PLAN: Charlestown

Urban Design Guidelines + Preservation Public Meeting

May 24, 2023



Welcome

Jason Ruggiero, Community Engagement Manager



Meeting Recording

At the request of community members, this event will be recorded and posted on the PLAN: Charlestown project webpage at http://bostonplans.org/PlanCharlestown for those who are unable to attend the zoom event live.

It is possible that participants may be recording the meeting with their phone cameras or other devices. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.

If your camera and microphone are off, you can still participate through the text chat feature at the end of the presentation.

Note: These meetings are not subject to Open Meeting Law. Open Meeting Law also does not require that public bodies allow public comment or public participation during meetings.



Zoom Tips

Welcome! Here are some tips on using Zoom for first-time users. Your controls are at the bottom of the screen



Use the chat to type a comment or ask a question at any time – Members of the PLAN: Charlestown team will enable the chat at the end.



To raise your hand, click on "Participants" at the bottom of your screen, and then choose the "Raise Hand" option in the participant box



Mute/unmute – Participants will be muted during the presentation – the host will unmute you during discussion if you raise your hand and it is your turn to talk



Turns your video on/off



Zoom Etiquette

- Please remain muted until called on. If you'd like to speak during this time please use the "Raise Hand" function in Zoom.
- The chat function will be enabled during the discussion agenda item. (In keeping with convention from in-person meetings.)
- Please be respectful of each other's time. We ask comments be held to 2 minutes.
- We ask that participants limit their questions so that others may participate in the discussion. If you have more questions, please wait until all others attending have an opportunity to ask questions.
- If we are unable to get to your question at this meeting please put them in the Chat at the end or email Jason.Ruggiero@boston.gov



Code of Conduct (co-written w/ AG)

- Virtual planning events will be held via the Zoom "Meeting" platform, which allows participants to control their engagement features such as "mute/unmute," "camera," and other features. Zoom Webinar does not allow these capabilities.
- <u>During presentations, the chat feature will be turned off.</u> The chat feature will be enabled once a presentation is complete. Participants are encouraged to raise their hands to ask questions if needed. The virtual "Raise Hand" feature is located at the bottom of the Zoom screen (hand icon).
- We <u>strongly encourage</u> speakers to turn on their cameras while speaking.
- Comments or questions from the public will be limited to 2 minutes of speaking time. Two questions per person at a time is the maximum. A 30-second follow-up comment after a staff member responds is allowed. These time limits will be strictly enforced.
- We ask that all attendees respect one another and any differences of opinion. We welcome differences of opinions, including opinions that differ from those of BPDA staff. Always assume good intentions when any contradictions or disagreements are made. Constructive comments and opinions should be aimed at topics, not people.
- We ask that all attendees refrain from the following behaviors:
 - Threatening to take unwarranted legal action against meeting participants
 - Bullying participants either in the chat or verbally out loud
 - Harassment including criticizing, mocking, or posing threats against participants
 - Threats or derogatory speech against BPDA staff or other participants
 - Grandstanding or exceeding allowed time limits
- Those who exceed the limits on speaking time or interrupt or otherwise disrupt others while they are speaking may be removed from the meeting.



For all meeting content: http://www.bostonplans.org/plancharlestown



Agenda

- Urban Design Guidelines (Original Peninsula and Lost Village) (6:10-6:35pm)
- Zoning Recommendations to Support Urban Design Goals (6:35-6:50pm)
- Preservation Recommendations (6:50-7:05pm)
- Q+A (7:05-7:30pm)

If you have a follow up item, please reach out to Jason Ruggiero (Jason.Ruggiero@boston.gov) and we will be in touch as soon as possible.

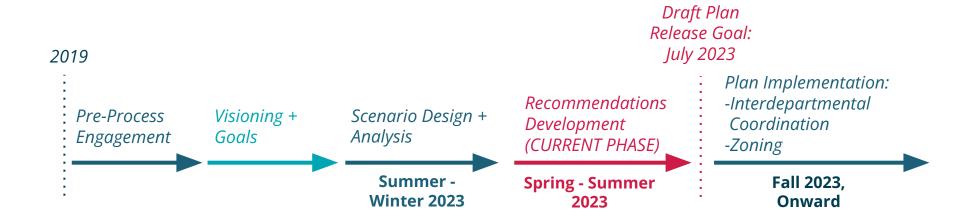


Quick Project Schedule Update

Patricia Cafferky, Senior Planner - BPDA



Timeline





3 Buckets of Work

Zoning Recommendations

- Focused on historically industrial areas
- Receive public feedback via the scenarios comment periods
- Consultant Team created the hybrid scenario
- There will be another iteration <u>after</u> the hybrid

Neighborhood Needs Analysis

Analysis Topics Include:

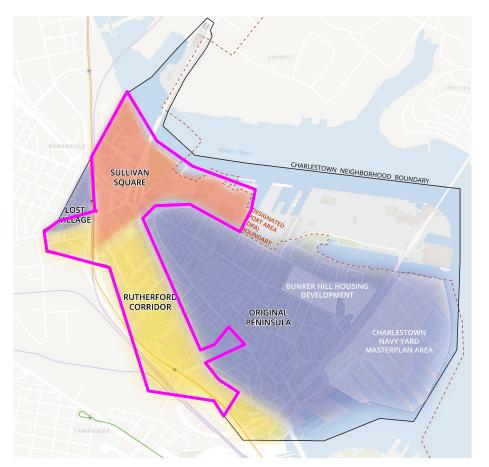
- Minor Zoning Changes
- Housing Needs
- Open Space / Sports Fields
- Neighborhood Services
- Retail + Food Access
- Resilience
- Arts and Culture
- Preservation
- Mobility

