



Western Avenue Corridor Study and Rezoning Community Meeting

September 14, 2020



**boston planning &
development agency**



bit.ly/westerncorridor
[@bostonplans](https://twitter.com/bostonplans)

Project Website

bit.ly/westerncorridor

- Presentations (including tonight's!)
- Recordings from virtual meetings
- Zoning Toolkit and Housing Toolkit



Agenda

1. Housekeeping
2. Background: Affordable Housing
3. Towards Development Scenarios
4. *[Short Q&A Session to Allow For Creation of Breakout Rooms]*
5. Public Feedback/Breakout Rooms
6. Reporting Back
7. Q&A and Discussion (Time Permitting)



1

Housekeeping

Virtual Meeting Protocols

- During the presentation you can ask questions through the chat feature. Depending on the question, we will answer it in writing in the chat box, verbally, or wait until the Q&A period.
- During verbal Q&A, please be respectful of each other's time so that all may participate in the discussion.
- You can always set up a conversation with Gerald Autler, Gerald.Autler@boston.gov.



Meeting Recording

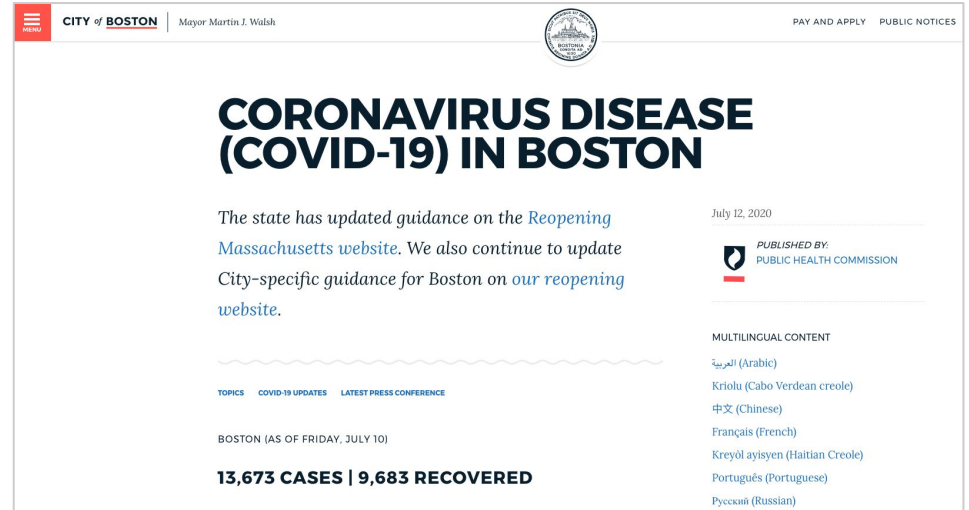
- The BPDA will be recording this meeting and posting it on its website at bit.ly/WesternCorridor. The recording will include the presentation, Q&A, and public comments afterwards.
- Also, it is possible that participants may be recording the meeting with their phone cameras or other devices.
- If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.



COVID-19 Resources

Stay up-to-date with COVID-19 related announcements, City of Boston reopening plans, and resources for you and your community at:

boston.gov/coronavirus



The screenshot shows the City of Boston website page for COVID-19 resources. The page features the City of Boston logo and Mayor Martin J. Walsh's name in the top left. The main heading is "CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19) IN BOSTON". Below the heading, there is a paragraph of text: "The state has updated guidance on the Reopening Massachusetts website. We also continue to update City-specific guidance for Boston on our reopening website." The date "July 12, 2020" is displayed. On the right side, there is a "PUBLISHED BY: PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION" logo. Below that, there is a "MULTILINGUAL CONTENT" section with links for Arabic, Kriolu (Cabo Verdean creole), Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Russian. At the bottom, there is a "TOPICS" section with links for "COVID-19 UPDATES" and "LATEST PRESS CONFERENCE". The date "BOSTON (AS OF FRIDAY, JULY 10)" is also present. The main statistics are "13,673 CASES | 9,683 RECOVERED".

2020 Census Update & Reminder

Key Dates:

August 11 - Doorknocking begins.

September 30 - Last day to respond.

Quick Facts:

As of 7/7, 52.2% (about 175,800) of Boston's households have responded.

In 2010, the final response rate was 64.4%.

The Census has never been more accessible. You can respond:

Online (my2020census.gov)

Over the phone, or by mail.

13 different languages available.

Boston depends on your household to respond. For every person not counted, **nearly \$2,400** per year in federal funding is **lost** for the next ten years.



