carbon in a building is consumed. Also, there's still a lot of character to be found in interior details or rooms as well that would be lost if only facades were reused - such as vestibules, stairs. There are many easily design solutions to adapting older buildings to contemporary requirements.			Thank you for your comments. The draft zoning creates an incentive to retain and upgrade or add additions to existing buildings, not just a building facade.

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1/29/2025	Trevor Long	I often visit Downtown	Not a whole lot. Maybe, generally, relaxing general zoning restrictions.	Buildings should not be glass boxes and should look like 'old' Boston. Nobody who stays here likes to live in or near the glass boxes and certainly few like to look at them. Additionally adding new height near the Commons opposes the intent for it to be an open, welcoming space for Boston.	scrap the towers.. seriously. Focus on low-mid rise. Should have the same height restrictions as any other district. Should have serious 'form' guidelines that make them look like the buildings in Boston people actually like (the old ones).		Thank you for your comments and sharing your concerns. Creating opportunities for housing Downtown that respects existing surroundings is a goal of the zoning and PLAN: Downtown. The dimensional regulations in the zoning and new design guidelines in the PLAN provide direction as to how new projects must respectfully enhance Downtown's unique and historic fabric and effectively activate the area and revitalize the public realm. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
1/30/2025	Patrick Dignan	I often visit Downtown	I like that it will make it easier to build housing downtown. We desperately need housing, especially in the areas most well-connected to transit	Completely uncap the height limits. This is literally the meeting point of all of our transit lines we should make the absolute most of it. Anything less is robbing the city and the state of potential vitality in the most ideal location we have		We have a housing crisis and transit is incredibly expensive to build. Downtown is unique and always will be for its connectedness and its centrality. We should absolutely not shy away from density and height here. That includes eliminating the common shadow law.	Thank you for the comments and enthusiasm for growth downtown. While the zoning allows additional density, especially in the SKY district, State shadow law regulations and Logan Airport Critical Airspace supersede zoning and are regulations outside the City's control.
1/30/2025	Andrew Szendrey	I often visit Downtown	More buildings allowed for more uses is a great thing! I also love to see the encouragement of repurposing existing buildings.	Nothing of note.			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
1/30/2025	Kameron Moore	I often visit Downtown	I love that it allows for much taller buildings and encourages housing development.	I would love to increase the size and quantity of buildings. Remove the red tape. Boston NEEDS more housing and more development. Build as much housing as you can. We are building for the future and need to act like city that cares about growth.		Stop giving NIMBY's a platform.	Thank you for your comments. Increasing housing options downtown and citywide is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform work.
1/31/2025	Arcady Goldminst-Orlov	I often visit Downtown	More density is good, Downtown is in a unique position with the best transit access in the city and the whole region. It is a good place to maximize density.	Could always be dense. Could be less prescriptive too.	More things should be by-right rather than conditional use.	Downtown development should, by and large, not include any parking, especially commercial development. There's already too much parking downtown, driving too much traffic onto too-narrow streets.	Thank you for your comment. While the zoning creates more flexibility when it comes to uses and density, some controls and conditionality is needed to ensure projects mitigate potential negative impacts such as on sensitive historic sites or the public realm. Given the ideal location in the epicenter of Boston's transit network and mix of uses, projects will be encouraged to eliminate or have very low amounts of on-site parking.

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1/31/2025	Christine	I often visit Downtown	see comment	see comments	see comments	<p>Dear City of Boston Planning Department,</p> <p>I write today regarding the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment, which I believe are crucial steps toward addressing our region's housing crisis. As someone struggling to find affordable housing closer to Boston, I'm acutely aware of how the current housing shortage affects individuals and families trying to make this vibrant city their home.</p> <p>The proposed changes, particularly the creation of the Sky-R district that incentivizes residential development west of Washington Street, represent a thoughtful approach to increasing housing supply while respecting Boston's historic character. By requiring 60% residential use for increased height allowances, this plan directly addresses our housing needs without compromising the city's architectural heritage.</p> <p>I'm particularly concerned about the ongoing exodus of residents from downtown areas due to housing costs. This amendment could help reverse that trend by creating more housing options in an area rich with public transit, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities. More residents downtown would support local businesses still recovering from the pandemic's impact while reducing pressure on housing in other neighborhoods.</p> <p>The housing crisis affects everyone in our region, and its consequences ripple through our entire economy. Without action, we risk becoming a city accessible only to the very wealthy. This amendment offers a balanced solution by encouraging residential development in appropriate areas while maintaining protections for historic landmarks and beloved public spaces like the Boston Common. I strongly urge you to support these zoning changes as a critical step toward making Boston more accessible and affordable for all.</p> <p>Sincerely, Christine</p>	Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need and benefits of increased housing and density Downtown. This zoning update is one part of the city's broader efforts to address the housing crisis in Boston. Please continue to follow the process. We look forward to sharing more details in the revised draft and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
2/1/2025	Mark	I often visit Downtown	I like that it adds more zoning for housing	Just more housing availability			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
2/1/2025	Robert Collins	I often visit Downtown	I like the idea of increasing housing in downtown and I also am a huge fan of reuse and preservation of historic buildings	I am a big history person and I was in love with the old Scollay Square and the West End and to learn what happened to them in the 1950's because of Urban Renewal. I know it sounds crazy but I would like to see Boston City Hall removed and Scollay Square rebuilt based off old maps and blueprints. The City Hall really breaks the city in half and does not allow the North End to blend into the rest of Downtown like it once did. You need to fix the mistakes of the past. Mainly things done in the 1950's like Urban Renewal and the highways that destroyed the city too.	I believe you should be trying to convert as many of the old buildings which are offices into residential		Thank you for your comments. Supporting the Office to Residential Conversion Program and new residential development, the draft zoning is one critical step towards increasing housing downtown.

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2/2/2025	Hailey Ames	I often visit Downtown	Incentivizing housing near transit, increasing height limits for residential buildings, protecting historical facades.	Reduce emphasis on laboratory/office space which leads to downtown only caring about the 7-7 crew and not the local residents (e.g., restaurants only being open during office hours for workers, preventing visitors or locals to enjoy the beautiful area)	<p>Dear City of Boston Planning Department,</p> <p>I enthusiastically support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as vital steps toward addressing Boston's housing needs. As a young professional committed to building my future in this city, I recognize that our current housing shortage threatens Boston's long-term economic vitality and affordability.</p> <p>The proposed Sky-R district particularly stands out as a smart approach to increasing housing supply where it's needed most. By incentivizing residential development near transit, employment centers, and cultural amenities, while maintaining contextual height restrictions and historic preservation requirements, this plan thoughtfully balances growth with neighborhood character. The requirement that additional height allowances must be used primarily for residential development ensures we're directly addressing our housing shortage.</p> <p>This zoning update will strengthen downtown Boston's role as an economic engine while making it more livable. More housing downtown means more people supporting local businesses, using public transit, and contributing to the neighborhood's vitality. Most importantly, increasing housing supply in high-demand areas like downtown helps stabilize costs throughout the city by reducing competition for existing units. Without bold action to enable more housing construction, Boston risks becoming accessible only to the very wealthy. This plan represents exactly the kind of forward-thinking policy we need to maintain Boston's position as a dynamic, inclusive city.</p>		Thank you for your feedback and highlighting the need for more housing and investment Downtown. We believe this zoning is a balanced approach to bring new density and housing downtown, allowing it to grow into a more vibrant and livable neighborhood, protect its historic and cultural assets, and address the Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
2/2/2025	Antonia	I often visit Downtown	I appreciate the move to add density, it is crucial for the overall health of the Boston housing market, environment, and communities. It will promote local businesses and the use of public transportation.	N/A			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
2/5/2025	Eric Herot	I often visit Downtown	Lots of opportunity for new housing to be built	Limiting growth around the common does not make any sense. Views of the common are a coveted asset. We should be trying to make more of them, not reserving them for the lucky few who have been grandfathered in. Also, Central Park manages to survive being surrounded on all sides by skyscrapers, so I think the common will be fine too. It is unfortunate that the state chose to make this area off limits to tall buildings with shadow laws, but there is no logical reason that these also need to be codified into zoning, which just creates another unnecessary barrier to their repeal.	I wholeheartedly reject the idea that design guidelines governing the scale and appearance of private real estate does anything to improve the quality of the public realm or the affordability of real estate, however I do welcome the use of a standardized approach that limits uncertainty and opportunities for the public process and lawsuits to force costly redesigns.	The most sustainable development is development that is transit-accessible development that is built sooner rather than later	Thank you for your comments. A key goal of the draft zoning is to reduce uncertainty and streamline the development process. While state shadow laws supersede local zoning, referencing them in the zoning code helps ensure clarity for potential projects. Any changes to the shadow regulations would occur at the state level, regardless of the new citations.
2/5/2025	Syd Hardin	I often visit Downtown	I like seeing an emphasis on housing density and loosening of zoning restrictions in an effort to build more housing and ease the housing crisis in Boston. As an artist, I'm also thrilled to hear there is an emphasis on creating much-needed spaces for the creative economy in Boston.	I'd like to see height restrictions abolished (within the guidelines set by the airport, obviously).	I want to see our city make meaningful changes to our zoning code to address the housing crisis we face.		Thank you for your feedback - please stay involved as the process continues. This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address our housing crisis!

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2/7/2025	Brendan DeSimone	I often visit Downtown	I like that it incentivizes residential development. I hope that a plan like this will allow much-needed housing to actually materialize. The Downtown area needs more residential to balance out the rising office vacancy and there is precedent for very tall buildings in this neighborhood. There is no better place for significant residential density in Boston.	I wish it allowed even more density on even more parcels that could be developed as residential. I hope Boston can make it very easy for residential development to get permitted so that as many units as possible are constructed. This is the only way to combat rising rents, but it requires building moderate to significant on many parcels to make a noticeable dent.		More housing and 24/7 population are just what the Downtown needs to increase foot traffic and revitalize the retail micro-market. If there were quality housing available and reasonably priced, I would consider moving from East Boston to the Downtown.	Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood while addressing Boston's housing needs.
2/7/2025	Max Moran	I often visit Downtown	Increased housing density. Plan for adjusting streets and helping pedestrianize areas.	I hope that some areas can be fully pedestrianized and allow for safer conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, instead of prioritizing car travel in areas where it is unnecessary	Our state is currently going through a housing crisis and a cost of living crisis. The only way to deal with these problems is to actively address them and not leave it for some future person in charge to have strength to pursue active investment in our community. Downtown is an area that would greatly benefit from increased availability of housing, with businesses increasingly taking advantage of remote work and not requiring commercial leases that used to be the main focus of the tax base of commercial districts. An area with prime access to transit and great local amenities that is empty past 7pm is not useful for maintaining growth or the quality of life of the city. Building more housing does not destroy the character of an area, but allows it to develop and continue to evolve.		Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning. Additional housing Downtown can truly help make it a more round-the-clock neighborhood! Ongoing and planned mobility and public realm projects are looking to improve Downtown streets. The Downtown Crossing Street Improvement project explores how to enhance and possibly expand the Downtown pedestrian zone.
2/7/2025	Meagen St. Louis	I often visit Downtown	I like that it supports denser and taller buildings. We have no land to build out, so we must build up. I like that included efforts to preserve Boston's beautiful architecture.	More tall buildings. Downtown is supposed to be filled with tall buildings. And you can keep the character. Chicago and New York figured it out. I bet we can too.		We need more housing to make things more affordable. You can't staff businesses if no one but the ultra rich can afford to live there. Mixed use doesn't exist without people. Don't let the NIMBYs win.  Signed, a Boston homeowner	Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
2/7/2025	Jonathan Bronson	I often visit Downtown	More dense housing downtown will help to reduce housing costs, reduce people's commutes thereby reducing emissions, and bring more life to downtown as more businesses open to serve the people who live there.	I don't know, but we need more safeguards to stop NIMBYS from putting an end to every housing project because they only care about their homes' property values.			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
2/7/2025	Javier Coindreau	I often visit Downtown	We need more space and housing, and increased zoning downtown is natural	Nothing, it really should pass. We can't have political gridlock end housing affordability.			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
2/7/2025	Peggy	I often visit Downtown	I like that this zoning amendment will increase housing development and address the housing shortage. Mixed-used buildings are wonderful.	Taller buildings	N/A	N/A	Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
2/7/2025	Philip Brink	I often visit Downtown	Increased housing in downtown, pedestrian-first planning, thoughtful slope of lower height near the Commons to greater height in the center of downtown.	I didn't see anything on this, so maybe it is already included, but I find the best environments in downtown areas have light commercial/retail on the ground floor, and residential above. In my view this should be a requirement. I also saw no mention of affordable housing requirements, which should also absolutely be a requirement.	I love the plan for more housing in the downtown. This is desperately needed, and a crucial part of meeting the increasing housing demands.		Thank you for your comments. Inclusionary Zoning requirements passed in 2024 will require all residential projects with seven or more units to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of the project reserved for people with housing vouchers.
2/7/2025	Karl Schmeckpeper	I often visit Downtown	I like the increased height limit for buildings that are 60% residential.	I would make whatever changes result in the most housing being built. More people living in the downtown of Boston will cause it to be a more vibrant place.			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
2/7/2025	Ben	I often visit Downtown	The infusion of more residential density would help make the city center a 24-hr vibrant hub.	I hope there is leniency for shadow impacts, and tall projects are not greatly hindered by their proximity to green space / The Common.			Thank you for your comments! State shadow law supersedes zoning, setting an absolute height limit in some areas.
2/7/2025	Colin Williams	I often visit Downtown	We need density and housing and I fully support the proposal to build a skyscraper in downtown Boston where skyscrapers should be!	Please build it as intended.	No Comment	Let Boston thrive through new development!	Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
2/7/2025	Joshua T.	I often visit Downtown	I like how the current zoning plan tries to allow for more growth while preserving as many historical areas as possible.	I'd always like to see more potential housing, and to lower the barriers to build more housing as much as possible.			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.

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2/7/2025	Sara Rostampour	I often visit Downtown	More housing being built and mixed use is great for high quality of life. The Greenway overlay is great too	Nothing - let's get this done faster is all			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
2/7/2025	Samantha Nelson	I often visit Downtown	Changes to allow higher density development, larger buildings	Always support more mixed use zoning, high density development is great for this area.	Want to encourage building more housing.		Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
2/7/2025	Jim webber	I often visit Downtown	We need to build more housing and make downtown vibrant again. Build it tall and build it fast as long as it's not already a historic property.	Even taller buildings			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
2/8/2025	Kaylen Dwyer	I often visit Downtown	A lot of good ideas here. I visit DTX multiple evenings a week and as I head back home downtown is just creepy! The plan for mixed use spaces is great. Increasing building height only makes sense. The sustainability plans are well thought out and forward thinking.	N/A		Are public bathrooms in the realm of possibility	Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the draft zoning.
2/8/2025	ryan snider	I often visit Downtown	It allows more high rise residential by right, helping to revitalize downtown.	Expand the 500 ft high residential overlay to all of downtown.			Thank you for your comments. The SKY district allows taller heights up to the limit of State Shadow Regulations and Critical Airspace to maximize a greater mix of uses and density in near major transportation assets.
2/9/2025	Ember Sawady	I often visit Downtown	Taller height limits, incentives for building residential	Increase height limits and allowed FAR even further! A skyscraper for every lot!		I'm not sure if this is already in the zoning, but we should disallow building car parking downtown, people should take the T instead	Thank you for your comments. There is a parking freeze in place Downtown that caps the number of off-street parking spaces in the area. There are no parking minimums for projects, and given the proximity to transit, projects will be encouraged to eliminate or have very low amounts of on-site parking.
2/5/2025	Nathan Mandell	I often visit Downtown, Boston resident	I love the focus on increasing high-density housing in downtown. We desperately need more housing in the city, and downtown is best suited to gain units. The creation of SKY-R districts is a fantastic way to encourage the development of primarily residential structures. Downtown also struggles with large sections feeling empty outside of the traditional 9-5 work hours, and more residents would go a long ways in resolving that. Seaport shows that office hubs and active neighborhoods aren't mutually exclusive.	If anything, I'd like to see the SKY-R height requirements be made similar to the SKY height requirements. Instead of a hard 500' cutoff, heights should be allowed as long as they are compliant with the relevant shadow codes, FAA regulations, and don't cause excessive ground-level wind loads. I doubt this would make a huge difference, but could certainly lead to more housing production.  I also don't see why Extra Large Retail Stores should only be conditionally allowed in SKY-R, but do not feel strongly about it.			Thank you for your comments and support for mixed-use growth Downtown! We believe it's important to strike a thoughtful balance between preserving the character and scale of Downtown's historic areas and encouraging new, dense development, particularly near transit. Together, these approaches can help make Downtown a more vibrant and welcoming place to live, work, and visit. We look forward to sharing more details on the revised draft and continuing the conversation at the upcoming public meeting.
2/7/2025	Sam McMillan	I often visit Downtown, Friends live Downtown	Allows for much needed housing!	Not much!		Please for the love of God stop giving these NIMBYs the time of day! Anyone having a meltdown about new skyscrapers in the DOWNTOWN of a MAJOR CITY should not be taken seriously. The urgent need for housing vastly outweighs any petty concerns these selfish individuals might have. Demands for additional "community involvement" are designed to obstruct and delay and are not made in good faith. Residents of Downtown Crossing who oppose the PLAN are free to move to a suburb if they are so apparently allergic to tall buildings. Build!	Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the zoning process.

