



**boston planning &
development agency**

PLAN: Mattapan

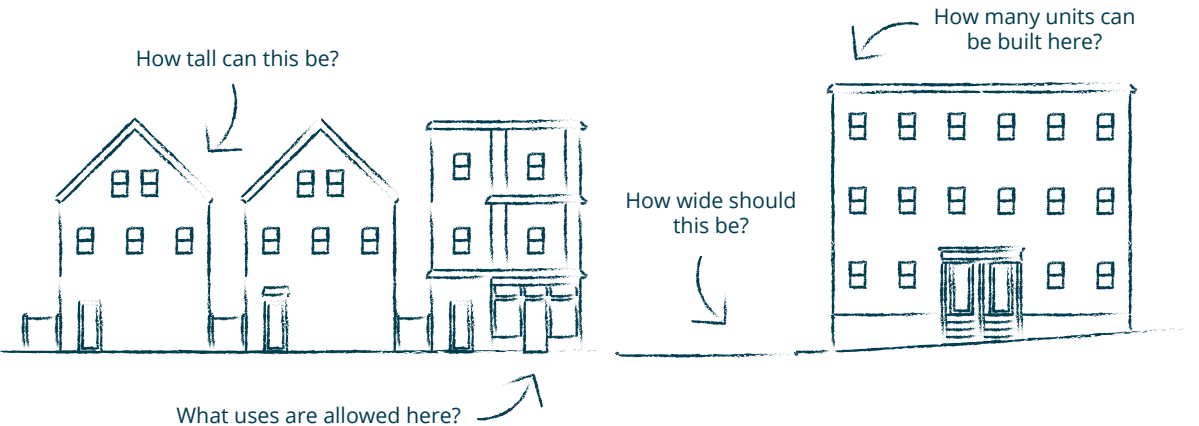
A Brief Guide to Mattapan's Zoning and the Article 80 Review Process



Introduction

What is zoning?

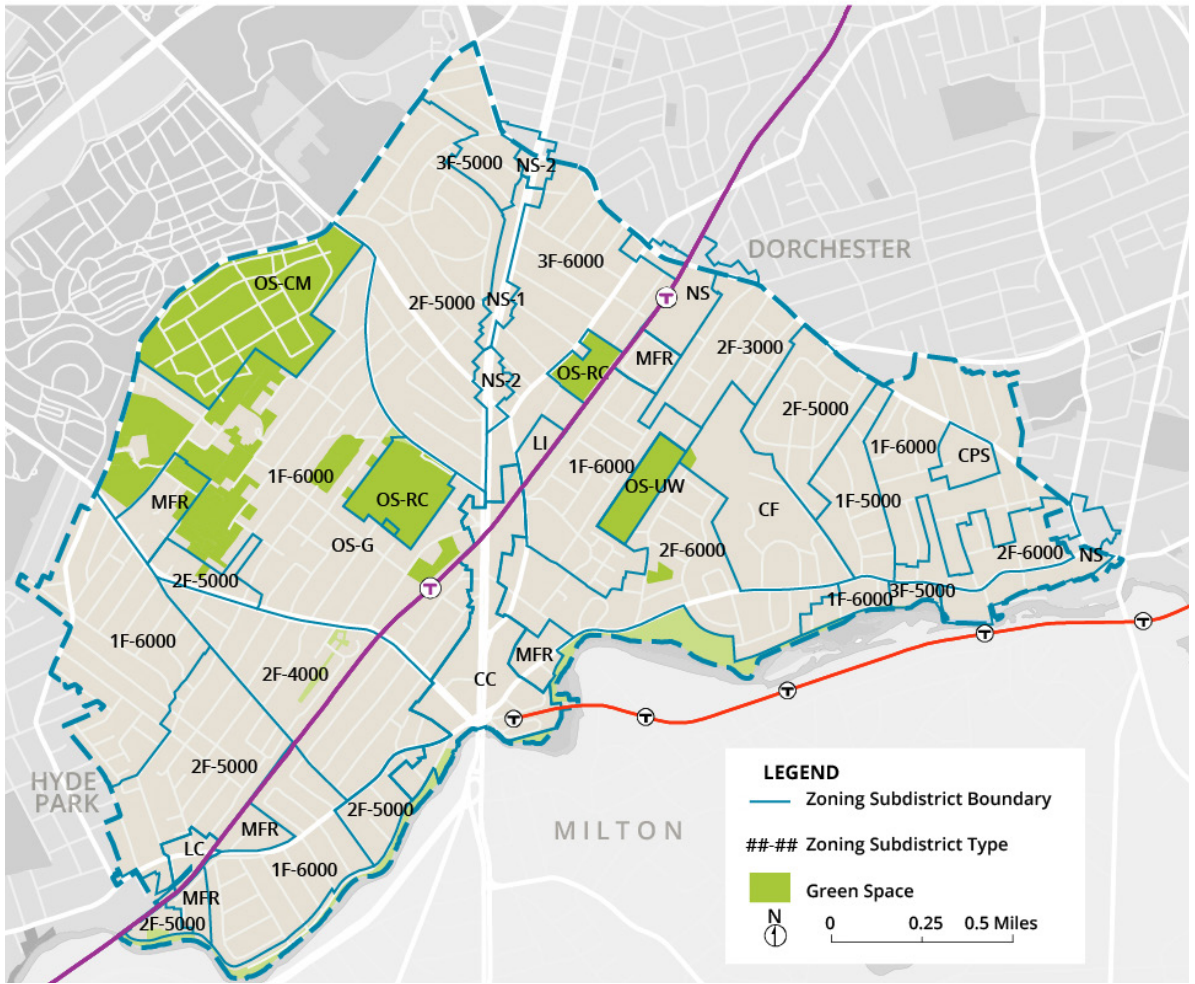
Zoning is a legal mechanism that regulates what property owners can and cannot do with their property. Zoning keeps compatible things together—like types of uses or sizes and forms of buildings.



In this document we'll explore—

Shaping individual buildings through zoning

Reviewing larger projects through the Article 80 Process



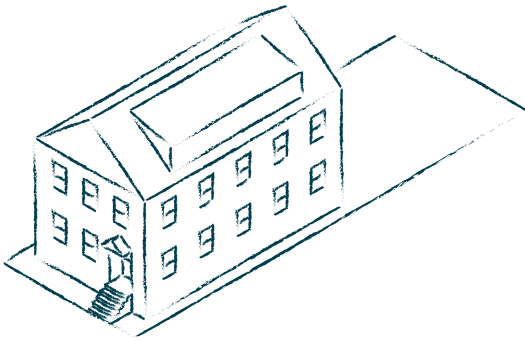
Mattapan’s zoning includes residential, commercial, neighborhood shopping, community facilities, open space, and local industrial.

Zoning

What is zoning?

There are different types of zoning. Mattapan uses what is referred to as Euclidean Zoning, which focuses primarily on the use of land as is commonly known as conventional zoning. There is also a type called Form-Based zoning, which focuses its regulation on architectural details and the shape of buildings.