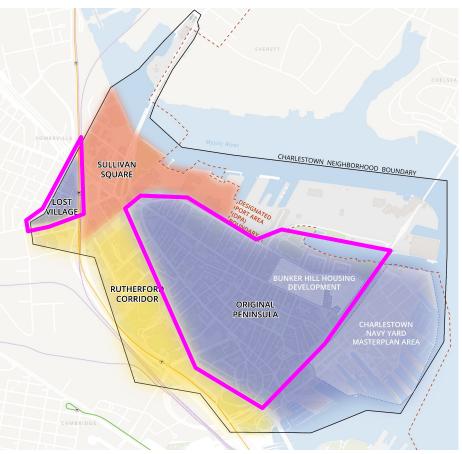
Urban Design Guidelines

- One set of guidelines for the Original Peninsula/ Lost Village;
- One set of guidelines for the Sullivan
 Square/Rutherford Ave



Our Last Meeting vs. Tonight's Focus





Next Steps

1. Zoning Recommendations (Scenarios)

- a. Hybrid Scenario out for public comment until <u>Friday</u>, <u>June 9th</u> (extended to include a late meeting with the Mishawum board)
- b. Updated version of the scenario to come in July

2. Urban Design Guidelines

- a. Meeting #1 (this meeting) Wednesday, May 24th
 - i. Topic: Original Peninsula + Lost Village areas
- b. Meeting #2 Thursday, June 1st
 - i. Topic: Rutherford Ave + Sullivan Square areas

3. Neighborhood Needs Analysis

- a. Meeting #1 <u>Tentative date: Wednesday, June 14th</u>
 - Topic: Neighborhood Services (Schools, Fire, Police, EMS, Library, Water, Sewers, Trash Collection, Street Sweeping, etc.)
- b. Meeting #2 Date TBD
 - i. Topic(s): Housing, Retail, Food Security, Arts + Culture, Mobility (Resident Parking Permits, Intersections), Climate Resilience



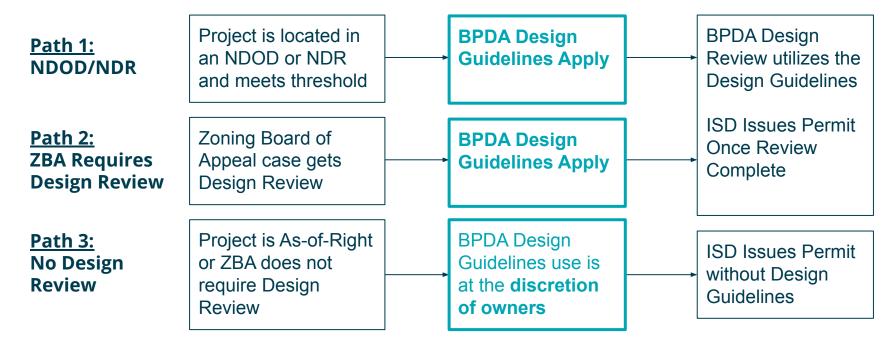
Urban Design Guidelines(Original Peninsula and Lost Village)

Patricia Cafferky, Senior Planner - BPDA <u>Meghan Ri</u>chard, Urban Designer II - BPDA



How Design Guidelines Work*

3 Possible Permitting Paths





*On projects below 20,000-sf of gross floor area or 15 dwelling units. Design guidelines apply for all projects above this threshold.

What is an NDOD?

Neighborhood Design Overlay Districts are overlays established to protect the:

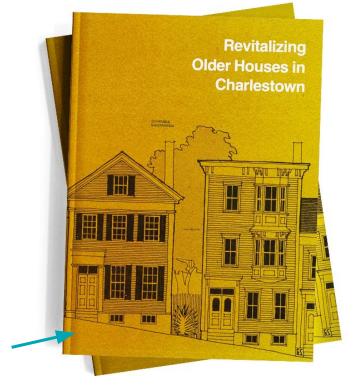
- Existing neighborhood scale;
- Quality of the pedestrian environment;
- Character of the residential neighborhoods; and
- Concentrations of historic buildings within the district.





What Changes are We Proposing?

- 1. Update Materials
- 2. Update guidance on dormers
- 3. Renewable / Sustainability Efforts / Resiliency Mitigation
- 4. Incorporate Public Realm Elements
- 5. Include modern day best practices



Existing design guidelines from 1973 [50 years ago]



How the New Guidelines are Organized

- 1. General Guidelines for All Proposals
- 2. Infill Development
- 3. Additions
- 4. Facade Alterations
- 5. Public Realm
- 6. Demolition



Massing

- Massing should be contextual, with similar heights, set backs, and step-backs to neighbors.
- Create visual interest by avoiding completely flat facades and by using pitched roofs where appropriate.
- Projections over the public sidewalk should be limited to orioles or bays.
 Bays should be scaled based on the surrounding context.
- For buildings located on corners, use massing variations and window patterns to give character to both street-facing facades.

The larger masses respect their context by only stepping up 1 floor, and using a similar roof profile to their neighbors.





<u>Decks</u>

- Decks and balconies should be located at the rear.
- Roof decks should be set back a minimum of 5'-0" to reduce visibility.

Materials

- Exterior materials should be high-quality.
 Vinyl, aluminum, and EIFS should be avoided. Wood, fiber cement, and full-wythe brick are preferred.
- Thin-brick, artificial stone, and stone veneer is not allowed.
- Material colors and proportions should compliment each other and highlight the building massing.





Windows

- Align windows on the same facade horizontally and vertically.
- Use window materials that are high-quality and compliment the exterior cladding. Preserving historic windows is encouraged. Wood-framed clad windows are preferred.

Doors

- All doors should be wood. Metal and vinyl are not typically allowed.
- All doors facing the street should have translucent panels.
- Provide good light at entries.





Sustainability

- Reduce urban heat island by using light-colored materials for all paving.
- Maximize permeable surface with planted areas, green walls, and open grid pavers.
- Prioritize adaptive re-use of existing structures. Use sustainable materials.

Open Space

- Open space is required for most housing units (in zoning). Parking areas, driveways, and areas not open to the sky are not open space.
- Make open spaces accessible, with unobstructed areas for seating, and a mix of shaded and sunny areas.

<u>Tree Preservation + Planting</u>

- Preserve on-site trees, and maximize the addition of new trees. When existing trees must be removed, they should be replaced on-site on a caliper-per-caliper basis. (Ex. A tree with a 6" diameter trunk might be replaced with two 3" trees).
- Use a diverse mix of native plantings.
- Irrigate landscape elements with collected storm or gray water.
- Existing street trees within the public right-of-way are to be protected and retained.



