



Western Avenue Corridor Study and Rezoning

Focus Meeting on Arts & Culture Sustainability and Resilience

November 17, 2020



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

Agenda

- Housekeeping + Updates
- Arts and Culture
 - Background on City Policies
 - Q&A + Discussion
- Sustainability and Resilience
 - Background on City Policies
 - Q&A + Discussion



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Housekeeping + Updates

Project Website

bit.ly/westerncorridor

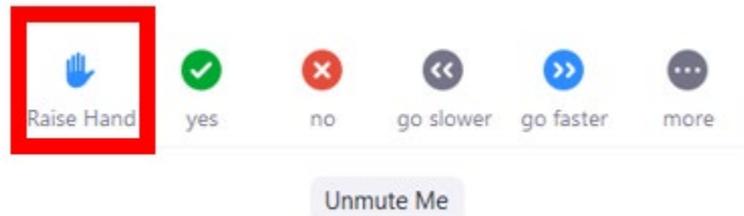
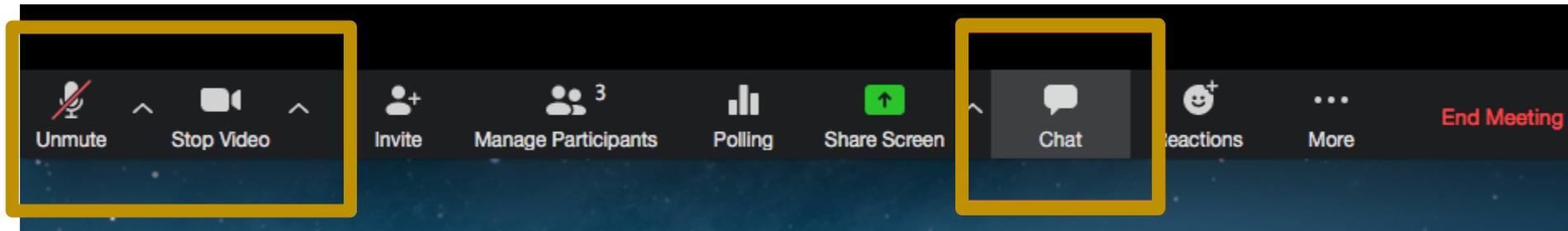
- Presentations (including tonight's!)
- Recordings from virtual meetings
- Zoning Toolkit and Housing Toolkit



Zoom Tips

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

Clicking on these symbols activates different features:



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

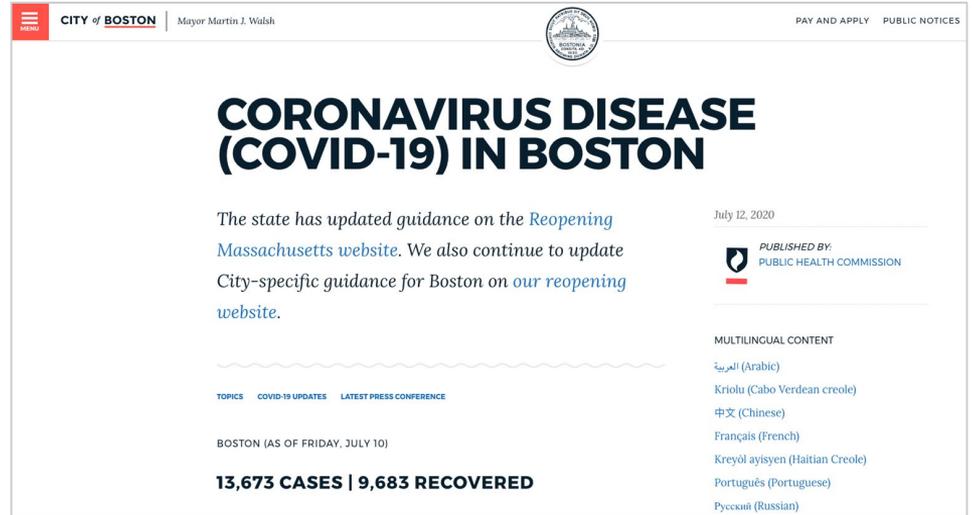
- The BPDA will be recording this meeting and posting it on its website at bit.ly/WesternCorridor. The recording will include the presentation, Q&A, and public comments afterwards.
- Also, it is possible that participants may be recording the meeting with their phone cameras or other devices.
- If you 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 header includes the City of Boston logo, Mayor Martin J. Walsh's name, and the date July 12, 2020. 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." To the right of this text, there is a "PUBLISHED BY: PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION" logo. Below the text, there is a "MULTILINGUAL CONTENT" section with links for Arabic, Criolu (Cabo Verdean creole), Chinese, Français (French), Kreyòl ayisyen (Haitian Creole), Português (Portuguese), and Русский (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 displayed. The main statistics are "13,673 CASES | 9,683 RECOVERED".

