



**boston planning &  
development agency**

## **Improving Our Development Review Process**

Article 80 Modernization

PHASE 1 INITIAL THEMES FEEDBACK REPORT  
APRIL 2024

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## 1. Executive Summary

This report builds on [Phase 1 of the Article 80 Modernization project](#). In Phase 1, the Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) listened and learned from community members, developers, city staff, and cities from across North America, to compile a list of potential policy and operational choices to improve Boston's development review process. In response to this initial feedback, the BPDA shared this list of "Emerging Ideas" through a series of focus groups, two public meetings, and an open survey. The purpose of this engagement was to collect detailed input to prioritize and determine the direction for future analysis and recommendations. This report summarizes the results of the survey.

**Key Result 1:** When asked to prioritize the elements of project feedback that are most important to them, survey respondents shared that they value providing feedback about the project design, including:

- Height and Density (51%)
- Building Uses (49%)
- Public Realm and Open Space (44%)

**Key Result 2:** When asked to prioritize the list of "Emerging Ideas," survey respondents prioritized the following three ideas:

- Establish clear, transparent performance tracking and approval (and rejection) standards – selected by 54% of respondents
- Establish a predictable approach for determining mitigation and community benefits – selected by 48% of respondents
- Reform advisory groups to build trust and generate more impactful and targeted input – selected by 46% of respondents

**Key Result 3:** The survey also demonstrated key differences in priorities between demographic groups. The greatest differences appeared when comparing responses based on homeownership status and time living in Boston. Respondents who own the homes they live in and have lived in Boston for more than 15 years are more interested in height and density, whereas people who rent and have lived in Boston for less than 15 years are more interested in shaping mitigation and community benefits.

## 2. Overview: Article 80 Modernization Process So Far

Community members, developers, and BPDA staff all agree that the BPDA's Article 80 development review process is outdated, unpredictable, and lacks transparency.

Mayor Wu, in her 2023 State of the City speech and Executive Order, charged the BPDA with creating and implementing a reformed development review process that improves how communities, developers, and the BPDA work together to shape the city.

To achieve this vision, the BPDA is excited to work with the public to modernize the development review process.

The Article 80 Modernization project kicked off in July 2023 with a series of engagement efforts across the City. You can learn more about the results of this engagement and research in the Phase 1 Report, available online:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/c73a4e89-319c-4807-aa17-f3cee4a25303>

## 3. Survey Overview

The project team then organized the feedback into a list of 11 "Emerging Themes and Ideas." These 11 ideas were shared at a series of community focus groups and public meetings in January and February 2024.

You can review the public meeting presentation, recording, and Q&A responses on the project webpage:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/projects/improving-development-review-process-article-80>

The Emerging Ideas Survey was designed to capture feedback from community members on the eleven emerging themes and ideas shared during the public meetings.

### **Emerging Ideas List**

1. Accelerate projects that align with City policy priorities
2. Recalibrate project thresholds in response to ongoing zoning reform
3. Communicate the City's position about development projects early and often
4. Introduce new inclusive methods and formats of engagement different from traditional public meetings

5. Reform advisory groups to build trust and generate more impactful and targeted input
6. Establish a predictable approach for determining mitigation and community benefits
7. Create clear standards and thresholds for Planned Development Area (PDA) eligibility and approval
8. Revise Institutional Master Plan (IMP) procedures to better serve the needs of institutions and communities
9. Minimize uncertainty by aligning approvals with design development process
10. Ensure consistency and coordination between Article 80 related permitting departments
11. Establish clear, transparent performance tracking and approval (and rejection) standards

### **Survey Questions**

The survey asked respondents four questions:

1. What type of input on development projects is most important to you? (Pick 3 issues)
2. Which of the initial ideas do you like the most?
3. What do you like about these ideas?
4. What questions or concerns do you have about these ideas?

### **Survey Duration**

The survey ran from March 1 to March 29, 2024.

**Total Survey Responses: 210**

## 4. Respondent Demographics

*Note: Overall Boston demographic information based on the US Census, unless otherwise noted.*

<b>Homeownership Status</b>	<b>Count of Survey Responses</b>	<b>Percent of Survey Responses</b>	<b>Boston Overall</b>
Own the home I live in	139	66%	32%
Rent my home	49	23%	68%
Other	6	3%	
No Response	16	8%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Residency Tenure</b>	<b>Count of Survey Responses</b>	<b>Percent of Survey Responses</b>
Less than 15 years	63	30%
15+ years	141	67%
No Response	6	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Race / Ethnicity</b>	<b>Count of Survey Responses</b>	<b>Percent of Survey Responses</b>	<b>Boston Overall</b>
Non-White	35	17%	51%
White	128	61%	49%
No Response	47	22%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Primary Community Affiliation</b>	<b>Count of Survey Responses</b>	<b>Percent of Survey Responses</b>
Community member	122	58%
Member of a civic or neighborhood association	59	28%
Other	14	7%
No Response	15	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>Count of Survey Responses</b>	<b>Percent of Survey Responses</b>	<b>% of Boston Population<sup>1</sup></b>
Brighton	27	13%	9%
Jamaica Plain	23	11%	6%
Dorchester	21	10%	19%
Roslindale	18	9%	4%
South End	13	6%	5%
South Boston	11	5%	5%
East Boston	10	5%	7%
Other	69	33%	45%
Non-Boston	5	2%	
No Response	13	6%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

1- Boston neighborhood information is based on the BPDA's 2017 Neighborhood Profile Report: <https://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/7987d9b4-193b-4749-8594-e41f1ae27719>

## 5. Results

### Question 1 Results

Question 1 asked respondents to select up to three topics that are most important to them when providing input on proposed development.

#### Development Topics List

- Height and density
- Building uses (eg. housing, commercial, lab, etc.)
- Public realm and open space
- Community benefits
- Mitigation (eg. affordable housing, fund, transportation)
- Advancing planning priorities
- Design characteristics (eg. color, choice of materials, etc.)

*Note: The total percentages add up to more than 100% because each respondent was able to select up to three topics.*

The top three topics selected as most important to survey respondents were:

- Height and Density
- Building Uses
- Public Realm and Open Space

Chart 1 - Question 1 Results

Question 1: What type of input on development projects is most important to you?

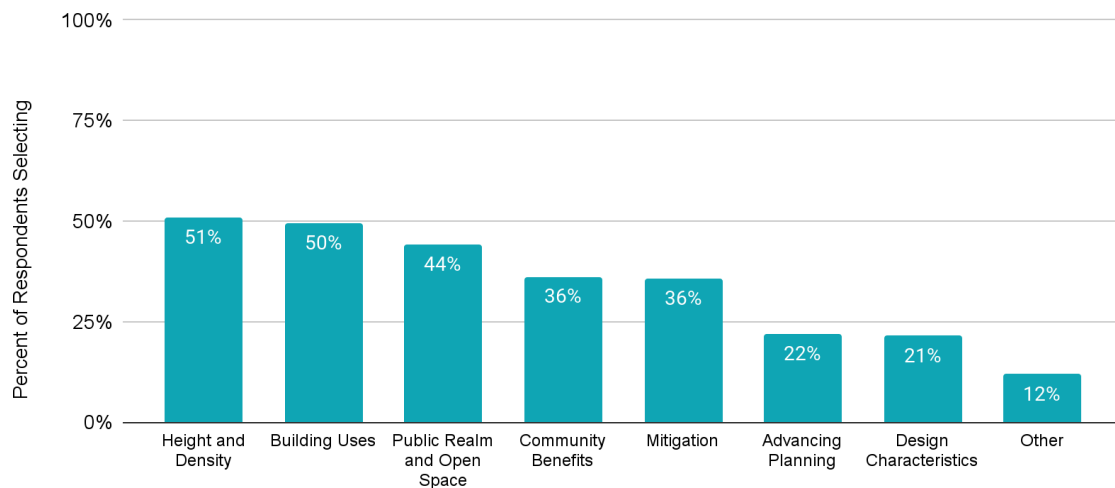




Table 1 - Question 1 Results

Topic	Count	Percent
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>
Height and Density	107	51%
Building Use	104	49%
Public Realm	93	44%
Community Benefits	76	36%
Mitigation	75	36%
Planning	46	22%
Design	45	21%
Other	25	12%

### Question 1 Analysis

Taking a deeper look at the responses to Question 1 reveals patterns in responses by demographic categories. The most significant differences between groups was found between a) homeowners and renters, and b) long-term and newer residents.

*Note: For the purposes of this analysis, “long-term resident” is defined as living in Boston for more than 15 years, while a “newer resident” is defined as living in Boston for less than 15 years.*

### Homeownership Status

Significant differences in prioritization rates appeared for a subset of topics. The most commonly prioritized topic, “Height and Density” was much more likely to be prioritized by homeowners than renters.

On the other hand, “Mitigation” was much more likely to be prioritized by renters than homeowners.

“Community Benefits” had a narrower difference but was slightly more likely to be prioritized by homeowners than renters.

Table 2 - Percent of Respondents Prioritizing Topics Comparing Homeowners and Renters

	<b>All respondents</b>	<b>Homeowners</b>	<b>Renters</b>
<b>Height and Density</b>	51%	58%	35%
<b>Mitigation</b>	36%	27%	59%
<b>Community Benefits</b>	36%	36%	31%

### Residency Tenure

Similar differences in prioritization rates appear when comparing long-term to newer residents. Long-term residents (those living in Boston for more than 15 years) were much more likely to prioritize “Height and Density” than newer residents.

Newer residents (those living in Boston for less than 15 years) were more likely to prioritize “Mitigation” and “Community Benefits.”

Table 3 - Percent of Respondents Prioritizing Topics Comparing Long Term and Newer Residents

	<b>All respondents</b>	<b>Long-term residents (15+ years)</b>	<b>Newer residents (less than 15 years)</b>
<b>Height and Density</b>	51%	59%	43%
<b>Mitigation</b>	36%	34%	43%
<b>Community Benefits</b>	36%	33%	49%

### Question 2 Results

Question 2 asked respondents to select which ideas from the emerging idea list they liked the most.

#### Emerging Ideas List

1. Accelerate projects that align with City policy priorities
2. Recalibrate project thresholds in response to ongoing zoning reform
3. Communicate the City's position about development projects early and often

4. Introduce new inclusive methods and formats of engagement different from traditional public meetings
5. Reform advisory groups to build trust and generate more impactful and targeted input
6. Establish a predictable approach for determining mitigation and community benefits
7. Create clear standards and thresholds for Planned Development Area (PDA) eligibility and approval
8. Revise Institutional Master Plan (IMP) procedures to better serve the needs of institutions and communities
9. Minimize uncertainty by aligning approvals with design development process
10. Ensure consistency and coordination between Article 80 related permitting departments
11. Establish clear, transparent performance tracking and approval (and rejection) standards

*Note: The total percentages add up to more than 100% because each respondent was able to select multiple ideas.*

The top three ideas selected the most by survey respondents were:

- 54% of respondents selected: Idea 11 “Establish clear, transparent performance tracking and approval (and rejection) standards”
- 48% selected: Idea 6 “Establish a predictable approach for determining mitigation and community benefits”
- 46% selected: Idea 5 “Reform advisory groups to build trust and generate more impactful and targeted input”

Chart 2 - Question 2 Results, Ordered by Idea Number

Question 2: Which of the initial ideas do you like most?