Team: Core BPDA Planning



Gerald Autler



Rosa Herrero

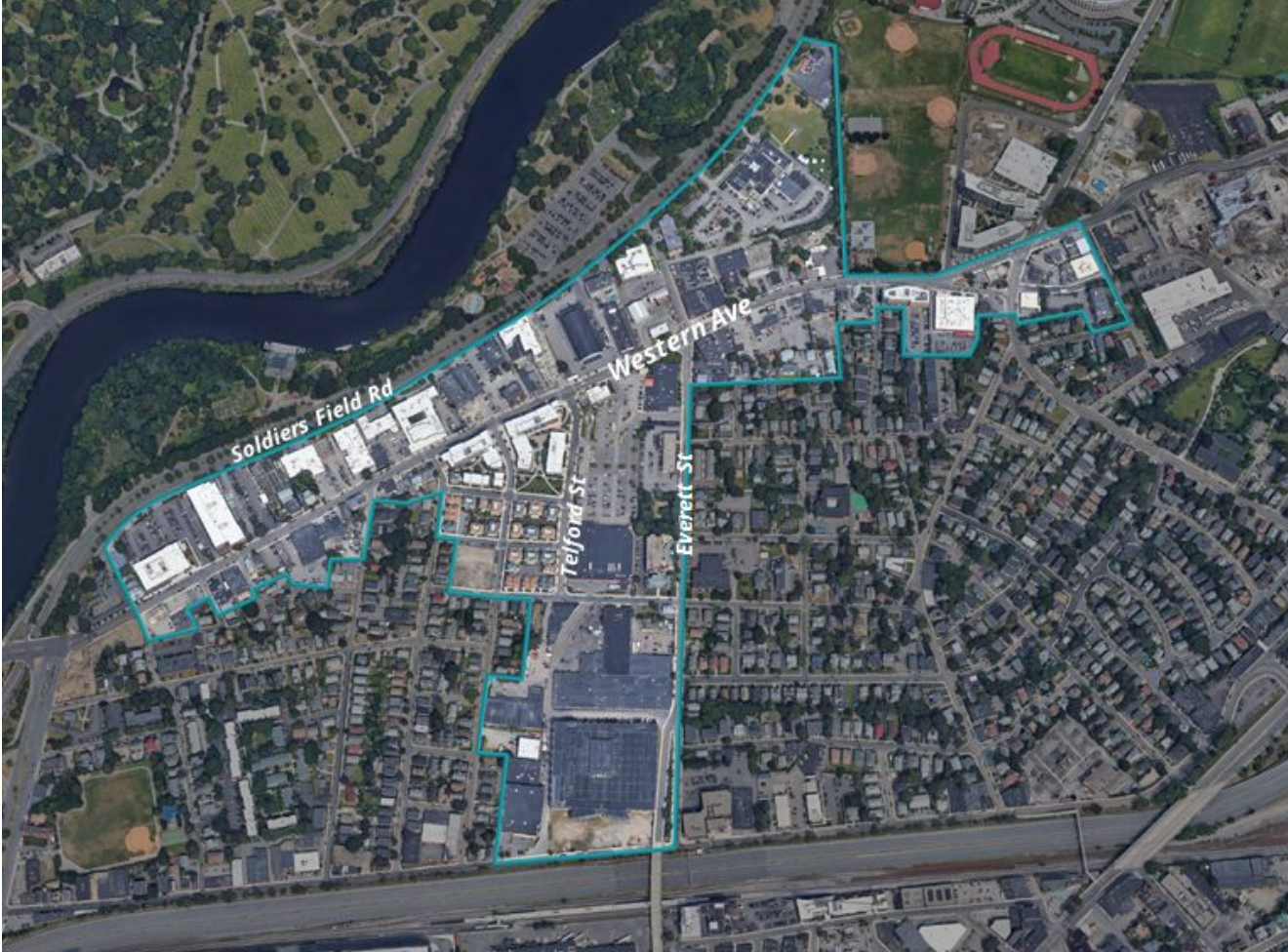


Kennan Rhyne

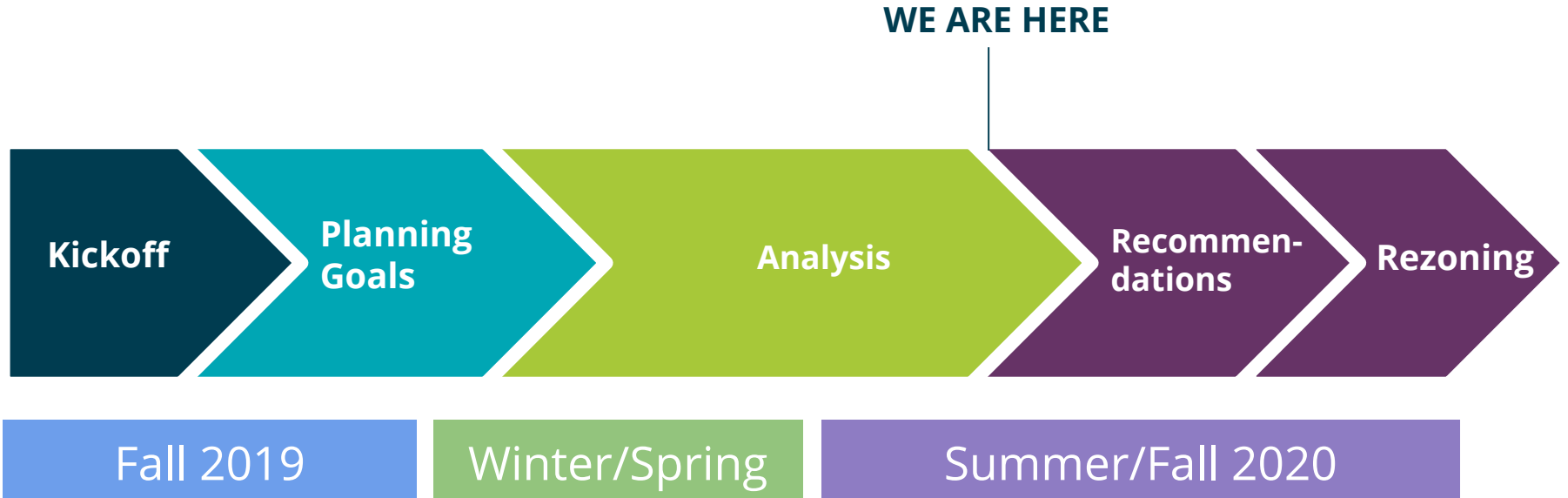


Charlotte Ong

Study Area



Timeline



Key Themes

1. Affordable housing and neighborhood diversity
2. Transportation
3. Resilience and sustainability
4. Arts, culture, creativity



Next Steps: September and October

- September 30 (tentative date)
 - Development scenarios
 - Additional background information
- October 14, 28 (tentative dates)
 - Transportation and financial analysis
 - Recommendations for zoning