What you see—



What the zoning looks like—

SUBDISTRICT	HEIGHT	FAR	SETBACK
2F-5000	2-½ stories	0.8	5' front

Mattapan's zoning looks at features of buildings and groups them by shared characteristics. There are three main parts to zoning:

Geography

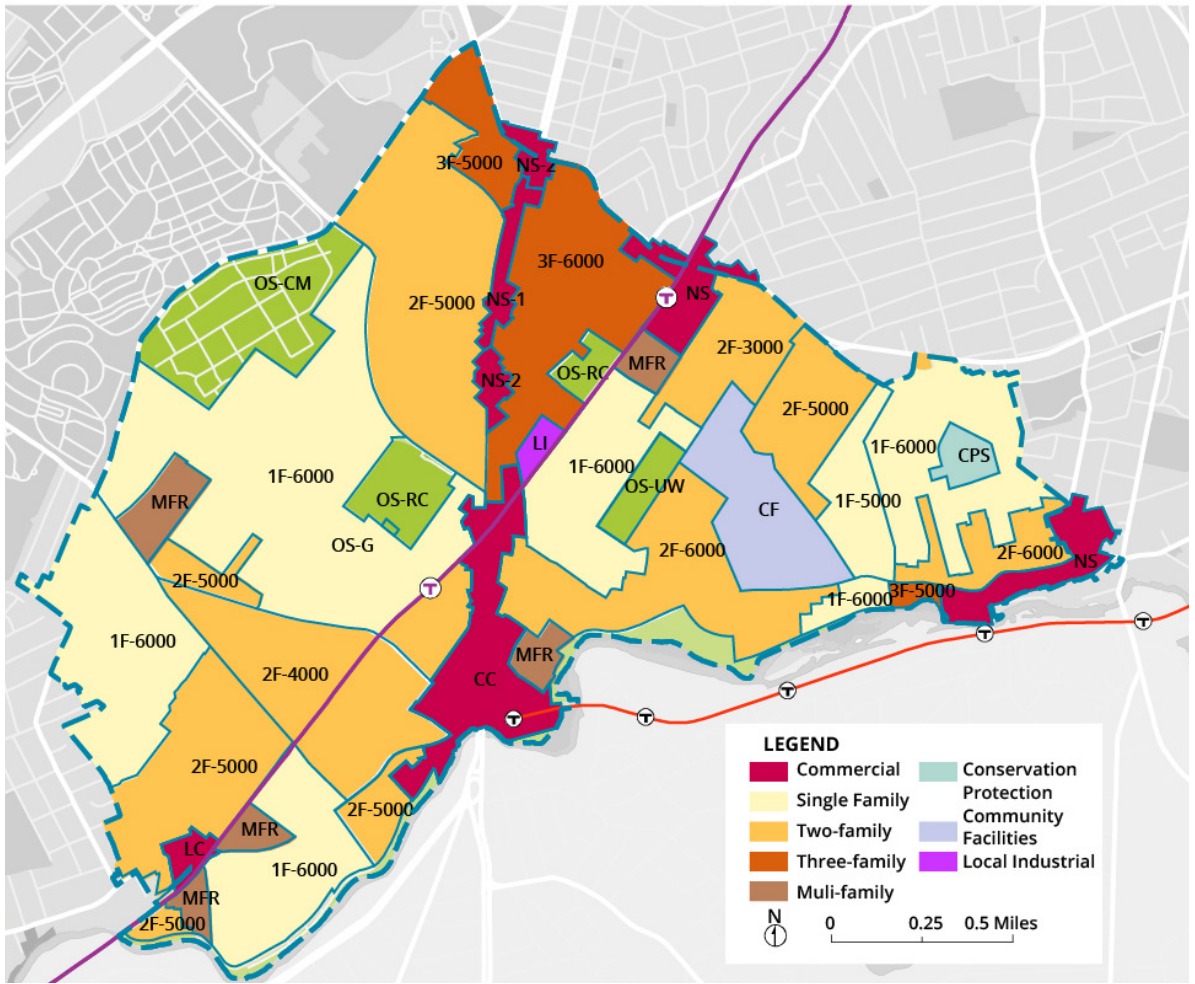
Zoning controls how growth and development occur by identifying different areas, or zoning subdistricts, with different use and/or dimensional standards.

Use

Zoning regulates what type of activities, or uses, are allowed in each subdistrict. Some common uses defined by zoning include residential, commercial/retail, civic, and industrial. Zoning in Mattapan's neighborhood residential areas further differentiates uses within the residential use category, creating One-Family (1F), Two-Family (2F), Three-Family (3F), and Multi-family (MFR) zoning subdistricts.

Dimensional Standards

Zoning guides the size and shape of buildings. It doesn't say what a building should look like, but it does set up rules about how big a building can be and where it should be located within a given parcel.



Mattapan's zoning code, known as Article 60, was last updated in 2008. In this section we'll explore how Mattapan's zoning encodes specific features of buildings in neighborhood residential areas today, and how it might do so in the future. Residential zoning subdistricts make up the majority of the land area within the study boundary.

Map of Zoning Subdistricts in Article 60

Sources: Article 60 Zoning

Zoning

Land Use

Historically, the primary purpose of zoning was to separate uses that were thought to be incompatible. Residential zoning subdistricts in Mattapan primarily allow residential uses and forbid most other uses. However, in Mattapan Square and along major corridors, retail and commercial uses are concentrated.



Allowed Uses

An allowed use is one that the zoning indicates is appropriate for a certain area. For instance, a single family home is an allowed use in any Mattapan residential zoning subdistrict.

Forbidden Uses

Forbidden uses are supposed to prevent conflicting land uses from coexisting in the same subdistrict. For instance, industrial uses are forbidden in residential subdistricts.