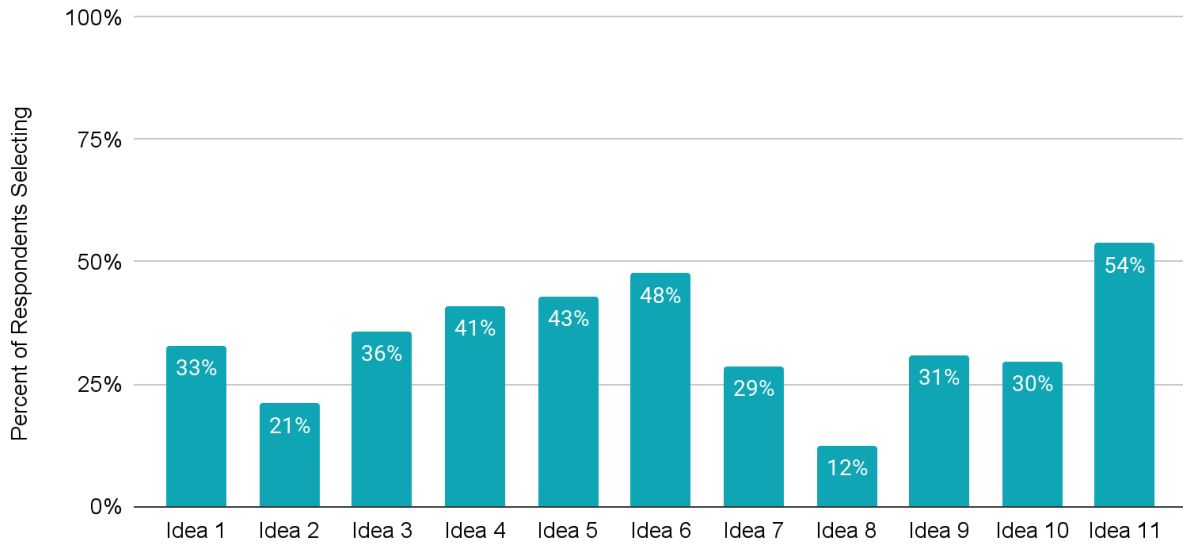


Chart 3 - Question 2 Results, Ordered by Number of Selections

Question 2: Which of the initial ideas do you like most?

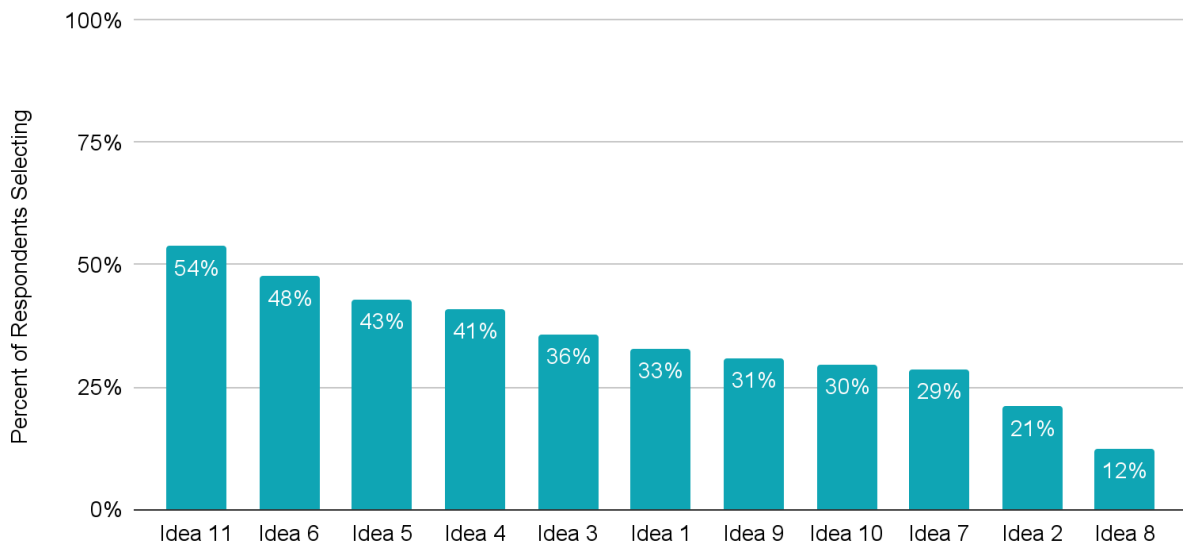


Table 4 - Question 2 Results  
 Total responses: 210

Idea	Count	Percent
Idea 1	69	33%
Idea 2	44	21%
Idea 3	75	36%
Idea 4	87	41%
Idea 5	91	43%
Idea 6	101	48%
Idea 7	60	28%
Idea 8	27	13%
Idea 9	65	31%
Idea 10	62	29%
Idea 11	113	54%

### Question 2 Analysis

Again, taking a deeper look at the responses to Question 2 reveals patterns in responses by demographic categories. The most significant differences between groups were found between a) homeowners and renters, b) long-term and newer residents, and c) community members and members of civic groups.

*Note: For the purposes of this analysis, "long-term resident" is defined as living in Boston for more than 15 years, while a "newer resident" is defined as living in Boston for less than 15 years.*

*Note: Respondents could only select one category in the "Affiliation" demographic question. Many respondents hold multiple roles in their communities and in the development process. For the purposes of this analysis, the selected affiliation of a respondent is assumed to be their strongest affiliation, not their only affiliation.*

## Homeownership Status

Homeowners and Renters responded differently to Question 2 for a subset of all ideas. Most ideas showed similar rates of selection across this demographic category. The ideas described below showed the greatest difference in selection.

Idea 1 (Accelerate projects that align with City policy priorities) was supported by 51% of renters but only 27% of homeowners. Renters were also slightly more likely to prefer Idea 2 (Recalibrate project thresholds in response to ongoing zoning reform) and much more likely to prefer Idea 9 (Minimize uncertainty by aligning approvals with design development process).

Table 5 - Percent of Respondents Selecting An Idea They Like, Comparing Homeowners and Renters

	All respondents	Homeowners	Renters
<b>Idea 1</b>	33%	27%	51%
<b>Idea 2</b>	21%	20%	27%
<b>Idea 9</b>	31%	28%	45%

## Residency Tenure

When categorizing respondents by residency length, similar differences emerge. Ideas 1, 2, and 9 were much more likely to be selected by newer residents than long-term residents.

Table 6 - Percent of Respondents Selecting An Idea They Like, Comparing Long Term and Newer Residents

	All respondents	Long-term residents (15+ years)	Newer residents (less than 15 years)
<b>Idea 1</b>	33%	27%	52%
<b>Idea 2</b>	21%	18%	30%
<b>Idea 9</b>	31%	25%	49%

## Community Role

*Note: Respondents could only select one category in the “Affiliation” demographic question. Many respondents hold multiple roles in their communities and in the development process. For the purposes of this analysis, the selected affiliation of a respondent is assumed to be their strongest affiliation, not their only affiliation.*

When comparing respondents by primary affiliation, members of civic or neighborhood associations were much less likely to select ideas 1, 2, and 9 than those identifying primarily as community members.

On the other hand, members of civic or neighborhood associations were much more likely to prefer ideas 4 and 5 (idea 4: Introduce new inclusive methods and formats of engagement different from traditional public meetings, idea 5: Reform advisory groups to build trust and generate more impactful and targeted input).

Table 7 - Percent of Respondents Selecting An Idea They Like, Comparing Members of Civic or Neighborhood Associations and Community Members

	<b>All respondents</b>	<b>Member of a Civic or Neighborhood Association</b>	<b>Community Member</b>
<b>Idea 1</b>	33%	17%	36%
<b>Idea 2</b>	21%	7%	26%
<b>Idea 4</b>	41%	53%	32%
<b>Idea 5</b>	43%	56%	36%
<b>Idea 9</b>	31%	19%	33%

## Question 3 Analysis

Question 3 was an open-ended response: What do you like about these ideas?

157 people responded to this question.

Based on analysis of the responses, the following key themes have been identified:

- ***Proactive Community Engagement:*** There is a clear preference for engaging the community early and effectively in the planning process. Residents appreciate the idea of having a say in the development process before an initial filing is submitted to the BPDA, rather than being informed only after decisions are made.
- ***Transparent and Accountable Processes:*** The respondents like the goal of increased transparency and accountability. There is a positive response to the idea of making the decision-making process more open and ensuring that feedback and concerns from the community are adequately addressed and reflected in the outcomes.
- ***Equitable Involvement in Decision-Making:*** Respondents support the idea of democratizing the review process by involving a wider cross-section of the community.
- ***Standardized Mitigation and Benefits:*** There is support for standardizing mitigation efforts and community benefits to ensure fairness and equity, moving away from decisions made based on the influence of the loudest voices in the room.
- ***Accessible and Diverse Methods of Communication:*** Respondents appreciate the proposal for improved methods of communication, such as targeted information for affected neighborhoods and the use of various media to gather community input. There is also support for using multiple communication channels, including social media and other digital platforms, to involve people who may not have the time or ability to attend public meetings.
- ***Clarity in Planning and Zoning Processes:*** The community favors clear and consistent guidelines for planning and zoning which would provide predictability for both developers and residents. There is a call to reform the current zoning processes to better align with the evolving nature of neighborhoods and to ensure that new developments fit into the existing community fabric.



## Question 4 Analysis

Question 4 was another open-ended response: What questions or concerns do you have about these ideas?

148 people responded to this question.

Based on analysis of the responses, the following key themes have been identified:

- **Transparency and Inclusivity:** Respondents emphasized the need for clear, understandable language in policies and true inclusivity in the planning process with an emphasis on making information and participation accessible to all, not just those well-versed in planning jargon or with time to engage deeply.
- **Community Engagement and Trust:** Respondents also expressed a strong desire for genuine, ongoing community engagement rather than token consultation, and for rebuilding trust that has been eroded by past practices perceived as ignoring or overriding community feedback.
- **Evaluation and Adaptability:** Responses highlighted the need for policies to include mechanisms for public evaluation and the flexibility to adjust based on the community's experiences, including unintended negative consequences.
- **Role of Advisory Groups:** Responses were mixed about the effectiveness and composition of advisory groups, with some comments defending their necessity for community representation and others questioning their current operation and influence.
- **Process Efficiency vs. Community Impact:** While efficiency in the development approval process is recognized as important, respondents identified a concern that an overemphasis on speed and "streamlining" could lead to developments that neglect community impact, environmental justice, and historical preservation.
- **Implementation and Accountability:** Skepticism existed about whether the proposed ideas will be implemented with fidelity and how accountability for delivering promised community benefits will be enforced, reflecting a demand for clear execution and monitoring plans.

## 6. Appendix: All Open-Ended Responses

### Question 3. What do you like about these ideas?

It puts accountability and transparency in the fore front

Nothing. Get rid of this entire process. Stop making it difficult to build housing.

"Mitigation" needs to be standardized. Whether it's a certain dollar threshold per square foot or there's a menu of mitigation options by neighborhood that are revised every 5-10 years. The current system seems to prioritize whoever is in the room and saying what they want the loudest, which is not sustainable or equitable.

4. Currently the same few people tend to speak for "the community". 6. The case-by-case mitigation & benefits seems arbitrary. In my opinion, the goal should be a good project (not a bad project that is made palatable with lots of benefits). 11. Transparency & accountability will build trust.

a consistent process that will help development and the community.