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2/5/2025	Suraiya Jetha	I often visit Downtown, I am a Boston resident	<p>I like that it encourages growth in Downtown while respecting the history of the area. It creates predictable, easily understood dimensional requirements for future projects in downtown.</p> <p>The proposed dimensional rules are tailored to require that new buildings fit in with the existing fabric and do not overwhelm important public spaces or historic buildings.</p> <p>Incentivizes housing! Proposes the creation of a new district (Sky-R) that incentivizes new housing production by allowing additional height in a small strip of properties west of Washington Street and one block south of the Boston Common that have at least 60% residential use. This means new height can only be used to make housing that our region desperately needs. More housing, even luxury housing, means less competition for units elsewhere in the city.</p> <p>This new zone provides a transition from Downtown's tallest towers to the lower zone along the Boston Common.</p> <p>Non-housing projects are limited to a lower height to respect their historic neighbors.</p> <p>Previously much of the area now proposed to become the Sky-R district was slated to be in the Sky district, which would have allowed much taller and larger buildings of non-residential uses. Incentivizes the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.</p> <p>A proposed new provision would provide additional dimensional flexibility for new construction that maintains and re-uses existing buildings.</p> <p>Formalizes in city zoning the Boston Common Shadow Law which was written to protect the Commonwealth's most cherished public space. All projects, regardless of their zoning, must comply with state laws that limit the amount of shadow cast on the Boston Common and Public Garden.</p> <p>Encourages new projects to respect their context. Provides additional historic context design guidelines so that new projects respect their existing neighbors.</p> <p>Eligible projects will still be required to go through the intensive Article 80 process with city development and design review staff.</p> <p>Downtown is rich in transit, public space, employment, and cultural resources. We want more people in Downtown. <b>More housing downtown</b></p>	More walking streets/fewer streets open to car traffic			Thank you for your comment. Please follow the ongoing Downtown Crossing Street Improvement and Activation projects, which are exploring ways to improve, activate, and possibly expand Downtown's pedestrian zone.
2/8/2025	Ricky	I often visit Downtown, I do work near there	I like that it makes Boston more like a World Class City that it is. It's time for people here to get out of our way and let it Blossom.	Yes	I like the idea. Boston could be a much larger city and much more things could happen here, if people weren't afraid of change		Thank you for your comment and enthusiasm for more housing and density Downtown!

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1/30/2025	Samuel Ghilardi	I often visit Downtown, I go to church every Sunday Downtown.	Opportunity for more housing and taller buildings. I often park near Post Office Square which is a ghost town on Sunday mornings. I would love to see the area become a vibrant and active neighborhood, even if it means there's no street parking and I have to park in a garage.	Taller buildings and less restrictions in height near historic buildings. I personally like the juxtaposition between historic buildings (like the old State House) and tall modern buildings. It gives Downtown layers and you can really feel our shared history breaking through in those spaces, as opposed to trying to "respect" the historic building, which often ends up looking like a poor pastiche of the original building.	I think the SKY-R district appropriately incentivizes new housing while also balancing the preservation of historic buildings.		Thank you for your comments. The layering of building eras and styles make downtown unique and a great springboard for thoughtful development and additions!
2/7/2025	Brian	I often visit Downtown, I live near downtown	More density, more housing and mixed use	It doesn't go far enough. We desperately need even MORE density and even MORE building (building up) to get people downtown at all hours. If people live downtown and we provide more places to visit more people will be drawn and there will be more activity. Downtown is dead all the time it seems, lets be a real city!			Thank you for your comment and enthusiasm for more housing and density Downtown!
2/7/2025	Cullen Deimer	I often visit Downtown, I would like to live Downtown	I love the SKY-R zoning overlay and its potential to add new residential towers to a neighborhood that desperately needs them.	More housing!! The sky(r)'s the limit.			Thank you for your comment and enthusiasm for more housing and density Downtown!
2/7/2025	Jesse Thue	I often visit Downtown, previously worked downtown	Permits lots of new housing and density that is heavily needed	Even greater height limits? Why stop at 500ft		Boston should be proud to be New England's largest and most flourishing city. Why are we so scared of building up? Most of the iconic buildings of Boston's beloved skyline could not be built under today's zoning laws, which is a tragedy.	Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the zoning.
2/1/2025	David Tatarakis	I often visit Downtown, Would love to live downtown if it was more affordable	I love the increase in dense housing downtown. It is vital that we help downtown Boston become a vibrant community by allowing more people to own and rent downtown. More residents means a more vibrant community and thriving local businesses. It is also vital that we concentrate new housing development near public transit to avoid increasing the volume of car traffic in and around Boston. There is no better place in the entire Commonwealth than downtown Boston to build dense housing, as it sits at the intersection of the entire MBTA network. I applaud the forward thinking action taken here to increase housing density near the T.	I would be happy to see even higher buildings allowed. I also do not think set backs should be a requirement.	Please do not be dissuaded by bad faith reactionary comments about tall buildings and historical character. Boston needs to evolve in order to thrive.	The second half of the 20th century was a time when we restructured our cities to serve only office buildings and 9 to 5 commuters. We now see that this was a huge mistake that transformed our once-vibrant downtowns into drab, corporate ghost towns. It is high time we reversed these mistakes by reimagining our downtowns to allow for dense housing as we once did. This is a fantastic step to this end.	Thank you for your comment and enthusiasm for more more density and mix of uses at the center of our city's transportation network!

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1/14/2025	Lucy Pollock	I work Downtown	<p>I appreciate the need for increased housing in the Downtown neighborhood, hopefully with the goal not only of assisting with the shortage of housing, but also attracting consistent foot traffic for Downtown businesses and cultural heritage sites.</p>	<p>To me and many other current members of the Downtown community, this plan's allowance for residential tall buildings up to 500 feet on Washington Street seems to be in an attempt to creating a new Downtown rather than preserving, protecting, and improving the vibrant neighborhood we already have. I hesitate to see tall buildings in this area as solutions to the housing crisis, and in fact see them as an obvious detriment to the neighborhood which I not only currently work in, but lived in and went to school in for several years. Tall buildings block out the sunlight which is important for the green spaces and street visibility that make the Downtown neighborhood so appealing and unique. Currently, much of Washington Street is bright during the day, well lit from the sun which is able to reach the ground due to the short, 19th and early 20th century architectural marvels which line its streets. As a smaller woman who frequently has to pass through sketchy areas of Washington Street past 5:00pm, I look forward to the summertime when I feel safe and visible in the streets. I feel unsafe and isolated in these streets in the winter (and I can't help but predict throughout all seasons in Downtown dominated by skyscrapers), when there is no sunlight; and I already feel similarly isolated on Federal Street, where the tall buildings already tower on either side. The tall buildings which are allowed in this zoning proposal seem to underestimate the effects of sunlight on the safety, security, and happiness (which is not an insignificant factor to consider!) on Washington Street workers and residents. Some of Downtown's greatest assets are the Common and Public Garden, yet another area where tourists, workers, residents, children, and the city's dogs could safely enjoy the sunlight nearly anywhere within in these green spaces. Already, there are shadows cast on these areas by tall buildings on the horizon; building them even closer seems ill-conceived. Tall buildings will undeniably block even more light from reaching these areas, making them unpleasant and unsafe-feeling for many.</p>	<p>Turning to our shared cultural spaces, this zoning plan and others which would permit additional skyscrapers in Downtown are harmful to the various Downtown historical sites. Erecting 500 foot tall buildings on Washington Street will change wind patterns and create breeze tunnels, causing very real harm to the historic buildings in the area such as King's Chapel, Old City Hall, the Old Corner Book Store, the Old State House, and the Old South Meeting House. Not only will it cost these organizations money to preserve their structures from the constant barrage of wind (and torment the area with perpetual scaffolding), it will make the Washington Street corridor less appealing to tourists, further driving down the tourism that these historic sites survive off of. Not to put too fine a point on this, but if anyone in the city has been led to believe that increased residents in Downtown will lead to increased patronage of these sites, they are sorely mistaken, and I speak from three and a half years of experience.</p> <p>If the reasoning for increasing residential areas in Downtown is to increase commercial activity, harmful and ugly tall buildings are not the first option that should be actioned upon. The desire for increased foot traffic in this neighborhood is, however, a reason to reassess the MBTA's train and trolley reach and bus route frequency; it is a reason to create more walkable and bike-friendly streets; it is a reason to deny leases to large corporations that draw business from Boston-based entrepreneurs and make our Downtown boring compared to the vibrant North End or Chinatown. These are all solutions that should be explored and acted upon before tall buildings are considered. As I remember, there was a plan for Washington Street from Summer Street to State Street to be fully-pedestrian, which I was so excited about, but it never came to fruition due to a parking garage not having access to the main streets. It is so frustrating to me that that plan was nixed for the access of cars to Downtown, and in this plan, congestion tax is not considered when Boston has some of the worst and most dangerous traffic in America. As someone who deeply cares about the neighborhood and identifies themselves as a Bostonian with pride, I strongly and respectfully request that this zoning plan be reconsidered.</p>		<p>Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns. Another key focus of the zoning is creating incentives and reducing barriers for the adaptive reuse of existing buildings alongside allowing density for a limited number of strategic sites along Washington St to enable more residential growth and reinvestment. We have made changes to the draft based on the feedback received during the public process. Notably, we have eliminated the SKY-R district and expanded the SKY-LOW-D district to better preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including Washington Street and the area around the Old South Meeting House. We believe this refined draft provides a balanced approach to development in Downtown, enhancing its vibrancy while protecting its historic assets and addressing Boston's housing crisis. We look forward to discussing this further at the upcoming public meeting.</p>

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1/15/2025	Tyler	I work Downtown	See below for additional comments	See below for additional comments		The protected bike lanes that connect Washington Street to PO Square and the Greenway are simply not used by bikes; everyday when I walk to Chipotle for lunch I don't see any bikes in the bike lanes. To put up the columns on such a tight street, like Milk Street, is irresponsible and a threat to public safety. Serious consideration needs to be given to taking these out and cutting the City's losses on what is bad public policy. It's not Field of Dreams, if you build bike lanes, people still don't come, and they have a negative effect on local businesses and the safety of pedestrians, particularly in light of all the motorized scooters that roam Downtown Crossing with impunity.	
1/29/2025	Joe	I work Downtown	overall positive but not enough	Increase allowed density on existing parking lots to reduce pressure on redeveloping existing building stock.			Thank you for your comments. The zoning is enabling additional density on several parking sites downtown to encourage more mixed-use development.
1/30/2025	Joseph Borkowski	I work Downtown	Supports desperately needed housing growth	N/A			Thank you for your comment.
1/30/2025	David Hattis	I work Downtown	I believe in transi oriented development. With access to the green line, orange line, red line, blue line, and the silver line, downtown Boston is one of the most transit accessible places in the entire country. There are also an incredible number of nearby jobs. It would be great if more people could live close to transit and close to where they work. I sure would love to be able to walk to my job in downtown crossing. More people in the area will also help local businesses. I know that many restaurants in Chinatown for example are struggling because people don't go into the office as much anymore. If more people live close by, that means more customers for local businesses. Additionally, for Boston to function long term it needs a thriving MBTA, and a thriving MBTA needs riders to supply it with revenue so it is on a better fiscal footing. More people living near MBTA stops will mean more people using the MBTA. In addition, housing affordability is a big issue and a shortage of housing is an important factor that contributes to the lack of affordability. In addition, this proposal will create large numbers of inclusionary affordable units.	I think allowing more height would be beneficial.			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for seeing more housing and greater mix of uses at the center of our transit network.
1/31/2025	Mina	I work Downtown	Mixed use development	N/A	Work for me	Do not let nimbys get in the way	Thank you for your comment.
1/31/2025	Kenneth Hoffman	I work Downtown	More density is purely a positive. Residences are badly needed in the downtown. The post-COVID work environment has left the downtown with a fraction of its former daytime foot traffic.	More residences, more density, always emphasizing the pedestrian experience.			Thank you for your comment.
2/1/2025	Jayne Goethe	I work Downtown	Emphasis on building density, more housing.	We need less regulation that adds expense and time to the development process, which ultimately reduces the number of housing units built or results in higher cost per unit. Cities change. Being precious about historicism will cause delay in remedying a regional housing crisis that will only exacerbate the decline of this region's economic might. Get serious about removing barriers to generating housing and vibrancy downtown. Remove the hurdles and incentivize timely construction. Remove height limits. Add housing!	See above. Remove regulation and speed up approvals process to address housing needs. Consider BERDO reprieve for adding housing. City should go on the offensive and fast track, incentivize building of housing, particularly dense housing.		Thank you for your comments. Updating Downtown use and dimensional regulations is one tool to help enable more density and reduce barriers for housing. The Article 80 Modernization project is also seeking to update our internal and external processes and the Zoning code to help address and respond to the needs of Bostonians and the review of critical projects.

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2/1/2025	Jay Michonski	I work Downtown	I like that this proposal directionally increases the possibility to add more housing density, because it is desperately needed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand Housing Zoning &amp; Incentives                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rezone more areas from SKY-LOW to SKY-R so taller, denser housing projects are possible.</li> <li>Offer height bonuses for mixed-use projects, even if they don't hit the 60% residential threshold.</li> <li>Fast-track approvals for projects that align with housing goals to cut red tape.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Loosen Height and Floor Plate Limits                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase height caps beyond 500 feet where feasible.</li> <li>Ease stepback rules and allow bigger floor plates so buildings can fit more units efficiently.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Give Developers More Flexibility with Historic Buildings                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make it easier to blend new construction with historic facades instead of requiring strict adaptive reuse.</li> <li>Speed up approval for projects that preserve key elements but still add new housing.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Relax Separation &amp; Massing Rules                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shrink the 60-foot separation rule for tall buildings so more housing fits in limited downtown space.</li> <li>Let buildings be longer than 200 feet above stepback height to improve site efficiency.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Ease Restrictions on Mixed-Use Development                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow more flexibility for blending housing with research labs and retail in certain zones.</li> <li>Lift some limits on retail and entertainment spaces to create more vibrant, walkable neighborhoods</li> </ul> </li> </ol>		<p>Boston and Massachusetts as a whole are in the midst of a full-blown housing crisis, driven by a severe shortage of new housing supply. If we don't act aggressively to remove obstacles to development, Boston risks losing its economic vibrancy and pricing out the very workers and families that make the city thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boston is building housing at a much slower rate than in past decades. In the 1970s and 1980s, Boston and the surrounding region produced roughly 5 to 8 housing units per 1,000 residents annually. Today, that number has dropped to around 2 to 3 per 1,000 residents, despite much stronger demand for housing.</li> <li>Boston is falling behind other cities. In 2022, Massachusetts authorized just 2.4 new housing units per 1,000 residents, significantly below the national average of 3.9 and far behind Texas (5.8 per 1,000 residents), where cities like Austin have been more aggressive in increasing housing supply. Austin, and many sunbelt cities have seen negative rent growth over the last 12-18 months due to increasing housing supply. Now compare that to Boston, since 2010, Boston's population has grown by over 100,000 people, yet housing production has lagged far behind, leading to record-high home prices and rents.</li> <li>Rents and home prices are spiraling out of reach. The median rent in Boston is now over \$3,000 per month, and home prices have soared nearly 50% in the past decade, making homeownership unattainable for many residents.</li> <li>Boston risks becoming a city only for the wealthy. If housing shortages persist, lower- and middle-income residents will continue to be priced out, leading to greater inequality and economic stagnation.</li> </ul> <p>If Boston wants to remain an economically competitive and dynamic city, we must make it easier to build housing at all income levels.</p>	Thank you for your comments and for highlighting Boston's critical housing crisis. We have made several changes to the draft zoning based on feedback. Parts of the SKY-district were expanded to help enable more flexibility for mixed-use development. Extra-large retail stores and entertainment/events remain conditional to ensure projects at that large of a scale are evaluated for site-specific impacts, particularly related to loading and pick-up/drop-off activity that may significantly impact the area.
2/2/2025	Helen Warfle	I work Downtown	<p>As a young professional beginning my career in Boston, the severe housing shortage directly impacts my ability to build a future here. The prospect of living closer to employment centers while potentially seeing some relief from astronomical rents through increased housing supply would make an enormous difference in my life and career planning.</p> <p>The proposed Sky-R district, is a step in the right direction. More residents in this area would support local businesses still recovering from pandemic impacts, increase transit ridership, and create a more vibrant downtown environment. Every unit built downtown means one less person competing for housing in other neighborhoods, making this an essential component of addressing our regional housing crisis.</p>	While I appreciate the current proposal's efforts to balance growth with preservation, I urge you to consider even bolder moves to maximize housing production in this transit-rich, opportunity-rich area. I understand the desire to "transition" building heights to the Common, but in, for example, NYC, tall buildings go right up to the parks. This city is in a severe housing crisis, and myself and many other young professionals who work here operate under the assumption that we cannot stay long term because of the cost of housing and any balance between preservation of existing character and allowing for new housing to be built should at least somewhat prioritize the latter.			Thank you for your comments. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including expanding portions of the SKY district to maximize density and flexibility for housing and mixed-use development near transit access.
2/7/2025	Conor Murphy	I work Downtown	We need to build taller in this city. Density is a large factor in neighborhoods feeling lived in and driving economic growth	Zone for even more height and units	We need to build taller and in the core of this city. As a Boston resident who commutes to downtown 5 days a week, this is great progress		Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for more density and growth Downtown.