Conditional Uses

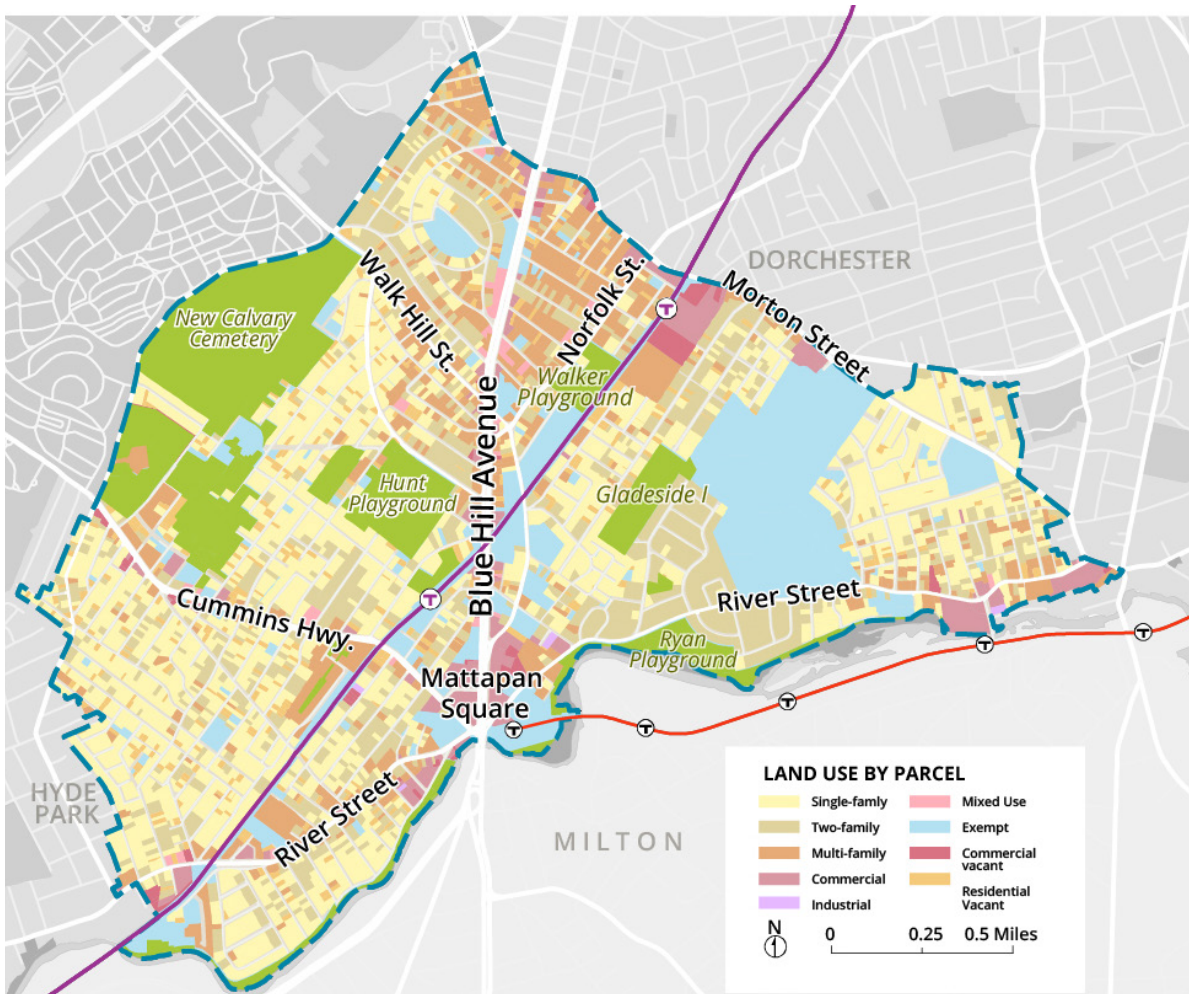
A conditional use describes a land use type that can be appropriate for an area if certain circumstances are met. However, conditional uses are only permitted through the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) process.

USE	1F	2F	3F	MFR
Daycare	C	C	C	C
Bakery	F	F	F	F
Local Retail	F	F	F	F
Dry Cleaning	F	F	F	F

Article 60 - Table A (see table to the left) Residential Subdistricts - Use Regulations

Uses are encoded as “Allowed” (A), “Conditional” (C), or “Forbidden” (F). Table A of Article 60 of the Boston Zoning Code lists 24 distinct use categories. For definitions of each use category and certain specific uses, see Article 2A of the Boston Zoning Code.

A - Allowed
C - Conditional
F - Forbidden



Zoning is different from land use. Mattapan zoning outlines how land can be used. However, how that land is being used in reality may be different from zoning. Take for instance, a corner shop in a residential area. The land is zoned for residential but is actually used for a commercial use.

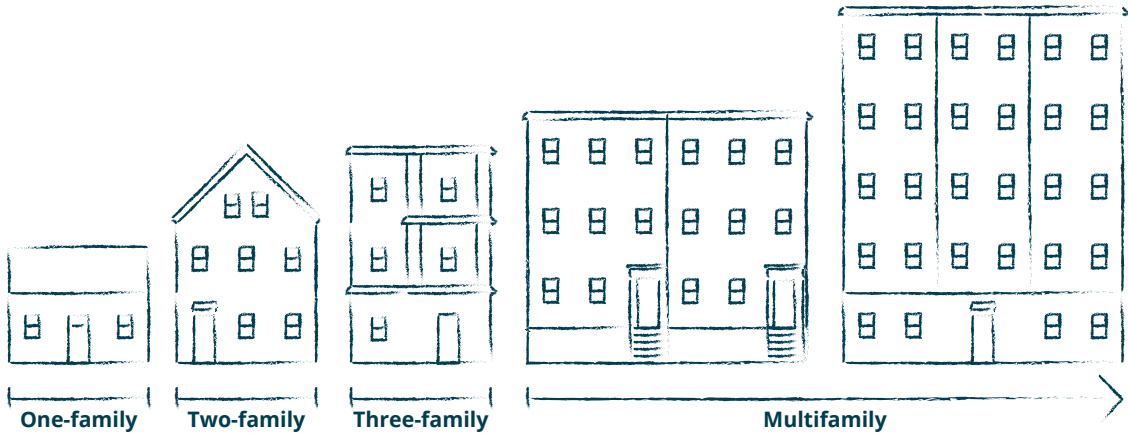
Map of Existing Land Use by Parcel

Sources: Zoning, Assessing FY'19 (as of Jan.1 2018)

Zoning

Residential Land Use

Mattapan’s zoning further differentiates uses within the residential use category—creating One-family, Two-family, Three-family, and Multi-family subdistricts.