All of these address a fundamental question: Is the BRA advocating for the developer, or for the City's residents. All too often it is unclear. And this is compounded when the BRA or the Mayor's office select the members of the advisory groups, rather than having the community select its representatives. PRUPAC (on which I served for a couple of years, though awhile ago) was a good model. The people at the table were elected or selected by established community groups and other stakeholder organizations. Before they voted, they vetted issues and their proposed vote with their constituents. When decisions got made they had been widely discussed and usually had pretty broad buy-in.

Mitigation and community benefits is currently a free-for-all, with empowered groups getting more than less-empowered groups and neighborhoods, and seemingly based on current local whim rather than building consistent infrastructure and amenities across the City.

Anything that engaged the neighborhoods and listens to them

Anything that makes the development process more predictable and faster. We have a massive housing shortage

Anything that speaks to more community involvement and giving residents a real say in what happens in our communities. Also creating standards for what can be developed where.

As an architect that works in Boston, on multi-family housing, schools and other public projects, I want to see BPDA facilitate better, deeper community input (#4) AND more certainty for design teams about the process and timeline for approvals (#6).

In the past, I've seen a lack of clarity in BPDA feedback and it's sometimes been contradictory, leaving a development team guessing about the direction. This is ineffective and a waste of everyone's time, and it doesn't advance the city or the neighborhood's goals.

I'd like to see zoning address more than dimensional and use regulation, and extend it to form and design, setting parameters for higher quality design/development than much of the mediocre market-rate housing that's been approved. Neighbors focus on parking, height and density because that's what they can address, but they deserve to have good quality buildings added to their neighborhoods, regardless of the particular uses (#2, 11).

Assuming good planning happens that leads to new zoning, then these ideas help in two ways: 1) helping projects move forward in a more consistent manner, hopefully faster, because they meet and advance planning goals, and can fairly mitigate impacts and offer clear community benefits; and 2) building trust between residents and city staff (the city says what it wants, gathers feedback from a wide array of residents (not just those who show up at public zoom meetings), follows through, and tracks performance.

Boston needs to move away from reliance on variances. The tightly contained ecosystem of: regulators familiar to those they are regulating; a relatively small set of local developers and builders with seemingly exclusive access to variances; the array of local architects, consultants and familiar beneficiaries; and even the reporting environment; together has not been healthy for Boston's growth, or for advancing equity, diversity and inclusion. In my view, unfettered and largely unreported cronyism in Boston has stifled the evolution of new ideas.

Boston residents should have more control over what gets built in neighborhoods.

BPDA unfair practices/Zoning violations to speed up gentrification and reduce quality of life of existing residents

BPDA unfair practices/Zoning violations to speed up gentrification and reduce quality of life of existing residents

Build more housing. Allow more housing to be built. Do not allow for public input on building size

Building trust; projects would be more predictable, with less uncertainty.

City employees not on committees. Community adopted priorities must be included.

Clarify what is and isn't allowed instead of sending every good project through a long and harmful negotiation war

Clarity and predictability are important for both developers and community members to ensure proper input and a streamlined process. The approvals process hasn't had either of these in the past.

Clarity and Predictability are very important, but not more important than the BPDA informing themselves about the neighborhood plans and priorities.

Clarity in expectations for planning projects, transparency with communication and clear pathways to success are key to the continued positive development of our city.

Clear details and approach

Communication, communication, communication.

Community engagement

Community input from the start

Community input on decisions that have local impact. This has been lacking in the South End.

compliance with public policies.

Consistency for those proposing projects. Get the right projects approved faster

Creates more transparency

Creating a predictable and consistent set of steps for development reduces costs and allows for projects to establish and communicate goals early to the community, and finish buildings in a timely manner. This decreases disruption to the surrounding neighborhood, and speeds the modernization of our city from a slow-moving parochial dinosaur to a fast-moving modern metropolis attracting new development, businesses and residents.

Develop a clear process of planning with community engagement BEFORE the letter of intent is provided and that community engagement should have the involvement of the community neighborhood associations, active members of the community as nominated by local elected officials, and other community members (send in nominations) and others (think democratically and creatively). the letters of intent should be approved by such a group. A letter of intent by a developer should be approved by this community engagement committee BEFORE it can be accepted by the city planning and development process and moved forward. NOT just informing community, but having the community APPROVE of the project before the letter of intent. No APPROVAL MEANS NO LOI.

Do not make any changes until more community leaders are brought into this process. Tony D'Isidoro should not be the only community leader involved in this process.

Each of these ideas addresses a deficiency in the current Article 80 review process. I think a lot of mistrust between the community, developers, and city staff stems from the unpredictable and opaque nature of the process. As a community member, it would be helpful to understand how community benefits and mitigation are determined.

Every project is different, so mitigation/community benefits should be on a project by project basis

Everything!

Fairness and predictability. Right now many approvals and community benefits depend on individuals and who gets to the table and who doesn't. This would change that

Fast tracking projects also means getting community buy in for the process.

focus on community

Greater transparency and standardization.

Guidelines, clarity, transparency, public participation.

having a clear and predictable process for both developers and residents

Having fewer voices in one conversation, and having those voices be concurrently decisive about design objectives - not continuously changing design specs for an indeterminate number of rounds with the architect. Give more respect to the architects and project managers.

How they can streamline the process and get the same benefits without a long development pipeline

I am supportive of anything that results in more housing being built in Boston. We have an extreme shortage of housing units, so policies that create shorter and less demanding review periods translate into money that could be spent on additional units and density. Housing construction is THE community benefit in Boston. We should not be taking additional exactions on housing projects or increasing deed restriction requirements to the point where no housing will be built.

I believe the neighborhood voices should be heard through multiple channels and methods along with communication about the city's position on projects. If we can figure out to align the city view with the neighborhood view (which I think the City has done a decent job with). Then I think we can look at accelerating projects that align with both City and neighborhood views

I do not like the choices provided as "Initial Ideas". They do not serve the community, they only serve the developers.

I hope that they would create more meaningful and transparent community involvement than we currently have.

I like that the city is finally reworking how this whole process works, it feels useless speaking up at any of these meetings when basically they all feel like a dime deal no matter what is said at community meetings.

I like that they are focused on what the City/BPDA can do to improve their own process rather than focusing on disempowering local advocacy groups and IAGs

I like the fact that the idea of minimizing uncertainty is finally getting some attention in the article 80 process

I like the fact that what exactly is acceptable to the BPDA will be communicated with more earlier an with more clarity.

I like the idea of the city communicating better internally, and to track things & promises better and with consequences for not living up to promises.

I like the ideas that will make the process more understandable and transparent.

I like the ones that increase transparency and advance equity

I like to have a bigger emphasis on mitigation, especially when it comes to climate resilience and affordability. Too often tenants and residents get priced out which in turn leads to huge chunks of empty apartments and unleased commercial real estate. More effort needs to be made to make the city affordable for families, and small business owners. In addition, projects like sea port show that not enough is being done in the city to create resilient investments that can stand the test of time. Before we know it sea port will be under water and the developers won't care because they already made their money. If the BPDA continues to allow this then they are just as complicit.

I liked all of these ideas. Most important is to have community engagemnt EARLY and OFTEN in the process: Well before to LOI is in. Identity which local community groups are at the table in a decision making process. See the following For Example, Philadelphia has a process of Registered Community Organizations (RCO's)

<https://www.phila.gov/programs/registered-community-organizations-rcos/> prospectively vetted and decided upon with clear criteria at the table and part of the decision making process, BEFORE there is a major presentation for the developmental process. Not just for input and questions. Here is a 12 minute YouTube video of the civic engagement and RCO process

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eru2jEljdGw> AND: Hi. thought I would share some interesting ways others have been involved with urban planning and community engagement. Experience from Europe

<https://www.allthingsurban.net/blog/What-is-Community-Engagement-and-Why-is-It-Crucial-for-Urban-Planning> Durham, NC community engagement blueprint

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/durhamnis/pages/592/attachments/original/1543332399/Draft\\_Equitable\\_Engagement\\_Blueprint\\_%2818%29\\_11.06.pdf?1543332399](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/durhamnis/pages/592/attachments/original/1543332399/Draft_Equitable_Engagement_Blueprint_%2818%29_11.06.pdf?1543332399)

I only like any of them if you put into place measures to ensure that they actually happen. There has been no follow-through. Approve a project and you're gone. Put pedestrian walk buttons on the wrong sides of poles, nobody wants to hear about it or get it fixed. Wind is brutal with no mitigation, same thing. Businesses encroach on sidewalks permanently, same thing. Welcome to the West Fenway.

I see an advisory board actually including more residents from different backgrounds.

I think all these Ideas are critically important but I think that the uncertainty and confusion of the Zoning and Approvals process is a burden both for communities and for developers and needs to be completely reformed into a more straightforward, predictable, transparent process.

I think most of them mean nothing to the residents of the community. Actually listening to the residents would be a great start instead of shoving overly dense, ugly housing into our neighborhoods.

I would like for projects to face similar standards across the board with fewer special exceptions granted. I want our built neighborhoods to be able to truly align with our policy goals. I would like the process to move faster so that projects proposed on blighted properties can be rehabilitated/improved faster.

I would like to ensure that these ideas are designed to be inclusive of community voice.

I would like to see a better balance between community interests and the city's interests. I would like to see a diminishing emphasis on the developers' interest. At this point, IAGs and CACs seem to have little or no influence, and the larger community has even less. I don't want to encourage "NIMBY-ism" but I very much want to see the long-term residents of communities that have in many ways been abused by developers and investors (I live in Mission Hill and speak from that experience) be more clearly respected in the process. Better and more transparent communication and a predictable process would go far in reaching this goal.

Idea 1. Projects that are in alignment with stated planning goals should not be unnecessarily bogged down in approvals, either Zoning or BPDA, and should happen as fast as is practicable while allowing for public input on relevant portions of the project.

Idea 2. Current practices (zoning and size related) result in projects that could otherwise receive expedient approval getting trapped in a cycle of approvals that is unnecessary for things of their size. The small project threshold and the BCDC thresholds in particular strike me as being too low, and qualify projects that do not always need the level of scrutiny that Article 80 and the BCDC provide. With a defined approach to mitigation requirements many Small Projects could likely receive a simple ministerial approval.

Idea 4. We know from abundant research by the BPDA and other independent entities that the current engagement formats primarily reach an audience that is wildly non-representative of our city as a whole. This audience skews older, whiter, and includes more homeowners than is acceptable given the diverse city that we live in and the city and BPDA should endeavor to get feedback from the people who are currently left out of the process.

Idea 5. Having interacted with the development process as a constituent, an applicant, and an IAG member, I still have to say that I find the entire existence of IAG's inscrutable. Similarly to Idea 4, they are broadly full of exactly the same people who already engage with project outreach and further it is unclear what role they play in the process and how their feedback is meant to be used. If they are meant simply to determine community benefit agreements as is implied in their scope of purpose then why do they frequently opine and have feedback incorporated that relates to program and project size? Why are they allowed to determine where mitigation funding goes when the city itself should know where mitigation funding is needed? The entire existence of them feels suspect and needs to be reformed.

Idea 6. See Idea 5 comment, and develop a rubric for mitigation that makes IAG's unnecessary.

Idea 9. As an applicant, it often feels as if we are being asked to design entire projects only to have the entire thing thrown in the trash once we hit BPDA review and public meetings. Allowing applicants to come to the table with softer ideas, maybe less strictly defined would go a long way to allowing development teams the leeway to incorporate agency and public feedback without wasting time and effort on work that only increases project costs in the long term and increases the unaffordability of the city.