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2/7/2025	Michael Bond	I work Downtown	Any housing is good housing, we need more of it	More tall buildings! Less height restrictions! Build! Build! Build!	Blocking housing and development in downtown of all places is completely ridiculous. There is a serious housing crisis, and the current federal government is going to be actively hostile to any progress in that front. We need to do all we can to build more housing as quickly and densely as possible to allow for a more equitable city		Thank you for your comments and support for more housing density Downtown. Increased housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform work.
2/7/2025	Gwen Yyrus	I work Downtown	We need more residential areas that allow for more housing	The more housing added the better. Allow tall buildings when allowed, we need more dense areas in the city.			Thank you for your comments and support for more housing density Downtown.
2/7/2025	Robert Seymour	I work Downtown	more density in an area of Boston that could use revitalization	NA	in support		Thank you for your comment and enthusiasm for the zoning.
2/7/2025	Will Queen	I work Downtown	It allows for us to build more residential units in downtown Boston, the ideally area for more high-density housing.	N/a		I support any amendment that allows more large-scale residential building, especially in areas that are already dense like Downtown Crossing.	Thank you for your comments and support for more housing density Downtown.
2/7/2025	Lee Morgan	I work Downtown	Downtown needs more housing to support businesses and create vibrancy. All of Boston needs more housing. Height limits make no sense for the downtown of a major city. This is a real city with real people who need a place to live and work, not a museum.	Nothing, it's an excellent amendment.			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the zoning.
2/8/2025	Mike Zamora	I work Downtown	The new rezoning proposal for taller up to 500 foot residential buildings in downtown crossing	More focus on addressing housing, instead of aesthetics			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the zoning.
2/10/2025	Matthew Engler	I work Downtown	Increased density and height for residential	Expanded area for residential height	It is critical that Boston have the ability for developers to build large residential towers as-of-right in Downtown Boston. The only way to address the affordability crisis in the city is by building our way out of it. Downtown is the most natural location for very tall residential buildings, and these buildings would have the added benefit of helping to re-energize and transform Downtown as it struggles to recover from the changes to the office market post pandemic.	Please don't cave to the narrow self-interest of a small but vocal few who oppose this needed zoning reform. Boston is one of the least affordable cities in the country because NIMBYs have ruled the debate for decade after decade.	Thank you for your comments and support for more housing density Downtown. We look forward to sharing more details on the revised draft and continuing the conversation at the upcoming public meeting.
2/7/2025	Hoang Viet	I work Downtown, I am a student Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I like the Article 31 which allow my favorite building in Boston to exist. I believe the deregulation in zoning will make Boston more unique and better for everyone.	None			Thank you for your comment and enthusiasm for the zoning!
1/31/2025	Charles Reichenbach	I work Downtown, I live in Beacon Hill	I think it's fabulous and a great idea	No changes. Go go go! This is how we relieve housing pressure and ensure a healthy downtown. Folks are scared of change, this is a good idea. Ignore the NIMBYs.	Build as much as possible as tall as possible. I'm surrounded by 10 story buildings. 400' would be just fine. Build the spine!	Keep going!	Thank you for your comment and enthusiasm for the zoning. We look forward to sharing more details on the revised draft and continuing the conversation at the upcoming public meeting.
1/15/2025	Grant Tebeau	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	new housing is great! more density would be amazing for the area and modernization should be a goal	n/a	love it! should be passed		Thank you for your comment. Increased housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform work.
1/15/2025	Regan McCoy	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	More housing, downtown will be more lively	more housing, higher buildings			Thank you for your comment. Increased housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform work.
1/17/2025	John Wilton	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I love increasing height and density to allow more people to live here.	It does not cover the entire City and eliminate height and density restrictions to the outer neighborhoods.	Looks Great	I support the proposed map and zoning amendment. This process has been ongoing for several years and the City has been receptive to comments. Please implement this quickly.	Thank you for your comment. This is a start and increased housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform work.
1/30/2025	Chris Friend	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	the increased opportunities to build much needed housing and office space downtown	remove any height limits and restrictions on percentage residential. it's downtown! it can have offices.	design guidelines are unnecessary and unhelpful and should be abolished entirely		Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for mixed-use growth Downtown. Design guidelines help establish key design expectations for projects, especially in dense areas like Downtown, where activating the ground floor and its impact on the public realm are crucial.
1/30/2025	katie calandrello	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	Increases in density	More business to residential conversions	Thank you helping increase downtown densities!		Thank you for your comments. We're working to increase office to residential conversion and recently expanded the program to include student and workforce housing!

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1/30/2025	Daniel Bisers	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	Additional capacity to add residential units	I would like to see more capacity to add residential units. Shadows are a less important concern than housing scarcity, which has caused unaffordable rents and homelessness.	Please increase the height limit to the FAA max in all areas, with modest step backs or required wind screening.		Thank you for your comment supporting more housing downtown. State shadow regulations and Logan Airport Critical Airpace supersede zoning, but the majority of the area is mapped as SKY district, maximizing portential for mixed-use development.
1/31/2025	Micah Sachs	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	Increased housing supply	Nothing			Thank you for your comment.
2/1/2025	Chris Vaughan	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	<p>I write to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment, though I believe we could be even bolder in our approach to revitalizing downtown Boston.</p> <p>As a resident who cares deeply about our city's future, I'm particularly focused on the need for increased residential density in our downtown core. The proposed Sky-R district is a step in the right direction, requiring 60% residential use for additional height allowances west of Washington Street. However, we could go further. Downtown Boston has unparalleled access to transit, employment opportunities, and cultural amenities – precisely the type of location where we should be maximizing housing development. The current housing crisis demands ambitious solutions, and downtown has the infrastructure to support significantly more residents than currently proposed.</p>	<p>While I appreciate the attention to historic preservation and contextual design guidelines, I believe we must balance these considerations with the urgent need to create more housing. Our downtown establishments – from restaurants to theaters – are still recovering from pandemic-related changes in work patterns. A larger residential population would help sustain these businesses while creating a more vibrant, 24/7 neighborhood. More housing downtown would also reduce pressure on other neighborhoods and support our sustainability goals by enabling more people to live within walking distance of jobs and amenities.</p>		I strongly support allowing more density, particularly to allow for more residential building, in the downtown.	Thank you for your comments and support for more housing at the center of our transit network.
2/1/2025	Benjamin Benson	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	Downtown already has the densest infrastructure in the city - if we utilize some of this area for housing it could exponentially increase the housing stock in Boston without the potential pushback to upcoming often seen in less dense neighborhoods.	I would like to see the amount of potential housing maximized - this will help increase affordability in Boston while also bringing even more economic activity downtown.		As a commuter who travels through downtown daily, I'd like to see increased funding for the T to allow for more frequent trains and more reliable schedules, in order to accommodate more residents and reduce crowding during peak hours.	Thank you for your comments and support for more housing at the center of our transit network.
2/1/2025	Eileen Huang	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	<p>I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown, particularly its focus on creating more housing opportunities. As someone who works in Chinatown at Tufts University, I see firsthand how critical it is to maintain and enhance the vibrancy of our downtown neighborhoods.</p> <p>I especially support residential development through additional height allowances, which addresses our region's housing crisis while preserving the historic character of cultural areas like Chinatown.</p> <p>More housing downtown would strengthen our immigrant communities and support local businesses that are still recovering from the pandemic's impact. With excellent access to public transportation and proximity to employment centers, downtown housing will allow more people to live where they work and contribute to a more sustainable, walkable city.</p>	n/a			Thank you for taking the time to comment! We believe this revised draft will help enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood while addressing Boston's housing needs. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
2/2/2025	Braeden Meandro	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I like the respect of the shadow law and the setback requirement. I appreciate the emphasis on maintaining the character of the neighborhood while also trying to increase density. Rezoning the area for denser residential use would be beneficial to all of Boston.	I like the plan as is and would be open to pushing the shadow law to its boundary with respect to increasing density / height.			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the zoning.

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2/2/2025	Aidan O'Keefe	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	New development is badly needed in Downtown Boston and will bring increased foot traffic and economic opportunities for businesses in the area. More housing supply should be built Downtown, especially due to the abundance of public transit options.	Nothing			Thank you for your comments and support for more housing density Downtown.
2/2/2025	Robert Kearns	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	Think we need more housing downtown and more dense residential to support small businesses and build neighborhoods downtown.	More density for housing. No car minimum.		Believe more housing will support the economy, renters like me and small businesses	Thank you for your comments and support for more housing density Downtown.
2/2/2025	Devin Matte	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I'm happy to see improvements in zoning to allow more height and more density. I want downtown to feel more vibrant and busy when I'm there. For that we need tons more housing and things to do downtown.	I would like to see more properties upzoned so that we can ensure an even larger number of people can live downtown. Expanding the Boston Skyline should be seen as a huge positive			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the zoning.
2/3/2025	Franklin Soultis	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I like that they are trying to creatively think about extending usages for downtown in the post-pandemic, work-from-home culture that has decimated traditional business districts.	Though I approve of creative reuse, the proposed height limits of 500 feet would completely obliterate the nature of the region and would seem to exacerbate the threats posed by climate change.	It seems wilful for these to go forward in the face of almost unanimous public opposition at well-attended meetings.	I have also sent a letter expressing my opposition to various officials.	Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns. We have made changes to the draft based on the feedback received during the public process. Notably, we have eliminated the SKY-R district and expanded the SKY-LOW-D district to better preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including Washington Street and the area around the Old South Meeting House.
2/4/2025	Gabriela Baierle	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I love that it promotes more housing options in downtown, bringing much needed vibrancy to the neighborhood. Bringing housing downtown is critical for the livability and character of the neighborhood.	I would love to see more encouragement for diverse unit types: more units that can accommodate families (3bed-2bath), more affordable units, and co-housing options all are worthy of feasibility studies.	I fully support incentivizing housing construction.		Thank you for your comments.
2/7/2025	Travis Drake	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	More density and more housing are desperately needed in Massachusetts.	I would like to see all zoning removed in the city center. No parking minimums, no affordable housing requirements, no way for NIMBYS to block much needed housing. Let developers build so more of us can afford to live and work downtown.		Please do not make this your only point of contact for people to express feedback. Voters in the state are much more YIMBY than NIMBY, but the YIMBYS tend to be people who are very busy with work, raising families, or going to school. The people you need to drive economic prosperity in the state want density, and they want housing.	Thank you for your comments.
2/7/2025	Michael Marolda	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I would like to see more density and height in downtown Boston.	I would like to see greater height and density than the proposed amendment.			Thank you for your comments.
2/7/2025	Michael Tracey	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I strongly agree with higher density zoning especially for residential uses as laid out in the zoning amendment. I also appreciate the preservation of historic facades and like the creative solution of allowing additions on top of existing facades.	Nothing at this time			Thank you for your comments.
2/7/2025	Dainius Kerikas	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I like the focus on housing growth and mixed use economic development.	I like it as is. Maybe some additional focus on the many transit options in the area.	More housing and small mixed use business development is a great idea for this walkable, transit connected area. Would love more reasons to visit downtown.		Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood while addressing Boston's housing needs.
2/7/2025	Trent Parker	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	The fact that it allows for more mixed use and housing construction, although the height restrictions severely hamper the benefits Downtown could receive.	Remove all height restrictions to allow for more housing and commercial space downtown. Reduce surface parking requirements and expand sidewalks. Allow for mixed use zoning in all of downtown.		More density, taller buildings and housing!	Thank you for your comments and support for mixed-use growth Downtown! We believe it's important to strike a thoughtful balance between preserving the character and scale of Downtown's historic areas and encouraging new, dense development, particularly near transit. Together, these approaches can help make Downtown a more vibrant and welcoming place to live, work, and visit. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and continuing the conversation at the upcoming public meeting.

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2/7/2025	Andrea Cologgi	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I like that it improves the zoning to be more flexible and mixed use which should open up housing options which Boston sorely needs while also making the amenities that people rely on more accessible. I especially like that it will consider relaxing height regulations and increasing density into this. Vertical planning is a huge opportunity that American cities in general have not taken advantage of that countries like Asia for example already do extremely well. Boston could lead by example and change what urban planning looks like for a better more livable and profitable city for all of us.	I recognize that there are still economic challenges to be faced with the loss of business occupying the office spaces in Boston. I hope that these shortfalls can be addressed in a way doesn't simply signal a return to outdated models.			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the zoning. We look forward to sharing more details on a revised draft and continuing the conversation at the upcoming public meeting.
2/7/2025	Vinnie Damace no	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	The respect it pays to fine balance between modern and America's history.	Build even taller.			Thank you for your comments.
2/7/2025	Jameson brown	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I like that more uses are by right allowed	Article 23, about off street parking. Off street parking should never be required downtown. It shouldn't be forbidden either.  There should not be a maximum floor area ratio anywhere downtown.			Thank you for your comment. There are no parking minimums for projects Downtown, and the zoning eliminates floor area ratio as a requirement.
2/7/2025	Daniel Houwen	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	Actual action on modernizing land use, and increasing density, alleviating the cost-of-living crisis.	Less deference to the loudest, most negative voices -- it's a good idea for the city, especially those of us with less time/ability to voice our opinions in community meetings.			Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the zoning.
2/8/2025	Brian Hickey	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	Large scale residential development is key to becoming a better city	Incentivize more smaller density homes	I approve of any attempt to build more.	We currently have the 93rd tallest building in the USA at 200 Clarendon. We can't be thought of as one of the top cities if we don't have a shining jewel that can make this city stand out. We need to build taller.	Thank you for your comments.
2/11/2025	Logan Nash	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I'm excited about the proposed new housing for the SKY-R district especially. I love working and visiting downtown Boston, but the lack of residents can make it feel deserted especially on evenings and weekends, and sometimes that emptiness can make it feel unsafe. More dense housing as-of-right would bring in new residents, enabling more activity and more interesting businesses to open.	No major suggested changes. I think wherever zoning could be "as of right" in this code would be great. Like most people, I'm busy and although I care about downtown and more housing in the region I don't have time to attend meetings or even fill out forms like this very often, let alone for each individual project that gets proposed.	I really support the effort to allow more buildings -- especially residential buildings -- at a high density and as-of-right. Downtown needs the increased housing and activity, and it's one of only a handful of places in all of New England with the transit and service level to support this level of new housing. I understand some downtown residents are opposed to allowing this kind of development, but downtown is a space that belongs to everyone. The lack of activity and safety affects thousands of workers like me, and visitors. The lack of housing supply makes the entire state and New England region more expensive. Downtown is a national asset -- allowing it to have more housing and more activity and more safety will benefit thousands of people around the region and the country who do not have time to attend public meetings and fill out a form.	There are hundreds of quaint and historical small towns in New England. But there is really only one urban downtown, and that's downtown Boston. I'm excited about this zoning because it embraces that identity as a place of activity, change, and growth.	Thank you for your comments and support for more housing density Downtown.