Next Steps and Opportunities for Public Input

December - January

Urban design framework + preliminary buildout scenarios

Discussion of density and community benefits

Transportation impacts, preliminary transportation mitigation and improvement options

February - March

Refined buildout scenarios and proposed transportation mitigation and improvement improvements

Draft report and zoning recommendations

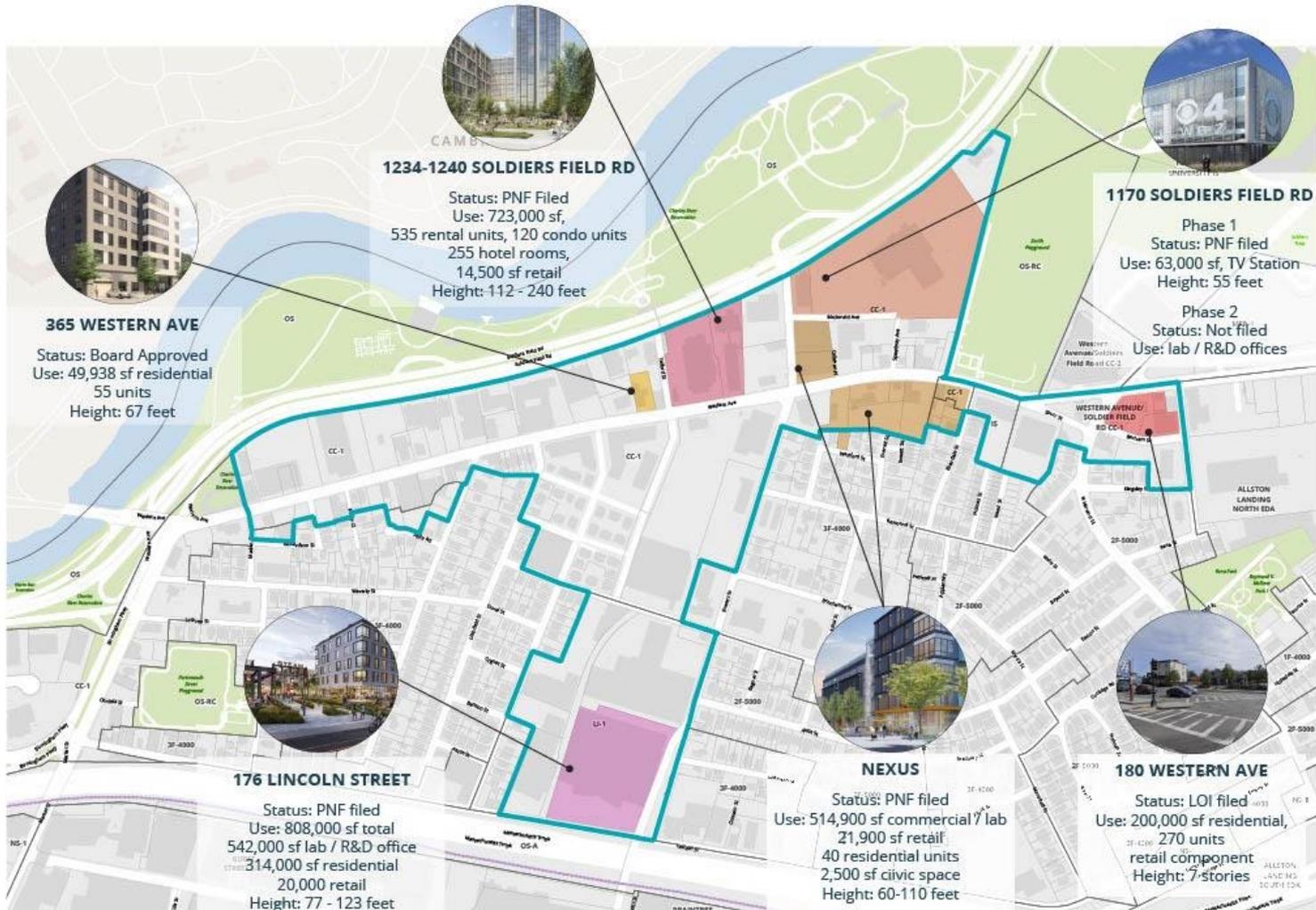
April and Beyond

Final report and zoning recommendations

Advancement of transportation mitigation and improvement recommendations

Rezoning

Current Development Proposals



Neighborhood Updates

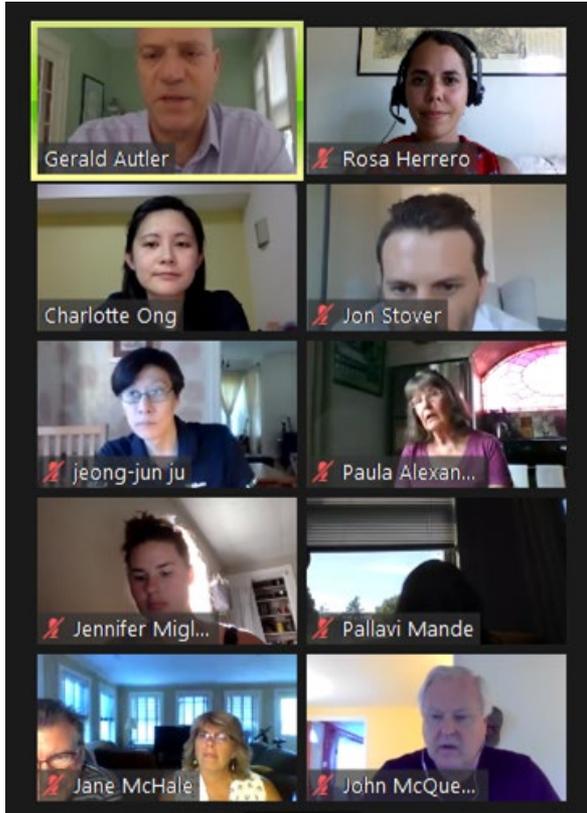
- [1170 Soldiers Field Road](#) (Phase 1)
- [1234-1240 Soldiers Field Road](#)
- [176 Lincoln Street](#) (comment period closes December 4)
- [Harvard Task Force](#)
 - Enterprise Research Campus
 - [180 Western Avenue](#)
- [Allston-Brighton Mobility Study](#)
 - Draft plan and feedback tool available now



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City Policies on Arts & Culture

What We Have Heard About Arts & Culture



- Interest in strengthening arts & culture and creative character of neighborhood
- New development could incorporate new opportunities for arts and culture

Neighborhood-Wide Concerns

- Artist displacement
- Loss of creative work, practice, and performance spaces
 - Eg. small- and mid-sized music venues
- Need to retain affordability (living, work, practice and performance spaces)
- Need to retain creative businesses and work opportunities
- Desire to retain and boost artistic and cultural character



Existing Arts & Culture Assets



Zone 3



Herter Park Amphitheater



Public Art @ Barry's Corner



Studio 52



Run of the Charles



Harvard Ed Portal



Harvard Ceramics Program



Harvard ArtLab

Planned Future Arts & Culture Assets



American Repertory Theatre

Poll Question 1

My interest in arts and culture is primarily as:

- Someone who works in the creative sector
- A resident eager to see Allston's creative side thrive
- A commercial property owner/developer who wants to enliven my property and support the arts
- Other (feel free to elaborate in chat)



Relevant Arts & Culture Plans and Policies



CITY LEVEL

- [Boston Creates Cultural Plan](#)



DISTRICT AND BUILDING LEVEL

- [Allston-Brighton Cultural Plan](#)
- [Artist Live/Work Program](#)





Boston Creates Cultural Plan

Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture



- Created out of a year-long community engagement effort
- Identified cultural needs, opportunities, and resources
- Sought to prioritize, coordinate, and align public and private resources to strengthen cultural vitality over the long term.