Off-Street Parking and Garage Doors

- Avoid creating new curb cuts.
- Limit curb cuts and driveway width to 10'.
- Garage doors should not face streets.
- Where garage doors are visible, materials should be high quality, avoiding metal and vinyl.
- Garage doors should include translucent panels.

Mechanicals and Transformers

- Consider transformer and switchgear locations early in site design.
- Do not located utility systems or mechanical elements in front yards. Mechanical and utility systems should be screened from public view.
- All mechanical vents should be in rear wall or roofs.
- If in the Coastal Flood Resilience Overlay District, locate critical systems above the Design Flood Elevation.



Guidelines for Infill Development

Massing

 New buildings should be a similar height, scale and form to those on the same block. (In addition to complying with zoning).

Front Yard

 Front yards should be based on context by matching the setback of a majority of buildings on the street or block. Consider especially the adjacent buildings' setbacks.

Roof

 Gable, flat, and mansard roofs may all be appropriate. Mansard roofs must be proportional and should not overhang.

Sustainability

Consider meeting LEED & Passive House.





Guidelines for Additions

Massing

- For smaller additions, it can be appropriate to use similar materials, proportions, and details as the original structure.
- For large, substantial additions, use massing and materials to differentiate. Additions should not overwhelm the existing structure.

Historic Significance

 If the existing structure is historic, delineate between the old and new with materials.
 Work with existing structures rather than demolishing and replacing. Additions should not conceal historic elements, and historic street-facing facades should be preserved.

This addition fills in the typical recessed entryway, and by doing so conceals an element that contributes to the historic building's character. Next door, a recessed entryway can be seen, which was likely similar to this home's original recess.

Though more complementary materials might have been chosen, the materials selected for the addition are clearly differentiated from the original brick house, and the old and new are both clearly legible.

Doors

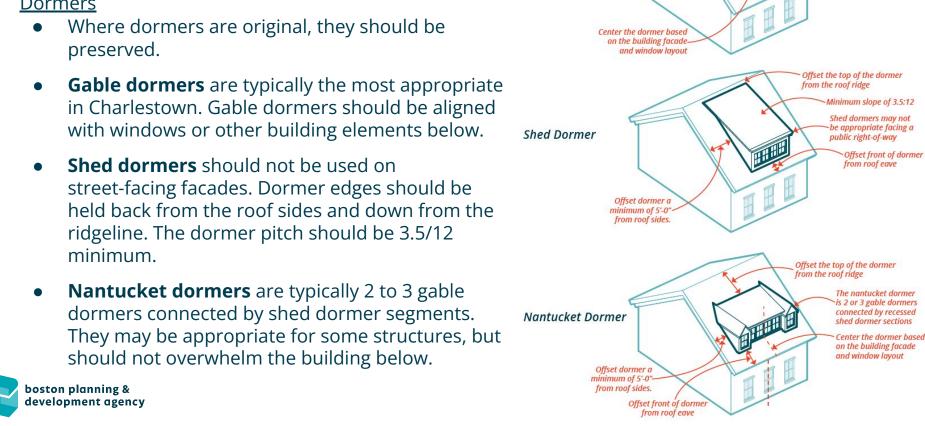
• Maintain recessed doorways and steps.

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Guidelines for Additions

Dormers



Gable Dormer

Offset the top of the dormer from the roof ridge

> Original gable dormers should be preserved

> > Offset front of dormer from roof eave



Guidelines for Facade Alterations

Historic Significance

Preserve, and do not conceal, historic elements.
 Restorations should be historically accurate.

<u>Materials</u>

- If only altering a portion of a facade, materials should match the existing portion being preserved.
- Maintain original brick whenever possible.
- Clapboard and Shingles: Wood shingles are not typically historically accurate. Replace with lap siding when possible.
- Match historic trim and details.

Windows

 Preserving original windows is preferred. Only true structural muntins are appropriate.



Windows often have a rhythm and common spacing on facades, which should be maintained. It is often clear when windows have been removed or are missing.

Original ornamental details should be retained and repaired when possible, and replicated when necessary.

New windows should match the proportion, type, and size of existing windows, while also being physically aligned on the facade. This bottom window is a different size, style, and proportion.



Guidelines for Public Realm

<u>Sidewalks</u>

- Frontage zones should be at least 2'-0" wide. If there is cafe seating, it should be at least 6'-0".
- Pedestrian zones should be a minimum of 5'-0" on neighborhood residential streets, or 8'-0" for neighborhood connector streets.
- Furnishing zones should be at least 1'-6", wide but are preferred at 5'. They are where public fixtures are installed, such as street trees, lights, signage, hydrants, benches, bike racks, etc.
- Existing street trees should be preserved. New tree pits should be 24sf minimum. Trees should be properly spaced from curb cuts and utilities.





Guidelines for Public Realm

Utilities

- New projects should always place utility lines should be placed below grade.
- Existing utility lines should be put underground as streets are improved.

Street Lighting

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- Older street lights should be replaced with newer 'arched pendant lights'.
- New street lights should be LED, dark sky compliant, and meet PWD control requirements.







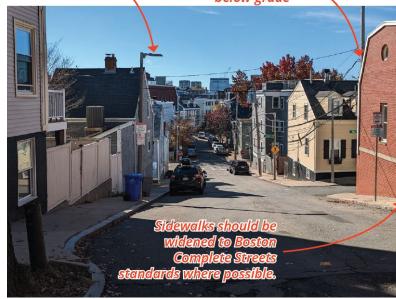
Rectilinear Light



Arched Pendant Light

Street lights to have updated fixtures

As street work is completed, utilities should be placed below-grade



Discouraging Demolition

The BPDA and BLC **discourage** demolition for 2 key reasons:

1. Historic Significance:

- a. Older buildings in Charlestown contribute to the distinctive quality of the neighborhood
- b. A city needs old buildings to maintain a sense of permanency and heritage
- c. Maintaining the quality and sense of place in the heart of Charlestown is vital as the neighborhood continues to evolve.