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2/11/2025	Maddie & Zack DeClerck	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	<p><b># Benefits from the Proposed Downtown Zoning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotes additional growth in Downtown, the economic hub of the Commonwealth, while still respecting the historic nature of many of its streets and its wealth of important historic landmarks.</li> <li>- Creates predictable, easily understood dimensional requirements for future projects in downtown.</li> <li>- The proposed dimensional rules are tailored to require that new buildings fit in with the existing fabric and do not overwhelm important public spaces or historic buildings.</li> <li>- Incentivizes housing!</li> <li>Proposes the creation of a new district (Sky-R) that incentivizes new housing production by allowing additional height in a small strip of properties west of Washington Street and one block south of the Boston Common that have at least 60% residential use. This means new height can only be used to make housing that our region desperately needs. More housing, even luxury housing, means less competition for units elsewhere in the city.</li> <li>- This new zone provides a transition from Downtown's tallest towers to the lower zone along the Boston Common</li> <li>- Non-housing projects are limited to a lower height to respect their historic neighbors. Previously much of the area now proposed to become the Sky-R district was slated to be in the Sky district, which would have allowed much taller and larger buildings of non-residential uses.</li> <li>- A change to the way building size is controlled will significantly expand Downtown's capacity for new housing, especially in the Financial District.</li> <li>- Incentivizes the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.</li> <li>- A proposed new provision would make it easier to convert and re-use existing buildings for housing.</li> <li>- Formalizes in city zoning the Boston Common Shadow Law which was written to protect the Commonwealth's most cherished public space. All projects, regardless of their zoning, must comply with state laws that limit the amount of shadow cast on the Boston Common and Public Garden.</li> <li>- Encourages new projects to respect their context.</li> <li>- Provides additional historic context design guidelines so that new projects respect their existing neighbors.</li> <li>- Eligible projects will still be required to go through the intensive Article 80 process with city development and design review staff.</li> </ul>	<p><b>**The Plan Could Do More**</b></p> <p>While the Planning Department is headed in the right direction, there are some changes that could further housing growth Downtown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The current draft will require any project that takes advantage of the new height bonus to complete Small Project Review, regardless of project size. Substituting Small Project Review for Large Project review is an excellent incentive for projects over 50,000 square feet, but many sites can't fit buildings of that size. Please consider creating a completely as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet.</li> <li>- Making residential uses of 9 units or less conditional sets a dangerous zoning precedent for expansion across the City and is in direct opposition to Governor Healey's intent for transit-oriented housing expansion in the surrounding MBTA communities. Making any category of residential uses conditional is fundamentally anti-growth and will likely block all incremental growth to small residential buildings Downtown looking for modest expansion, specifically in the Broad Street area and Ladder Blocks where lots are small.</li> <li>- There will be a measurable impact on Boston's housing availability if college dormitory rooms or hotel rooms are in short supply. The City has taken huge policy steps to regulate short-term rentals and expand dormitory construction, thanks to the Mayor. Changing "College or University Use" and "Hotel - Large" uses to conditional may undermine this work and give folks who oppose development leverage to stop projects Downtown at the Zoning Board of Appeal.</li> </ul>	<p><b># Benefits from more housing downtown</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Downtown is rich in transit, public space, employment, and cultural resources. We want more people in Downtown. More housing downtown means more people and pedestrians downtown.</li> <li>- More customers for downtown shops, restaurants, museums, and theaters helping to repair the damage done by the economic turmoil of the COVID-19 pandemic and the loss of downtown workers to work-from-home.</li> <li>- More people within walking and biking distance of Downtown's many offices and employers.</li> <li>- More people commuting via public transportation, not cars.</li> <li>- More people enjoying Downtown's world class public spaces and parks.</li> <li>- More people enjoying and learning about Downtown's landmarks, some of the most important landmarks in American history.</li> <li>- The Commonwealth is in the midst of an unprecedented housing crisis. Every corner of the state and every neighborhood in the city will be needed to solve this problem. More housing downtown means less competition for housing in the city's other neighborhoods. This is a housing justice and equity issue.</li> </ul>	<p>Dear City of Boston Planning Department,</p> <p>I'm writing to express my strong support for the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment, while also sharing some concerns about our city's future. As parents raising our children in Boston, we worry about whether they'll be able to afford to stay in the only home they've known when they grow up.</p> <p>The proposed changes offer promising steps forward, particularly the expanded housing capacity in the Financial District and incentives for adaptive reuse of existing buildings. I'm especially encouraged by the Sky-R district proposal allowing additional height for predominantly residential developments. However, I believe the plan could be more ambitious. The requirement for conditional use approval for projects under 9 units could stifle the incremental growth we desperately need. Additionally, conditioning college and large hotel uses may inadvertently complicate efforts to expand student housing and regulate short-term rentals.</p> <p>Downtown Boston, with its unparalleled transit access and cultural significance, is ideally positioned to help address our housing crisis. As Cambridge demonstrates with its recent citywide zoning reforms, bold action is possible. Downtown belongs to all of us - it's where we work, gather, and celebrate our city's heritage. By enabling more people to live there, we can create a more vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive Boston while preserving opportunities for future generations.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Maddie &amp; Zack DeClerck</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the zoning. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. The 20,000 sq. ft. design review threshold remains in place to ensure that project designs relate to their context and help enhance the character of downtown. Universities are regulated by Institutional Master Plans that ensure that university uses enhance the area and that their expansion occurs thoughtfully and transparently. Large hotel uses are conditional in the draft zoning to allow for the evaluation of site-specific impacts, particularly related to loading and pick-up/drop-off activity that may impact this pedestrian-first environment.</p>
2/11/2025	Scott Faber	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I like that it encourages a more vibrant and modern setting for downtown Boston	no changes			Thank you for your comment.
2/11/2025	Carlos Febres-Mazzei	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	Activate blighted streets and storefronts, bring more 24-hour population to Downtown.	More emphasis on mixed use spaces including amenities and destination entertainment and recreational uses. Outdoor space including public realm and pocket parks.	I am supportive of density that offers revitalization and increases daytime and 24-hour population.		Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood while addressing Boston's housing needs.

**Online Survey Responses**

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1/16/2025	HARRY JOHNSTON	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown, I go to church Downtown & shop there- I am there 6 or 7 days a week.	I love the zoning going to 500 feet. Downtown needs thousands of apartment units so workers will be able to live Downtown instead of commuting hours-this will also reduce the number of cars on the road. Downtown Crossing is dying with so many empty store fronts with homeless people living in front. You have to build higher to establish population density which will support stores and restaurants and bring the are to life and bring it much needed tax revenue and jobs.	I would like to see this plan pass asap and if buildings can be higher than 500 feet- so much the better.	Overall the plan is great. Development is always opposed in Boston for many reasons ( I went to meetings were most people opposed Millennium Place, Millennium Tower & Winthrop Center ) everything that has been built has been an asset to the city. Downtown Crossing has so many empty buildings this plan has to go forward. Newbury Street & The Seaport are booming-Downtown Crossing is turning into a ghost town.	Boston is very anti-development-this needs to change-otherwise Downtown Boston will continue to head down hill. This is a good plan that needs to go forward asap.	Thank you for your comments and for highlighting the need for and benefits of additional housing Downtown.
1/27/2025	Kenneth D. Dietz	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown, Travel to and from downtown, shopping and transit hubs, and access to harbor front	As long as the existing historic buildings and facades are protected and newer buildings take 2nd seat. We dont need another souless Seaport "supposed and promised to be a neighborhood" which will never happen now. Diversity in use and housing needs to include aging in place, the traffic plans and alternative auto-less options honestly only work with a population under 70 y/o. The addition of grocery, pharmacy and other necessary businesses need to be advanced to support your expected residency. We dont need more overpriced skyscrpaers that remain less than fully occupied, and too expensive for average families.	Smaller Sky zones AND Sky zones with max heights of 400' or less, more Sky-R biuldings that incorporate historic facades with small businesses, restaurants, neighborhood establishments and vendors, outdoor spaces connecting downtown to water front. All new or mstly new renovations of residential and commerical buildings need to be require and held to minimum autoand transportaion storage (garage units), no more deals and trade-offs to developers for a nickle size landscaped "park" instead of providing more garage space.	Much better than the first round of plans; remember always reduce the intial design as in general it is overzealous and out of touch with the common good and health of a urban center	Again, first step should always be a default usage of existing and historicl buildings for renovations and reuse; only then should demo and new construction be considered. We dont need more off a faceless Boston like the Seaport, Please lets keep the architectural history and neighborhoods alive and allow Boston to remain unique and Boston, not another overbuilt urban environment that could be any unprotected city center without any reference to its history and heritage. Focus on less Luxury Living buildings, and overbuilt, lifeless, empty commercial foyers at street level, all inaccessible to general public and use	Thank you for your comments. The draft zoning creates an incentive for the reuse or and additions to existing buildings, supporting the ongoing Office-to-Residential Conversion program. While the program is one key tool to both preserve existing buildings and meet sustainability goals, it has shown that adaptive reuse alone cannot create the much-needed housing downtown, including substantial affordable rental units for the City that would be required of larger projects. Article 80 development review will assess the project's impacts on the public realm and transportation network, and enforce new design guidelines for the Downtown area. These guidelines help ensure that new development responds to its historic context.
1/29/2025	Chelsea Blanchard	I work Downtown, I work downtown for OHP and live within the city.	I am very unhappy with the proposed heights of development in the downtown Washington Street corridor.	Please limit heights in all downtown areas. Please enforce a new overlay district in the downtown area which would require the Boston Landmarks Commission to perform binding design review on all projects - similar to NDOD reviews in the neighborhoods. This would give a preservation-minded review of new developments. Boston's historic resources deserve that type of consideration.	The City of Boston Planning Department should be required to fund a comprehensive survey round for all of downtown, which would link with the BLC's current proposal for a city-wide survey. This piece of zoning should be paused until that type of mitigation is enforced. If the Planning Department could budget for this type of comprehensive survey, it would go a long way to identifying and protecting downtown buildings.	Please include the BLC in all of your downtown planning efforts. We have expertise that is not always considered in Planning Department initiatives.	Thank you for your comment and feedback throughout the PLANL Downtown process. We collaborated with the Office of Historic Preservation to incorporate several changes into the new zoning draft based on feedback. We were also excited to work with BLC staff on the Downtown Historic Context Design Guidelines, which outline expectations for conducting context analysis, utilizing survey resources, and proactively engaging with BLC staff for new projects.
2/13/2025	Andrew Barsom	I often visit Downtown	More density creates more units and adds to housing and commercial stock in the Boston area. We desperately need to encourage greater density everywhere in the area. Downtown crossing is within a couple blocks of access to every T line, as well as walking distance to North and South Station. It would be insane not to make this area as high density as possible.	Even more density. Taller the better.			Thank you for taking the time to comment. We believe this revised draft will help enable Downtown to grow as a vibrant and inclusive neighborhood while addressing Boston's housing needs.
2/14/2025	Andrew Zimmerman	I work Downtown	I like the focus on residential and the massive incentive in height given to residential buildings in the SKY-R district.	Stop, stop stop being afraid of height. Loosen height restrictions up to the FAA max. Boston continues to be a second tier city globally in part because its parochial sensibilities limit investment and building height. Stop.	I like some aspects especially the push for residential uses. I welcome the 500' incentive for residential but if that height can never be achieved because of shadow laws then it is meaningless. I think the plan should map the effective height limit of Sky-R parcels so we can better understand what the potential is.		Thank you for your comment and enthusiasm for the zoning. We made changes based on feedback and will note the approximate height limit based on State Shadow Regulations. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
2/15/2025	Joshua Lewis	I often visit Downtown, Spouse works Downtown	creating housing opportunities	Allow for 500 ft buildings to help promote housing (which is needed) - these days types of buildings in...Downtown...with other tall buildings...only makes sense :)			Thank you for your comment and enthusiasm for the zoning.
2/18/2025	Andrew Wiley	I often visit Downtown	The height allowed for new buildings.	Even taller/bigger buildings to be allowed.	I like the increased height allowed, and am disappointed by the residents who don't see that their NIMBYism is what prevents rents from stabilizing across the region.	Please hold strong to the 500' allowance for new residential buildings. We need all the units we can get!	Thank you for your comment and enthusiasm for the zoning. Please continue to participate. We look forward to sharing more details at the upcoming public meeting.

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2/20/2025	Graham Lowe	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I love that it is reframing development to encourage more housing production. I think streamlining the approval of buildings with additional housing, in Downtown where we (post-COVID) have a mix of too much commercial and not enough residential. That doesn't suit modern demand and the neighborhood would benefit if more housing was built. It is so transportation connected it could be very eco friendly as well.	More as-of-right pathways requiring no additional approvals, expansion of what would fit into Small Project Review or other limited processes. More expedited approvals for school purposes/student housing. Hotel conditional of 50 keys set too low, we need more hotels too!	Fewer/more permissive design guidelines better. Let's give architects the space they need to create beautiful spaces.		Thank you for your comments and support for more housing density Downtown. While the zoning creates more flexibility and density for growth, it includes key review measures to ensure that projects are still evaluated for how they fit in their context, particularly in terms of their impact on the public realm. This includes making large hotels conditional, to allow for the evaluation of site-specific impacts, particularly related to loading and pick-up/drop-off activity that may impact this pedestrian-first environment. Universities are regulated by Institutional Master Plans that ensure that university uses enhance the area and that their expansion occurs thoughtfully and transparently.
2/20/2025	Ryan Forgione	I live Downtown, I work Downtown	Removes zoning restrictions and encourages residential density.	Allowed heights should be higher. There should be no restrictions on height other than the state shadow law and the FAA height restrictions.	Overall I support the amendment.		Thank you for your comments. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including making a clearer balance between lower SKY-LOW-D and higher SKY districts.
2/21/2025	Isaac	I live Downtown, I work Downtown	There is enough density and height to meaningfully address the housing shortage and create the critical mass needed to revitalize downtown. In fact, even greater height and density should be considered, with limitations based only on shadows and FAA regulations—not the opposition of a small group of community members. The reality is that most of the city supports more housing and activation. The existing buildings have outlived their usefulness and should be treated accordingly—conversions are not the solution.	There could be even more height and density, limited only by shadows and FAA regulations	There could be even more height and density, limited only by shadows and FAA regulations	Don't let a small group of unhappy, old community members dictate the city's future. Beyond adjusting height limits based only on shadows over the Common and FAA regulations, the plan is ready to move forward	Thank you for your comments. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including making a clearer balance between lower SKY-LOW-D and higher SKY districts.
2/21/2025	Karin Pawluk	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I support more housing and vibrancy downtown. We are a major city, downtown should be busy and fun.	more housing			Thank you for your comments and for highlighting the need for more housing Downtown.
2/21/2025	Kristine	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More customers for downtown shops, restaurants, museums, and theaters helping to repair the damage done by the economic turmoil of the COVID-19 pandemic and the loss of downtown workers to work-from-home.</li> <li>- More people within walking and biking distance of Downtown's many offices and employers.</li> <li>- More people commuting via public transportation, not cars.</li> <li>- More people enjoying Downtown's world class public spaces and parks.</li> <li>- More people enjoying and learning about Downtown's landmarks, some of the most important landmarks in American history.</li> </ul>	Making residential uses of 9 units or less conditional sets a dangerous zoning precedent for expansion across the City and is in direct opposition to Governor Healey's intent for transit-oriented housing expansion in the surrounding MBTA communities. Making any category of residential uses conditional is fundamentally anti-growth and will likely block all incremental growth to small residential buildings Downtown looking for modest expansion, specifically in the Broad Street area and Ladder Blocks where lots are small.	I have the same concern with Hotels over 50 keys becoming conditional. I've heard rumors this is because the SEIU and trade unions want a pathway to stop nonunionized projects at ZBA. While I definitely support a unionized workforce, the City has a huge shortage compared to the demand for hotel rooms, and we know that means more executive suites and dorm conversion, something the Mayor studied as a councilor. NYC did something similar, which exacerbated their hotel room shortage (honestly, I don't know enough about NYC to speak with authority, I've just heard that from another planner).		<p>Thank you for your comments and enthusiasm for the zoning. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional</p> <p>Large hotel uses are conditional in the draft zoning to allow for the evaluation of site-specific impacts, particularly related to loading and pick-up/drop-off activity that may impact this pedestrian-first environment.</p>
2/22/2025	Kimberly Kennedy	I often visit Downtown	I like that it incentivizes housing. We need more units built in the Boston area. I also like that the Downtown Crossing part of the plan mentions the support of active ground floors. Bromfield Street in particular could use some attention.	None			Thank you for your comments. Please stay involved as the process continues. This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address our housing crisis!
2/22/2025	Ben Coderre	I often visit Downtown	I like the prioritization of housing. Every rule in the book should be examined for its impact on housing supply, and any deflationary pressures should require very high justifications. The best thing Boston could do for itself is unleash its latent potential. Boston ought to be a national powerhouse, not New York's baby sister. As crazy as it sounds, Boston could see near double digit growth in its economy if it were not so disastrously throttled by high housing costs.	I am not an expert, so I will not propose an alternative, but I really hope the the facade requirements and "Improved dimensional regulations to further regulate form" have strong justifications. It is a luxury to kneecap new development for petty aesthetic concerns, one that we perhaps cannot afford.	The verbiage on the PLAN website is not as aggressive as I would like to see. In the five year period described, the board has "Reviewed" "Evaluated" "Assessed" and "Proposed". Those seem like awfully passive steps in the pursuit of real change in affordability and the dream for downtown. Cautious agendas get nothing done, they waste time. I think we are finished with cautious agendas.		Thank you for your comments and engagement in the process. The dimensional regulations help ensure large projects incorporate massing changes that reduce negative wind impacts on the public realm.

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2/23/2025	Grace Fletcher	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	Sky-R district allowing additional height for residential use and expanded housing capacity in the Financial District. The formalization of the Boston Common Shadow Law.	Create a completely as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet and remove barriers to smaller developments. The conditional use restriction on housing projects with nine units or less should be removed, as it could hinder incremental growth in areas with smaller lots.			Thank you for your comments. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional.
2/23/2025	Charles Denison	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	It allows for more a lot housing downtown	I don't think any big changes are needed to the proposed zoning amendment	Please try to include as much guidance that encourages preservation of historic buildings and facades, as well as design guidance for new buildings that results in buildings that blend in well with the historic architecture. Try to discourage large flat glass walls as much as possible.	I'm in favor of adding density throughout downtown, particularly more housing, since we have a huge housing shortage and downtown is the perfect place to go big, while preserving and respecting our historic buildings and architecture as much as possible. Please also provide through zoning more car-free spaces, outdoor dining opportunities, and ways to limit through traffic to ensure that downtown is pleasant, appealing, and livable.	Thank you for your comments. The Downtown Design Guidelines outline how projects should enhance and respect surrounding buildings and the public realm.
2/25/2025	Kathleen Evarts	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	<p>As a Boston resident who works downtown, I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment, which represent crucial steps toward addressing our city's housing crisis. Living in Dorchester, I've witnessed firsthand how limited housing options affect our communities, pushing young professionals, families, and longtime residents out of the neighborhoods they call home.</p> <p>The proposed changes offer thoughtful solutions that will benefit our entire city. The new Sky-R district's allowance for additional height in areas with substantial residential use is particularly promising, as it will significantly expand housing capacity in the Financial District. I'm also encouraged by the incentives for adaptive reuse of existing buildings and the implementation of historic context design guidelines, which will help preserve Boston's unique character while accommodating growth. These changes will create vibrant, accessible neighborhoods where more people can live near jobs, transit, and amenities.</p>	I urge the Planning Department to strengthen these amendments further. Creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet would streamline development of much-needed housing. Additionally, the conditional use restriction on projects with 9 units or less should be removed, as it could hinder incremental growth in areas with smaller lots. By addressing these concerns, we can ensure the amendments fully support housing production while maintaining Boston's distinctive urban fabric. The time to act boldly on housing is now, and these zoning changes represent an important opportunity to create a more inclusive and accessible Boston.			Thank you for your comments. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional.
2/25/2025	Matthew Dailey	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I like that the amendment is encouraging more building density.	I would like to see the amendment to allow for taller buildings so even more housing units can be built.			Thank you for your comments. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including expanding portions of the SKY district to maximize density and flexibility for housing and mixed-use development near transit access.
2/25/2025	Kirill Shklovsky	I often visit Downtown	I like it encouraging new housing!	I think we shouldn't have any height limits. Let them build!			Thank you for your comments.