Land Use and Building Types

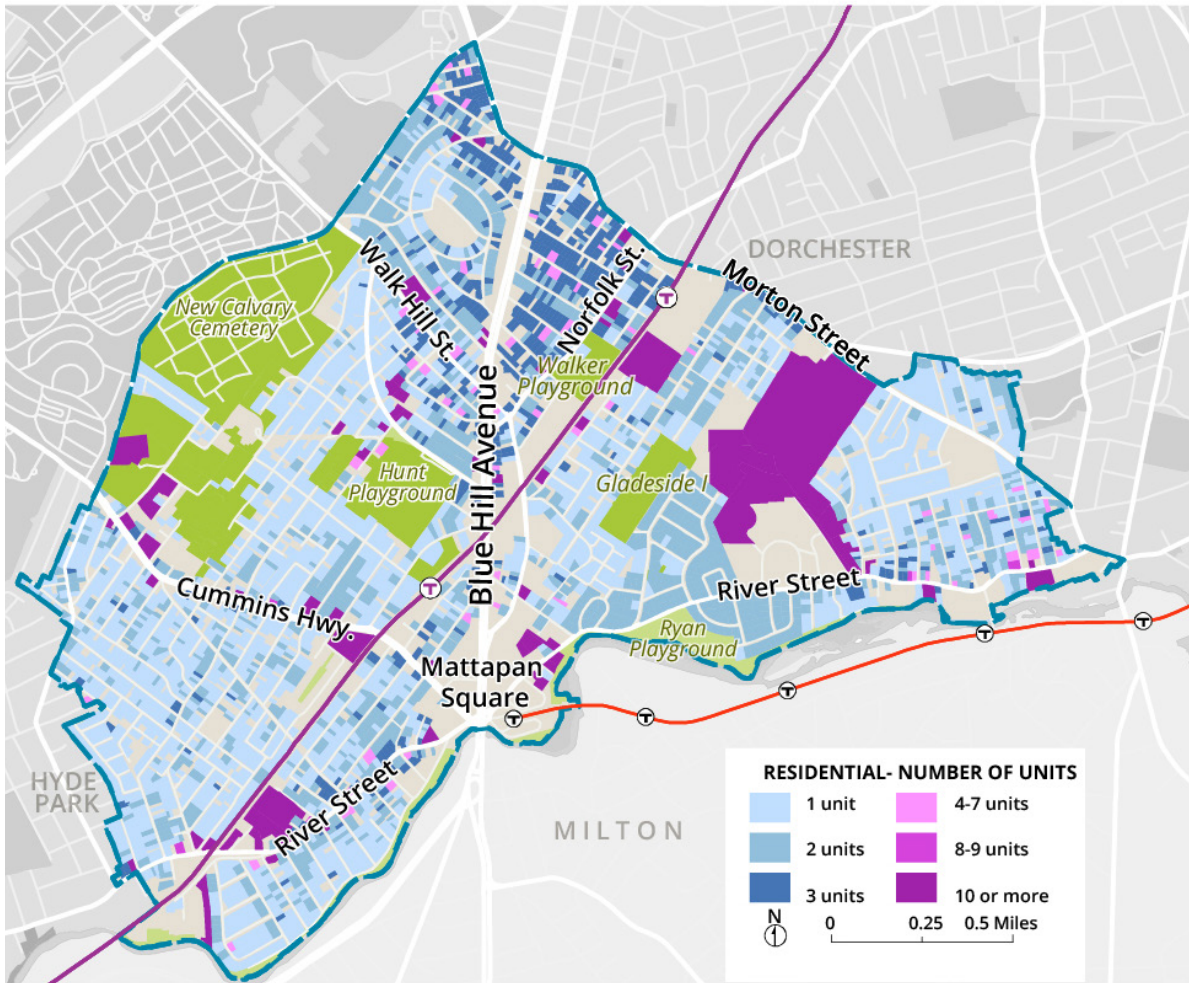
The multi-family designation technically applies to all buildings with 4 or more dwelling units and covers a wide range of residential building types.

USE	1F	2F	3F	MFR
Multi-family	F	F	F	A
Rowhouse	F	F	F	A
One-family	A	A	A	A
Two-family	F	A	A	A
Three-family	F	F	A	A

Article 60 - Table A (see table to the left) Residential Subdistricts - Use Regulations

Residential subdistricts are unique from other types of land use subdistricts in Article 60 in that they refer to a building typology and have a minimum lot size associated with them. There are 17 specific uses identified within the Residential Use category. This table references a few of the most common uses within Mattapan’s neighborhood residential areas.

A - Allowed
C - Conditional
F - Forbidden



Residential Land use

Approximately 28% of Mattapan’s land area is used for single-family homes. That’s almost half of the land that is being used for residential purposes. Only about 4% of the land in Mattapan is used for housing with 4 or more units.

Map of the Residential units by number.

Sources: Zoning, Assessing FY’19 (as of Jan.1 2018)

Zoning

Height

Building height is one of several dimensional regulations encoded by zoning. Height is recorded in both feet and number of stories, and is currently measured from the average grade of a parcel to the top of the highest occupiable floor.



Pitched Roof versus Flat Roof

A building with a pitched roof is traditionally considered to have a half story. Pitched roofs also reduce our perception of the overall height of a building. Flat roofs are more commonly understood as full stories and appear to have a greater impact.

Roof access

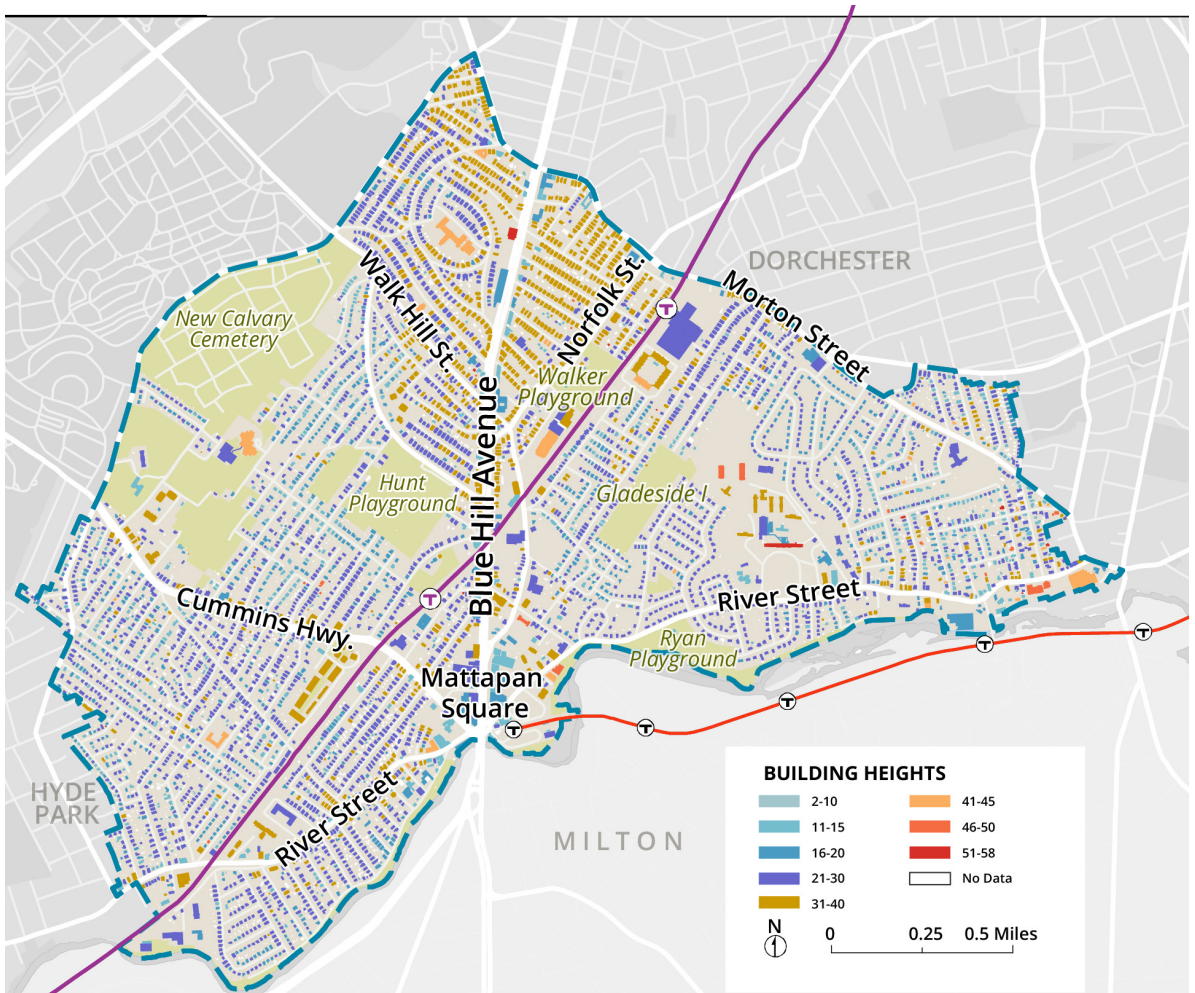
Mechanical space, roof decks, and access to roof decks are not usually included in measuring the height of a building because they are not technically occupiable space.