Idea 11. See Idea 1 response, often projects that are clearly in alignment with the city's stated goals are reduced in scope or entirely shot down during the public process and it is never made truly clear to development teams why this happens other than "pushback" which should be irrelevant for project that advance the city and agency's stated goals!



Idea 4: It is good for us to think about how to have new inclusive methods and formats of engagement. Our planning department should identify community partners to help facilitate conversation and ensure there is neighborhood specific support. We should pay local groups to do this work. ONS and city council district office staff should also be included in community engagement. Idea 5: We need to have conflict of interest clauses for review committees. The process for outreach for PRC's needs to be done better, The planning dept should identify community partners to help spread the word, and work with ONS and city council district office staff to spread the word. Idea 6: There should be clarity for those wanting to access community benefits. Currently there appears to be no clarity or open process. Idea 7: We need to ensure that in PDA's where developers are spending less money to develop due to an easier development process, that there is a push for more affordable housing, potentially more than what the inclusionary development requires since the policy was formed prior to S&S PDA's that lower cost for developers. Idea 8: We need to analyze how community members are currently included in IMP processes or not, to ensure that there is an equitable process. We need full funding of PILOT payments based on up-to-date valuations, and we need to make sure community members have a say in how funding is allocated in their neighborhood. Idea 10: We need to make sure that the article 80 process is clear and that if any changes happen, community members are apart of the process. There needs to be time given to understand proposals, and then time given to give feedback. Different neighborhoods shouldn't have drastically different processes.

Idea 4: It seems like very few people are able to participate in public meetings (and economic status is a major indicator of ability to participate), and those I have attended often have 1-2 people dominating the conversation. More methods of gathering community input (and via other avenues like social media, grassroots community organizations, text messaging, etc.) would help mitigate this. I personally would also find it helpful to receive info only on the projects closest to me. There is too much noise in my inbox so it's hard to find the meetings that matter most for me to attend. I live in JP and don't need to participate in discussions about the Charlestown waterfront (nor should I, it should be that community who will be most impacted). Targeted subscriptions to specific neighborhood projects as opposed to all BPDA would help a lot.

Ideas 6, 7, and 11: It should be easy for communities to find information about projects that impact them, find resources for how they can provide feedback or challenge a project, etc. Having a clear process that is repeatable for every project (and easy to access resources IN LAYMAN'S TERMS) established will allow communities to participate in a repeatable process for multiple projects without starting over in their understanding of how and when feedback will be collected and decisions will be made. The city should be 100% clear and transparent about the results of community feedback surveys and how they came to decisions based on those results even if (and especially if) it is an unpopular decision that the city has deemed it had to make regardless of community pushback.

Idea 9: Wherever possible, simplifying the process without sacrificing nuance and accessibility is

ideal. The more hurdles individuals need to go through in order to be heard the less community impact you will receive and the more sway certain individuals will have. The same person attending 5 meetings to reiterate the same concern should not be given more weight than another person who attends a single meeting to express a concern. The time and energy it takes to participate in many hearings and appeals is a privilege that many in our communities do not have. The loudest voice is not the right voice or the one who cares the most. They are literally only the loudest. Nothing more.

If anything can make City Projects more open to community input and involvement

If standards policies and procedures will be enacted and enforced in ways that will remediate EJ neighborhoods' quality of life, awesome. If they require developers to provide evidence-based and peer-reviewed documentation of the existing conditions, project impacts, public transit, and usable greenspace, awesome. If they require affordable housing to be spread out around the city and not just economically sorted into poor neighborhoods, awesome. If they require optimal design and amenities standards to be required for development in EJ neighborhoods, awesome. If they require an environmental audit to be done at the beginning of the development review process, awesome. If density proposals were accompanied by a city and state commitment to increasing multimodal public transit and safety in car dependent neighborhoods, awesome. I do not yet see those factors incorporated into the current proposed changes. If they were, I and many other residents would have more confidence in supporting these proposals.

Inclusion of community input in decision-making process

Increased transparency; more opportunity for community input

increases speed for good projects, predictability for community and priorities should be directed by the City, not other way around.

Increasing predictability and reducing uncertainty benefit the community and developers

Increasing transparency in the process, too many projects at the moment get quietly killed in pre-file meetings because they are politically unpopular without any community input. Too much of the approval process today is about developers making concessions to niche community groups and making "impact" payments to random other groups to essentially pay them off and appease councilors. Mitigation funds should go to the city and be used to fund city improvements, not stuffy community groups.

Increasingly, developers seek to buy lower cost residential properties and develop it by changing its use. An example is residential property near a commercial zone being changed into commercial use. Only the developer benefits by the increase in assessed value while the entire neighborhood is harmed.

It can often feel like the BPDA comes into development and zoning conversations with a pre-existing agenda and solutions that it wants to rubber stamp by going through the motions of a community process. I think the BPDA can be more clear and direct in using language that captures

the true essence of what it can or can't do and what it is asking of residents when it comes to community input. Transparency and communication early in the process and consistency throughout are key to establishing strong relational ties and trust with community members in ways that are mutual and can advance any collective work.

It democratizes the process. Process is not controlled exclusively by developer and their allies in BPDA.

It is urgent for us to accelerate the approval process, and remove potential veto/litigation points, for affordable housing across the city. Boston has given the BPDA the authority to waive large project review on projects that meet the large project threshold and that help meet the need for affordable housing, but it only applies to large projects. Squares & Streets creates by-right development which also applies to affordable housing, but only covers small areas of land as of now. The city should continue to pursue policies aligned with idea #1 by making it easier to build affordable housing across the city, as other cities like Cambridge have done.

It will clear up what parts of proposals the community can actually influence and will help development projects be approved more seamlessly if there are set guidelines.

It would allow stakeholders (residents, businesses, community organizations, developers) to better understand why things are changing and try to front-load questions and concerns so that this process does not drag on for months or years.

It's crucially important that development review responds to planning and zoning, and not be a planning and zoning process itself. Development review is, effectively, the implementation phase of planning: we plan our vision for the built environment, we encode that vision into zoning, and developers build under those zoning rules. Accelerating projects that correspond to the city's priorities, creating predictable and consistent processes, and establishing transparent approval standards will help everyone involved in development to set expectations, hold the city accountable, and have good information by which to judge the necessity of a change in course.

It's hard to say what is likable about any of the ideas from just one statement. There should be at least a paragraph expanding on the statement. Many too me are too similar and all are interconnected so choosing one is insufficient. It should be rank order or at least what are your 10 5 in rank order.

Keeping up with project meetings is a lot of work now that my neighborhood is inundated with development, so while I think the existing meetings have been totally useful, additional tools to help manage information would be welcome. Furthermore, the process by which developers make contributions to mitigation have been very opaque to me. There should be a clear list of priorities that the city is trying to advance (pedestrian safety? undergrounding power lines? building non-bus transit? cultivating greenspace along thoroughfares? etc.) that the city is actively working toward as we densify and develop.

Makes for more inclusive community involvement in the planning and approval process and requires developers and the City to regularly report progress through the review and approval process.

making the development expectations clear, transparent, and predictable.

Many of these "Ideas" are phrased in a leading way, i.e., they sound generated by developers and institutions, not by residents. residents should always be the primary concern.

More predictability from planning before development starts.

More transparency and direct input from residents. Actually listening to residents.

Moves the growth of Boston progressively with transparency.

Need to cut red tape, move quickly, follow lead of cities like Barcelona (think their E'xample district)

Needed reform

None of these. They all place the public in a REACTIVE rather than PROACTIVE position.

None of those ideas reflect what is most important to permanent residents - and that is their ability to impact projects that have a negative impact on the quality of life in the city. The Article 80 review process should equally protect the needs and interests of developers, institutions, as well as residents. It appears that protecting the residents' ability to influence developments is not a priority.

None really thrill me. From the projects I've seen, most everything goes, despite push back and concerns addressed at public meetings and in written comments. So little changes that i find it thoroughly depressing that money comes over concerns of residents who have lived in the neighborhood for 20 + years when the proposal will totally change the character of the neighborhood and other projects that have been approved and built or not being occupied because of price.

not much

Not much as it seems to lean more towards city approval than resident approval.

Nothing

Nothing. These initiatives are developer driven. The community must be at the planning table of development with rights and privileges. There is no planning in Boston. Developers come with massive buildings, with no comprehensive plan for infrastructure, open space, community impacts, school and public facilities. It is completely irresponsible and money driven. Boston is Broken. Doing more of the same, faster to profit BPDA and developers creates willful harm to Bostonians.

opportunities for transparent input and impact

People are often shocked and angry when a project that has strong opposition gets approved. It would be helpful to have clear guidelines on when a project has qualified for approval. Right now, it feels like the pushiest developers have projects move the fastest, rather than the best projects.

Planning before development.

Planning needs to be done before an LOI is dropped. I don't see it in your list.

please see...Historical Vista Viewing Corridors. ( HVVC )

Predictability and speed of process are essential to reducing the cost of creating new homes in the City of Boston. The greatest community benefit of new developments is the housing itself. Design review by professionals within BPDA is important, and there is local context knowledge residents have that can inform that, but IAGs as such should be eliminated and civic association participants should not have any greater input. Diversifying engagement strategies is key, if we are going to continue to feel the need to give the public a chance to weigh in on everything.

Property development typically directs profits out of the community. The approval process needs to be community-centered to ensure development improves residents' quality of life and builds wealth in our neighborhoods.

Quicker approvals

Recognize that development conditions change and policies and practice must change too

Reduce confusion, increase delivery of promised benefits

Reducing the platform for opposition to weaponize process at traditional public meetings, hearing more voices in different varied contexts. Accelerating projects that align with City policy priorities is extremely welcome.

Right now, a massive office-lab project is going to be dropped onto a parcel at 1400 Boylston Street, despited the fact that the plot was zoned residential. What's the point of being on an IAG group when developers do whatever they want. And is just a big and current example of what goes on. Hence 10 would be a new, better world.

Sets standards that are clear to the residents

Should allow projects to be better positioned to move forward.

Speeding up the process of development approvals by creating clear and transparent rules to follow will result in more housing being built, by a more diverse array of developers.

Streamlining projects that align with the city goals might allow projects to increase affordability or other public benefits. The uncertainty of development, particularly housing drives up costs.

Streamlining the process for all involved. Putting accountability on other city departments and public agencies who have a stake in the development process to effectively engage in a timely and appropriate manner in project review. Refining development standards and principles (whether by zoning updates or other means) to set a better base for project review processes and engagement.

That Bpda realizes that it has been doing a very poor job of neighborhood planning

That they will completely overhaul the development process if they can be put into effect

The BPDA process seems to largely be happening behind closed doors, or in meetings that are practically inaccessible to community members. Clear standards with community input helps ensure new builds are in line with community needs rather than just pandering to developers looking to squeeze every dime out of a property, regardless of harm to the surrounding community.

The city/BPDA needs to get involved early and with more specific direction and scrutiny so that new projects that are problematic don't tie up the developer's and community's time and put so much of the burden on the community to point out obvious issues.

Notice of meetings and other opportunities for input need to be MUCH improved so that MANY more constituent groups in the impacted neighborhood are made aware of projects and opportunities to participate.

IAGs are very useful, but the BPDA does not hold the proponent's feet to the fire on addressing through answers (at a minimum) and changes (ideally) to IAG feedback.