Arts Innovation District

Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture

- Imagine Boston 2030: recommends the creation of three Arts Innovation Districts
 - First one in [Upham's Corner](#)
 - Harness existing cultural activity and capitalize on the physical attributes unique to each neighborhood to support cultural activity
- Potential Arts Innovation District for Allston-Brighton: still in exploratory phase to figure out policy mechanisms

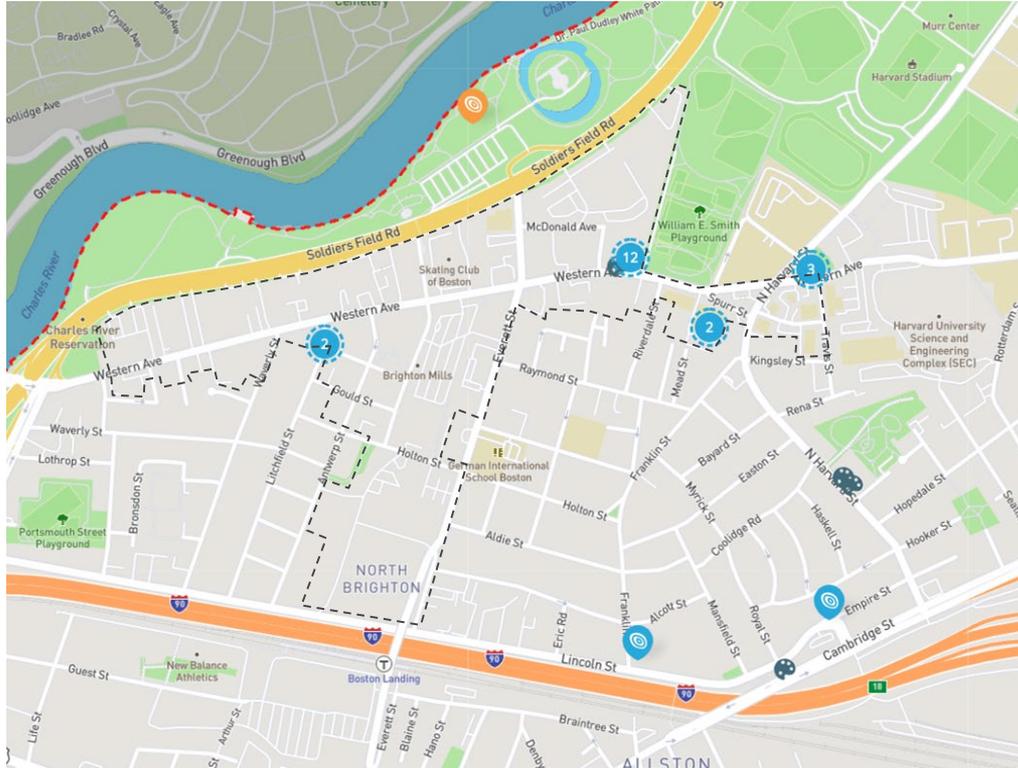


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Allston-Brighton Cultural Placekeeping Report

Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture



- Report will:
 - Identify elements that define unique qualities of Allston-Brighton cultural community
 - Create an inventory of cultural assets
 - Provide recommendations for keeping, supporting and growing arts & culture in Allston-Brighton



Artist Resource Desk

Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES



OPPORTUNITY FUND

The Opportunity Fund provides grants of up to \$1,000 to support individual artists and local arts events planned by artists.

[APPLY FOR THE OPPORTUNITY FUND](#)



ARTIST HOUSING CERTIFICATION

An Artist Housing Certificate qualifies an artist as eligible for artist live and work housing and some work space in Boston.