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Background: Affordable Housing

Definitions

- Affordable Housing
- Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP)
- Housing Linkage
- Housing Creation
- Compact Living



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Boston Housing Toolkit

**Affordable Housing &
Displacement Intervention
City Policies and Strategies**

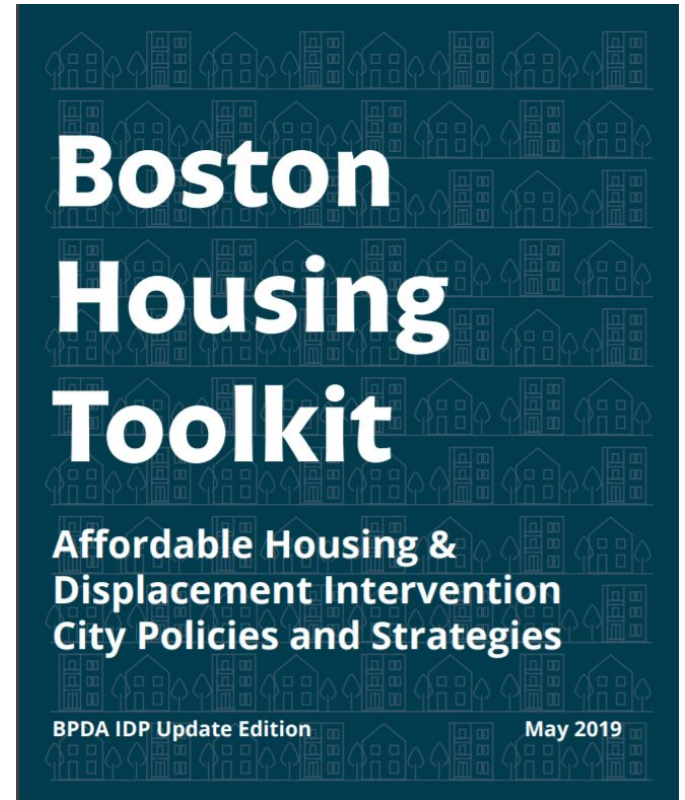
BPDA IDP Update Edition

May 2019

Definitions

- Affordable Housing

***Income-restricted housing** with a rent (or price) limit calculated to be affordable to households that earn below a certain amount.*