It's ridiculous that the BPDA approves projects that need numerous zoning variances. Make that part of the process so that a final approval does not have any loose ends or additional material challenges that create additional friction btw the developer, the community, and the city.

The current process is far too bureaucratic and capricious. That adds to development costs.

The current system is so geared to developers of housing as to allow no input. Developers are allowed to squeeze every penny out of a plan and a neighborhood.

The more certainty you inject into the process the more likely a developer will actually try to build new housing. So much of a developer's up-front cost is the opportunity cost of holding real estate ready to be developed but having to spend years going through discretionary and arbitrary approvals. Simplifying that and providing clear guidelines and binary decisions (simple yes or no, and fewer "yes, but") would help planning significantly.

The ones speak to clarity, communication, transparency are important.

The possibility of development actually "fitting into a neighborhood "

The process is easy-to-understand, predictable, and accelerated

The process needs to:

(1) Improve Transparency- there's a building proposed adjacent to our lot and we only learned about it multiple meetings in via a physical flyer. If notice isn't easily accessible (e.g., centralized website with scheduled meetings searchable by address proximity with a map) it's unfair to the residents.

(2) Improve Flexibility - meetings are often held during the work week during or shortly after working hours. Meetings should be later and/or on the weekends to improve attendance.

(3) Honor Code - we recently joined a meeting and the developer dismissed concerns aligned to code because "they city typically allows it"- code was developed by neighborhood and while in part it's out dated there are very much parts of code relevant. Giving developers a sense that the code is a suggestion and not a regulation sets residents back from the start and forces residents to spend resources to sue the city through the state for compliance.

(4) Preserve Main Streets - the city has recently focused on downtown development and activation but on one block on West Broadway there are 4-5 banks. there should be regulations as to what is allowed in all of the "mixed use" development as it's killing our main streets.

(5) Align with Reality - parking in South Boston is very difficult and the lines for the L bus are extremely long however developments continue to be approved with less than the required parking as there's an exception for transit adjacent development. In reality, the individuals inevitably increase the strain on street parking and public transportation

(6) Support Neighborhood Advancement - With all of the development in Southie, our parks should no longer be missing gates and grass. In addition to contributions to MTA and BPDA, the developers should be given a choice of neighborhood supported / requested projects to support and provide funds for ongoing upkeep (size dependent).

The same people testify at these public meetings over and over. City Hall only listens to NEWRA in the north End. Enable online communication so the average person who has a job and doesn't like these exclusive neighborhood groups ( NEWRA) can have their voices heard also. There are a lot of us like that.

There is frankly a huge amount of distrust among many in our community that the BPDA, BTM, or City as a whole actually deeply listen to community input (particularly around scale, height, and density issues), and the items I checked off hopefully can help address some of that.

There's a realization that the process is broken. I've been to many of these meetings and the proposals barely change from one to the next, even with clear feedback from the community. It seems like a waste of time from everyone's perspective.

These are good ideas but depend where you set the bar - the problem is that developers have been allowed to come in and pillage our neighborhoods building massive boxes of small luxury condos nobody can afford or labs that nobody uses with limited permeable space and limited public green space. We do not need to look far to find streets that are far more resident friendly than A-B (e.g., Cambridge has several areas of high density with trees/gardens and large sidewalks to make buildings less imposing. or brookline along pond avenue

These are lame and tired ideas from the lens of developers and planners. We are tired of the top down BPDA approach that breeds distrust. These ideas are more of the same. Not all community members are NIMBYs. We agree we need more housing but we are sick of our concerns being ignored, superficial community benefits with no accountability, and a process that favors back room decision making with developers. Start this process over again and engage with established community groups to generate ideas to rebuild trust.

They all seem aspirational without specifics

They all streamline the development review process, and make it more predictable and more aligned with City priorities. That's necessary for us to accelerate and reduce the cost of building more housing.

They enhance predictability, transparency, and democracy to ensure that development isn't driven by the unrepresentative sample of people who have time to participate in public meetings

They give residence a voice in the development process.

They improve community input and make the process more predictable and transparent. Clear approval/rejection standards would be immensely positive.

They make the process clear and more understandable. Feel like you are part of the process.

They may generate a more efficient and predictable process for developers so more housing gets built.

They recognize parts of development process that now get little acknowledgment

They reduce uncertainty for developers and accelerate time to market, improving project economics, which helps us address our enormous lack of housing supply.

They're okay.

Those 4 areas are where I would focus on

Transparency

Transparency and predictability, build trust and engage in planning/review not just as one-off project review processes.

Transparency is paramount.

Transparency, accessibility outside of zoom platform

Transparency, Accountability, Metrics

transparency, public input on zoning waivers

Transparency. Create meaningful and accountable community input.

Want to retain the important aspect of community engagement in IAGs and public meetings, but provide mechanism for enforcing existing zoning, having BPDA guide developers toward



cooperation and responsiveness to community feedback, and providing consistent results across projects.

We appreciate the additional transparency and consistency for all involved parties and think these values. Building these principles into new practices will be important. When decisions are made, people often need to understand the "why". By establishing clear development guidelines, both developers and community members will learn what to expect.

- 1 helps forward goals of the city and encourages their creation
- 2 provides everyone with more predictability
- 4 if optimized to emphasize transparency, it will instill trust (when possible, we recommend data/results be shown to the public, ex. live polling)
- 6 helps the community better understand what benefits they can expect from development

We are in desperate need of INCREASED (OR ANY) TRANSPARENCY. Even more important ACCOUNTABILITY. Community input is ignored. Developers get what they want with window-dressing "concessions" and our expertise is ignored. Look at 125 Lincoln St. EMPTY. BLIGHT. And approved plan goes AGAINST community input. AGAINST standards for 20 year plan and requirements of the community. AGAINST even the existing pre-approval planning body (forget their name). We said too tall. They came in at absurd height so they could "negotiate" down to a height that STILL violates 20 yr. plan. They said "lab space" we raised the issue of wrong use. We showed documented GLUT OF LAB SPACE. We asked for some component of housing, retail at the street level, design that does not block off Chinatown from LD. IGNORED. Now it's a haven for drug dealers and no one keeps the property clean. Garbage dump. Broken windows and now we hear "oops there's no one interested because there's apparently a glut of lab space." AS WE SHOWED.

We should be removing as many barriers as possible to housing. Making the process predictable and clear will go a long way to doing that. In addition, we have too many steps in the process - if something is allowed by zoning (once Squares and Streets is finalized), it should be considered approved, with no additional review necessary. We have too much of a gap in housing to be concerned with items that will only slow the process down.

When institutions or developers file amendments to plans there should be commensurate changes in community benefits and mitigation.

Advisory groups have many of same members, often with conflicts of interest. New advisory groups, with transparent membership, should actually represent community goals & concerns. The Planning Dept should have a standardized way of help those members learn about the community's wants.

While I value many of these ideas, my thoughts gravitate initially to #2-5:

#2: the nature of the City and its neighborhoods is rapidly evolving and zoning and related project thresholds should keep pace of these changes

#3: City leaders should be transparent about their values and intents in public so we residents know their positions and can hold them accountable to their statements

#4: ever since meetings have gone to Zoom format, my ability (and that of my neighbors) to participate has improved; I feel better informed about projects in my neighborhood and better heard by City officials and developers; this trend should continue so folks with various levels of time and access can fully participate. I feel strongly that presentations should more fully explain technical terms (such as Article 80 itself and its required procedures, and terms of art used in the architectural presentations). Background materials/glossaries could also be helpful here. Maps and schematic drawings are often presented quickly without proper orientation of the participants to what is being shown.

#5 How advisory groups are selected and convened remains a cypher to me; I have lived in my neighborhood for 44 years, participated in multiple public meetings and local organizations, but have never understood how one gets to participate in an IAG, for example. Seems like the same folks are on all of the advisory groups.

Would be a vast improvement

Zoning needs reform prior to approval of projects

**Question 4. What questions or concerns do you have about these ideas?**

"Accelerate" projects; the goal isn't to slow anything down, but it shouldn't feel like a runaway train.
Any acceleration of the process worries me deeply, as it priorities developers' interests over that of communities.
As written many of these ideas are both far too esoteric (Who among the general public even knows what a Planned Development Area or an Institutional Master Plan is?) and also far too vague (What would "Recalibrate project thresholds in response to ongoing zoning reform" actually mean in practice?)
Assuring that those with the deepest knowledge of community, traditionally marginalized groups, and those most affected by the change have voice. It is wrong to assume that ONS liaisons and BPDA Community Managers know us best. They absolutely do not.
BPDA unfair practices/Zoning violations to speed up gentrification and reduce quality of life of existing residents
BPDA unfair practices/Zoning violations to speed up gentrification and reduce quality of life of existing residents
City needs major rezoning first and foremost
City removing public input; city decreasing transparency
Community Benefits and Mitigation seem like they are decided on arbitrarily depending on the project and that there are ways for developers to get around it. Are there any current guidelines or criteria for what a project needs to meet in terms of community benefits and mitigation?
community impact
Community input is critical.
Community mitigation vs community benefits
Community-informed, City priority community benefits.
Concerns are the ability to implement these.
Coordination among all agencies and providing consistent direction may be difficult as each agency may have different and sometimes conflicting objectives.
Couched in development techno-speak. What do you really mean?
Decreasing transparency; decreasing opportunities for community input
Does it go far enough
Does not respond to community/neighborhood specific concerns

Engage in community early

Even if we end up reducing uncertainty and improving predictability, if the actual zoning regs are too restrictive we still won't see any new housing.

expediting at the risk of ignoring the nuances of individual projects, and their larger (broader and long term) impacts on the community

Follow through

For wanting to forward City priorities of resilience, equity, and affordability, there are surprisingly few recommendations that address these topics. While some of the recommendations outside of the resilience, equity, and affordability category will promote these ideas as sort of secondary effects (creating a more predictable mitigation approach provides transparency and helps put communities on equal playing fields, creating equity is not the primary goal there). We're particularly concerned there aren't more recommendations to forward resilience.

further giving power to big business and sidelining the people who actually try to live here - but are leaving in droves

Good intentions can have unintended consequences. Can you build in a public evaluation after a reasonable period of time - with a commitment to make changes if there are unintended negative consequences?

Honestly neighbors are given WAY too much input in these process, and developers have smartened up and bake those additional costs into their plans. We need more height, more density, and more housing. It would go a long way if the City could encourage (force) developers to build beautiful things rather than ugly boxy vinyl s\*\*\*. Just 3D print some siding to match our beautiful neighborhoods if real brick is too expensive!

How can advisory groups and other community input methods avoid the trap of only hearing the most vocal, often most NIMBY residents on developments going forward? How can proven expertise from best practices in other cities be effectively weighed against community concerns that tend to slow down the development process? Is there a plan for that?

How do I revise Northeastern's IMP? BPDA already knows my concerns

How do try put climate change mitigation and resilience and pedestrian/bike/public transit priorities to the fore?

How do we change this so more community needs are met and it's not so much an insider game

How localized/community tailored are planning policies expected to be?

I am concerned that notwithstanding the role in Boston of neighborhood groups improving projects and pushing for more affordable housing, the "solutions" the BPDA is proposing all focus on disenfranchising/disempowering local groups, as though this is Newton or Weston and the main problem with development is the meddling of NIMBY neighbors. That is actually not our problem in Boston -- our problem is an inconsistent, secretive, fickle, often dishonest/disingenuous, overly-centralized and politicized planning and permitting process \*at the City level.\* The BPDA should be reforming itself and instead it is focusing on how to cut-off and cut-short community feedback on projects of significance to the community.