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3/1/2025	Zach Shapiro	I often visit Downtown	Incentivizes housing. My wife and I moved to the suburbs but would have much rather stayed living in Boston if housing wasn't so insanely expensive. And this is coming from two working professionals with an income well above the state average.	<p>Right now, the draft proposal requires any project using the new height bonus to go through Small Project Review, no matter how small the project is. While this makes sense as an incentive for projects over 50,000 square feet (since it replaces the more burdensome Large Project Review), many sites simply can't accommodate buildings that big. There should be a completely as-of-right approval pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet to encourage more small-scale development. Let's make it easy to build housing! We should be</p> <p>Remove making residential buildings of 9 units or fewer conditional. It directly contradicts Governor Healey's push for transit-oriented housing and could block all modest, incremental growth in small residential buildings Downtown—especially in areas like Broad Street and the Ladder Blocks, where lot sizes are already small. Any policy that makes residential growth harder to achieve is fundamentally anti-housing. Boston should be leading on the housing crisis!</p>			Thank you for your comments. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. Projects greater than 20,000 sf must only go through the design component of Small Project Review to ensure alignment with Downtown's Design Guidelines, especially for how projects impact and activate the public realm.
3/1/2025	Tyler Swanson	I often visit Downtown	Additional height allowed to buildings in the downtown core.	Less restrictive zoning in terms of height and project size.	<p>Dear City of Boston Planning Department,</p> <p>I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment. As a Brighton resident who works downtown, I see firsthand how the area becomes vacant after business hours. More housing in this vibrant, transit-rich neighborhood would transform it into a 24/7 community while addressing our city's housing shortage.</p> <p>The proposed changes make significant strides toward creating a more dynamic downtown. The new Sky-R district, which allows additional height for predominantly residential projects, is particularly promising. I appreciate how the plan balances growth with context-sensitive design through predictable dimensional requirements and historic context guidelines. These changes will help ensure new development enhances rather than overwhelms the neighborhood's character. The formalization of the Boston Common Shadow Law in city zoning also demonstrates a thoughtful approach to preserving our public spaces.</p>	<p>However, I believe the plan could go further to facilitate housing production. The conditional use restriction on projects with 9 units or fewer seems unnecessarily restrictive and could prevent small-scale development on smaller lots. I urge you to remove this limitation. Additionally, creating a completely as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet would streamline the development process for modest-sized buildings. These adjustments would help maximize the plan's potential to address our housing crisis while maintaining appropriate safeguards for neighborhood character.</p> <p>Sincerely, Tyler Swanson</p>	Thank you for your comments. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. Projects exceeding 20,000 square feet would only undergo the design review component of Small Project Review to ensure alignment with Downtown's Design Guidelines, particularly in terms of how projects impact and activate the public realm.

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3/1/2025	Coralie Schwartz	I live Downtown	<p>Not much, only the idea of Revitalizing the area. But shameful way to go about it</p>	<p>Everything is to be changed:                      -Return to prior height agreement agreed upon and valid until this new plan being shoved in a hurry. Current residents bought in good faith based on the agreement, as part of desire to revitalize the downtown, spending a lot to purchase, patronizing the stores/restaurants/venues and paying a huge amount of property taxes. And outsiders now want to erase the plan in place to replace unique historical buildings with glass towers, which certainly will never be "affordable housing".                      It is a deceiving move from the City to throw away the prior consensus, and current residents will never have faith again neither the process, not in a safe place to invest.</p> <p>-Refusal to cave in to developers who bought and sat on properties to manipulate the City, letting the downtown decay and now push for high rises which don't belong there. The City should have let them buy under the condition to develop/rent within 3 years to avoid the current void and rents that stores can not afford.                      -Urgent need to save a precious architectural heritage, rather than let another downtown become indistinguishable from thousands of others, keep the current human scale and not pretend to incorporate the unique historical facades like in a Disney park. Visitors and residents will not be interested to come here or visit if these buildings are erased or dwarfed by 500ft glass towers.                      Once the scale/facades are lost, it is forever.</p> <p>All the residents would support renovations like the ones that were done on the Godfrey hotel or by Emerson college, to be commended for their beautiful conversions. The same could be done on Washington street to turn many of these into affordable apartments, in a place where people want to live, not in a glass wind tunnel.</p> <p>Has the team working on this proposal walked in the business district recently? Haven't they noticed how unfriendly, empty and cold the place is? Why not repurpose these empty building instead, regaining the space if repurposing is not feasible? (also very close to mass transit) Let's fix that area with tall glass towers but don't ruin another one just because developers with lots of money are pushing for it. Instead, aim at a low height attractive neighborhood on Washington street where new residents who don't want/can't afford luxury condo can buy and live, appreciating the scale and feel.</p>	<p>Shocking to see such a sudden overriding of a prior agreement that we trusted and led us to invest. NO explanation about the sudden changes, makes us very suspicious                      No thought given to keeping a human scale to places to make them more livable                      No thought given on density/parking</p>	<p>Amateurish plan with lots of "we will see", "TBD"'s                      Feels like the City planning is controlled by wealthy developers, caving to their pressure as they were too happy to see the neighborhood limp along, waiting to pounce and push for what is going to line their pockets.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns. We extended the public comment period to review additional feedback and continue to meet with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. Based on feedback, we have made changes to the draft, taking steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.</p>

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3/1/2025	Nick Block	I often visit Downtown	Density in downtown makes sense.	More housing.	Dear City of Boston Planning Department,  I support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment because increasing density in downtown Boston is a logical approach to addressing our housing needs. Downtown already has the infrastructure, transit access, and amenities to support more residents. Building more housing in this area will maximize existing resources while creating vibrant, walkable neighborhoods.	The proposed changes make important strides by expanding housing capacity in the Financial District and creating predictable requirements for new construction. However, I believe the plan could go further to achieve its goals. Specifically, I encourage the Planning Department to create an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet and remove the conditional use restriction on housing projects with nine units or less. These modifications would eliminate unnecessary barriers to the incremental growth we need. The current limitations could set concerning precedents that hinder housing development, particularly on smaller lots where modest density increases would be appropriate. By making these adjustments, we can better ensure that downtown Boston evolves into a more accessible, sustainable neighborhood that serves residents of all backgrounds.  Sincerely,  Nick Block	Thank you for your comments. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. Projects exceeding 20,000 square feet would only undergo the design review component of Small Project Review to ensure alignment with Downtown's Design Guidelines, particularly in terms of how projects impact and activate the public realm.
3/2/2025	Charles Schuerhoff	I often visit Downtown, I live nearby in Boston.	Good graphics. Mostly understandable	Include more info about the CRUCIALLY important, oft-mentioned State Shadow Law. It gets one dotted line in one small illustration (with not even the angle of the line or any other info included).	1) Include at least some analysis proving that the housing for which the years of work by the A.G. and others are being sacrificed for this new plan can actually be built in this location for an affordable cost without large subsidies, AND 2) for the same reason "predominantly residential" should be 75%, not 60%.	The housing shortage may well turn out to be today's "crisis-of-the-moment". Don't make a huge U-turn in zoning that we will have to live with forever. That eyesore we call City Hall got built when a particularly ugly, inhospitable architectural style was in vogue, and now we literally have to live with it forever.	Thank you for your comments. Approximate State Shadow Law building height limits are noted on the draft zoning map diagram. We will provide additional analysis at upcoming engagement.
3/3/2025	Jennifer Dwyer	I live Downtown	I appreciate the amendment's commitment to historical preservation, which is essential in protecting Boston's character and ensuring future developments respect its unique architectural heritage. Thoughtful growth that aligns with the city's historical identity is crucial. However, this amendment fails to balance that preservation with sustainable, community-focused development.	The proposed amendment prioritizes high-rise development without a clear plan to address congestion, infrastructure strain, and public safety issues. The city already struggles to handle traffic surges during theater events, and there is no framework to accommodate additional density. Additionally, the amendment weakens public oversight and review, giving large developers too much influence over the area's future. The process for approving major zoning changes must be transparent, data-driven, and community-led—not rushed through without meaningful input.	The amendment contradicts the original intent of PLAN: Downtown, which was developed over six years of public engagement. By fast-tracking height increases and reducing oversight, the amendment disregards the voices of residents who rely on the city's planning process for stability and predictability. Additionally, while the amendment promotes density, it fails to ensure that new developments contribute to affordable housing, sustainable growth, and improved infrastructure. Without these guarantees, the amendment serves developers more than the community.	As a longtime Downtown resident, my husband and I chose this neighborhood because of its history, culture, and walkability. We envisioned building our future here—whether that means raising a family or growing old in the city we love. But recent increases in crime, lack of infrastructure improvements, and rushed zoning changes have made us question whether that is possible. We no longer feel safe walking around our own neighborhood at night. Before adding massive towers, the city must focus on public safety, affordable housing, and essential infrastructure improvements. Rushing this amendment through without addressing these concerns is irresponsible and erodes public trust.	Thank you for your comment. This zoning initiative is a long-term framework intended to enable future strategic development opportunities, so we do not anticipate every site to be built out immediately or have detailed financial feasibility analyses for each. That said, we've made changes to the zoning based on feedback to better clarify how State Shadow Law regulations apply. We look forward to sharing more details at the upcoming public meeting.
3/4/2025	Christine Dwyer	I live Downtown	I don't like how it has been rushed without public input and I'm appalled that radical height restrictions for Washington Street and nearby would even be considered allowed or appropriate for our historic Down Town.	I would like to see the original plan that took over six years to forge and included proper planning process and that was approved in December, 2024 be honored. Allowing 500 foot towers along Washington Street without due process and the necessary basic studies into density, traffic, emergency services and even shade restrictions will destroy the historic and livability of the heart of Down Town Boston.	I fear that how this amendment has been handled exposes the City of Boston to costly lawsuits and years of litigation.	I respectfully urge you to reject the proposed amendment and return to the Master Plan.	Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process including eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts. We look forward to sharing more details at the upcoming public meeting.

**Online Survey Responses**

Date	Name	What is your relationship to Downtown?	What do you like about the proposed zoning amendment for Downtown?	What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning amendment for Downtown?	Comments on the PLAN: Downtown amendment and updated design guidelines:	Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:	Response
3/4/2025	Suzanne Segura Taylor	I am a student Downtown. Work in Downtown Boston/Live Very Close By in Boston/Born in Boston.	Nothing, respectfully.	Revert to the previous building heights of 155' along along Washington Streets, the Ladder Blocks, etc. to preserve not only Boston's historic Freedom Trail sites, but other historic assets in Downtown Boston. Over 4 million people visit the Freedom Trail annually to see and learn about our rich history and experience our charming city. These visitors bring in millions to both the City and Commonwealth in spending and help create multitudes of jobs in the tourism sector. Many cities across the country (and world) do not have the unique treasures like we have in Boston, such as the Freedom Trail historic sites. We need to preserve these historic sites by limiting the heights, which if allowed to increase will affect Boston Common - America's first and oldest public park (as well as The Public Garden - not a Freedom Trail site), the Granary Burying Ground, King's Chapel and King's Chapel Burying Ground, Old Corner Bookstore, Old South Meeting House and Old State House to name just the Freedom Trail sites in the PLAN: Downtown Boston footprint. Boston's history, the Freedom Trail historic sites, as well as historic sites steps off the Trail should be a top priority when we think about business, tourism, and benefits to our great city and region. Please preserve it.	I applaud the City of Boston for planning for more housing in the area and recommend using the existing, beautiful architectural buildings, as is, to meet these goals and to place the focus on affordable housing and helping house the unhoused. These efforts will also add to more businesses and services in Downtown needed by an increase in residents. As an aside, I would also applaud city and business leaders with less work from home options as this would help revitalize Downtown with more people coming to work, and patronizing restaurants, shops and more. Both residents and workers vitalize urban settings.	Thank you for working with your community and our fellow residents to make the PLAN a success for everyone in Downtown Boston.	Thank you for your comments. Based on feedback, we have made changes to the draft, taking steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting. This includes expanding SKY-LOW-D to preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including areas along Washington Street and around the Old South Meeting House. We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
3/4/2025	Audrey Seraphin	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	I strongly support the draft zoning amendment and PLAN: Downtown amendment as crucial steps toward creating a more vibrant, accessible Boston. The proposed changes, particularly the new Sky-R district allowing additional height for primarily residential buildings and expanded housing capacity in the Financial District, are exactly what Boston needs.	I urge you to strengthen these reforms by creating an as-of-right pathway for projects under 50,000 square feet and removing the conditional use restriction on smaller housing projects with 9 units or less. These modifications would help maximize the unprecedented opportunity presented by vacant office spaces downtown.	Converting these spaces into homes near public transit would not only address our housing crisis but also reduce car dependency and create a more sustainable city. The proposed adaptive reuse incentives and contextual design guidelines will ensure new development respects Boston's historic character while meeting our urgent need for housing.		Thank you for your comments. We have incorporated changes into the zoning based on feedback, including allowing Household Living for 5-8 units. In order to discourage the downconversions we are seeing in the Back Bay and Beacon Hill, which lead to a loss of housing units, and to ensure that when office space is converted to residential units that it is subject to inclusionary zoning, residential uses below 5 units remain conditional. Projects exceeding 20,000 square feet would only undergo the design review component of Small Project Review to ensure alignment with Downtown's Design Guidelines, particularly in terms of how projects impact and activate the public realm.
3/5/2025	Beatrice Nessen	I live Downtown	don't like the Sky-R heights that would allow 500' residential towers. The Friends of the Public Garden and other groups defeated the original Park Plaza urban renewal proposal of Mort Zuckerman's/Mayor White's in the 1970 primarily because the height of 3 towers of 40-50 stories and their negative impact on the Public Garden and surrounding neighborhood. Why are you resurrecting these heights when the alternative plan implemented resulted in a very successful development along Boylston St. and Park Plaza. We have there the proof that high rise development was inappropriate.	Sky-R changed to Sky-D-Low and the preservation of the Ladder Block's special character, the Washington St. fabric retained, and Park Plaza zoned as is.	Let's hope the Design Guidelines are implemented.	The zoning should implemented the priorities of the 2023 adopted PLAN: Downtown.	Thank you for your comments. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback, including expanding SKY-LOW-D to preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including areas along Washington Street and around the Old South Meeting House. Building heights in the Park Plaza area will not be able to exceed the State Shadow Regulations limiting new shadow on the Boston Common and Public Garden.
3/6/2025	Andrew Copelotti	We own the Pennyweight Hotel on Portland Street, adjacent to the new Downtown zoning	More height and density and the addition of housing to add to the vibrancy of the neighborhood.	Even more height and density than is currently planned	Mixed use creates vibrancy and a more 24/7 environment.		Thank you for your comments. We agree that added housing and density can help make Downtown a more vibrant, 24/7 neighborhood at the heart of our transit network.
3/6/2025	Todd Greenfield	Building Owner rep	This proposal aims to unlock the economic potential of this area. Its inherent walkability, coupled with direct access to Boston's public transportation and key locations, creates an opportunity to revitalize the local economy. By reducing vehicular traffic and stimulating foot traffic, this will directly support and strengthen the local retail sector.	Develop a tool that effectively aligns the proposed area's design guidelines with the desired expectations. This tool should prioritize objective, measurable criteria to minimize subjective interpretation, streamline the approval process, and reduce development costs by limiting redesign iterations.	None	We believe this proposal will effectively guide Downtown's progress and look forward to its approval.	Thank you for your comments. The Article 80 Modernization project seeks to update our internal and external processes to make them more predictable, consistent, transparent, and timely.