[APPLY FOR ARTIST HOUSING CERTIFICATION](#)



BOSTON CULTURAL COUNCIL GRANTS

The Boston Cultural Council is awarding grants to nonprofit organizations that offer arts and cultural programming in Boston.

[APPLY FOR A BOSTON CULTURAL COUNCIL GRANT](#)

- Sharing art in public
- Finding space:
 - [Creative Commercial Space Connector](#)
 - Artist Live Work housing
- Opportunity funds / grants, [Boston Artists-in-Residence programs](#)



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Artist Live/Work Program

Boston Planning & Development Agency

- Certification to qualify for artist housing:
 - Open to anyone who has made art in the last 3 years (Mayor's Office of Arts & Culture)
- BPDA actively encourages developers to create units that are specifically built out for artists' needs
- Many (but not all) of these units are income-restricted
- Income-restricted housing for artists are monitored for compliance





Leveraging Private Development

Boston Planning & Development Agency; Mayor's Office of Arts & Culture



- Negotiated community benefits
 - Funding for arts and culture (e.g. Harvard Flex Fund support for Herter Park, Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, public art)
 - Creation of cultural space

Case Study: Allston Square Article 80 Large Project Review project

- Incorporated cultural aspects into the project:
 - Artist live-work spaces (IDP units)
 - Public art opportunities
 - Pocket park

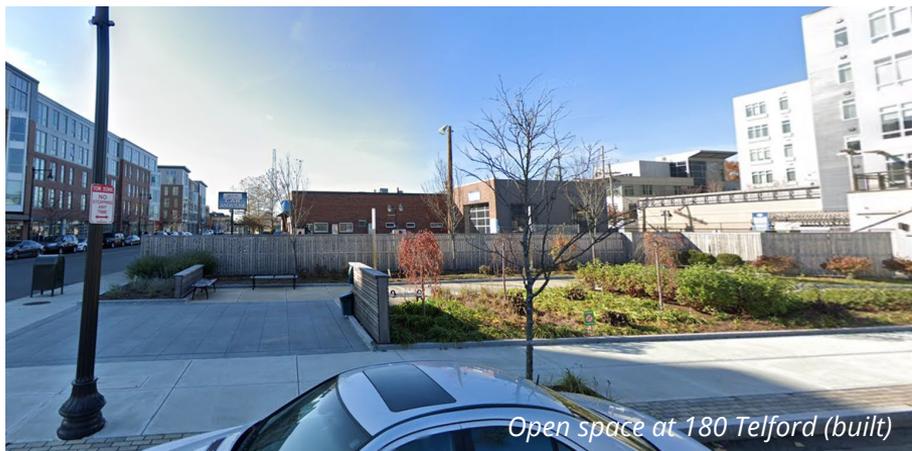


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Placemaking Examples in Western Ave

Boston Planning & Development Agency



**boston planning &
development agency**

Poll Question 2

After learning more about the city's existing policies:

- I have a better understanding of how these policies can support arts and culture in Allston
- I have some other great ideas to suggest (feel free to elaborate in chat)
- I believe that new development can help support arts and culture
- I am skeptical that new development can help support arts and culture



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Arts and Culture Q&A and Discussion

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City Policies on Sustainability and Resilience

Special Guests from the BPDA



Chris Busch,

Assistant Deputy Director
for Climate Change &
Environmental Planning



John Dalzell,

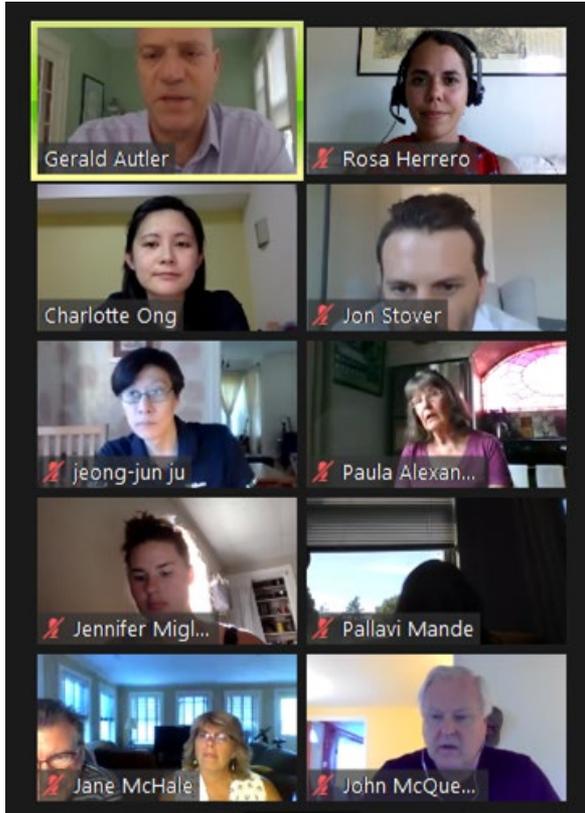
Sr. Architect for
Sustainable Development