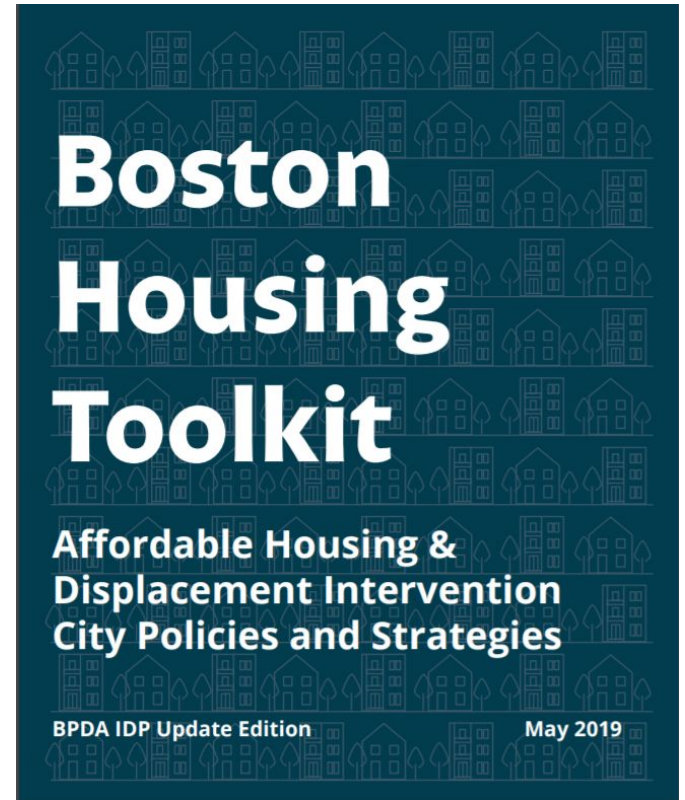


Definitions

- Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP)

Most housing developments of 10 or more units must include on-site affordable units equal to 13% of project total.

Options to pay into a fund or create housing in a nearby project.

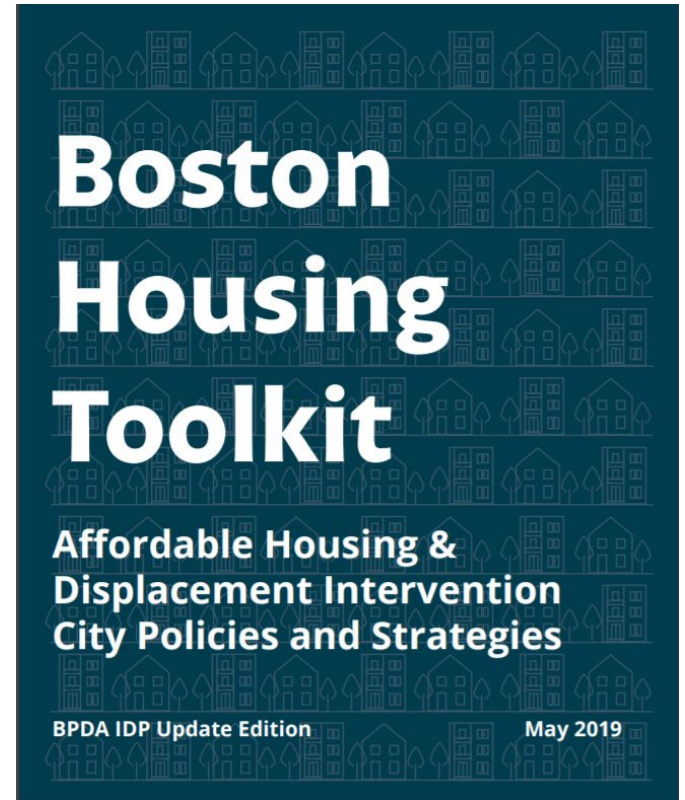


Definitions

- Housing Linkage

Large commercial projects pay per square foot into Neighborhood Housing Trust (and Neighborhood Jobs Trust).