**Online Survey Responses**

Date	Name	What is your relationship to Downtown?	What do you like about the proposed zoning amendment for Downtown?	What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning amendment for Downtown?	Comments on the PLAN: Downtown amendment and updated design guidelines:	Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:	Response
3/6/2025	Jordan Sorensen	I often visit Downtown	As a homeowner in the Boston area who cares deeply about Boston thriving, I strongly support this plan. This plan addresses our dual challenges of housing affordability and economic growth by increasing supply where demand is highest. By encouraging developers to build upward with a focus on residential units, we can create more homes near jobs and transit, maintaining Boston's economic vibrancy while making housing more accessible for residents across income levels.	These are great steps, but with Boston's famously complex and difficult zoning processes, I think it could go even further. We should be broadening the scope of projects that can be built as-of-right.			Thank you for your comments. While downtown zoning reduces outdated barriers within Downtown zoning, the Article 80 Modernization project seeks to update our internal and external processes to make them more predictable, consistent, transparent, and timely. Please continue to follow the process! We look forward to sharing more details and hearing your continued feedback at the upcoming public meeting.
3/7/2025	Eric Ngo	I often visit Downtown	I like that it provides opportunities to reuse already existing buildings to provide more accessible housing.	I would want them to reduce further the barriers that prevent increasing housing availability in downtown.	As a new Boston resident invested in its future, I am writing to express my support for the incentivization of housing production through this policy. I moved here to study public health, and would like to emphasize the necessity of accessible housing in improving the health of Boston's population as a whole. Housing rights and access are directly related to many different health outcomes. Boston's climate tends towards suffocatingly hot and humid summers, and freezing, frigid winters. The ability for people to seek shelter from the environment is essential in maintaining their physical well-being. Besides physical wellness, having housing also impacts mental wellness. Worrying about the ability to afford housing or the quality of the housing that one can barely afford will interfere with the ability of an individual to be happy and healthy. The stress can accumulate and contribute to mental health issues and physical exhaustion. Lastly, having a permanent address is essential for many services that are part of the social security safety net. It is essential for applying to jobs, earning an income, and receiving mail, which are all essential to being able to afford and access healthcare.	I especially support the creation of the Sky-R district in order to incentivize housing production and the provisions of adaptive reuse of existing buildings. Helping to emphasize the importance of high-density, affordable housing and the vitality of Downtown as a main artery of commerce and culture in Boston is something that I feel very strongly benefits the city of Boston as a whole. I urge you to approve this plan and continue to invest back into our community by providing affordable, accessible housing in this way.	Thank you for your comment and for engaging in the zoning process. Increased housing downtown and citywide is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform work.
3/7/2025	Karin Pawluk	I work Downtown, I often visit Downtown	Downtown is lacking vibrancy, It's downtown after all. I support more housing.	more housing	it should go without saying these units should *not* require parking allotments		Thank you for your comments. Projects will not be required to have parking, and given the proximity to transit, projects will be encouraged to eliminate or have very low amounts of on-site parking.
3/7/2025	Brian Rose	I often visit Downtown	Incentivizing housing and height via SKY-R district. We cannot afford to derail this crucial opportunity for dense housing downtown. This will enliven and add vibrancy to downtown, while giving our city desperately needed housing units in a transit-rich area well-suited to support them.	While preservation is a worthy pursuit, SKY-LOW-D district extends too far, leaving potential housing units on the table.	The January 2025 update is a positive update as it incentivizes developers to build housing at the scale our housing crisis demands. This SKY-R district allows for enough units to make the numbers pencil out. Most importantly, this plan will likely result in more desperately-needed affordable units given our city's 17%/20% inclusionary zoning policy.	Please pass the updated January 2025 version of PLAN: Downtown. If we cannot even build necessary dense housing in the heart of downtown, then where can we?	Thank you for your comments and for highlighting Downtown as an opportunity for more housing density.
3/7/2025	Jordan Bryant	I work Downtown	I love that the new plan allows for growth downtown while still respecting the historic landmarks that make our city special. The kind of growth I like seeing is more housing, so it's great that this amendment encourages the building of more housing units. I also love that it will be easier to adapt existing buildings to create additional housing. We need to increase our housing stock in this city to alleviate the shortage and put an end to the rapidly rising cost of housing in the Boston area.	Changing "College or University Use" and "Hotel - Large" uses to conditional may undermine the work that the city has already taken to ensure that tourists and students have an appropriate supply of lodging while also curbing the short term rental market by giving folks who oppose development leverage to stop projects Downtown at the Zoning Board of Appeal.			Thank you for your comment. Universities are regulated by Institutional Master Plans that ensure that university uses enhance the area and that their expansion occurs thoughtfully and transparently. Large hotel uses are conditional in the draft zoning to allow for the evaluation of site-specific impacts, particularly related to loading and pick-up/drop-off activity that may impact this pedestrian-first environment.
3/12/2025	Andrew Aikens	I often visit Downtown, Live in Back Bay	My hope is that this plan helps to alleviate housing costs by encouraging additional development and will support people staying in the city.	NA			Thank you for this feedback - please stay involved as the process continues. This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address our housing crisis!



*Neighbors  
Helping  
Neighbors*

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Patricia Tully

March 7, 2025

Mr. Kairos Shen  
Chief of Planning  
Boston Planning Department  
1 City Hall Square, 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
Boston, MA 02201

Via email to [kairos.shen@boston.gov](mailto:kairos.shen@boston.gov)

Dear Mr. Shen,

Since 1922, the Beacon Hill Civic Association (“BHCA”) has worked to preserve and enhance the quality of residential life on Beacon Hill and in downtown neighborhoods. The BHCA has also been committed to civic engagement and access to neighborhood and public assets in the City of Boston.

We understand that there is a nominal comment date on the Downtown Plan of March 7, 2025, but that the Planning Department and a number of stakeholders, including the BHCA, are involving in ongoing discussions to review and potentially revise the Zoning Plan that was proposed by the Planning Department on January 8, 2025. As such, any comments would be premature and BHCA specifically reserve the right to comment until a reasonable period after those discussions result in a new zoning plan or otherwise conclude.

This being said, the BHCA would like to ensure that the comment period extends beyond the conclusion of the stakeholder dialog by including a general public comment period.

We hope that the outcome of these stakeholder and public comment periods will be zoning changes that will ensure the increased development of affordable and moderate-income housing, and that also protect our historic buildings, parks, and open spaces.

Sincerely,

*Joshua A. Leffler*  
Joshua A. Leffler  
Chair

Colin Zick  
President

## **Beacon Hill Civic Association**

### **Response:**

Thank you for your comments and for lending your feedback throughout the PLAN: Downtown and Downtown zoning process. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community groups like the BHCA, preservation advocates, and business organizations. We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced approach—one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing while safeguarding its historic character and supporting its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood that can thrive alongside Beacon Hill.

February 12, 2025

Mayor Michelle Wu  
Boston City Hall  
1 City Hall Plaza  
Boston, MA 02201

## RE:PLAN: Downtown

Dear Mayor Wu,

The Boston Preservation Alliance is Boston's primary, non-profit advocacy organization that protects and promotes the use of historic buildings and landscapes in all of the city's neighborhoods. With 40 Organizational Members, 100 Corporate Members, and a reach of over 100,000 friends and supporters we represent a diverse constituency advocating for the thoughtful evolution of the city and celebration of its unique character. We appreciate the opportunity to offer comments on projects that impact the historic character of the city.

The Alliance has engaged in the PLAN: Downtown process since its inception and is pleased to continue to collaborate towards its conclusion and implementation through zoning. This most recent iteration shared in January took us by surprise as it ignores much of the work we—and so many others—have put towards this effort.

Boston is a historic city, and as such, our historic streetscapes are our greatest asset as they cannot be experienced anywhere else but here. This includes the Ladder Blocks, a rare, surviving example of 19<sup>th</sup>-century commercial street life. We also understand that Boston is not only a historic city, but a vibrant, growing, and living city. We believe a more direct focus on preserving our historic buildings and adapting what we already have is the best way to add density, create unique consumer experiences, and ensure Boston remains a vibrant place to live, work, and visit.

- Building reuse is climate action. Boston will never be a Green city without factoring in embodied carbons and adaptive use into the climate plan.
- Historic buildings are naturally occurring affordable housing. They are already there! In fact, there are at least 46 buildings built before 1948 in the study area, some of which exclusively serve section-8 tenants. Adapting or expanding a building is a much quicker process than building new, supplying much needed housing at a faster rate. A nearby example includes the 44 Bromfield Street conversion from office to residential with 44 units ranging from studios to two bedroom apartments. Adapting our historic spaces, balanced with new construction, will honor our unique, tourist-worthy streetscapes and continue to add housing for many income levels.
- The historic storefronts are the right size for local businesses. They encourage walking and supply affordable space for mom-and-pop shops, giving Boston legacy businesses of the future.
- Facadism is not where a plan begins, it is only an ending point once all other options fail. We know there is a better compromise that lets Boston's history shine and allows adapted uses for our growing city.

The City is already putting some noteworthy initiatives into action including the Office-to-Residential conversion program and ADUs. We are enthusiastic fans of both. We hope the same vision and creativity will continue with PLAN: Downtown.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to safeguard Boston's treasured historic resources as the city continues to grow and change. We look forward to further engagement on this and future planning initiatives.

Thank you,



Kimberlee Schumacher  
Interim Executive Director  
Boston Preservation Alliance



Regan Shields Ives  
Board President  
Boston Preservation Alliance

cc:

Kairos Shen, Chief of Planning  
Andrew Nahmias, Senior Planner  
Michael Firestone, Chief of Policy  
Brian Swett, Chief of Environment and Energy  
Kathy Kottaridis, Director of the Office of Historic Preservation  
Sheila Dillon, Chief of Housing  
Ruthzee Louijeune, City Council President  
Julia Mejia, City Councilor, At-Large  
Erin Murphy, City Councilor, At-Large  
Henry Santana, City Councilor, At-Large

## **Boston Preservation Alliance**

### **Response:**

Thank you for sharing your priorities and concerns about the draft zoning. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

One of our priorities in crafting this zoning was to ensure that building reuse, including adapting and expanding buildings, have the easiest zoning pathway because they are so essential to downtown. In addition to setting dimensional regulations like building floorplates to align with historic context, we have also drafted language that incentivizes preservation of existing buildings by allowing the extension of existing non-conformities, ensuring that preservation of existing buildings as they are will not create a violation with new zoning requirements. Mos

Thank you also for highlighting how important building reuse is to climate action. These zoning changes are particularly essential as many buildings will be required to upgrade their mechanical systems and decarbonize under the City's Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO). Additionally, earlier this year Boston adopted an update to Article 37 to create Net Zero Carbon Zoning, establishing requirements for reporting on embodied carbon. We know these changes will allow us to track and show how effective building reuse is to meeting the City's climate goals.

As highlighted in the Downtown Design Guidelines, there are many strategies for successful historic preservation, adaptation, and additions; we are lucky to have so many strong Boston examples of all of these strategies because of yours and others' work and advocacy over so many decades. We hope that the changes we've made that require a Plan of Development Area to incorporate a Landmark, subject to the jurisdiction of the Boston Landmarks Commission, and to invest in the preservation and rehabilitation of Landmark(s) and historic structures, help make clear that we share your priorities for ensuring that new development helps make Boston's history shine.

We look forward to working with you to ensure the implementation of PLAN: Downtown continues on these priorities and the successes of the Office to Residential Program, SPACE grants to fill vacant retail spaces, and all of our climate planning.



March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

We write on behalf of Boston Opera House Ventures, LLC, as the owners of the Citizens Opera House, with comments on the zoning proposal that was presented on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025. For reasons stated below, the Citizens Opera House opposes the zoning proposal.

The Citizens Opera House, located on Washington Street in the heart of Boston's Theater District, is a historic gem. Originally commissioned by Edward Albee to honor his close friend and business partner, Benjamin Franklin Keith, the theater was completed in 1928. With no expense spared, it stands as one of the finest examples of architect Thomas White Lamb's extensive theater design portfolio. Fully restored to its original grandeur in 2004, the Citizens Opera House is not only a Boston Landmark but also a key anchor property within the Washington Street Theater National Historic Register District. As a major cultural destination in the Ladder District, the venue boasts a capacity of 2,600 and hosts approximately 265 performances annually with 500,000 attendees, making it one of New England's most important entertainment spaces.

While we understand the need for housing in the Ladder District, the proposal put forth by the Downtown PLAN would adversely affect the neighborhood in the vicinity of the Citizens Opera House. The Ladder District still enjoys the benefits preserved by the current protective zoning height limits. Between Avery Street and Temple Street the building heights are relatively consistent, and the urban environment is still human-scale and open to the sky. There is still a "sunny side of the street". If approved, increasing building height limits will create opportunities for buildings to loom over the Opera House and the Washington Street Theater National Historic Register District, which also includes the Paramount Theater and the Modern Theater. Such structures will irretrievably damage the Ladder District's most compelling architectural virtues, trending toward eventual change to a windy, shadowed canyon. Allowing 500-foot towers along

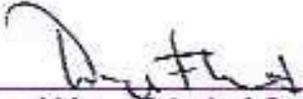


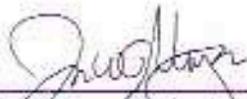
Washington Street and into Back Bay threatens Downtown Boston's character, particularly the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tourists and visitors.

The built and natural environments that define downtown Boston influence how people experience our city and must evolve in harmony. We are confident that we all share a common vision: one that prioritizes the public good, promotes sustainable growth, and ensures the preservation of essential natural elements, like sunlight, which contribute to the health and vibrancy of the Boston Common and its surrounding neighborhoods. Smart, thoughtful development can help us achieve these goals, benefiting both the residents and developers that make our city unique.

The last comprehensive planning effort for the Downtown area took place in 1989 with the adoption of **PLAN: Downtown**. This plan was developed with the goal of fostering community collaboration, preserving the neighborhood's character, and ensuring clarity and predictability for all stakeholders, including both residents and developers. The city's current move to bypass the ongoing, six-year planning process in favor of a sudden, large-scale upzoning undermines the very principles of the original plan. We appreciate the planning department's consideration of these comments in this process.

Very truly yours,

  
Donald Law, Principal Owner

  
Jon Mugar, Principal Owner

On behalf of Boston Opera House Ventures, LLC

## **Citizens' Opera House**

### **Response:**

Thank you for your feedback and for sharing your concerns about the draft zoning. We have made changes to the draft based on feedback to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. Notably, the revised draft expands the SKY-LOW-D district that has a 155' building height limit to include areas along Washington St that include the Citizen Opera House. We believe this revised draft reflects a balanced approach—that one strengthens protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets, such as the Opera House, while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive.

March 7, 2025

Kairos Shen, Chief of Planning  
c/o Andrew Nahmias, Senior Planner II  
Boston Planning Department  
One City Hall Square, Room 900  
Boston, MA 02201

RE: PLAN: Downtown Updated Draft Zoning Text Amendment & Report

Dear Chief Shen:

On behalf of the Downtown Boston Alliance (DBA), I am pleased to offer our organization's comments on the PLAN: Downtown updated draft zoning text amendment (hereafter referred to as "the amendment"), as well as the new pages inserted into the PLAN: Downtown report. This letter serves as a follow-up to our PLAN: Downtown comment letter from May 23, 2024. Given the scope and significance of the latest proposed iterations, we appreciate the Planning Department's decision to have extended the current comment period.

Having followed and reviewed PLAN: Downtown's evolution closely, our position from last May remains unchanged. **We are largely in support of the proposed zoning changes as presented, with some additional suggestions noted below.** Five years after the COVID-19 contagion profoundly reshaped central business districts worldwide, this proposal offers the DBA service area—a vibrant and diverse 34-square-block mixed-use district located in the heart of Downtown—its best chance to address our new paradigm to the benefit of all stakeholders.

Planned Development Areas: In the broader context, we endorse the Planning Department's drive for greater certainty, simplification, and transparency in the development process, as embodied by the Article 80 modernization initiative. Nevertheless, we remain convinced that (as we wrote in our May 2024 comment letter), "in a high-density district such as ours, with few remaining parcels suitable for transformative developments, PDAs remain a vital instrument in the City's redevelopment toolkit." Without PDAs, larger, complicated multi-parcel development sites become significantly harder to redevelop into modern, productive uses.

Office-Large, Large Hotels & Research Labs Uses: Despite the pandemic and our district's mixed-use composition, the DBA area remains predominantly office in character. Thus, we are glad to see Office-Large now being proposed as an allowed use. As for the plan to restrict Large Hotels and Research Labs to conditional usage, we appreciate the emphasis on prioritizing our neighborhood's "pedestrian-first" environment and the importance of evaluating site-specific impacts. That said, over the past decade, our neighborhood has seen not only the Godfrey Hotel (2016) and Hyatt Centric (2019) renovations, but also the repositioning of 1 Winthrop Square to lab use and 55 Summer Street's ongoing renovation to lab space. None of these redevelopments have disrupted our district's pedestrian rhythms or otherwise imposed

undue hardships on its daily commerce and transportation. Thus, we believe Large Hotels should be an allowed use—and are inclined to support Research Labs similarly.

As Nan Fung Life Sciences Real Estate (NFLSRE) noted in its June 2024 comment letter, these uses are “entirely appropriate for Downtown and have been part of this vibrant mixed-use district for years . . . at a time when the City is confronting high vacancy rates and falling property values . . . [we] should be encouraging a broad mix of productive uses in Downtown, rather than requiring more projects to seek [zoning] relief.”

SKY-R District Proposal: We also applaud the proposed creation of a new SKY-R district. Despite our community’s array of conflicting interests and perspectives, the conviction that our housing crisis requires bold initiatives seems widespread. In this context, a new intermediate zoning district prioritizing “housing growth . . . and [incentivizing] larger-scale residential development,” would not only be good for our district’s vitality but should also help alleviate a regionwide problem. Given prevailing macroeconomic conditions, it is extremely unlikely that the adoption of SKY-R would unleash a rapid change to the Downtown landscape. Thus, rather than being distracted by unrealistic concerns about an invasion of tall towers in our district, we gladly welcome the certainty SKY-R’s provisions would provide in helping future projects address our acute housing shortage.

Adaptive Reuse: The amendment’s emphasis on adaptive reuse is also welcomed, given how much of our district’s recent success—from boutique conversions (including such hallmarks as 1 Milk Street, 407 Washington Street, and 8 Winter Street) to transformative redevelopments such as the Burnham Building/Millennium Tower project—has been driven by the phenomenon. PLAN: Downtown’s highlighting of the structural modifications to 40 Water Street is particularly apropos, as the firm’s addition of a rooftop structure to the building transformed the property’s narrative remarkably, enabling it to attract hip new tenants such as Digitas and ezCater.