Manuel Esquivel,

Sr. Infrastructure and
Energy Planner

What we have heard about sustainability & resilience



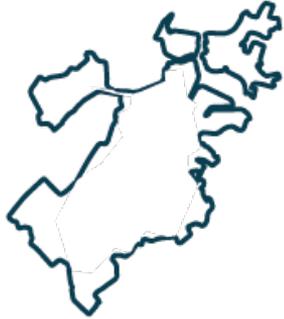
1. Concern about **urban heat island**
2. Concern about **coastal flooding and stormwater**
3. Interest in **district- and building-level** sustainability
4. Interest in enhancing **urban mobility** and **transportation**

Poll Question 3

What we have heard about sustainability and resilience: urban heat island, coastal flooding and stormwater, district- and building-level sustainability, and enhancing urban mobility.

- Yes, these topics match my concerns and questions
- I would frame the challenges differently (feel free to elaborate in chat)
- I have a sustainability and resilience concern that's not reflected here and will put it in chat

Relevant climate-related plans and policies



CITY LEVEL

- [Climate Ready Boston](#) (2016)
 - Focus on stormwater and urban heat island effect
- [Flood Resiliency Building Guidelines & Zoning Overlay District](#) (ongoing)
- [Urban Forest Plan](#) (anticipated 2021)
- [Go Boston 2030](#) (2017)
- [Carbon Free Boston / Climate Action Plan Update](#) (2019)



DISTRICT AND BUILDING LEVEL

- [Green Building Zoning](#) (2007)
- [Boston Smart Utilities](#) (2018)
- [Zero Net Carbon Building Zoning Initiative](#) (ongoing)
- [Allston-Brighton Mobility Study](#) (draft forthcoming)
- [Transportation Development Review](#) (ongoing)



Relevant climate-related plans and policies



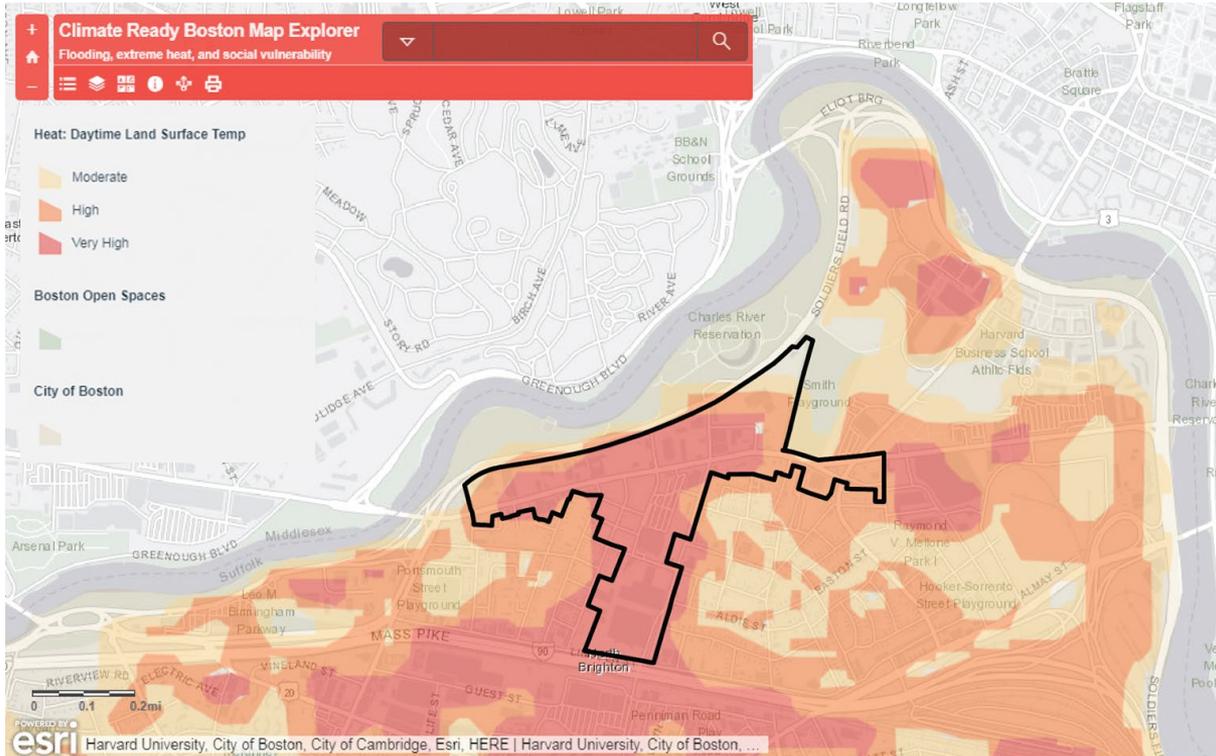
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Climate Ready Boston