2. Sustainability:

a. Most often preservation and adaptation of existing buildings is the far more sustainable option when taking into account that the construction of buildings depletes limited natural resources, contributes to pollution, and uses excessive amounts of energy.

Demolition is addressed by Article 85 of the Boston Zoning Code and is subject to further study as a part of broader zoning reform.



Zoning Recommendations to Support Urban Design Goals

Patricia Cafferky, Senior Planner - BPDA

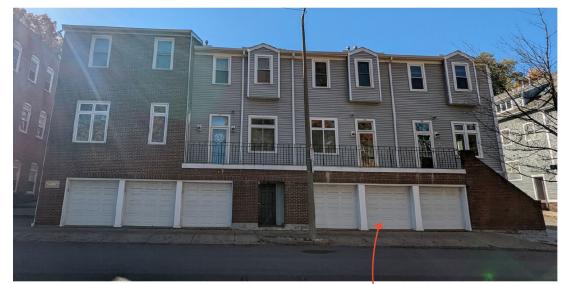


Goals of Zoning Modifications

- 1. Improve the public realm (in alignment with UD Guidelines)
- 2. Decrease the necessity of zoning variances for simple projects (especially for existing buildings)
- 3. Simplify the zoning code (make easier to use!)

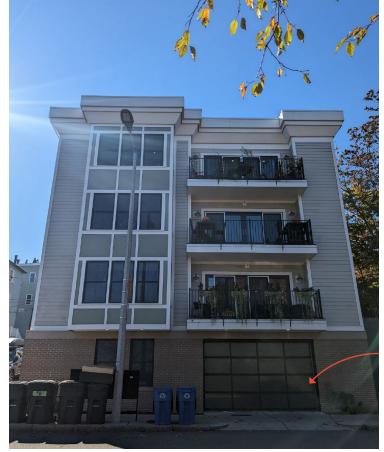


1. Limit garage doors facing public streets



Text to add to zoning code: "Location of Garage Doors. Within the Residential Subdistricts, garage doors shall not face the Front Lot Line."

Garage doors at the sidewalk create a 'dead' street edge and can make walking along the sidewalk dangerous due to vehicle crossing





2. Remove parking minimums for structures with 6 or less housing units

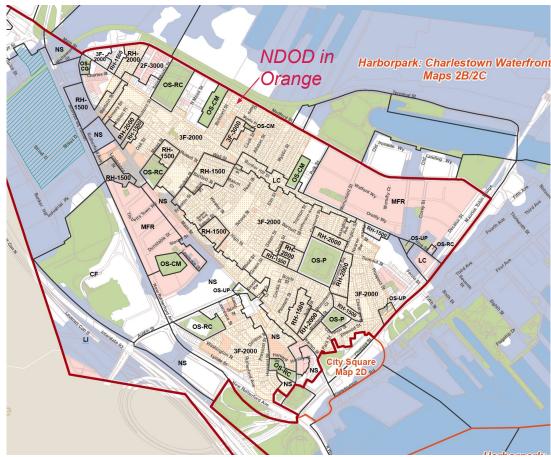
Other Residential Uses ⁽³⁾	Suggestion
1-2 units	1.0
3-6 units	1.5 0
7-9 units	1.75 1.0
10+ units	2.0 1.0

- In Charlestown in 2021, 76.5% of households owned 1 car or less (18.7% did not own a car at all). - Source: ACS 2016-2021 data.
- Aligned with BTD maximums.



3. Simplify the NDOD district in the code to

match the map

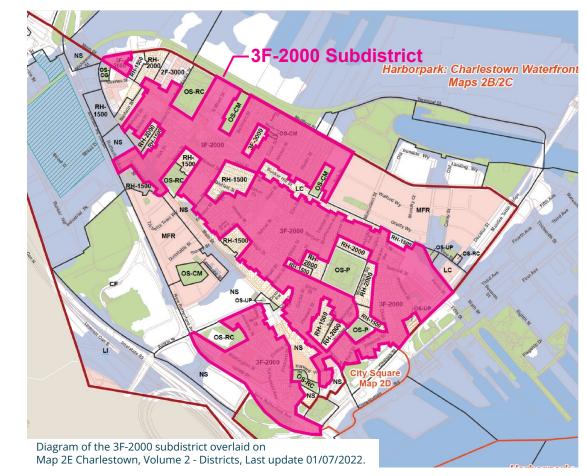




4. Simplify Charlestown's 2F + 3F Subdistricts

3F-2000 Allows:

- Use: Up to 3 housing units
- Height: Up to 35 feet
- Density: Up to 2.0 FAR
- Side Yard Width: Min 2"-6"
- Rear Yard: Min 20 feet





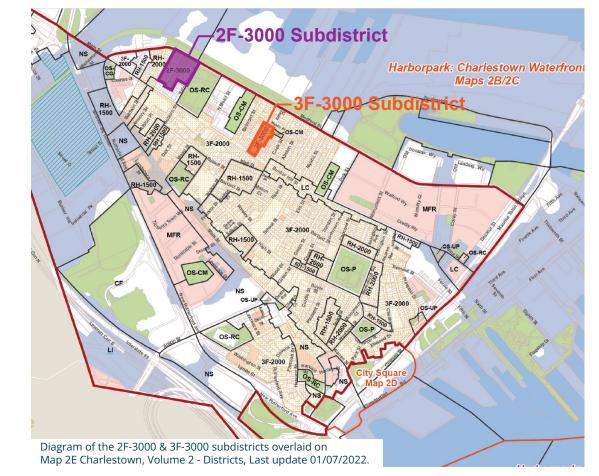
4. Simplify Charlestown's 2F + 3F Subdistricts

2F-3000 Allows:

- Use: Up to 2 housing units
- Height: Up to 35 feet
- Density: Up to 2.0 FAR
- Side Yard Width: Min 5 feet
- Rear Yard: Min 30 feet

3F-3000 Allows:

- Use: Up to 3 housing units
- Height: 35 feet
- Density: 2.0 FAR
- Side Yard Width: Min 5 feet
- Rear Yard: Min 25 feet