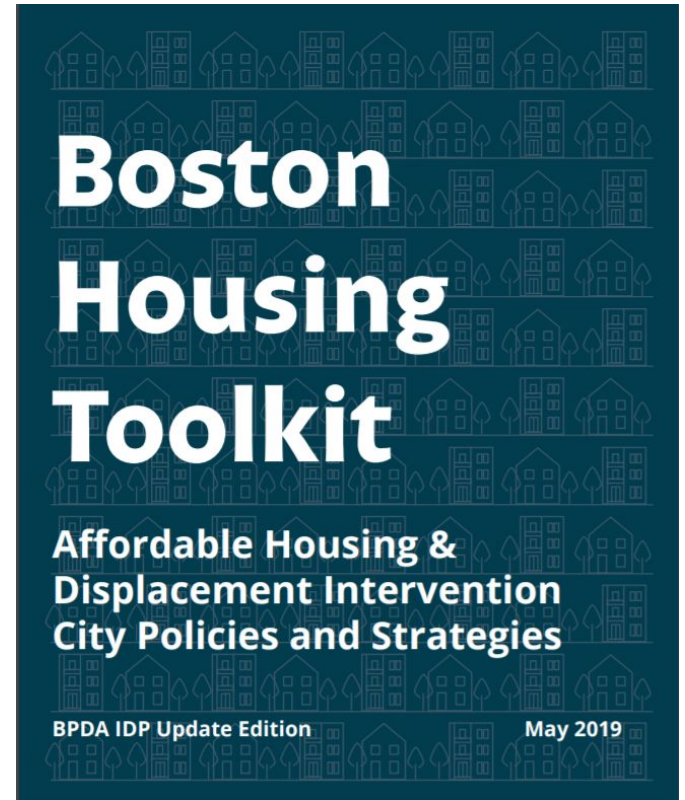
Funds are distributed to support affordable housing development (and workforce development).



Definitions

- Housing Creation

As an alternative to housing linkage payments into the Neighborhood Housing Trust, developers may create or directly assist in the creation of housing for low-and moderate-income residents.



Definitions

- Compact Living

Pilot project to determine ability of efficient units to increase housing affordability, build community, and encourage creativity in the ways that designers and developers meet the needs of residents.

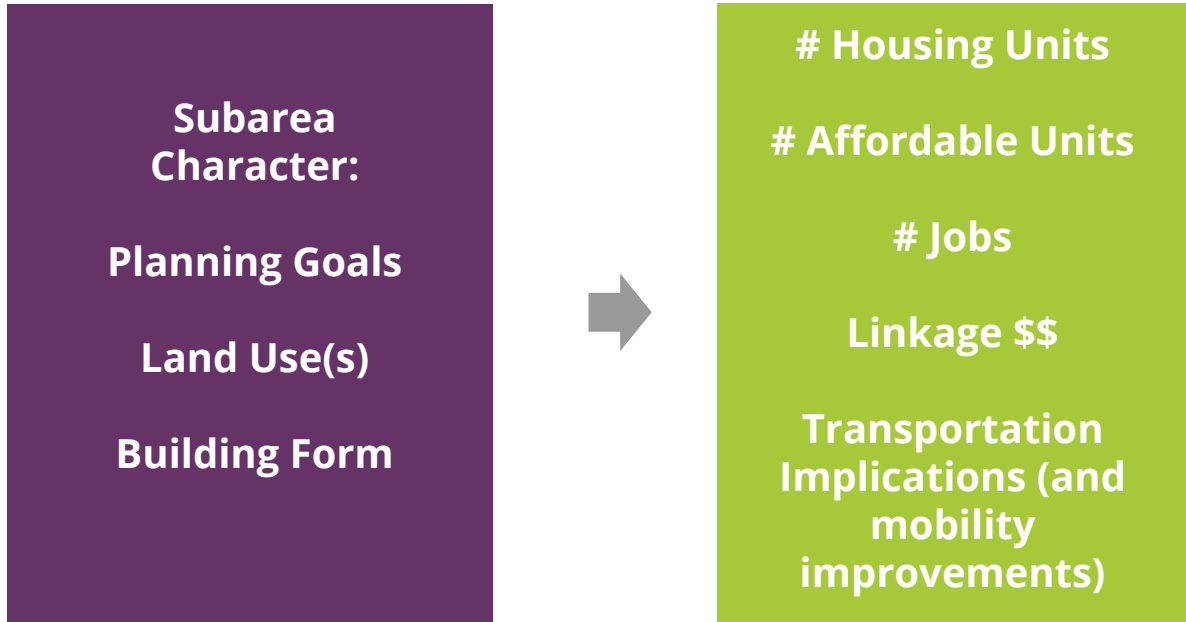
- *Smaller, well-designed units*
- *Shared common areas*
- *Parking maxima*



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Towards Development Scenarios

Development Scenarios



Proposed Scenario Frameworks

2. Define several different scenarios that prioritize different outcomes

- Visions for the neighborhood that vary in:
 - Land use mix
 - Building form (height, density, massing, e.g. step-backs)



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- All scenarios consistent with high-level planning goals and urban design framework



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- Visions for the neighborhood that vary in:
 - Land use mix
 - Building form (height, density, massing, e.g. step-backs)
- All scenarios consistent with high-level planning goals and urban design framework
- All scenarios predicated on financially feasible assumptions (except as-of-right)



Proposed Scenario Frameworks

1. As-of-Right Buildout
2. Transformative Mixed-Use
3. Housing Access Variation
4. Cultural Development Variation



As-of-Right Buildout

Illustrate hypothetical buildout under existing zoning if unchanged.