I am concerned that projects will be pushed through too fast without meaningful consideration to the impact of the surrounding community. I am concerned that as of right will allow people to build without the consideration of their neighbors. I am concerned that an expedited process won't allow for proper vetting of projects and contractors and erode building quality standards as well as worker standards.

I am strongly opposed to a city-wide committee. This is the opposite of community lead planning, engagement and participation.

I do not believe that IAGs or CACs should be eliminated.

I don't believe the BPDA will listen to the communities most affected by the changes that are being introduced. There has been an incredible push to add housing but no effort to improve public transportation to deal with the extra people. At the same time parking and driving has become a nightmare (bring done intentionally) to force people to the overcrowded, inefficient and time consuming public transport.

I don't see any changes that pertain to developers fulfilling the plans. One Institutional developer promised to build a new dorm on their campus but 10 years after that IMP no such dorm exists.

One developer had a four-building project approved with all the IDP units in building # four. They boasted about the high average percent of affordable units in the project, but acknowledged that they weren't bound to actually build the fourth building. And, if they sold the lot the new owners were not bound to the same number of IDP units. Please do not let developers rob the community this way.

I don't understand their tangible impact to me and my community and there are various terms that are undefined in the numbered idea categories.

I feel that some of the above ideas (particularly #1 and #2) are too heavily weighted towards what I would call "upzoning", and honestly have a lot of qualms about some of the new initiatives such as "Squares and Streets"

I have not heard of any guardrails on political patronage (current and future elected officials biasing access to variances, conditional approvals, the flow of direct benefits to favored nonprofits, appointments to IAGs, etc).

I hope you do not move forward with Idea 1, which is in direct conflict with the other ideas. City priorities have not always reflected neighborhood priorities, and this process is likely to create resentment and railroad communities, undermining the purpose of reform.

I just expect them to be implemented, as soon as possible.

I just feel this will just be smoke and mirrors and nothing will really get accomplished and fixed.

I think "community benefits" needs to be reimagined. Giving a pant-load of money to the most connected non profit or vocal organization in exchange for project support has gone too far. Far too often these benefits don't address the true needs of the neighborhoods that are going to be impacted.

I think the city needs to should revisit having elected neighborhood councils like the CCCC proposal of the late 80's. These councils could be a part of the engagement process along with ONS and city council district offices, and ensure there is true democracy in neighborhood decision making. Also, as mentioned earlier the planning department needs to create a list of neighborhood partners that it can lean on or contract for outreach and facilitation. It has been done before during the AFFH process under Mayor Walsh, and in Chinatown to support Chinese speakers.

I worry that developments will be fast-tracked and the community's needs and desires not be taking into account; I am concerned that the "needs" of developers will (continue to) be paramount, and those are often counter to those of the community. I really don't care if a developer needs to do certain things in order for their development to be profitable; that is very much NOT my concern, and yet variances and waivers are often allowed for that reason.

I worry that this may lead to more discussions on development and slow down the approval process.

I would be a little concerned with giving neighborhood groups more power over major parts of the approvals process. There are not strong incentives for individual neighborhood groups to consistently provide feedback that aligns with city-wide policies that will make our whole city and region better off. Members of neighborhood groups tend to be focused on their own individual property values more than the quality of their neighborhood.

I would like to know more about what is meant by community input around "height & density." Historically, prioritizing this type of input has led to exclusionary zoning and has essentially been a way for upper-class homeowners to have their interests catered to. What type of input processes is the city considering implementing around height & density, and what positive policy (not political) outcomes do you expect it to achieve?

I would like to understand better the future of zoning in Boston (particularly Fenway/Kenmore).

I'd like to know more details on what the city is thinking on changes to PDA and IMP approvals/procedures before making a judgement on whether either are a priority.

Idea 2 is too vague for comment. Idea 6 sounds good on its face, but could easily be captured by bad actors as a way to demand more and more inappropriate investment infrastructure that in reality is the City's responsibility or diverting funds to unaccountable local orgs.

keeping status quo is impossible. Residents need to be able to decide where they live, not developers.

Lack of respect for existing neighborhoods at any cost or loss to residents

low income priority housing

Many are worded with inside jargon, so I don't really understand what they are saying.

Many of these ideas seem to imply that whatever process the BPDA feels like adopting, will be adopted, which for many communities is more of the same old BPDA.

Many of these ideas seem to undermine the Zoning Process.

Many seem unclear and obtuse to the regular person

Members of the public are smarter than you think and they know their neighborhoods far better than City Hall planners who think they know what is best.

more community/neighborhood involvement

More ideas about how to accelerate building housing

My biggest concern is community input by the neighborhood being impacted. We are a city of distinct, unique neighborhoods

My concern is that our community is voiceless. Went to several meeting that didn't have a Cape Verdean/spanish translator

My main concern is access to the process. Really tired of what feels like 7 people who have a lot of spare time railroading good projects with their antiquated ideals. Neighborhood groups cannot speak for the neighborhood when they make it hard for the average neighborhood person to participate.

My main concern is that ordinary citizens have to invest substantial time to become essentially planning experts to understand the City's development approval process and are forced to be hyper-vigilant to discover what projects are proposed for their neighborhood. The process is much too tilted in favor of development proponents who know how to "work the system" and even with community involvement there is too little democratic oversight and no formal authority of neighbors or groups of citizens to influence development proposals or project approvals.

My question is simple the why was the real intention of the Master Plan not presented at the beginning of the process.

N/A

need to insure that larger public policy objectives are achieved over local impacts.

Need to make sure we significantly upzone first

No money is tied to this process. Must not extend designations without providing justification to community.

Not clear about #1. Does this mean the city will not review projects in locations that are not "prioritized" by it? Does it mean the city will tell developers not to propose lab space but affordable housing instead? This needs more explanation.

Oddly no ideas are included regarding the reconsideration of uneconomic aspects of policies that are disincentivizing developers from building new housing which further exacerbates the supply and demand imbalance in the Boston housing market, leading to unaffordable housing.

open space and parks

Over crowding

Overcomplicating and lengthening the planning process with excessive advisory group meetings, public notices, and BPDA meetings. Stick to the process and do NOT allow BPDA staff, elected officials, and community groups to continually interject themselves into a project. Looks unprofessional and wastes a lot of time and money.

PDA's need to be planed prior to allowing development

Politics

Rebuilding trust is essential, but will be very difficult

SEE ABOVE

See above

See above

See my answer to #3.

Some of the ideas presented here seem to be about rushing things and moving quickly. I think that's a mistake for the future. The city is too drunk on the notion of a housing crisis to see what it's doing to the future of the city.

Some of these question relate to streamlining processes and approvals, I'm all for that, why does the city need a survey to streamline their own departments and processes?



Somewhere in there should be a clear public timeline for city approvals, a DPIR goes in for example, both community members and developers deserve to know when the decision on that will be made

Streamlining and making things predictable sounds good except when it perpetuates historical inequities. An environmental justice lens must be used to ensure that its EJ neighborhoods have: 1. Sufficient home ownership housing to counter wealth inequality; 2. Sufficient open green space and tree canopy to improve public health and environmental equity; and 3. Location specific community benefits to mitigate development impact on nearby residents, and historical disinvestment in the immediate area (not contributions to citywide affordable housing funds or Boys and Girls Clubs, etc).

That developers and city planners be given too much authority to decide what gets built and where.

That it will just business as usual and the entire exercise will end with the same old way of planning

That the city will only pay lip service to them and not honor the true spirit of neighborhood participation.

That there are too many priorities

The city needs updated zoning and there need to be zero appeals. Either a project conforms and can be built or doesn't and can't. A system that lets developers with the most lawyers do whatever they want and restricts everyone else is unfair for everyone. It creates anger from communities who feel powerless. Once that changes, the Article 80 process can use community feedback to help those conforming project better fit the neighborhoods.

The city should think very clearly about the purpose of community engagement. Why do you want feedback? Where can it be most helpful? Where is it least helpful? How do you know when community engagement is successful? What does that look like? How do you train city staff to do this well? And how do you learn from experience? Try to find community-based organizations that do this well and work with them, even if they aren't in the "planning and development" arena - they may have valuable insights and networks.

Separately, I am concerned that the level of polarization in our society will sabotage even the best efforts at constructive community engagement.

The city will not respect or honor resident concerns and will continue to approve sub-optimal developments

The expected opposition of NIMBY's should not delay or detail the fast tracking of projects once the city has gotten but in for the process.

The ideas are developed without meaningful input from residents.

The planning department's goals are often different than the community's. When they are in direct opposition, like on height or parking, which group is development expected to comply with? If neighbors want more parking but the planners advise against it, we need transparency around what developers are being expected to do.

The planning review process should more closely align with zoning, but that assumes zoning changes have been widely vetted and have broad support. So far, the attempts to update and regularize zoning--which is badly needed--is a work in progress I would not say that we have broad agreement in many cases. Meanwhile, the current "everything is negotiable" Spot Zoning doesn't work well for anyone.

The problem of community input is that it allows some sticks in the mud to maintain the status quo when it's clear that that status quo isn't working. It is important for people to know what's going on and \*why\*, but that should not stop changes because it's unlikeable as opposed to dangerous.

The project approval process still feels opaque to me. It's hard to get a read on basic summary information e.g. "what does the city like about this proposal? what does it not like?" The developer proposals and the city responses typically employ a lot of domain-specific technical jargon.

The proposal was unclear and many of the questions that were asked at the meeting went unanswered.

The reform of advisory groups is important; I wonder if the Impact Advisory Group as currently conceived is an idea that's run its course. There are better and more representative ways of soliciting community feedback, ideally through a planning process that informs zoning. Impact Advisory Groups too often feed into the primary pathology of Article 80, which is that these reviews tend to be project-specific and changes to the project are ad-hoc and inconsistent from project to project.

The same people are always on IAGs. It's about more than trust.

The wordings are too ambiguous for me to confidently state my opinion. Each word could use defining.

The words neighbor or abutters is not ther at all

There is a lack of rigor in Article 80 proceedings that needs to be addressed. For example, Kenmore Square is going to have major developments with increased use, and the traffic plan presented by the developer relied on carton of a traffic circle, with no indication of how pedestrians were to get where they were going.

There is insufficient information so my concern is more detail about each idea.

There is still no transparency and no accountability. I've lived here for four decades, the entrenched BPDA serve themselves (kowtowing to developers, rotating into lucrative private sector jobs, ) This agency should BALANCE the rights of the community against the rights of developers. Instead, it's blank checks, approvals despite significant negative community input, and developers get what they want with little accountability to the community. We live with an eyesore, attractive nuisance and trash dumping ground while vagrants piss on the mural and drug dealers ply their trade with impunity.

There is way too much jargon in the ideas listed above

There needs to be balance and compromise between neighborhood groups, city hall and everyone else.

There needs to be fair and clear community input

There should be transparent monitoring of permitted projects for compliance of mitigation, community benefits. This must be over the entire life of project. Too much "agreed" to little delivered

These are early ideas, so they're of course still very general without detail. A couple things I think are particularly important to refine are: 1) addressing not just the goal but the actual methods for how to have more representative advisory groups and community feedback that capture the whole breadth of the community, and not just those with the most time and resources to participate; 2) how we can reform IMPs to ensure our educational institutions are playing a more consistent and substantive role in creating housing for all of their students, either on campus, or through contributions to the City that enable building new off-campus housing to address the gap between the number of students and the amount of on-campus housing.