4. Simplify Charlestown's 2F + 3F Subdistricts

BECOMES

2F-3000 Allows:

- Use: Up to 2 housing units
- Height: Up to 35 feet
- Density: Up to 2.0 FAR
- Side Yard Width: Min 5 feet
- Rear Yard: Min 30 feet

3F-3000 Allows:

- Use: Up to 3 housing units
- Height: Up to 35 feet
- Density: Up to 2.0 FAR
- Side Yard Width: Min 5 feet
- Rear Yard: Min 25 feet

3F-2000 Allows:

- Use: Up to 3 housing units
- Height: Up to 35 feet
- Density: Up to 2.0 FAR
- Side Yard Width: Min 2"-6"
- Rear Yard: Min 20 feet



4. 2F-3000

























4. Simplify Charlestown's 2F + 3F Subdistricts













Stats: 14 residential properties 0 vacant properties

5. Update the Rear Yard Setback Rqmt for Row House Subdistricts

Full recommendation: Update the rear yard setback requirement to be 15 feet minimum for Row House parcels (RH-1500 and RH-2000 districts) in Charlestown to better match existing conditions.

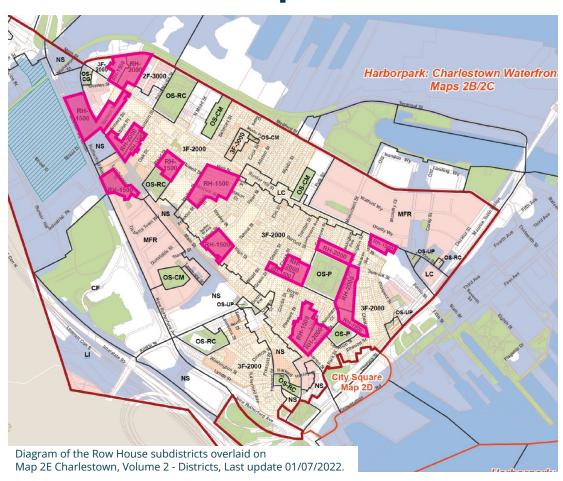
RH-1500 Requires:

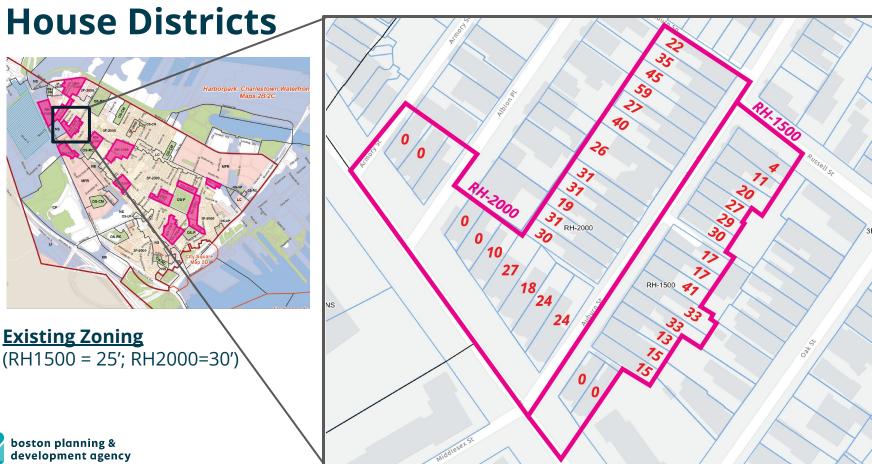
• Rear Yard: Minimum 25 feet

RH-2000 Requires:

• Rear Yard: Minimum 30 feet

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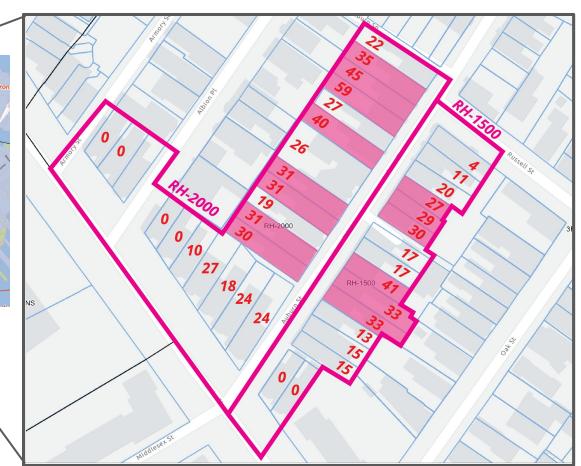