Subdistrict	Feet	Stories
1F	35'	2-1/2
2F	35'	2-1/2
3F	35'	3
MFR	35'	3

Article 60 - Table D (see table to the left)

Residential Subdistricts - Dimensional Regulations

Residential zoning subdistricts in Mattapan limit height to 35 feet uniformly but have a slight variation in the number of stories allowed.



Building Height

Much of Mattapan's building height conforms to zoning and is below the maximum allowed height. However, the areas north of Walk Hill and Norfolk are at or above the maximum height, measured in feet, by Article 60.

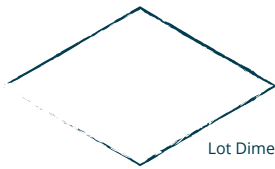
Map of Existing Building Height

Source: 2010 LIDAR data, PNF documents for buildings erected after 2010. Building heights are approximate.

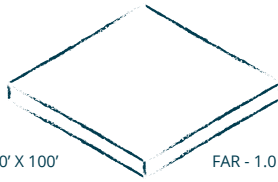
Zoning

Density

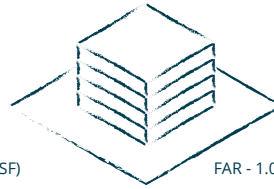
One of the main ways zoning limits the size of buildings is by regulating allowed Floor Area Ratio (FAR). FAR is the total square footage of all the floors of a building, divided by the total square footage of the parcel.



Lot Dimension - 100' X 100'
Lot Area - 10,000 SQ FT



FAR - 1.0 (10,000 GSF)
Building Footprint - 10,000 SQ FT
Building Height - 10 FT
Lot Coverage - 100%



FAR - 1.0 (10,000 GSF)
Building Footprint - 2,500 SQ FT
Building Height - 40 FT
Lot Coverage - 25%

Subdistrict	FAR
1F-5000	0.6
1F-6000	0.6
2F-3000	0.8
2F-4000	0.8
2F-5000	0.8
2F-6000	0.8
3F-5000	0.8
3F-6000	0.8
MFR	0.9

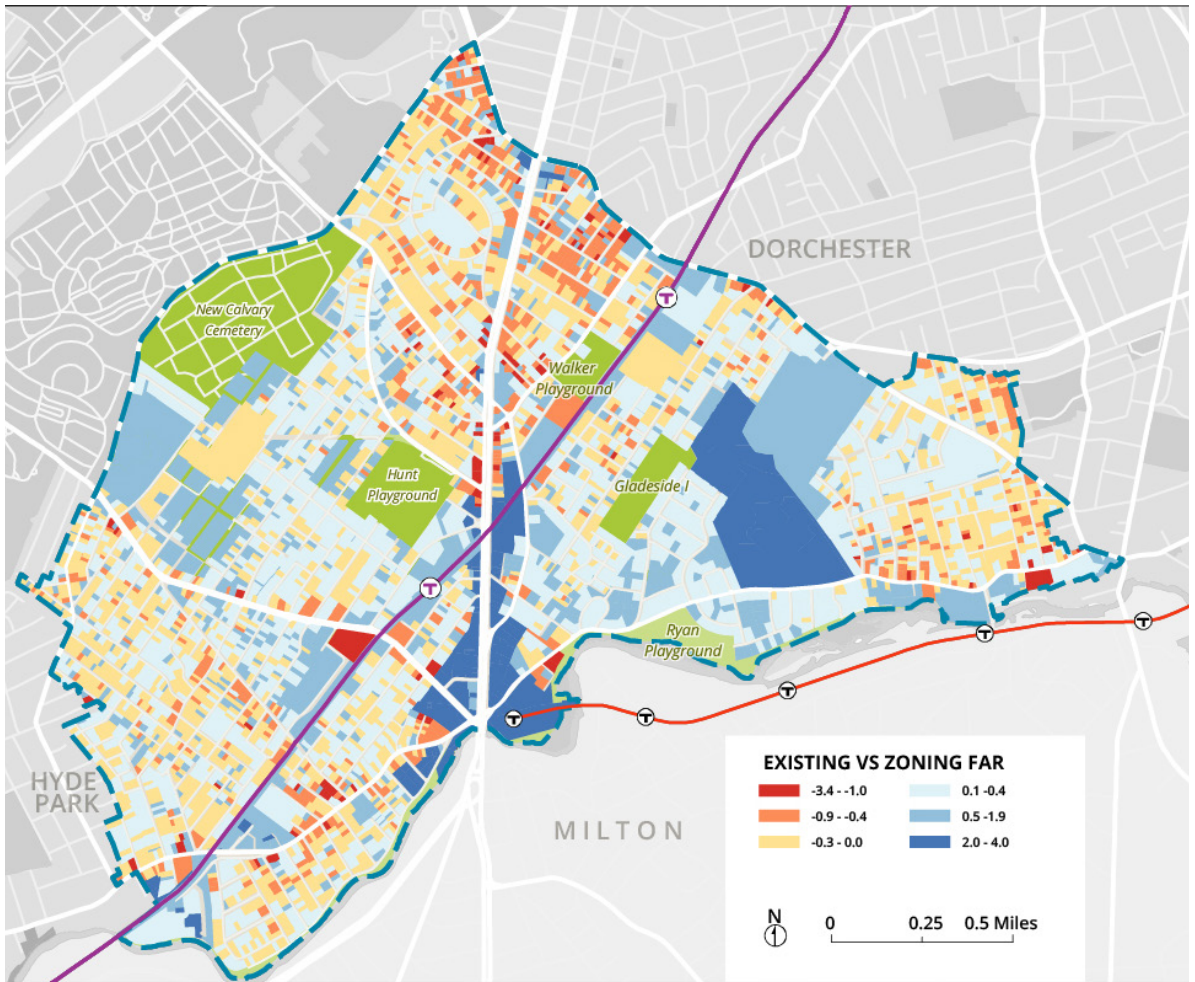
Calculating FAR

FAR operates as a multiplier. If a parcel is zoned as 1.0 FAR, multiply the site area by 1.0 to determine how much development would be allowed on the site. For instance, a 1,000-square-foot parcel with an FAR limit of 1.0 would allow 1,000 square feet in total usable area. The diagram above demonstrates how the same amount of building density could be built in different ways.

Article 60 - Table D (see table to the left)

Residential Subdistricts - Dimensional Regulations

The number following the "1F," "2F," or "3F" designation refers to the minimum lot area required in that subdistrict for the first one, two, or three dwelling units. Minimum lot area requirements further limit the density of a given subdistrict. For example, a 2F-3000 subdistrict allows for a 1- or 2-family detached building on a 3,000 square foot lot for 1 or 2 dwelling units.