These can't be just window dressing. The most important thing is to listen to feedback from Neighborhood groups.

These ideas are so general that it's hard to tell yet whether I will support them when they are fully developed.

These ideas as expressed are generic, broad brush umbrellas, and as each is open to several interpretations, it's hard to gauge what you mean by them. The absence of specifics and detail, or at least of several examples, doesn't allow me to discern whether my interpretation is at all consonant with yours.

These ideas do not reflect the needs of the communities. You have not spoken with communities who see what is going on, and have better ideas.

These ideas seem to cut the community out of the process.

They could lead to decreased housing production in a time when accelerated housing production in the Boston region is necessary

They won't be implemented and are needed.

This process seems to be skipping the way that the zoning, even relatively recent zoning, gets tossed out, and there is really no assurance that traffic issues will be addressed (e.g., the proposed Kenmore Square traffic pattern may end up working about as well as the notorious Charles Circle does).

Institutional expansion and disruption are not really addressed (e.g. Northeastern seems to think that it has a manifest destiny to occupy everything between its current campus, its outposts in the Christian Science office buildings, and Sheraton Tower slated for student use for the next ten years).

This Administration ignores neighborhood input and should have less power, not more.

I welcome new, creative and inclusive engagement methods but if all engagement is mediated by and only advisory to BPDA staff, what recourse do community members have when their voices are ignored? If not something like a neighborhood council model with real power, which has its dangers of becoming an entrenched group, then at least we need some kind of defined, democratic appeal process.

too many acronyms for your average citizen to meaningfully comment. Why isn't this in a language and level that the average Boston citizen can understand? Would like to see goals around reduced graft, bribery, and the old boys network

Trade off for density needs to be public realm and community benefits. ( new side walks lighting trees landscaping garbage mitigation plans

Unfortunately, many are not clear - or seem to deny that anything that exists is worthwhile. Seems they came from the development community and staff. What about the constituents/residents?

unless a high affordable housing threshold met, developments should not get accelerated

We need to establish baseline requirements for the city to push for more density, more affordability, and taller buildings, so that we can have density without full lot coverage. I don't see anything in here that reforms the design review process which I've seen actively push for a shorter building against the wishes of neighbors.

What does accountability look like for both the city and developers? How do we accelerate priority projects (e.g. affordable housing)

What if the existing plans are bad or outdated?

What is being ignored in this process is that when a development project is built, the result will usually be that the surrounding neighbors will lose some of the quality of life that they previously enjoyed. They need to have a voice and some power to decrease that loss. They are the ones that know their neighborhood best.

Most of the new housing developments being proposed and built are exclusively rentals priced higher than the surrounding area's rentals and unaffordable to many working class residents. Some of these residents will be forced to move out of Boston.

With homeownership in Boston at 35% of total housing stock, this large increase in rental housing will decrease that ownership rate and at the same time make renting more unaffordable to many Boston residents. Expecting more rental developments to cause a decrease in rents city wide is a risky bet with no future time line. Also, decreasing the opportunity for home ownership means even more of us will spend much of our lives building someone else's wealth.

I do not underestimate the difficulty of solving these problems.

What mechanisms will be used to keep developers ACCOUNTABLE to delivering community benefits agreed upon? How will monitor and guarantee accountability?

What opportunities do abutters have for ensuring proposed housing projects maintains the existing fabric of the neighborhood?

What the City thinks of as clear and predictable might not be what a developer thinks they are.

Whether (an if) the city will indeed enforce these new ideas.

Who determines those gates of approval? Keeping our city's architecture is important to me in preserving our history

Who participated

Whp will insure compliance with these ideas?

Why is there no mention of the need to ensure that residents' interests be protected in Article 80?

Why is Tony D'Isidoro the only community leader on this committee? Why are all the other people on the Article 80 review committee developers?

Will residents of Boston have the opportunity to shape development goals and outcomes with development teams. This should be our goal, so as to avoid the all or nothing approach that leads to lawsuits against development.

The city needs to do a better job of identifying benefits and risks of each proposed development and communicating that to neighbors so that people can give their input in a meaningful way, well-informed about the opportunities and burdens in a given project.

Planning efforts led by BPDA with neighborhoods that will experience development pressure ahead of specific development proposals will help a lot-- and isn't addressed in the 11 ideas above.

Will space be wasted for parking? Will projects be slowed by red tape?

Will the public be notified of the public meetings in time to attend

Will these, if any changes be clearly communicated and implemented across departments?  
That's the crux of what's failing now.

Will they actually be implemented, tracked and executed?

Words like "accelerate" and "recalibrate" are vague. I would want the city to provide full transparency on how and why they are deciding to accelerate, recalibrate, etc. and project, proposal process, etc. It shouldn't be a black box.

You only had one community member on the group and was that person picked by the mayor? This is curated community engagement.

**Question 5: Other comments or questions?**

ABusive deveopers need to be put in check
Adding more housing to Boston's inventory makes no sense without: 1) a vastly improved Boston public school system 2) a functioning, appropriately-funded MBTA 3) reliable, upgraded water, sewer and bridge infrastructure, 4) an increase in publicly accessible park and open space, and 5) proper attention to the threats caused by climate change. Good planning takes a comprehensive, holistic view and doesn't promote one use (in this case - housing) at the expense of other essential city functions.
Aligning mutual goals should be a collaborative effort, not a battle.
All of the ideas above are pretty vague. A more detailed explanation of what they mean and a hypothetical example would ensure responses produce much more valuable and accurate community feedback.
Approval of commercial developments without consideration of housing required for new workers in those buildings has created our current crisis. Growth needs to be looked at holistically rather than just approving every new lab or office that comes along.
Article 80 doesn't have to be a process that attempts to be everything to everyone. It is straightforwardly meant to provide a more rigorous level of review to projects that are larger and more complex than a standard project that would simply apply for a building permit. The best thing the city can do relative to community sentiment about projects is to be consistent and transparent in its reviews; when people have clear expectations, they might not agree with the outcomes, but they can't argue with the process that led to those outcomes.
Boston has to separate zoning and regulation from promotion. In particular, the all powerful BPDA, needs to be broken up and subject to more control by elected officials.
Boston should aim to have no zoning variants granted except for extreme conditions. Thr current policy is a travesty and you should be ashamed.
BPDA unfair practices/Zoning violations to speed up gentrification and reduce quality of life of existing residents
BPDA unfair practices/Zoning violations to speed up gentrification and reduce quality of life of existing residents
Civic Associations participation in the Development and Zoning process are written into the State Zoning Enabling Act. They should not be Marginalized. Participation in Civic Associations should be encouraged by the city.

Community input in Boston is out of control. We need to consolidate community input into a single forum to eliminate conflicting and dragged out inputs from IAGs, neighborhood associations, sub civic neighborhood associations and organized groups of neighbors. We also need to set create deadlines by which approval is automatic if a denial decision is not made. Better to kill projects early than drag them out for years and kill them via deteriorating economics.

Community voice and input needs to be paramount. If a community does not support a project, the project should not happen until it meets the community's needs. Affordable housing is so crucial, and the BPDA needs to make that its top priority. We are in a housing crisis, and we need more affordable housing so people can actually live in Boston, invest in their communities, and take care of their health. If a community is against a project because it is not affordable, this project should not be accepted.

Do not confuse car use out of necessity for car use by preference; make city more walker friendly

Expand ideas to include more detail for those of us who are less informed and involved if you want us to become actively involved. From my experience its not truly a top priority to incorporate feedback from those most affected by your decisions, the developer gives 2%-3% and the zoning and approval boards just waive everything else.

For every use, data on whether it is over or under-represented in the neighborhood based upon the neighborhood pre-approved plan.

Get rid of parking requirements.

How can we preserve zoning that allows many different types of housing styles for varied lifestyles .

How do residents know that inspectional services will respond to abutter concerns regarding erosion and sedimentation running off project areas into street or adjacent public spaces such as parks and wetlands?

I don't see listed here anything about following up after BRA approval, e.g. an institutional building plan said 49,000 SF but was built at 60,000 SF. The project, 5 buildings on mostly concrete with some grass and a few ornamental trees, meant clear-cutting 5 acres of green space and by representing it at 49,000 the institution was able to avoid certain environmental standard.

I hope that there will be significantly increased coordination with and respect for the responsibilities of other City departments and their respective policy and regulatory responsibilities

I think the tracking part is also clear, because there have been times when the community benefits out of a project have been seemingly lost in translation and never came to fruition in the past.



I will submit additional detailed comments separately, but the survey is a good start.

I wish the article 80 process made developers proformas public. They say all the time that IDP requirements are killing projects, but without seeing the numbers and the impacts on profits, I don't really believe them. Can we require the numbers be submitted in the filings?

I worry the city will reduce the opportunity for residents to weigh in on zoning waivers

I would like to see more development that can occur as-of-right, especially with regard to height, density, and use. There are far too many zones within each neighborhood that reflect past community concerns or development patterns that are no longer relevant to the current real estate market or planning best practices. My other concern is that there is a disconnect between the BPDA and MBTA during development review. Every developer comes in touting how their project is going to be transit-oriented and, from a long-term planning perspective, that's what we WANT the city to become. But if the location is currently served by infrequent or unreliable transit, why would anyone choose to rely on the T to get around? I'm specifically thinking of all of the apartments going up on Leo Birmingham Parkway, each developer calling their project "transit-oriented development" because it's along the 86 bus route, but none of them acknowledging that during rush hour, by the time the bus gets to that part of the route, it's already full and usually drives right by. You can't force a change in behavior if the system can't accommodate it. I want to see you work with the T during large project review to determine how many additional riders can be accommodated at each stop, at various times of the day, and match that with ridership projections for each development so that there's a real accounting of existing supply and potential demand. This will also put real data behind any TDM measures, parking ratios, and mitigation or community benefits commitments.

I'd like to understand how Article 80 will work in newly zoned neighborhoods (or post Squares+Streets areas) versus how it will continue to work in areas that still have out of date zoning. I'd like to see a more accelerate process if projects match new zoning.

Idea 5 - I chose to support this because advisory groups are a big impediment to housing density. However, I do not support reforming them. I support eliminating them.

If there is too much emphasis on green-lighting developments at the expense of the residential quality of life, Boston will become an entirely transient city, unable to hold on to long-term residents and owner-occupants. That will harm the city's appeal, charm, and ability to have an economically diverse population.

Improvements to the public space should be a part of every project.

In other parts of the country, there are Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances. Is the BPDA considering adopting something like this?

Trust in government is a major concern. Although this is focused just on A80, the BPDA needs to work on building community trust beyond the AG.

Article 80 should prepare the project to contemplate the goals established in other permitting processes the project will be subject to. This should include not just City processes but State review processes like Chapter 91.