- Current CC-1 and LI-1 zoning:
 - 1.0 FAR limit
 - 1.75 FAR under PDAs (not allowed everywhere)
 - Housing conditional or forbidden
- Current FAR limits insufficient to incentivize redevelopment
- Less predictability due to need for variances



Transformative Mixed-Use

Illustrate sufficient density to encourage high-quality redevelopment that advances key planning goals, provides flexibility regarding use.

- Baseline requirements: good design, public realm improvements, affordable housing, environmental sustainability
- Affordable housing, workforce development, arts & culture all significant components
- Include some preference regarding uses but also let market determine use in significant portions of the study area
 - Under current conditions, commercial/lab more likely where parcels accommodate it



Housing Access Variation

In addition to core goals of previous scenario, use zoning and other tools to incentivize creation of more housing and more affordable housing

- Allow commercial development where appropriate, but more land zoned residential: more housing yield, increased # of IDP* (affordable) units
- Consider bonus density: increased housing yield, increased # and % of IDP units
 - Bonus density may or may not be achievable right now

* Inclusionary Development Policy



Housing Access

- Non-zoning tools:
 - Unit size/type, e.g. compact living
- Lower parking ratio/parking maximum:
 - Fewer physical and financial constraints
- Capture linkage \$\$ from commercial development for *Housing Creation*



Cultural Development Variation

In addition to core goals of previous scenario, use zoning and other tools to emphasize creation of arts and culture uses

- Study ways to generate cultural space (artist live-work space, space for cultural creation and performance) through zoning
- Consider bonus density in exchange for affordable cultural space
 - Bonus density may or may not be achievable right now

* Inclusionary Development Policy



4

Short Q&A Session

Short Q&A Session

- Please focus on clarifying questions
- Write your question in the chat.

OR

- Raise your hand or use chat to indicate you'd like to speak.
- Unmute microphone when called on by moderator.



5

Public Feedback/Breakout Rooms

Feedback Exercise

1. Discuss the **proposed scenario frameworks** and let us know what you think.
2. Further define the **character of each subarea** [uses and heights] so we can start to imagine what zoning might look like.
3. Consider places where **additional height** might be acceptable in exchange for greater benefits.



Land Use: Commercial (Primarily Lab/Office)

- Likely mid-rise (4-7 stories)
- Life sciences are a critical component of Boston's economy
- Commercial property tax rate is ~2.5 x residential rate
- Generates linkage \$\$ for affordable housing development
- Daytime employment population helps support retail and services



Building 400-500, Cambridge Discovery Park



Land Use: Mid-Rise Residential (4-10 Stories)

- Housing goals: Production of new housing: 69,000 new units of housing at a variety of income levels, including nearly 16,000 new units of income-restricted housing.
- Residential population supports vitality and neighborhood services.



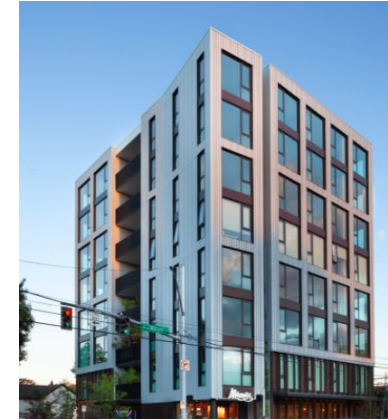
Land Use: Mid-Rise Residential (4-10 Stories)



Radius, 530 Western Ave.



Continuum, Allston



Carbon 12, Portland, OR
8 stories, cross-laminated timber



Land Use: High-Rise Residential (>10 Stories)

- More housing and potential for greater % affordable
- More area left open at ground plane
- Potential for other benefits
- Design at pedestrian level can be active and engaging



boston planning & development agency The Eddy, East Boston

Watermark, Seaport

Land Use: High-Rise Residential (>10 Stories)



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Land Use: Mixed-Use Node

- Activation and placemaking: programming, pop-ups, arts and culture
- Urban format retail, e.g. grocery store
- Requires daytime and residential population