Density

Density can be measured in many ways. Article 60 measures density using floor area ratio. The map above indicates how much the FAR of buildings in Mattapan is over or under the maximum allowed by zoning.

Map of Existing FAR in relation to Allowable FAR

Sources: Zoning, Assessing FY'19 (as of Jan.1 2018)

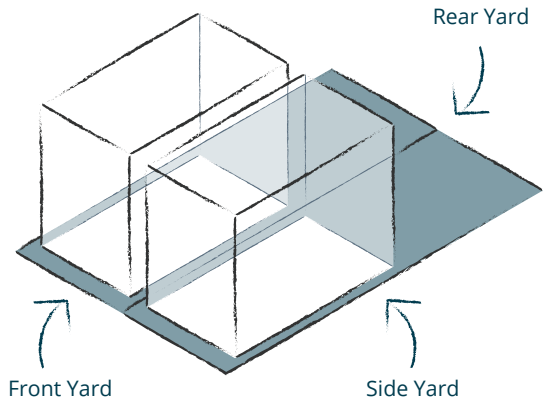
Zoning

Space between buildings

Setbacks refer to how far a building must be from the property line. Zoning uses setbacks to control how much of a parcel is built on by requiring setbacks from the front, rear, and side property lines.

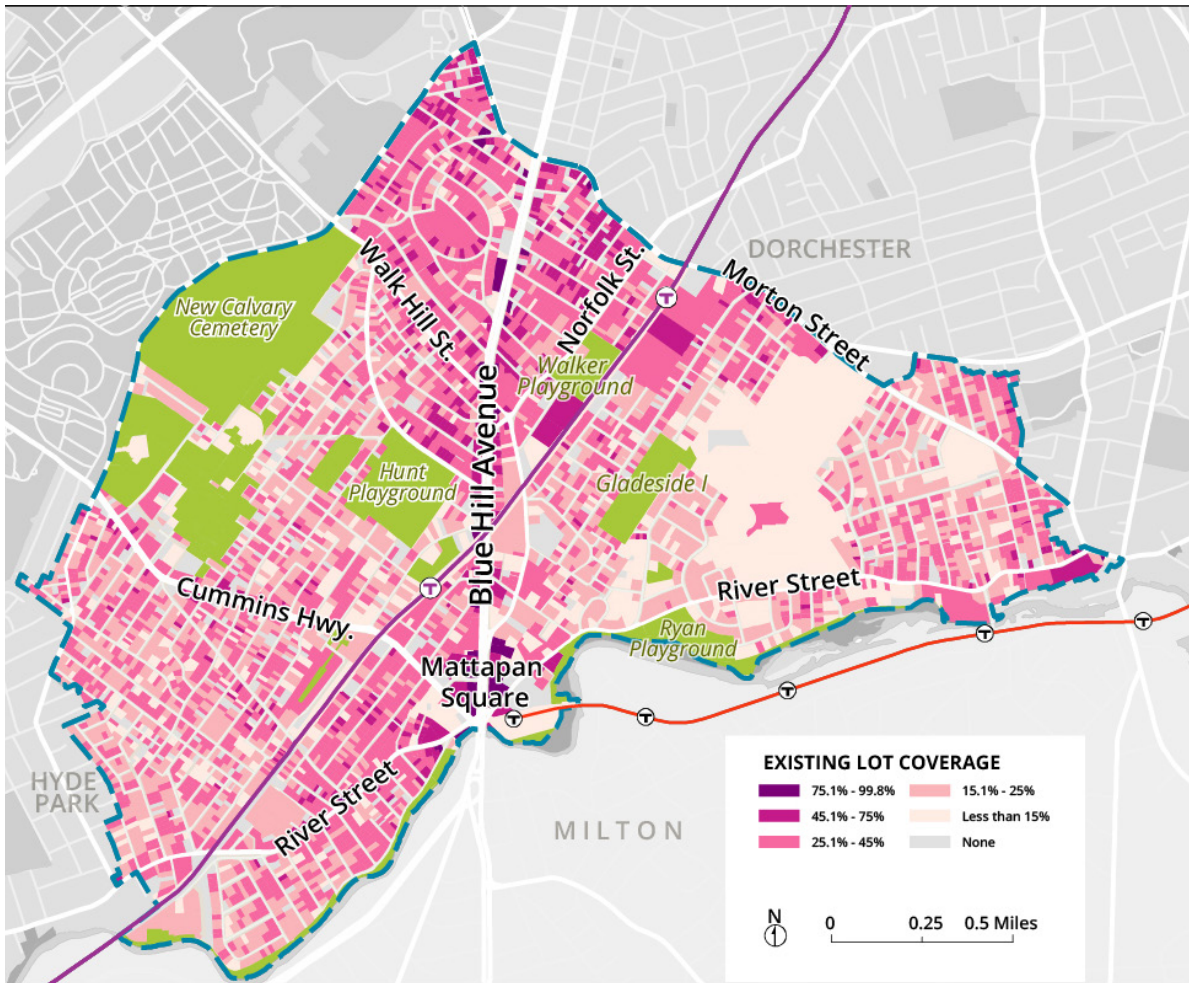
Article 60 - Table D
Residential Subdistricts - Dimensional Regulations

Subdistrict	Setback (in feet)		
	Front	Rear	Side
1F-5000	20	40	10
1F-6000	20	40	10
2F-3000	15	30	10
2F-4000	15	30	10
2F-5000	15	30	10
2F-6000	15	30	10
3F-5000	15	30	10
3F-6000	15	30	10
MFR	15	30	10



Setbacks

Front yard setbacks determine the distance between a building and the sidewalk. In Mattapan, dimensional requirements in neighborhood residential areas can vary from 5 feet to 20 feet. Side yard setbacks determine the distance between buildings as seen from the street.



Zoning could also limit how much of a lot you can build on by setting lot coverage limits. Mattapan zoning does not currently encode lot coverage but relies on setback requirements to perform a similar function.

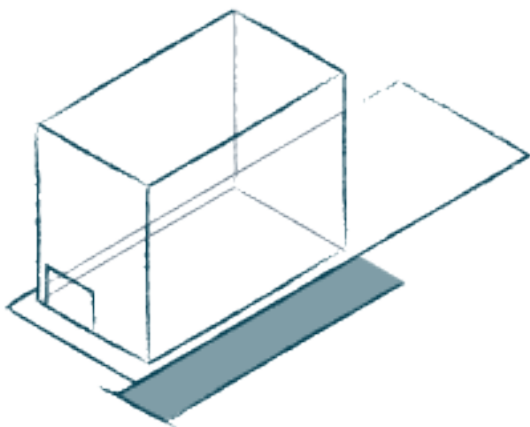
Map of Existing Lot Coverage

Sources: Zoning, Assessing FY'19 (as of Jan.1 2018)

Zoning

On-site parking

Zoning says how many parking spaces are required per use in different districts. For residential uses, zoning typically requires one parking space per unit except for those projects subject to Large Project Review.