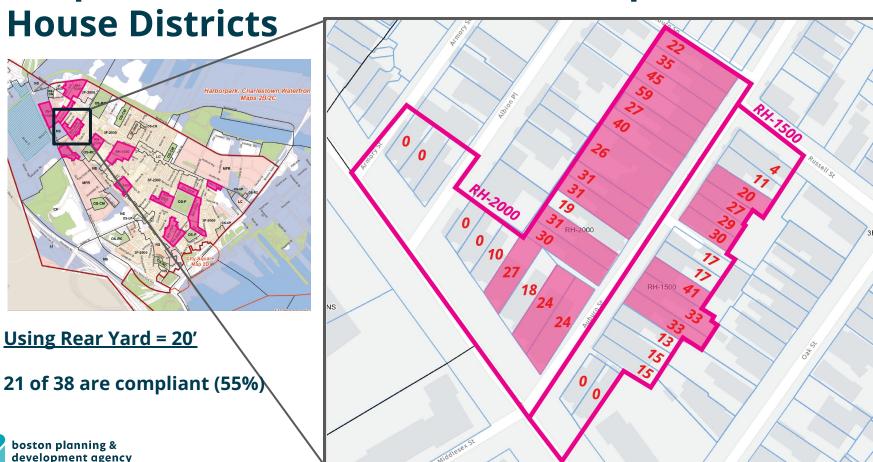


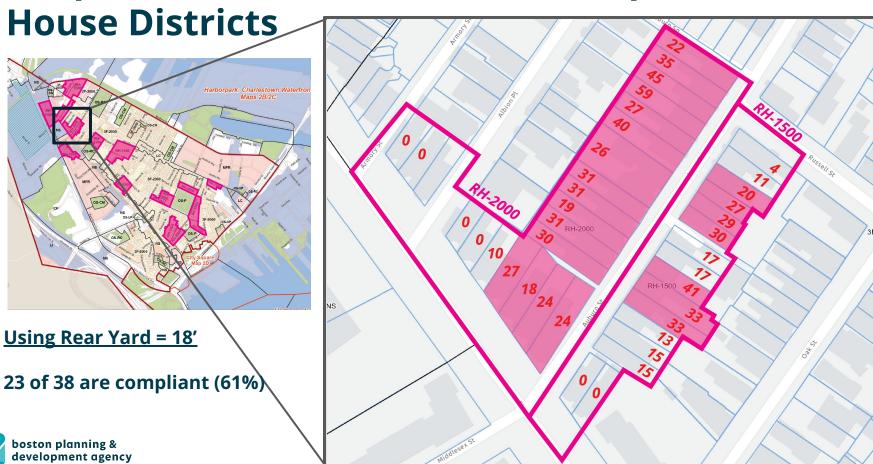
Existing Zoning (RH1500 = 25'; RH2000=30')

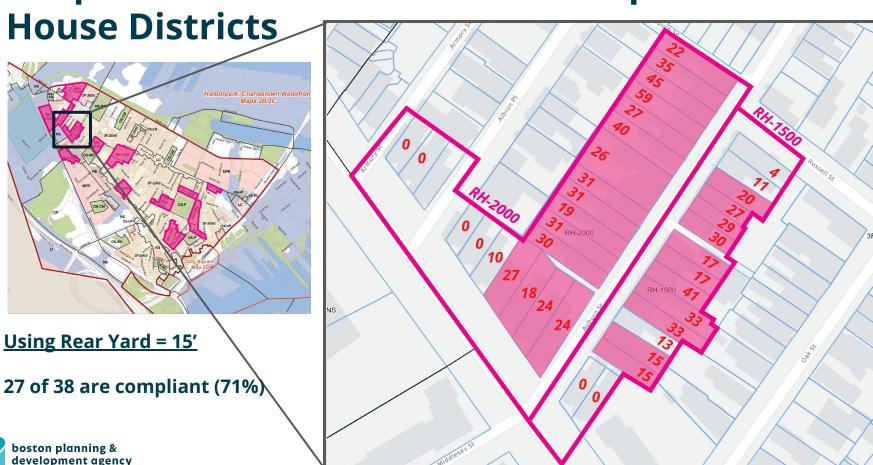
14 of 38 are compliant (37%)