Mayor's Office of Environment, Energy, and Open Space



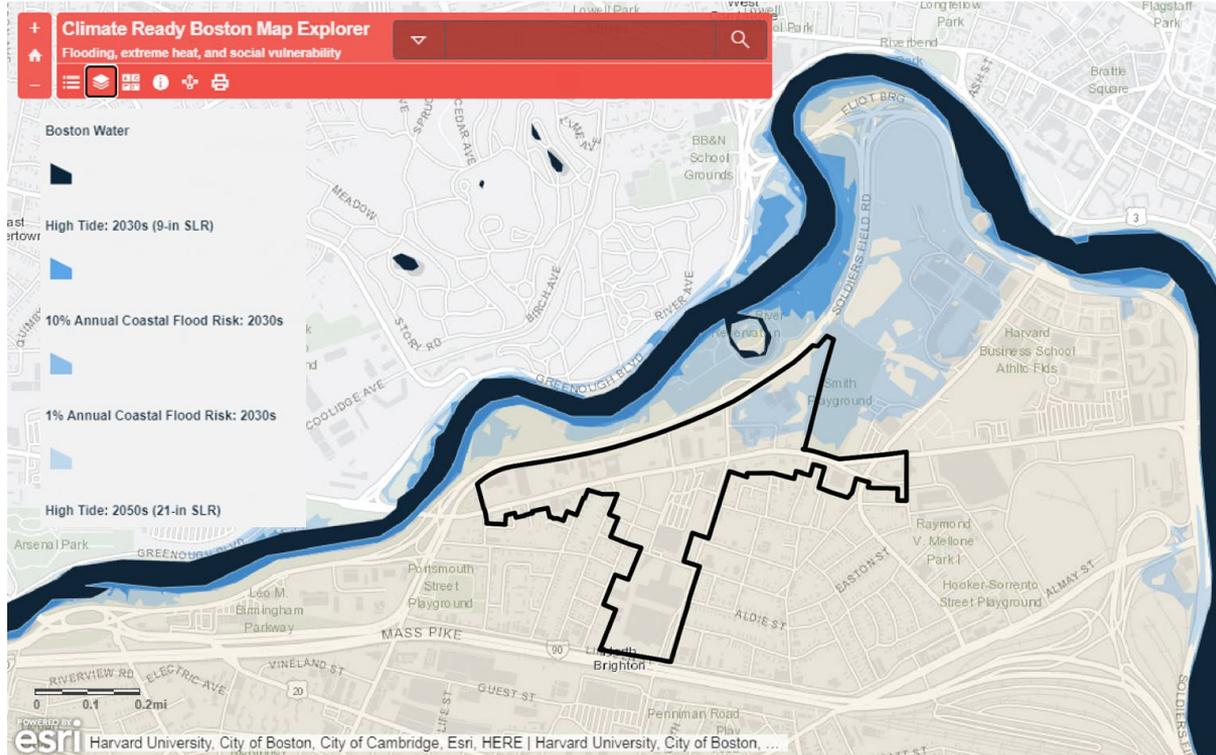
Western Avenue experiences very high levels of **urban heat island effect**.