Parking Diagram

On-site parking requires square footage for the storage and maneuvering of vehicles, which could otherwise be allocated to active ground floor uses.

Parking also requires a curb cut to provide access to the street, which introduces a vehicular conflict point with pedestrians and eliminates opportunities for public realm enhancements and on-street parking.

Subdistrict	Minimum spaces per unit
1F, 2F, 3F	1.0
MFR (4-6 units)	1.0
MFR (7-9 units)	1.0
MFR (10+ units)	1.0
Affordable Housing under <50,000 square feet	0.7

Article 60 - Table H (see table to the left)

Zoning requires a minimum number of parking spaces for all proposed residential projects. It does not cap or limit the total number of parking spaces that can be provided.

However, the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) recommends maximum parking ratios for large developments (at least 50,000 gross square feet). The Mayor's Housing Innovation Lab also designates maximum parking ratios for developments participating in the Compact Living Pilot.



Minimum Parking Requirements

Generally, Article 60 requires 1 off-street parking space per dwelling unit in Mattapan. However, for areas along corridors, near transit or for smaller lots, meeting this requirement can be difficult. In addition, off-street parking requirements can impede the production of affordable housing as parking garages are expensive to construct.

Mobility Options in Mattapan

Overview

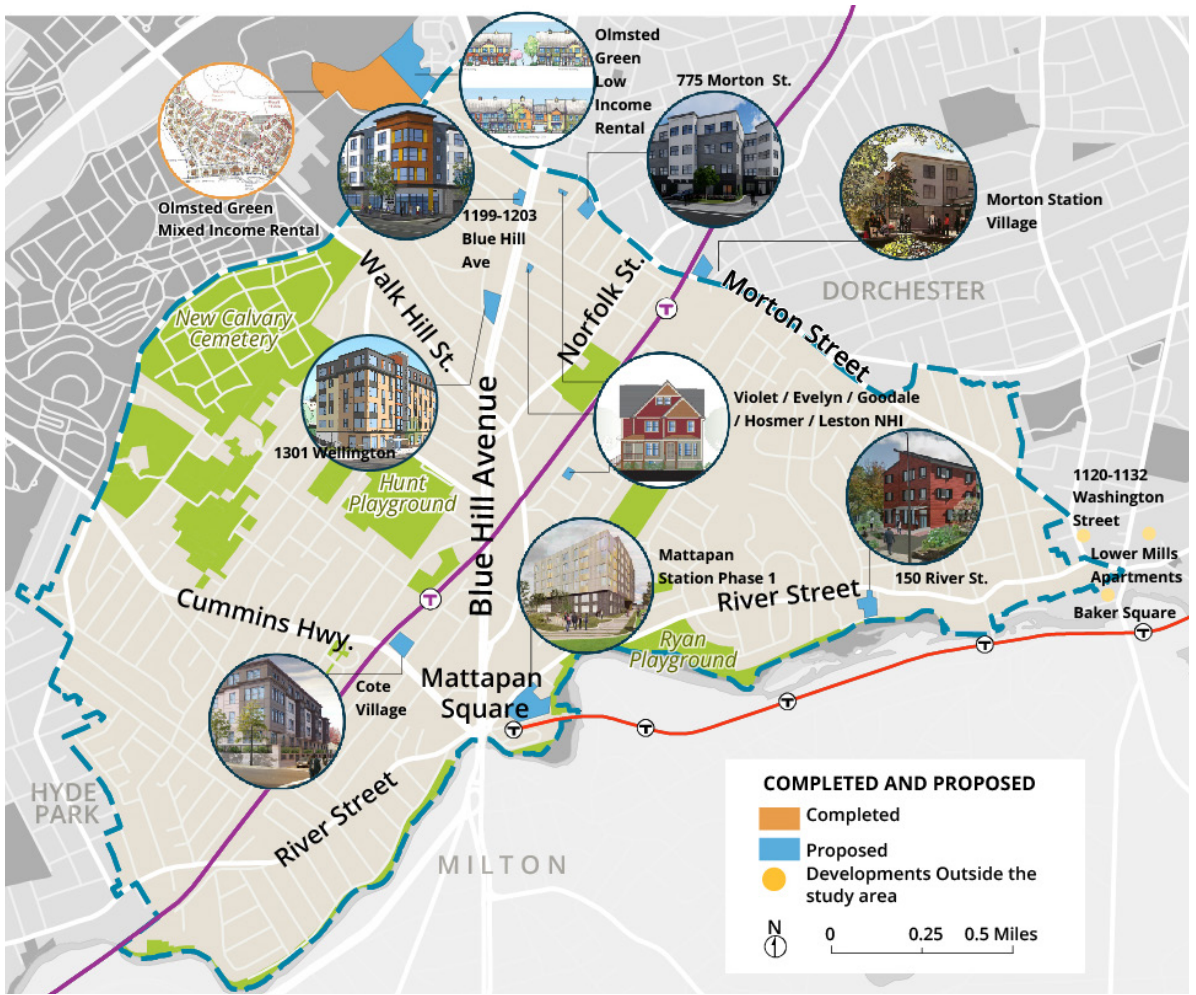
Article 80 Project Review

Adopted in 1996 to provide clear guidelines for the review of certain development projects, the Article 80 process may include, but is not limited to, review of a project's impacts on transportation, public realm, the environment, and historic resources.

The development review process is outlined in Article 80 of the Boston Zoning Code, and includes:

- **Small Projects** - adding/constructing more than 20,000 square feet and/or 15+ net new residential units
- **Large Projects** - adding/constructing more than 50,000 square feet
- **Planned Development Areas (PDAs)** - new overlay zoning districts for project areas larger than 1 acre
- **Institutional Master Plans (IMPs)** - projects relating to academic and medical campuses.

BPDA Project Managers assist developers in navigating the Article 80 process while Planners, Urban Designers, and other City departments provide input to help shape each project and ensure that the design of the project is one that relates to and enhances the surrounding area. Public input is encouraged throughout a project's review timeline.

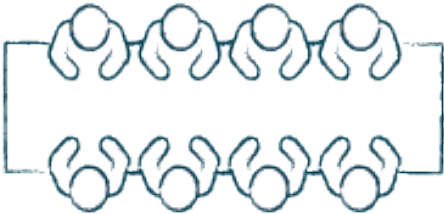


Article 80 Developments in the Mattapan Area as of January 2020.

Source: BPDA GIS analysis

Article 80 Project Review

The BPDA encourages development teams to meet with the community multiple times throughout the review process. At a minimum, however, the development team is required to make 1 presentation to the community during the initial 30 day comment period.



Pre-File Meetings

Conversations begin before the: Letter of Intent (LOI)* is filed. Prospective developers meet with BPDA and City of Boston staff to outline project intentions and conceptual design, and BPDA staff inform the developers about the Article 80 Process. BPDA staff **encourages the development team to meet with the community** prior to filing an LOI or Small Project Review Application (SPRA).