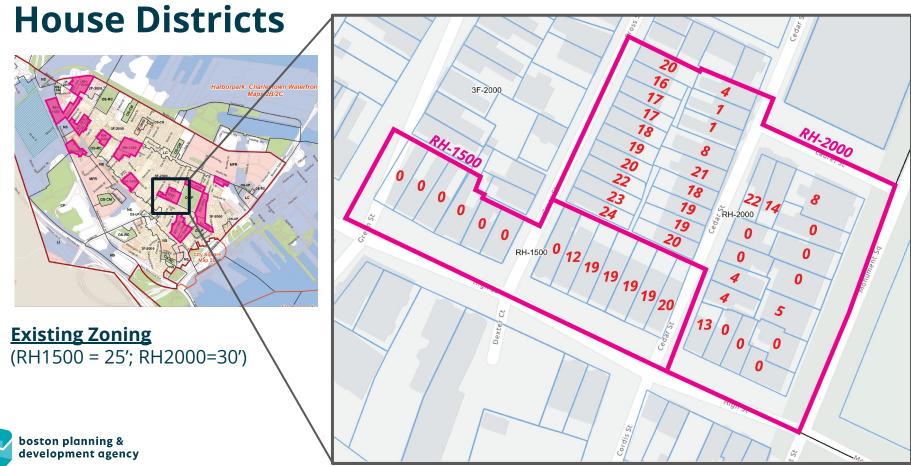


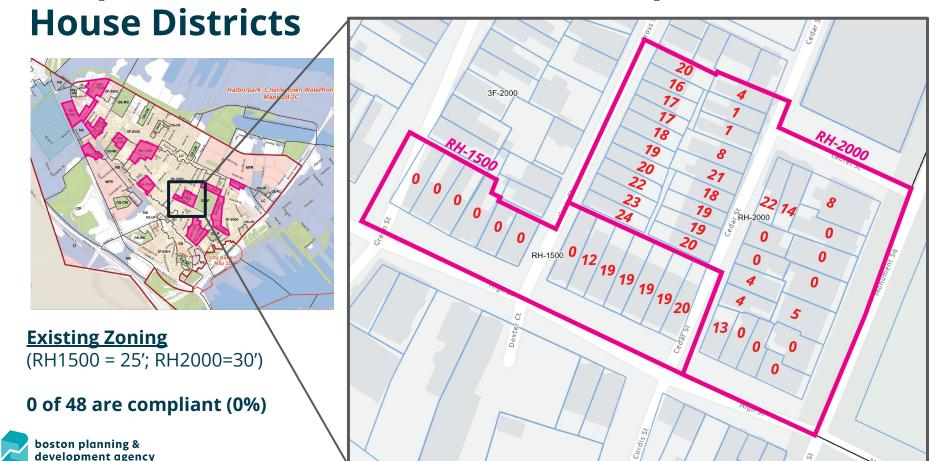


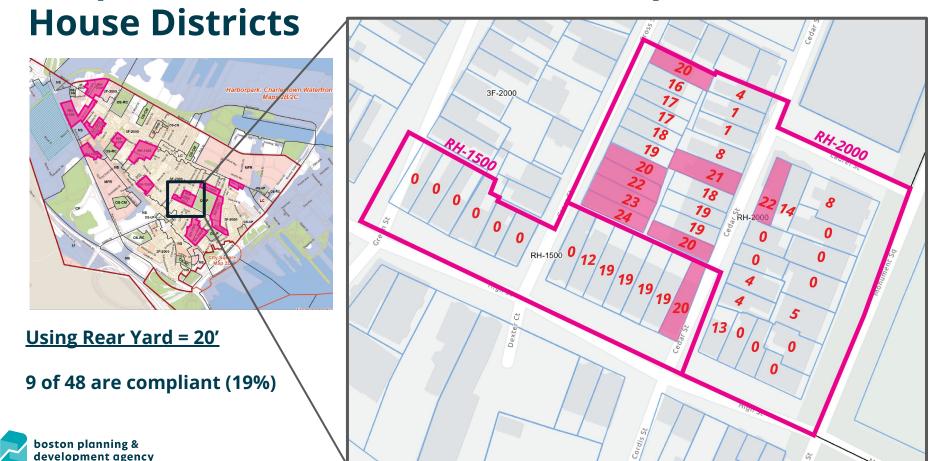


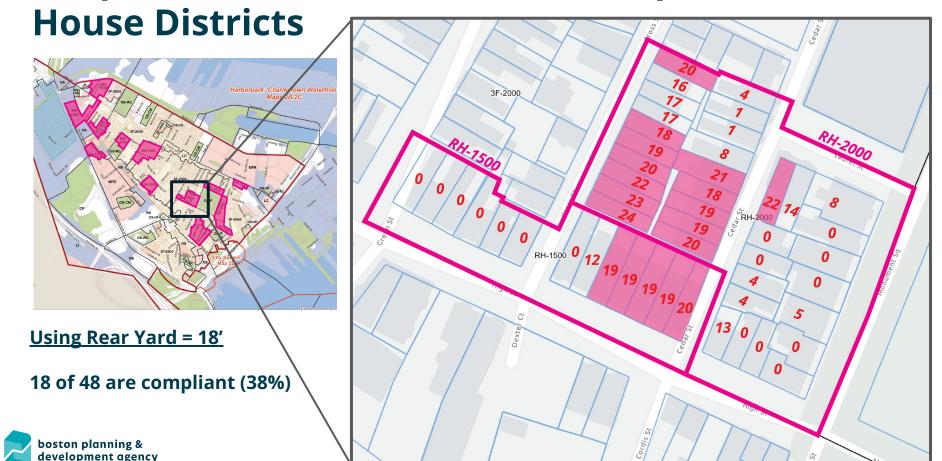


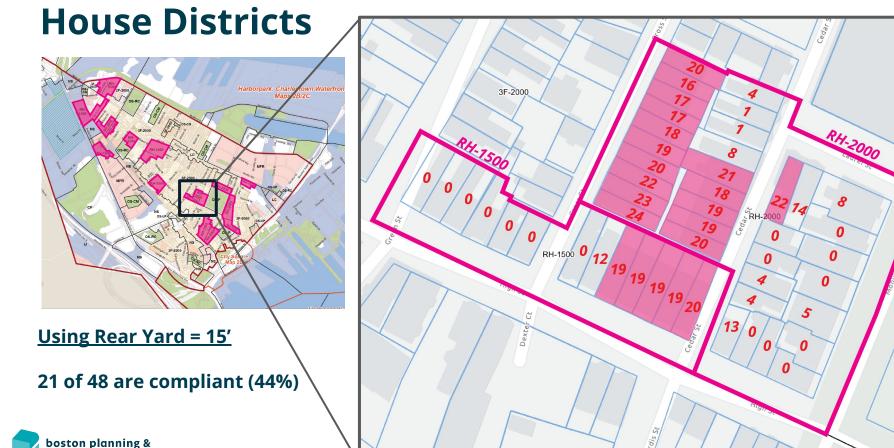












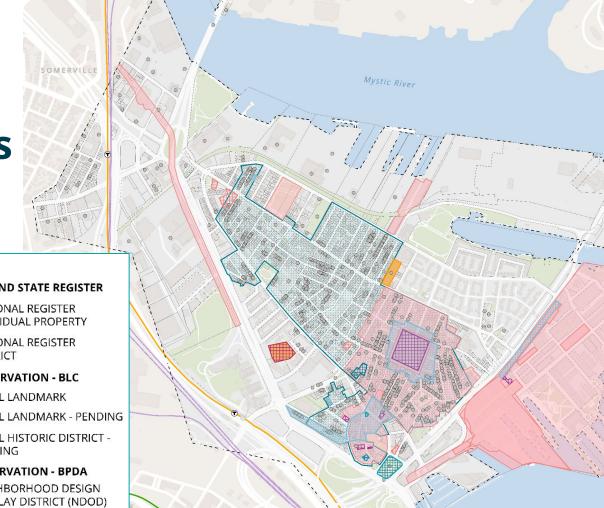
development agency

Preservation Recommendations

Meghan Richard, Urban Designer II - BPDA Nicholas Armata, Senior Preservation Planner - Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC)



Existing Historic **Designations**



LEGEND

CHARLESTOWN BOUNDARY

EXISTING OPEN SPACE

EXISTING BUILDING

MBTA ORANGE LINE

MBTA GREEN LINE

COMMUTER RAIL

HISTORIC TRAILS

BURIAL GROUND

INVENTORIED PROPERTY

PRESERVATION BY COVENANT

PRESERVATION RESTRICTION

NATIONAL AND STATE REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY

NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT

LOCAL PRESERVATION - BLC

LOCAL LANDMARK

LOCAL LANDMARK - PENDING

LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT -PENDING

LOCAL PRESERVATION - BPDA

NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN OVERLAY DISTRICT (NDOD)

How Do Local Protections

Type of **Protection**

Local Historic District

NDOD / NDR with **Design Guidelines** **Design Guidelines** only

Compare?

Relevant **Agency**

BLC

ISD/BPDA

ISD/BPDA

Inappropriate substantive changes/alterations

Loss of trees/open space

Inappropriate infill development









Demolition









Out-of-date for resilience / sustainability best practices









Maintain individual freedom for minor design changes











Feedback

Community



= Does Not Address









= Addresses, to 25%, 50% 75%, or 100%

WHO IS THE BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION (BLC)?

There are over 9,000 protected properties listed as individual Landmarks or located within Boston's local historic districts.