Continuum, Allston



New Brunswick Performing Arts Center



Fenway, Boston



Sub-Areas

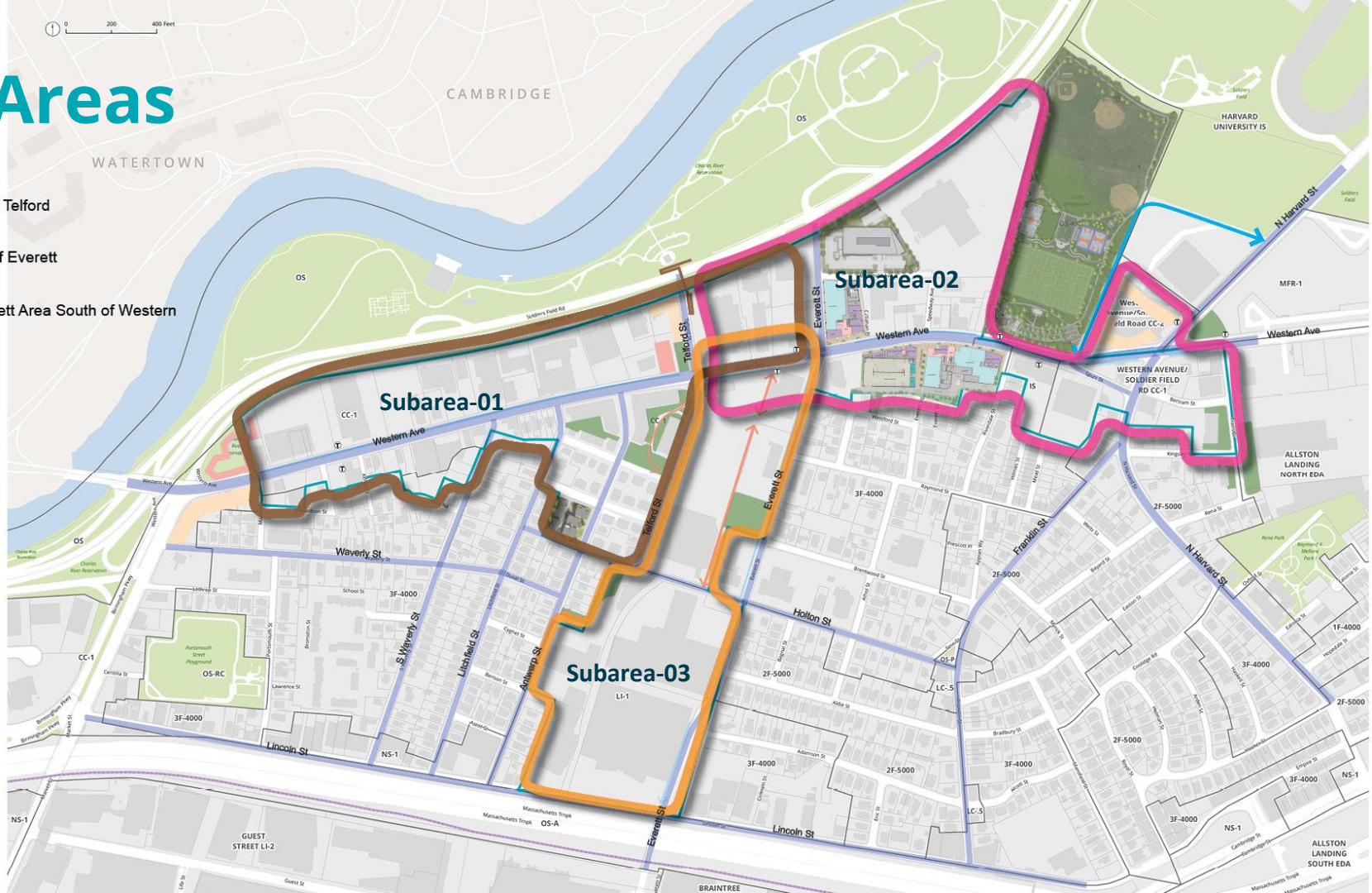
0 200 400 Feet



Area East of Telford

Area West of Everett

Telford-Everett Area South of Western



CAMBRIDGE

WATERTOWN

Subarea-02

Subarea-01

Subarea-03

HARVARD UNIVERSITY IS

ALLSTON LANDING NORTH EDA

ALLSTON LANDING SOUTH EDA

BRAINTREE

Subarea Character (Work in Progress)

Subarea	Characteristics	Goals
1. West of Everett	Large parcels on north, small on south + adjacent residential fabric	Through-block connections, modest scale on Western, setback
2. East of Telford	Mostly larger parcels, some adjacent residential fabric	Multimodal connections to river, more intensive activation
3. Everett/Telford South of Western	Mostly larger parcels, residential fabric to east and west	Ample new green space, enhanced circulation and connections
Everett/Telford Node	Existing retail node on south, excessive surface parking, large deep parcels	Anchor active corridor, connect to river, public realm opportunity