In a larger context, the resounding success of the Burnham Building restoration—which groups such as the Boston Preservation Alliance [vigorously supported](#) when the project was being reviewed—demonstrates how thoughtful preservation, far from being antithetical to new growth, *can in fact be coupled dynamically with it*. Another example of the latent synergies unifying historic preservation with new development is the approved-for-construction 9 Hamilton Place hotel project, which is slated to preserve the property’s classic Victorian-era façade while adding a new tower on top of it.

Light Manufacturing & Climate Tech: We appreciate PLAN: Downtown’s recognition of “the ongoing modernization of light manufacturing and trade uses [and] climate technology businesses advancing Boston’s future.” In partnership with the City of Boston, Alliance for Climate Transition (ACT), MassCEC, Schneider Electric, and other key partners, our organization has embraced the effort to make our district a haven for emerging and established climate-tech firms.

Greenway Enhancements & New Design Guidelines: Given the DBA area’s lengthy Greenway frontage, combined with our organization’s natural affinity with our counterparts at the Greenway, we are pleased to see new emphasis on Greenway enhancements. Finally, the new

Design Guidelines for Downtown Crossing, the Ladder Blocks, and the Theater District thoughtfully embrace these special and iconic neighborhoods of our service area.

For all these reasons, **we continue to strongly SUPPORT PLAN: Downtown** and look forward to seeing it come to a successful conclusion, as we approach this ambitious—and crucial—initiative's final stages.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Nichols".

Michael Nichols  
President

cc: Ruthzee Louijeune, President, Boston City Council  
Gabriela Coletta Zapata, Boston City Councilor, District 1  
Ed Flynn, Boston City Councilor, District 2

Caitlin Coppinger, Deputy Director of Planning  
James Fitzgerald, Deputy Director of Planning Review  
Kathleen Onufer, Deputy Director of Zoning  
Ted Schwartzberg, Asst. Deputy Director of Planning Review

## **Downtown Boston Alliance**

Thank you for your continued participation in the Downtown zoning and PLAN: Downtown process.

We are excited about this revised draft, which reflects a balanced path forward for Downtown—protecting its historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood. The draft introduces new limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district as a tool for strategic development and housing that protects and enhances historic buildings and areas. Large office uses are allowed in the latest draft, and upcoming changes to Article 80 will ensure Linkage is still preserved. Large hotel uses, however, remain conditional in the draft zoning to allow for the evaluation of site-specific impacts, particularly related to loading and pick-up/drop-off activity that may impact this pedestrian-first environment.

We are grateful for your participation throughout this six-year process and look forward to continuing to collaborate to help Downtown grow and thrive.



The Druker Company, Ltd., Suite 1000, 50 Federal Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02110-2536

January 31, 2025

VIA EMAIL

Mr. Kairos Shen, Chief of Planning  
Mr. Andrew Nahmias, Senior Planner II  
Boston Planning & Development Agency  
One City Hall Square  
Boston, Massachusetts 02201-1007

Re: PLAN: Downtown; 2025 Zoning and Map Amendment

Dear Mr. Shen and Mr. Nahmias:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the updated draft zoning text and map amendment for the proposed Skyline Districts in Downtown Boston. We are writing to request the incorporation of an additional zoning concept which we believe will further the goals of PLAN: Downtown and enable opportunities for economic revitalization, mixed-use growth, the creation of new Downtown residences including affordable housing, as well as the protection of historic resources including cherished theaters, all on critical blocks in Downtown Crossing.

The Druker Company, Ltd. has been an active member of the Boston community for well over a century and is a founding member of the Downtown Boston Business Improvement District, now the Downtown Boston Alliance (DBA). We own a significant portion of the block bounded by Winter Street, Washington Street, Bromfield Street and Tremont Street, including The Orpheum Theatre and The Corner Mall. Accordingly, we are one of the largest landowners affected by the proposed zoning amendments.

We have been actively involved in the PLAN: Downtown planning process since its inception in 2018. We served on the Advisory Group and wrote comment letters on the initial concept on September 18, 2023 and on the initial draft of the zoning amendment on June 4, 2024.

We appreciate the current draft's inclusion of a new SKY-R housing priority area. However, we continue to believe the rezoning should also allow a flexible development planning vehicle similar to PDAs to enter Article 80 review processes and community discussions. This flexible development planning zoning tool will enable owners to design and deliver projects which will be the catalysts for the post-pandemic Downtown and will prioritize residential housing including affordable units, as well as address preservation for historic buildings and provide public benefits and mitigation for the neighborhood. These goals are the attributes of the

Mr. Kairos Shen, Chief of Planning  
Mr. Andrew Nahmias, Senior Planner II  
January 31, 2025  
Page 2

PLAN and are critical to the revitalization of the Downtown including the Ladder Blocks. In many cases, projects like these will simply not be feasible without the adaptability provided by a flexible development planning zoning tool.

Currently, PDA eligibility covers a patchwork of blocks and development sites along the south side of Washington Street and a small area between Washington and Tremont Streets. The intent of the Article 3-1A(a) of the Zoning Code was to allow PDAs in any part of a subdistrict, subject to public review and approval by the BPDA and Zoning Commission. According to the BPDA's written policy, PDAs promote and accommodate large-scale, complex development; provide for a greater flexibility of zoning including additional controls for the development and public benefits for the surrounding community and neighborhood. We think this type of flexible development planning zoning tool is tailor-made for Downtown including the Ladder Blocks, where one-acre sites are rare and development proposals will inevitably include complex planning, design, and mitigation considerations and community engagement.

Thank you again, and we ask the BPDA to incorporate in the proposed zoning amendment a level of flexibility, so to achieve all that the PLAN aspires to, by allowing flexible development planning vehicles. We look forward to continuing to work with the BPDA on our mutual efforts to revitalize the Downtown.

Sincerely,



Ronald M. Druker  
President

cc: Mayor Michelle Wu  
Devin Quirk, Deputy Chief, Planning Department  
Casey Hines, Deputy Director of Development Review, BPDA  
Steven D. Fessler, The Druker Company, Ltd.  
Barbara J. Boylan AIA, The Druker Company, Ltd.  
Michael Nichols, DBA  
Matthew Kiefer, Esq., Goulston & Storrs, PC

## **The Druker Company**

### **Response:**

Thank you for your continued participation in PLAN: Downtown and the rezoning process.

We have developed a revised draft that incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. Updates in the revised draft that address your comments regarding the Ladder Blocks include:

- **Eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district** to preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including areas along Washington Street and around the Old South Meeting House.
- **Reinforcing compliance with State Shadow Regulations**, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.
- **Introducing new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas.** New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings.

We appreciate your continued participation in the revitalization of downtown and the achievement of PLAN: Downtown's goals.



**Boston City Council**

**ED FLYNN**

Councilor - District 2

February 3, 2025

Kairos Shen, Chief of Planning  
Boston Planning Department  
One City Hall Square, Room 900  
Boston, MA 02201

**RE: Letter opposing PLAN: Downtown Zoning Text Amendment**

Dear Chief Shen,

I am writing today in opposition of the latest zoning text amendment to PLAN: Downtown.

At the January 15th PLAN: Downtown information session, which was attended by over 230 people, there was overwhelming opposition from residents to the proposed amendments in the plan. Residents and members of the PLAN: Downtown Advisory Group expressed frustration that the latest amendment to expand the SKY-R Zone is a large departure from the previous iteration of the PLAN. Neighbors who worked in partnership with the Planning Department to provide community input over the past six years felt disappointed and a lack of respect and regard for their efforts. Given significant changes from previous iterations of the plan, it is unacceptable that Downtown residents are only given three weeks to provide public comments. It is critical that Downtown residents are properly engaged, and given more time to review the changes made. I respectfully request that the Planning Department postpone the comment period until Friday, March 7th.

I hope that the Planning Department will listen to these concerns and allow more time for a thorough community process with the residents. There needs to be more dialogue with our community. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at directly 617-635-3203, or at [Ed.Flynn@Boston.gov](mailto:Ed.Flynn@Boston.gov).

Sincerely,

Ed Flynn

Boston City Councilor, District 2

## Councilor Flynn

### Response:

Thank you for your comments on the downtown zoning focused on the importance of community vetting of the January draft zoning update. In response to feedback, including yours, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations.

The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. Updates in the revised draft include:

- **Eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district** to preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including areas along Washington Street and around the Old South Meeting House.
- **Reinforcing compliance with State Shadow Regulations**, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.
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Alongside safeguarding the unique character of some of Boston's most historic areas, we remain firmly committed to enabling inclusive growth and new housing in the heart of our City. This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address our housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City.

Implementing the recommendations of PLAN: Downtown for the growth and preservation of Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.



FOUR SEASONS  
PLACE  
BOSTON

Date:

Subject: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7<sup>th</sup>
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,



Signature

Print Name: Maureen Crowe

Unit: 1109

220 Boylston Street, Boston, MA: 02116



FOUR SEASONS  
PLACE  
BOSTON

Date: 1.27.25

Subject: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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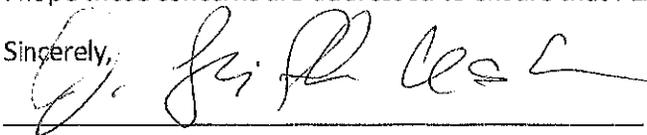
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Sincerely, 

Signature  
Print Name: J. GRIFFIN LESNER

Unit: 1/27/2025  
#1012

220 Boylston Street, Boston, MA: 02116



FOUR SEASONS  
PLACE  
BOSTON

Date: 1/27/25

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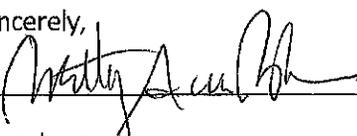
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Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Print Name: BETTY ANN BLUM

Unit: # 1111

220 Boylston Street, Boston, MA: 02116



## FOUR SEASONS

PLACE  
BOSTON

Date: 01/27/25

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Sincerely,



Signature

Print Name: Shirley Shames

Unit: 9015

220 Boylston Street, Boston, MA: 02116



FOUR SEASONS  
PLACE  
BOSTON

Date: 1.27.25

Subject: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Print Name: Lisa Rauch

Unit: 9016

220 Boylston Street, Boston, MA: 02116



FOUR SEASONS  
PLACE  
BOSTON

Date: 1/27/25

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Sincerely,

Signature

Print Name:

Amy Walker

Unit:

1114

220 Boylston Street, Boston, MA: 02116



## FOUR SEASONS

PLACE  
BOSTON

Date:

Subject: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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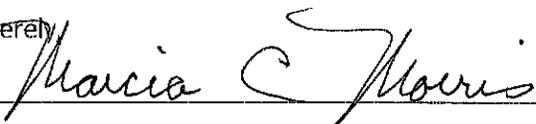
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Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Print Name: MARCIA C MORRIS

Unit: 9008

220 Boylston Street, Boston, MA: 02116



FOUR SEASONS  
PLACE  
BOSTON

Date:

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Sincerely,

Signature

Print Name:

Kenneth W Freeman

Unit:

9001/9003

220 Boylston Street, Boston, MA: 02116



FOUR SEASONS  
PLACE  
BOSTON

Date: 1.30.2025

Subject: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

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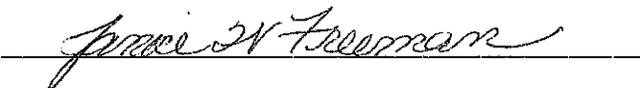
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Signature

Print Name: Janice W Freeman

Unit: 9001/9003

220 Boylston Street, Boston, MA: 02116



Date: January 30, 2025

Subject: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

To whom it may concern,

I am a resident of Downtown Boston. I am writing to express my deep concern and vehement opposition regarding the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown. This is a significantly different plan from the one that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023. The only reason that I can think of for the City to push through the newly revised plan shortly after February 5<sup>th</sup> – a mere 4 weeks after the virtual public meeting held January 15 – is that those wishing to do so are fully aware of the opposition to said plan but wish to go ahead regardless.

I am compelled to ask: Is this government of the people, by the people and for the people?

To reiterate the main concerns aptly articulated by others:

Zoning: Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

Housing: Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

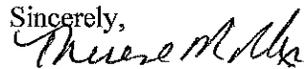
Community Input: There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I strongly urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7<sup>th</sup>
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I sincerely hope that these concerns are given due attention and actually addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,



Therese Miller

220 Boylston St. Unit 9009

Boston, MA 02116



FOUR SEASONS  
PLACE  
BOSTON

Date: 1.27.25

Subject: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

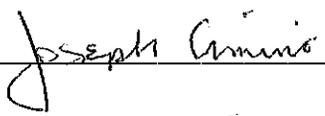
**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7<sup>th</sup>
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Print Name: Joseph Cimino

Unit: 1514

220 Boylston Street, Boston, MA: 02116



FOUR SEASONS  
PLACE  
BOSTON

Date: 1/27/25

Subject: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7<sup>th</sup>
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

Signature

Print Name: Richard Pitych

Unit: 1117, 1013

220 Boylston Street, Boston, MA: 02116



## FOUR SEASONS

PLACE  
BOSTON

Date: JANUARY 27, 2025

Subject: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders,

I am a Downtown Boston resident. I am writing to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal for PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the plan that was adopted by the BPDA in December 2023.

**Zoning:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay endangers the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. This will also harm tourism in the Ladder Blocks, which attracts countless tours and visitors because of the density of historically significant buildings in the area.

**Housing:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street will not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional housing that is more affordable, given the realities of construction and development costs. Instead, it invites towers that are likely to offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

**Community Input:** There has been repeated, consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents, preservation and other non-profit organizations, and the large majority of Advisory Group members regarding containing height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Despite this, the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions. Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, which were offered with a very short window for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval.

I urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7<sup>th</sup>
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155-foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that PLAN: Downtown balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

GAIL FLATTO

Signature

Print Name:

Gail Flatto

Unit:

9012

220 Boylston Street, Boston, MA: 02116

***magdalena T toteson***

*220 Boylston St, Boston, MA 02116*

January 28, 2025

Re: Opposition to new PLAN: Downtown Changes

Dear Elected Officials, Appointees, and Stakeholders:

I am a Downtown Boston resident and as such, I would like to express my opposition to the latest revised proposal to the

PLAN: Downtown, which is significantly different than the one that was adopted by the BPDA on December 2023.

**ZONING:** Allowing developments up to 500 feet along Washington Street and into Back Bay. It seems to be that will change the character of these historic areas, landmark buildings, and open spaces. And, to the detriment of this area, it just might also harm tourism in the "Ladder Blocks", located within Boston's famous Downtown Crossing neighborhood and encompassing the historic Washington Street Theatre District. As is very well known, this is a very attractive and highly transited area of Boston.

**HOUSING:** Allowing projects as high as 500 feet in the so-called SKY-R zone along Washington Street and Stuart Street might not help accomplish the city's goal of creating additional affordable housing, given the realities of construction and development costs.

As a matter of fact, this might lead to the erection of towers that might offer luxury residences while giving developers leeway to offer additional unneeded office space. Affordable housing experts agree.

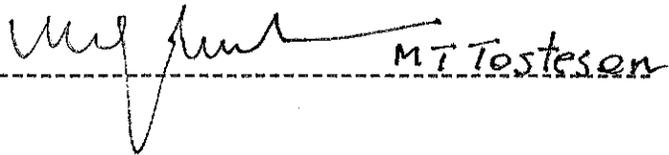
**COMMUNITY INPUT:** There has been repeated and consistent feedback over 6+ years from the community's residents as well as preservation and non-profit organizations. Furthermore, the large majority of Advisory Group members are concerned due to the proposed height in character areas and advocating for a strong housing preference. Nonetheless, it seems that the Planning Department has unilaterally discarded this feedback with the latest revisions.

Moreover, these drastic changes were made without consulting the Advisory Group, and which were offered with a very short window of time for comment from the public and were presumptively presented as a final version that would be brought to the BPDA Board within a month for approval. Given all of this, I need to urge the City's Planning Department to:

1. Extend the comment period by 30 days to March 7th
2. Respect the plan that was adopted in December 2023 and expand the SKY-LOW-D boundaries (155 foot height limit) to Washington and Stuart Streets
3. Prioritize affordable housing through targeted incentives

I hope these concerns are addressed to ensure that "PLAN: Downtown Changes" balances growth with community needs.

Sincerely,

  
-----  
M. Tosteson

## **Four Seasons Place**

### **Response:**

Thank you for your comments on the downtown zoning. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations.

The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process. It eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.



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February 5, 2025

Mr. Kairos Shen, Chief of Planning  
Boston Planning Department  
One City Hall – 9th Floor  
Boston, MA 02201

Re: PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendments  
Subject: Request for Comments

Dear Mr. Shen,

We submit this comment letter as long-time partners of the City of Boston, particularly the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Mayor's Office, and as stewards of the Boston Common, Public Garden and Commonwealth Avenue Mall.

In reference to the PLAN: Downtown Zoning Amendment Initiative, we appreciate the extension of time granted for the receipt of comments until March 7. This will allow more time for consideration and understanding of the zoning plan amendments as well as to foster public dialogue in support of advancing a consensus driven plan that will shape both our City's natural and built environments. We also request that any action by the BPDA Board be delayed correspondingly, to ensure comments submitted by March 7 (and perhaps thereafter) can be thoughtfully reviewed and considered. It is our continued hope that PLAN: Downtown will foster and embrace development that allows the City, its neighborhoods, and its parks to flourish through meaningful engagement with key stakeholder groups and those who care deeply about our downtown and integral green spaces like the Boston Common and Public Garden.