THE BOSTON LANDMARKS COMMISSION:

- Administers design review for designated individual Landmarks and districts, and accelerated design review for pending Landmarks
- Issues violations and fines related to unapproved construction
- Supports State and Federal Designations
- Oversees ARTICLE 85 of the City's Zoning Code and reviews all proposed demolition city-wide
 - if invoked, delay period is 90 days





NATIONAL REGISTER DESIGNATION

- National Register is often the starting point for local districts.
 - Local designation uses National Register to determine significance, and then uses designation to protect
- Analyzes and assesses the historic character and quality of the district
 - Designates historic areas based on uniform <u>national</u> criteria and procedures. Sets district boundaries tightly, based on the actual distribution pattern of intact historic properties in the area
- Financial Advantages:
 - Unlocks federal and state tax incentives for preservation purposes.
 - Qualifies property owners for federal and state grants for preservation purposes, when funds are available
- Provides only a limited degree of protection from the effects of federally assisted undertakings.
 - Does not require conformance to design guidelines or preservation standards
 - Does not affect state and local government activities



PLAN: Charlestown Preservation Recommendation #1

The BLC and MHC should continue to nominate landmarks in Charlestown to the National Register of Historic Places.

This is important as it is linked to eligibility for preservation related tax incentives and grants.



LOCAL DESIGNATION

The Boston Landmarks Commission may designate various resources (structures, sites, or objects, man-made, or natural) as local Landmarks. There are four criteria used to evaluate the significance of a resource:

- A property **listed on the National Register of Historic Places**
- A **resource at which events occurred** related to important aspects of cultural, political, economic, military, or social history.
- A resource associated with the **lives of outstanding historic personages**.
- A resource representative of **elements of architectural or landscape design** or **craftsmanship** that embody distinctive characteristics that are inherently valuable for study of a period, style, or method of construction or development, or a **notable work of an influential architect**, landscape architect, designer, or builder.
- There are 4 types of local designations: **Individual Landmark**, **Landmark District**, **Architectural Conservation District**, and **Protection Areas**.



DESIGNATION PROCESS TIMELINE

MEET WITH STUDY **VOTE TO PETITION BLC VOTE BLC STAFF** REPORT **ACCEPT** To discuss The petition, once If Boston Landmark A completed study Once a draft study Commission accepts report is the next report is ready, the landmarking accepted, formally starts the process to the petition for Boston Landmarks expectations, step in the process to further study, the timeframe, investigate the designate a pending Commission holds landmark. BLC has eligibility, etc. history of the now pending public hearings and resource. The landmark awaits a Designating a dozens of pending votes to accept or district is a lengthy petition must be study report. petitions awaiting reject. If accepted, process involving an signed by 10 funding for study the Mayor and City appointed study Registered Boston Council will also reports. committee. Voters OR a member vote/veto. of the Landmarks Commission. (or the Mayor)



PLAN: Charlestown Preservation Recommendation #2

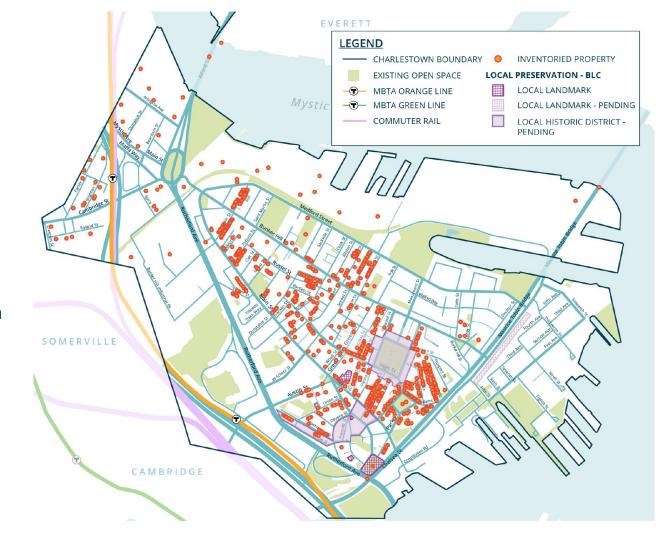
The Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) will continue to review the petitions for landmarks in Charlestown submitted by the community, and should continue the Commission's process to vote on the designation of Monument Square district, once the study report is complete, and to process other existing petitions in the neighborhood.

The BPDA and BLC supports the community continuing to submit petitions for landmark designations.



Step #1 to Landmark Districts: An Updated Inventory

- The most recent inventory in Charlestown was conducted in 1987 (updated in 1990), and is out of date.
- Many structures have never been inventoried.





PLAN: Charlestown Preservation Recommendation #3

Complete an updated inventory of historic resources in Charlestown. BLC administers inventories in consultation with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC).



Current Demolition Delay Timeline

COMPLETE APPLICATION

Applications received by the Commission are reviewed by BLC staff to determine significance. A small percentage are significant: those developers must submit two alternatives to demolition.

DEMOLITION DELAY EXPIRES

Developer is now free to move forward with any plans for the property. ISD is cleared to issue a demolition permit.



*Landmark petitions **CAN** be submitted at any time. But the timeframe to complete this process is often <u>longer</u> than the 90 day timeframe for Article 85.





PLAN: Charlestown Preservation Recommendation #4

As part of larger zoning reform, the City of Boston will study Article 85 and other preservation strategies on a citywide basis.



Survey

bit.ly/UDGuides1Survey





Questions?

Please hold comments to 2 Minutes MAX



Next Steps

1. Zoning Recommendations (Scenarios)

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 - i. Topic: Original Peninsula + Lost Village areas
- b. Meeting #2 Thursday, June 1st
 - i. Topic: Rutherford Ave + Sullivan Square areas

3. Neighborhood Needs Analysis

- a. Meeting #1 <u>Tentative date: Wednesday, June 14th</u>
 - Topic: Neighborhood Services (Schools, Fire, Police, EMS, Library, Water, Sewers, Trash Collection, Street Sweeping, etc.)
- b. Meeting #2 Date TBD
 - i. Topic(s): Housing, Retail, Food Security, Arts + Culture, Mobility (Resident Parking Permits, Intersections), Climate Resilience