In watching the full two-hour presentation after the fact, I think it was a very good, productive meeting, with a lot of good discussion points by all involved- both city staff and the public comments- thank you!. And if I can clarify what might sound like some negative comments above from me, please allow me some quick background on where I'm coming from, so to speak- since I really do want to long term see this process work. I served on the PZAC/IPOD rezoning effort back in the early 1990's for Allston-Brighton that worked with the then BRA to create Article 51. We met almost weekly for about four years, and worked hard to create what I still feel is a good base for much of the community, particularly its residential areas. But it was a surprise to a lot of us when a few years later that the original Article 80 was created with little community input. Even though officially the underlying zoning was (and still is) there, Article 80 basically trumped the zoning process- it frankly made Article 51 almost secondary. Almost NO project was thereafter met with a "no" by the BRA/BPDA, that a project didn't follow the zoning code, which was NOT ancient at the time- everything seemed to be up to negotiation by the city. And that was extremely frustrating to many of us, who felt Article 51 was never given a chance. So for example, there are many good things in the Squares and Streets initiative- such as limiting height limits in the lower density districts/corridors to four floors, which to me I'm comfortable with- since 3-4 floor buildings generally fit the existing fabric of many of these area (such as Brighton Center). But will those new guidelines ACTUALLY be followed- will the BPDA finally say NO to a developer who say comes in with a 5 or 6 story building? Or will even the new guidelines "be up to negotiation"? That is the long term trust process for a lot of us. And if I may give you one more example- a few years the BPDA worked with Allston-Brighton residents to create some new area guidelines for the former industrial streets between Cambridge Street and the Mass Pike, that were starting to see new residential blocks. Height limits were higher than the original Article 51, set at what seemed a reasonable 5-6 stories. But it wasn't long before BPDA was approving buildings at 7 stories and higher- which frankly made the prior effort seem pointless. I'm sorry at the length of these comments, and I appreciate your time reading them- so thank you for letting me get these feelings across.

Increased transparency and public access to information could improve community trust

Involvement by those who will be impacted most by each development is essential, and must be baked into all current and future city policies and procedures regarding land disposition. Article 80 reform, rezoning initiatives, and the like must only go forward if they incorporate and enforce much more robust engagement and input from the immediate and nearby residents and the civic groups that bring them together. The city must change from using a process-oriented checklist of "community engagement" activities, to an improvement and results-oriented model that respects its constituents.

It seems like there are public forums but that they rarely change any policy

Lack of housing is a symptom you are treating. The real problem is over-population. You are enabling this through your actions.

Limits should be placed on FAR not height in order to encourage taller buildings with smaller footprints and more publicly accessible green space and trees

Maddening to continually be asked to attend meetings, give input only to have it ignored. Again and again. WHO is accountable at BPDA? Who will answer for ruining our neighborhood?

many neighborhood groups are way too powerful and the Mayor and Segun cater to them. It's not right.

more affordable rental housing!!!

more community/neighborhood involvement

More effort must be made to develop a standard frame work for community engagement. Having a framework for the amount of needed engagement and the results you are expecting will help to establish trust between the BPDA and the city. It is in your own best interest especially with the mayors plans for change. Cities around the country are developing these kinds of policies. If you don't make changes soon the communities will push back.

N/A

neighborhood input needs to be given more weight

No thanks

none.

Not every neighborhood is the same. City wide standards could be detrimental to neighborhoods.

Not much impressed by Mayor Wu's "vision" for A/B--more like a nightmare than a dream.

Please come to Charlestown for a public, open community meeting so you can hear what is wrong with Boston. We are Inundation District 2, with approved buildings to be built in known flood zones, next to toxic air corridors, to profit developers, while putting Bostonians public

health at risk, in massive heat island with rising energy costs without trees to protect our environment.

Please consider that this is not Newton or Brookline and that the local community process adds value (and affordability) to projects 99% of the time. Every piece of this latest zoning reform effort seems to be coming at it from the opposite, counter-factual perspective -- that a dysfunctional and overly-politicized BPDA/ISD/ZBA/MONS is not what gums up increases the costs of development, but instead it's the peons/citizens who live in the communities.

Please listen to people in neighborhood projects are getting too dense

Please stop and look around. Take the time to listen and hear to the residents experience and concerns! Change from the current method if isolating neighbors from each other and take the opportunity to build community through meetings. The BPDA may learn something.

Preserve all open spaces! In some areas, there are hardly any left, suffocating.

Proposed changes to public involvement confuse awareness and actual engagement. Out of 100 people, 95 mostly want simply to be aware of the proposal. Only a small number will have the time, skills and interest to dig into the details and follow the progress of the development proposal. BPDA needs to focus more on meaningful input from stakeholders and less on comments from a random person at a bus stop who has 90 seconds to understand what massing is and 60 seconds to put a colored dot on a board. It is unfair to ask someone to grasp a technical concept in minutes that staff has spent a week studying. Of course, many people who see a rendering in the local news may respond and comment, but BPDA needs to prioritize informed comments.

At 2/28 meeting there was no discussion of the role of the developer in public engagement. The developer should take the lead unless it is incapable. The public should build a relationship with the proponent. Why does BPDA put itself run the middle?

An effective advisory group is essential. Members of an advisory group are the most engaged, committed and focused stakeholders you can get. Again, very, very few people have the skills and the time to follow the complicated development process or know are the key parts of a PNF to read. Advisory group members do.

Idea #5 that proposes a citywide advisory group sounds good but won't work in a city of neighborhoods as is Boston. The current IAG format restricts IAG input to comments on mitigation only. This must change. However, the statement 2/28 that suggested an advisory group could start before the project is filed makes little sense if the input is to be meaningful. A developer buys the land and figures out how to develop it to make money. A pre-filing advisory group would only be able to tinker at the edges and give the illusion that big changes are possible.

Public community seats on boards like ZBA, BPDA, or other decision-making bodies should not be filled with developers, development consultants, or major institutions but by community residents.

Reforming advisory groups could be a large improvement if done well - and more inclusively.

Residents should be first and foremost. Believe it or not, there are many residents who are forward thinking and know what's best for their neighborhoods and it doesn't take a college degree, just eyes in your head.

retain public input on zoning waivers

see above. BE GLAD TO TALK PERSONALLY IF YOU WISH ME TO ELABORATE.

See my answer to #3.

Stop over building

Thank you for listening.

Thank you for reaching out to us on this important process.

Thanks you for soliciting citizen feedback.

The Article 80 and public comment periods need to be dramatically changed. Boston needs to understand it competes with other cities and states in the US. I moved here after working in local government and was shocked by the way Planners and the City treats developers. Here, Planners have restarted and demanded so many changes to projects that it has increased the average cost per unit here to \$600,000. Absolutely, ridiculous.

I would recommend eliminating ways for Planners to restart projects, reduce environmental and energy saving housing initiatives (or an emergency pause for now), and consolidate community comment periods and neighborhood committees. All of these add more time to projects, increasing the cost to pay for lawyers, architects, and designers before the project even breaks ground.

With extremely high housings costs and high interest rates, Boston cannot depend anymore on 2% interest rates to lower the mortgage payment of potential borrowers. Planners and elected officials need to aim to bring the project costs DOWN NOW.

The biggest problem with the article 80 process (other than the fact that so many units have to go through it in the first place) is the uncertainty and arbitrariness of the result. Perfectly good projects are often delayed or significantly downsized based entirely on who manages to find time to show up for the public meeting. In general, the role of public comment in this process needs to be significantly curtailed. Public comment can be useful for sussing out issues that are genuinely unique to the project site, such as addressing highly specific problems with sidewalks or traffic flow, but it should play no part in deciding how much housing gets built.

The BPDA has the arrogant attitude of "we have advanced degrees, so we know best", which is both offensive and not true.

The city has not truly listened to the neighborhoods, nor has it adequately engaged with them in an open and sincere process. The ZBA has not acted within their prescribed authority so there is no trust in the city currently.

The city is currently not understanding all aspects of the 'housing crisis' it touts so much, and its answers are very one dimensional - and in some cases, the solutions are not going to solve the problem. Also, the solutions touted are to make way for other people so as to be able to brush off the families and children that have put in their time in the community. I keep hearing about young people leaving the city, well, I don't see them leaving my neighborhood. Our young people are still here, so maybe it's time the city start valuing the young people here and not putting so much value on the blow-ins that complain about everything and get everything.

The goal of reforming and streamlining the development process is laudable, but not if residents and neighborhood associations are cut out of the process. Exceptions to established codes is already turning Boston into a NYC wannabe. One great virtue of Boston, that is quickly being lost, is its human scale. We don't need skyscraper canyons to be a "world class" city.

The Impact Advisory Group process needs to be greatly enhanced beyond what it is. Currently IAGs are all but perfunctory. They only meet once, and only with the developer. There should be training workshops for IAG candidates, more formal engagement to recruit community members to IAGs, more meetings with BPDA, developers, and stand-alone meetings as the IAG alone to discuss project impacts. Developers should be required to present projects in much more consistent formats and required to clearly convey key information (FAR, Height, number of Units, number of zoning violations, etc) prominently in their meetings and presentations. As it stands developers can essentially put together a powerpoint "deck" with whatever information or images they want, without any rules or requirements. This obfuscates the impact of projects, sometimes it seems intentionally to obscure the size of proposals. This is not serving the public interest well.

The industry players involved, as well as the regulatory players involved, all seem to understand that less overall housing production leads to less overall housing affordability. Why then, a citizen must ask, do the regulatory authorities not reconsider their policy positions such that they stand to actually move the needle on affordable housing? Policies that look good from the political marketing perspective may get folks re-elected, but they won't leave the city better off.

The planning and approval process in the last few years has not been responsive to residents' concerns although the mayor and the BPDA continue to insist that it has.

This city has a long history of ramming unwanted projects down people's throats, especially in communities of color. For example, just in Roxbury: Northeastern tore down hundreds of residential buildings that displaced thousands. The city just took an actively used recreation center and turned it into a shelter for migrants without community input. How dare they when there are so many unused spaces in the city? The inequity is astounding. So I'm hopeful that a better, more equitable system will be put in place, but remain mistrustful.

This feels like a template approach to deep, strategic issues and this approach feels inadequate to the major issues of our city and its residents.

Will we be notified if the final duty I decision

What actual, real roles will neighborhoods and communities play?

When it comes to affordable housing, Boston continues to rely on trickle down approaches and the efforts of individual community groups. These efforts are certainly helpful but have not created affordable housing in the numbers needed. At times the city seems to be amplifying the gap between the very wealthy and the rest of us. Boston needs to stop encouraging projects that exist more as wealth storage units and second or third homes rather than as principal residences.

When will BPDA stop listening to civic group who know nothing but irrational responses to proposed projects.

Where access to variances is favored as opposed to as-of-right zoning (such as proposed by Squares and Streets, which I support), I'd appreciate more transparency in how access to BPDA prior to land deals is managed. There is evidence to suggest that select developers/investors are favored in their ability to secure tacit approvals at BPDA in months or years before an LOI or PNF is filed, in instances even before land acquisition is reported.

Where does ZBA fall within decisioning

Where in this schema do neighborhood priorities and character fit?

What of preventing displacement and loss of local businesses?

Is there any attention to historic preservation?

Why are we chosen to change our nicest neighborhoods to conform to a plan most simply don't like. And are we able to trust this process.

Why can't I have 10 minutes before BPDA Board to explain HVVC?

Why does the city continue to push bike lanes and no parking in these developments yet the eye test tells you people want their cars and should take priority over 10 people that drive there bikes full time.

Why is North End not a historic district

Why is there not as much focus on streamlining the permitting process with ISD? Many of the housing needs this city has could be improved if smaller property owners could more easily acquire the necessary permits.

Why is Tony D'Isidoro the only community leader on this committee? Why are all the other people on the Article 80 review committee developers? Community leaders throughout the city are asking this question openly and this question is only growing.

Would be great to add an on line site for status of all projects and milestones after community input and approvals - hard now to understand status

You guys need to hire some consultants that specialized in community engagement. This is not going to cut it.

You need more community members to truly transform your practices. This misses the mark on all fronts.