We applaud the City's efforts to update, modernize, and ultimately adopt downtown zoning policies that help to yield a more economically robust and sustainable environment where commercial, retail, and residential uses thrive together. We believe that providing safeguards to protect the downtown's greatest assets, including its nationally significant late 18th and early 19th century fabric is important, as new, compatible, economically viable, and appropriately scaled development is encouraged.

The Friends believe that achieving a reinvigorated and thriving downtown is essential to the safety, health, well-being, and success of Boston Common and the Public Garden, and we commend efforts to update zoning in a way that helps to achieve this and make the parks more accessible and welcoming to more people. Yet the new zoning amendments, as reported by many other stakeholders, appear to represent a significant departure from what

had been proposed and agreed upon in December 2023, at the end of a nearly six-year public engagement process. As such, we continue to recommend that time be taken to address core stakeholders' concerns and advance a plan that will help shape this area for decades to come.

Further to our concerns, we are seeking assurances from the City, as we consult with our own technical resources, that the aftereffects of the new zoning amendments will yield no new harm to the Common and/or Garden beyond what is permissible in accordance with:

- Boston Common Shadow Law (Ch. 362, Acts of 1990; Ch. 384, Acts of 1993; Ch. 57, Acts of 2017)
- Public Garden Shadow Law (Ch. 384, Acts of 1993; CH. 57, Acts of 2017)

We appreciate the opportunity to help support and advance this important planning initiative in a manner that allows for constructive and collaborative dialogue and results in the implementation of new zoning amendments that are grounded in consensus.

Very sincerely yours,



Eugene R. Bolinger  
Interim President



Leslie Singleton Adam  
Board Chair

- CC:
- Mayor Michelle Wu
  - Director of Planning and Zoning Aimee Chambers
  - Senior Planner Andrew Nahamias
  - Chief of Policy Mike Firestone
  - Councilor Sharon Durkan
  - Councilor Ed Flynn
  - Council President Ruthzee Louijeune
  - Chief Climate Officer Brian Swett
  - Rep Jay Livingstone
  - Rep Aaron Michlewitz
  - Sen Lydia Edwards
  - Boston Preservation Alliance
  - PLAN: Downtown Initiative

## **Friends of the Public Garden**

### **Response:**

Thank you for your comments on the latest draft and your feedback throughout the Downtown zoning and PLAN: Downtown process. We valued the opportunity to discuss the January draft with the Friends of the Public Garden and other stakeholder groups.

We believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced approach for Downtown- one that leverages Downtown's potential for new housing, safeguards its historic character, supports its growth into a more vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood, while enforcing critical shadow restrictions on Downtown's open spaces. We hope the changes we made to include definitions and direct references to State Shadow Regulations help emphasize our commitment to reinforcing and highlighting the centrality of the State Shadow Laws.

We are grateful for your participation and collaboration throughout this six-year-long process.



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March 7, 2025

Mr. Kairos Shen  
Chief of Planning  
City of Boston Planning Department  
One City Hall Square, 9<sup>th</sup> floor  
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Chief Shen,

On behalf of Historic Boston Inc., I'm writing to provide comments on the City's January 8<sup>th</sup> amendments to the PLAN Downtown zoning draft.

Historic Boston Inc. (HBI) is a non-profit historic preservation organization that rehabilitates historic buildings for new uses that benefit the community. We are the owners of the c. 1718 Old Corner Bookstore, a site on the Freedom Trail and one of only a handful of remaining 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings in downtown Boston. HBI's headquarters is also housed in the Old Corner Bookstore.

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We would first like to express our gratitude to the BPDA for the years of work that have gone into this PLAN Downtown rezoning process. We recognize that there are many complex needs that the City is trying to balance. We are especially mindful of the need for additional housing, particularly for low and moderate-income households.

HBI commends the City's efforts to encourage adaptive re-use of commercial buildings to residential in this neighborhood, and we hope more owners of existing buildings choose to convert historic structures to housing. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings is environmentally responsible and helps maintain downtown Boston's character. Further, we hope the City will encourage owners to retain historic structures rather than just facades.

We also hope that the City will take seriously the concerns that have been raised about the potential harm certain increased height allowances could have on the 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings in the downtown area, including both physical degradation to masonry and experiential impacts.

These historic buildings provide immense economic, cultural, and social value to the City. Thanks to the care and preservation of these buildings, both tourists and Boston residents alike are able to imagine what our City looked and felt like during

the American Revolution as they walk the Freedom Trail – an experience that is unique to our City. Boston simply wouldn't be "Boston" without them.

We know that this work is challenging. HBI would be more than happy to lend our expertise to the City to ensure the final zoning text amendment and plan for Downtown Boston appropriately balances the potential impacts on these treasured structures with the neighborhood's evolving modern needs.

As always, Historic Boston is ready and willing to participate in any discussions regarding proposed new development in the downtown neighborhood, particularly those that are planned for School and Washington Streets.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stacy Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Stacy Thompson  
Interim Executive Director  
Historic Boston, Inc.

## Historic Boston

### Response:

Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of Downtown and your continued stewardship of the Old Corner Bookstore, a treasure of downtown.

After extensive review, including over 800 public comments and meetings with stakeholders, we have developed a revised draft that expands the SKY-LOW district to cover further areas of sensitive historic buildings and ensures that those buildings receive reinvestment alongside catalytic redevelopment. To that end, the revised draft includes:

- **Eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district** to preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including areas along Washington Street and around the Old South Meeting House.
- **Reinforcing compliance with State Shadow Regulations**, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.
- **Introducing new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas.** New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings.

Alongside safeguarding the unique character of some of Boston's most historic areas, we remain firmly committed to enabling inclusive growth and new housing in the heart of our City, and appreciate your commitment to this shared goal. This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address our housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City.

Implementing the recommendations of PLAN: Downtown for the growth and preservation of Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.



**National Trust for  
Historic Preservation**  
*Save the past. Enrich the future.*

March 6, 2025

VIA: PLANdowntown@boston.gov

Kairos Shen, Chief of Planning  
Boston Planning Department  
1 City Hall Square #9  
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Mr. Shen:

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has reviewed the Boston Planning **Department's January 2025 draft zoning amendments for PLAN Downtown. In** our view, the proposed zoning amendments could result in irreparable harm to **Boston's historic and cultural** resources. We respectfully recommend full public review and consideration of the potential adverse impacts of these proposed **zoning changes and consideration of alternative approaches before the City's** approval process is allowed to proceed.

Boston-based stakeholders including the Boston Preservation Alliance have expressed grave concerns about the potential adverse impacts of the draft zoning amendments upon the character of several important historic downtown blocks. The National Trust shares **the Boston Preservation Alliance's concerns. We** encourage revisions to the proposed zoning amendments to enable and incentivize the preservation-based rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of the **historic buildings that distinguish Boston's downtown. The reuse and retrofit of Boston's existing older and historic buildings is a sustainable way to help address the local community's need for housing.** State and federal tax credits are available to support adaptive reuse of historic buildings for housing. By contrast "facadism," the retention of only the skin of a historic building, is not considered a best practice in historic preservation. It is a last resort.

In addition to the potential loss of valuable historic buildings, Boston-based stakeholders including Revolutionary Spaces have expressed serious concerns about the adverse impacts of the proposed zoning changes upon the Old South Meeting House, the Old State House, and other individual cultural landmarks that are open and interpreted for the public. These historic places are essential to a full understanding of American heritage. The National Trust shares the concerns expressed by Revolutionary Spaces. The City of Boston should make every effort to preserve and protect these unique and irreplaceable landmarks. **Visitors to Boston's internationally renowned treasures deserve the opportunity** now and into the future to visit and experience the power of these historic places.

Given the very serious concerns raised by esteemed local historic preservation **institutions, which have actively participated in Boston's master planning** process, the National Trust strongly recommends that the City of Boston pause the re-zoning approval process in order to provide a meaningful opportunity to fully assess the potential adverse impacts that the proposed downtown zoning **changes will have on Boston's historic buildings, streetscapes, and cultural** treasures.

Thank you for considering the views of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Nieweg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Rob Nieweg  
Senior Vice President, Preservation Services & Outreach  
National Trust for Historic Preservation

## National Trust for Historic Preservation

### Response:

Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of Downtown. After extensive engagement with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations—and a review of over 800 public comments—we have developed a revised draft.

The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown’s historic and cultural assets while enabling a mix of uses and housing that Downtown needs to thrive. Updates in the revised draft include:

- **Eliminating the SKY-R district and expanding the SKY-LOW-D district** to preserve the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, including areas along Washington Street and around the Old South Meeting House.
- **Reinforcing compliance with State Shadow Regulations**, adding formal references to the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.
- **Introducing new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas.** New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings.

Alongside safeguarding the unique character of some of Boston’s most historic areas, we remain firmly committed to enabling inclusive growth and new housing in the heart of our City. This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address our housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other parts of the City.

Implementing the recommendations of PLAN: Downtown for the growth and preservation of Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown’s historic identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.

March 5, 2025

Kairos Shen, Chief of Planning  
Boston Planning Department  
Boston City Hall  
One City Hall, Ninth Floor  
Boston, Massachusetts 02201

**Re: 2025 Draft Downtown Zoning Amendment –  
Effect on Redevelopment Potential of Pi Alley Parking Garage**

Dear Chief Shen,

Thank you for providing an opportunity to review and comment on the Boston Planning Department's draft zoning text amendment and map changes for the proposed Skyline Districts in Downtown Boston.

We represent a family group (the Harwoods) that, since 1986, has owned and operated the Pi Alley Parking Garage at 275 Washington Street in Downtown Crossing—a 792-space, public parking garage built in 1969, located on a 32,864 square-foot parcel. For the past several years, our client has actively considered redeveloping the property for a mixed-use tower which includes replacement parking.

The Harwoods have submitted prior comments on PLAN: Downtown and on the April 10, 2024 draft Downtown zoning amendment. We have also reviewed the recent changes to the draft zoning amendment to identify how they might affect the property's redevelopment potential. We are pleased to see that the Pi Alley Parking Garage would be located in the SKY district, which allows for building up to the maximum height allowed by state shadow laws and FAA regulations and for significant use flexibility—in particular making residential use allowed-as-of-right. These changes will be helpful in accommodating redevelopment options for the site, and we commend you for advancing zoning ideas that will help attract investment that contributes to the vitality of Downtown Boston.

In contrast to flexibility on use and height, however, the revised draft contains even more detailed form-based requirements and limitations. These could discourage design innovation more broadly, and also present specific challenges for accommodating a sufficiently ambitious redevelopment of the Pi Alley Parking Garage site to warrant demolition of the existing garage. For instance, the proposed building lot coverage maximum of 85%, combined with the floor

plate reduction minimum of 20%, effectively limits the average floor plate above the stepback height to 65% of the lot size.

We accordingly ask that you consider two changes to provide design flexibility needed to accommodate context-sensitive development. First, we ask that you consider allowing Planned Development Areas within the SKY district, which are currently allowed in the B-10 zoning district where the Pi Alley Parking Garage is located. Prohibiting PDAs in the new SKY district would eliminate a potential zoning compliance pathway for projects that may be burdened by massing and other zoning restrictions. Allowing PDAs within the SKY district would help unlock redevelopment potential under Planning Department and Zoning Commission oversight, and further the SKY district's purpose of accommodating high density mixed-use development that helps foster more vibrancy and public benefits to move Downtown Boston forward.

Second, we ask that you consider expanding the proposed zoning restrictions which can be determined through Large Project Review to include building lot coverage, length of building façade, minimum square footage of ground floor outdoor amenity space and floor plate area reduction above stepback height. This change would enable large projects to maintain greater design flexibility through the urban design component of Large Project Review and would also reduce the need for PDAs or zoning relief from the Board of Appeal.

Thank you for considering these requests.

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Kiefer

cc: Brett Harwood  
Craig Harwood  
Leslie Harwood  
Doug Sickler  
Mike Berman

## **Re: Effect on Redevelopment Potential of Pi Alley Parking Garage**

### **Response:**

Thank you for sharing your thoughts on the draft Downtown zoning, and particularly how it would apply to your property in the Skyline (SKY) District. In the SKY District, we are trying to balance a performance-based approach to zoning and development and ensuring predictability on building form. Additionally, while PDAs are an appropriate tool in some cases, they also have drawbacks and so the Planning Department carefully considers and evaluates where they should be deployed. We are not extending PDA eligibility to the SKY District that includes Pi Alley.

Similarly, we think the building lot coverage, length of building facade, ground floor amenity space, and floor plate reduction all represent important dimensional regulations to shape building form through Article 80 Large Project Review, and should be retained as drafted. The provisions that allow for the reconstruction and extension of non-conforming buildings will likewise be an important avenue to provide flexibility to preserve existing buildings.

We appreciate your detailed feedback on the zoning proposal and how it might apply to your property, a key site in downtown.

# Tremont on the Common Condominium

January 31, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

As members of the Board of Trustees and Management of the 374-unit apartment building at 151 Tremont Street (Tremont on the Common), we wish to register our opposition to the proposed new zoning plan for the Downtown District. The plan presented Monday, January 15, 2025, with a scant four days' notice, is a shocking departure from previous proposals, which were developed with extensive, years-long neighborhood input as part of PLAN: Downtown. We believe that if this plan is implemented it will be detrimental to the future of our neighborhood, its residents, workers, and visitors.

Tremont Street, Washington Street, the Ladder Streets, and especially Downtown Crossing are unquestionably in need of economic development and infrastructure improvements.

We fully support the revitalization of the Downtown neighborhood. We would like the district to be more prosperous and without vacant storefronts. We want it to be safer and to support more families and small businesses. We applaud the conversion of underutilized commercial buildings to residential use and welcome more affordable housing to our neighborhood.

Downtown has the unique distinction of being a living language of colonial civic architecture and 19th and 20th century commercial architecture. These buildings represent a great cultural accomplishment. There is no other intact neighborhood of this type in the city of Boston and to allow 500-foot towers along the length of Washington Street, Stuart Street and beyond will destroy what makes this area singular.

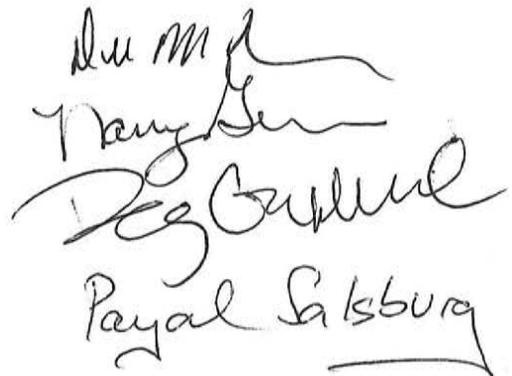
This proposed zoning plan was rushed in its formulation, rushed to the community, and is being further rushed to a Zoning Board vote. It was presented with a paucity of information. There were no analyses of data regarding population density when fully built out nor the impact that density would have on infrastructure, the environment, or quality of life. There were no case studies showing successful examples of this type of high-rise zoning in other cities. Such information is the barest minimum a community should expect.

We urge you to reassess this zoning proposal and explore more creative ways to improve our neighborhood while following a review process with a reasonable timeframe that allows resident input.

Sincerely,

Tremont on the Common Resident Trustees  
Deb Danik, Nancy Gerlach, Peg Gaillard, Payal Salsburg  
151 Tremont Street, Boston, MA 02111

151 Tremont Street  
Management Office  
Boston, MA 02111



Handwritten signatures of Deb Danik, Nancy Gerlach, Peg Gaillard, and Payal Salsburg.

617-482-2165

## **Tremont on the Common Condominium**

### **Response:**

Thank you for your comments and for sharing your concerns about the latest draft. In response to feedback, the comment period was extended to collect additional input and continue engaging with residents, community leaders, preservation advocates, and business organizations. The revised draft incorporates many of the concerns raised throughout the public process and takes important steps to strengthen protections for Downtown's historic and cultural assets while enabling the mix of uses and housing needed for Downtown to thrive.

The revised draft eliminates the SKY-R district and expands the SKY-LOW-D district to maintain the scale and character of sensitive historic areas, such as Washington Street and the area surrounding the Old South Meeting House. It introduces new incentives for strategic development and housing that protect and enhance historic buildings and areas. New limited eligibility for Planned Development Areas (PDAs) for 1-acre sites in the SKY-LOW-D district must include a Landmark, be predominantly residential, and invest in and preserve Landmark(s) and historic buildings. In addition, Article 80 Development Review will enforce the new Downtown Design Guidelines and require projects to assess and mitigate impacts on nearby historic resources, the transportation network, and the public realm. The draft also reinforces compliance with State Shadow Regulations by formally referencing the state laws that protect the Boston Common and Public Garden from new shadow impacts.

This zoning update is one of several plans and initiatives underway across Boston to address the housing crisis. As the most transit-accessible part of our City, Downtown is a critical location for focusing new mixed-use and residential density, where Inclusionary Zoning requirements will produce affordable housing at a scale not feasible in other neighborhoods. Inclusionary Zoning will require all residential projects to be 17 percent income-restricted at an average of 60% of Area Median Income, with an additional 3 percent of units reserved for people with housing vouchers.

Every proposed development downtown - under current and future zoning - is comprehensively evaluated for its impacts on infrastructure, the environment, and other factors as part of Article 80 Review. We look forward to your continued participation in that process.

By implementing the growth and preservation goals of PLAN: Downtown, we believe this revised draft reflects a more balanced path forward—protecting Downtown's historic

identity while enabling it to grow as a vibrant, inclusive, and livable neighborhood for generations to come.