Subarea Character (Work in Progress)

Subarea	Goals	Height, Use
1. West of Everett	Through-block connections, modest scale on Western, setback	<i>Moderate height on south; mid to high on north; lab and residential uses north of Western</i>
2. East of Telford	Multimodal connections to river, more intensive activation	<i>Mix of uses desirable; predominantly mid-rise height</i>
3. Everett/Telford South of Western	Ample new green space, enhanced circulation and connections	<i>Transition from industrial to residential moving north; pedominantly mid-rise height</i>
Everett/Telford Node	Anchor active corridor, connect to river, public realm opportunity	<i>Mid to high on north, mid-rise on south; retail node both sides</i>

Western Avenue Corridor Study & Rezoning










Known Development Sites

Development can yield much-needed housing and space for the jobs of the future. It replaces unsightly properties with new buildings, retail space, and public amenities. It generates property taxes, affordable housing, and funds for improving the public realm and transportation systems.

Developers are actively working on development proposals for a number of sites. We have encouraged developers to present their concepts even as this study is underway, both informally and through Article 80 review since developers may seek zoning relief from the Zoning Board of Appeals. The conversation about and review of specific proposals will enrich the zoning conversation.

Of course, projects will not be approved unless they are consistent with zoning, so in most cases there will be no approval until this process is complete. Depending on the outcome of the zoning process, developers may have to revise their initial proposals.



-  Existing Commercial Frontage
-  Existing Residential Neighborhood Edges
-  Proposed Connection
-  Proposed Green Network
-  Proposed Residential Frontage
-  Proposed Residential Frontage
-  Proposed Commercial Frontage
-  Proposed Retail Frontage
-  Proposed Cultural Frontage





Mid-rise Residential



High-rise Residential



6-7-story Commercial/Lab



Mixed Use Node



- Existing Commercial Frontage
- Existing Residential Neighborhood Edges
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- Proposed Green Network
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McDonald Ave

Western Ave

Everett St

N Harvard St

Speedway

Questions for Each Group

- How well do the scenario frameworks capture different visions of the neighborhood?
- Would you modify them or propose a different one?
- Think about what each framework would mean for your subarea:
 - What uses would be appropriate and desirable?
 - What heights might be allowed as a base or in exchange for greater benefits?



5

Reporting Back

6

Q&A and Discussion

Community Conversation

- Write your question in the chat.

OR

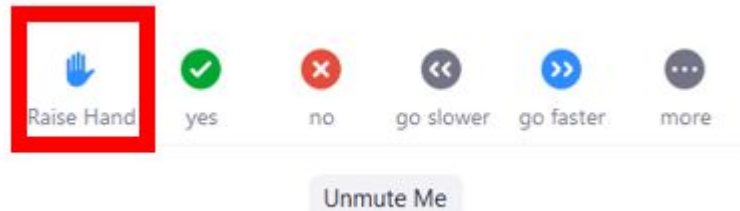
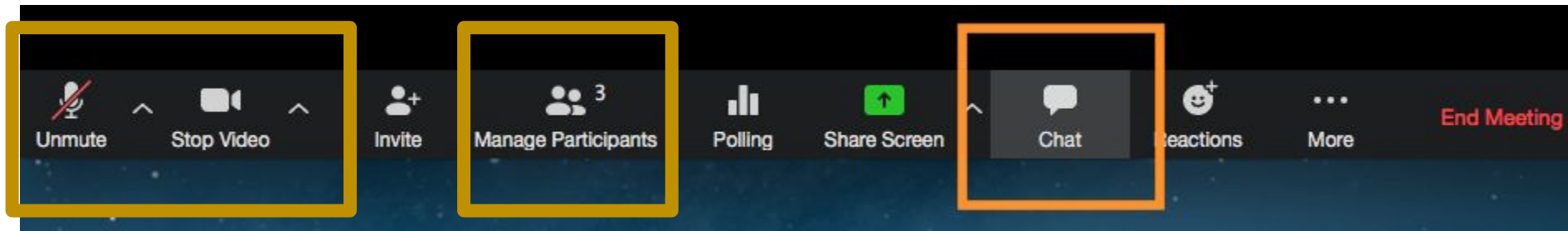
- Raise your hand or use chat to indicate you'd like to speak.
- Unmute microphone when called on by moderator.
- Please allow everyone space to participate.
- If you are joining only by phone, unfortunately, you will not be able to ask questions.



Zoom Tips

Your controls should be available at the bottom of the screen.

Clicking on these symbols activates different features:



Thank you

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#westernave