Letter of Intent (LOI)*

The filing of this document formally initiates the Article 80 process for all projects except those subject to Small Project Review. LOIs provide a brief introduction to the project. They also notify the BPDA that an Impact Advisory Group (IAG) must be formed to review the local impacts of large projects and related mitigation possibilities.

Filing Small Project Review Application (SPRA)/Project Notification Form (PNF)*

Depending on the size of the project, a developer will file a SPRA or PNF*. This document is posted to the BPDA website and made available to the public. The filing of either document also initiates active review of the project by the BPDA and a **30-day public comment period**. The project's filing includes information about the project, including a description of the project, its associated zoning compliance, as well as impact analyses and architectural renderings of the project.

*The asterisk indicates items that are not applicable to Small Project Review.



- **Cooperation Agreement*** - This document details mitigation and community benefits to be provided by the developer. These documents are reviewed by IAGs*.
- **Affordable Housing Agreement** - Developers may be required to designate a certain percentage of built housing units as affordable through the Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP). Most housing developments reviewed under Article 80 require IDP units or payments.
- **Boston Residents Jobs Policy** - A certain percentage of construction jobs created by a project must be filled by Boston residents.
- **Development Impact Project Agreement** - Office developments may be required to pay into a “linkage” fund towards housing and job creation.

30-Day Comment Period

During the 30-day comment period, community members, City of Boston departments and agencies, and State agencies alike are invited to provide feedback on the project. Comments on the project can vary but should be submitted to the BPDA’s Project Manager overseeing the process. **It is important that comments are specific and constructive to help inform the iterative review process.**

After the 30-Day comment period, the review process may continue depending on comments received, the status of the proposed development, and if there needs to be substantial changes made to the proposal, among other things. The closure of the initial comment period does not always signify a proposal moving into the Board approval process.

Board Approval Process

Following BPDA and community review, projects must be formally approved by a vote of the BPDA Board. Most often, approval is conditional upon design review. A number of written agreements are also included in the Board vote to ensure that all project mitigation components and community agreements are finalized and recorded. Examples of these documents are:

Post-Board Approval

Once a project is BPDA Board Approved, it may go through the Zoning Board of Appeals process, Zoning Commission for PDA’s, or directly to Inspectional Services Department to receive its permits. During construction, the BPDA Compliance department monitors the progress of the project and ensures it adheres to all policies and agreements made.

Zoning Overview

A brief history of Boston's zoning

Fifteen of Boston's twenty-six neighborhoods were once separate towns (or neighborhoods of separate towns). As the years passed, these neighborhoods were slowly annexed by the City of Boston. To this day, many of these neighborhoods remain unique in their look and feel compared to the rest of the City. The most recent edition of the Boston Zoning Code, enacted in 1964, has evolved and adapted to accommodate the unique character of these places and it includes many separate maps and amendments. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a comprehensive rezoning process that led to the rewriting of the zoning for many neighborhoods.

Part of Mattapan's zoning code, known as Article 60, was last updated in 2008.

How Zoning Works

Different City agencies, departments, and boards and commissions play important, but separate, roles in zoning.

- The Boston Planning & Development Agency (BPDA) writes zoning.
- The Boston Zoning Commission (BZC) adopts zoning.
- The Inspectional Services Department (ISD) interprets and applies zoning.
- The Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) determines eligibility for exceptions from zoning.

When the public comes in contact with zoning issues, it does so most often through the BPDA or ISD.

A property owner must apply to ISD for a building permit and/or a change in use or occupancy permit. If the permit is denied because the proposed project violates the Zoning Code, the applicant may appeal the decision to the ZBA within ISD.

The BPDA makes recommendations concerning the case after its planning staff:

- Evaluates zoning applications
- Reviews the proposal

The BPDA makes its recommendations to the Board of Appeal on requests for variances and conditional uses and to the Zoning Commission in cases concerning Zoning Code amendments.

Members of the public and elected officials can also weigh in on requests for variances.

The BPDA makes no final rulings. Final decisions are made by the Board of Appeal and the Zoning Commission.

Zoning Terms

Accessory use - a land use which is related to and on the same lot as the principal land use.

Allowed use - a land use which is permitted as a matter of right. Board of Appeal approval is not required.

Appeal - a request made to the Board of Appeal for relief from zoning code regulations.

As-of-right-use - those uses that are automatically allowed by the zoning code.

Article 80 - Adopted in 1996 by the BPDA to provide clear guidelines for the development review process relating to large projects (adding/constructing more than 50,000 square feet), small projects (adding/constructing more than 20,000 square feet and/or 15+ net new residential units), Planned Development Areas (PDAs) (new overlay zoning districts for project areas larger than 1 acre), and Institutional Master Plans (IMPs) (projects relating to academic and medical campuses). The Article 80 process may include, but is not limited to, review of a project's impacts on transportation, public realm, the environment, and historic resources. BPDA Project Managers assist developers in navigating the Article 80 process. Public input is encouraged throughout a project's review timeline.

Conditional Use - a land use permitted by the Zoning Code provided that it is found by the Board of Appeal to comply with certain conditions set out in the Code.

Forbidden Use - A use that is not permitted in a particular district because of harmful impacts on other allowed uses (e.g., noise or pollution) without a variance.

Height - height is measured from the average grade of a parcel to the top of the highest occupiable floor.

Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) - Established in 2000 to promote the production of affordable housing in Boston. Under IDP, developers may include affordable units within their developments (on-site), create

affordable housing in an off-site location, or make a cash contribution towards the creation or preservation of affordable housing.

Inspectional Services Department (ISD) - A City of Boston department which administers the Boston Zoning Code and the State Building Code and issues all building, use, and occupancy permits. If a project requires development review under Article 80, ISD will not issue a permit until the BPDA and the Zoning Commission (if necessary) have completed the required review and the BPDA has certified that the project described in the permit application is consistent with the project approved through development review.

Lot, lot area/size - the area of a parcel of land in single ownership and not divided by a street.

Nonconforming Use - A use or activity that was lawful prior to the adoption or amendment of the Zoning Code, but which does not, because of such adoption or amendment, conform to the present requirements of the Zoning Code.

Variance - Permission to deviate from a specific requirement of the Zoning Code.

Zoning Commission - The Zoning Commission is responsible for adopting all new zoning and zoning amendments, for establishing PDAs and approving PDA Development Plans, and for approving Institutional Master Plans. The Zoning Commission is located within the City of Boston's administration, not the BPDA.

Guided by Imagine Boston 2030, PLAN: Mattapan is a City planning initiative that seeks to ensure that we preserve wisely, enhance equitably, and grow inclusively. Through these three principles of “preserve, enhance, and grow,” the City’s planning team will work with the community to create a comprehensive vision for the Mattapan planning area and guide future growth and investment.

PLAN: Mattapan will work closely with the community to review past planning efforts, and identify needs and opportunities for improvements which will support the long-term equitable growth and sustainability of the neighborhood. Focuses will include, though are not limited to, economic development (jobs and business) and the creation of transit-oriented market-rate and affordable housing growth while preserving the neighborhood’s character and unique attributes.

Contact

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Project Website

bit.ly/PlanMattapan



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development agency**