City policies, urban design guidelines, zoning, and project review can require and incentivize **tree canopy** and **open space**, as well as building design elements that mitigate heat, such as high-reflectance materials and cool roofs.



Climate Ready Boston

Mayor's Office of Environment, Energy, and Open Space

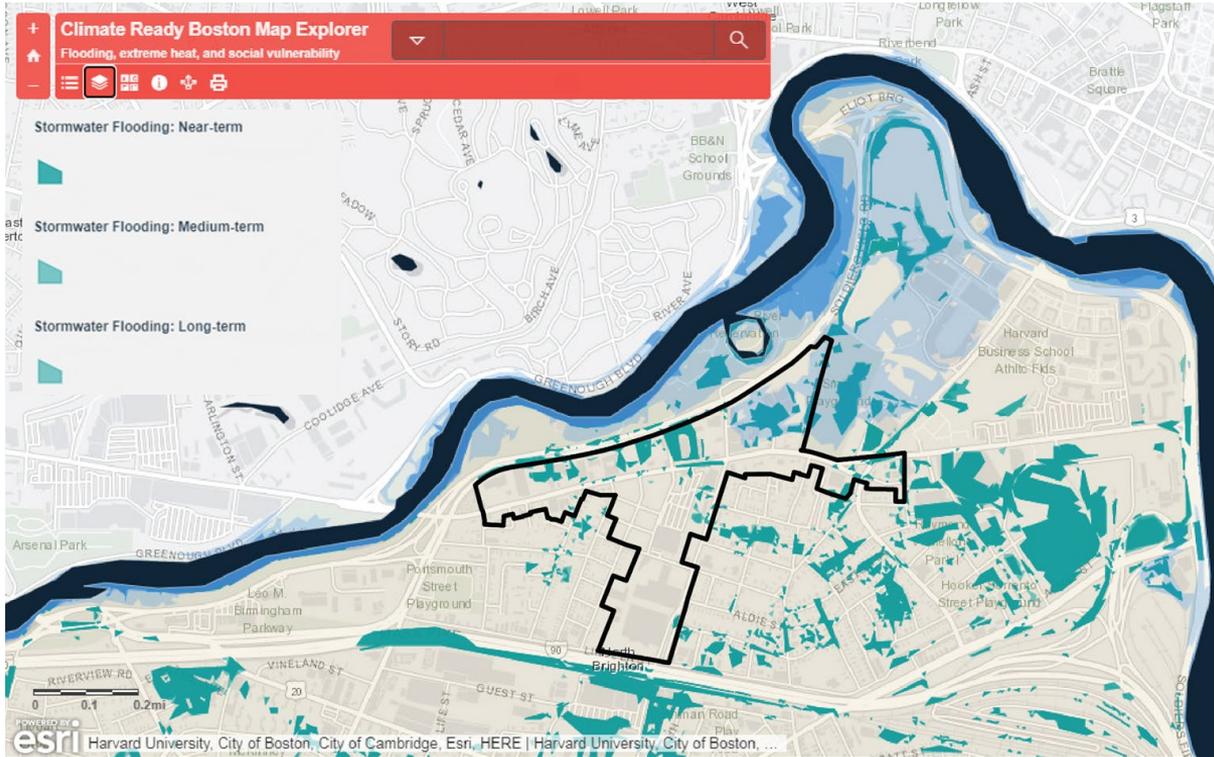


Coastal and riverine flooding, through 2070, **has limited impact** on the Western Avenue Study Area, the area west of Smith Playground will be at risk of flooding by 2070.



Climate Ready Boston

Mayor's Office of Environment, Energy, and Open Space



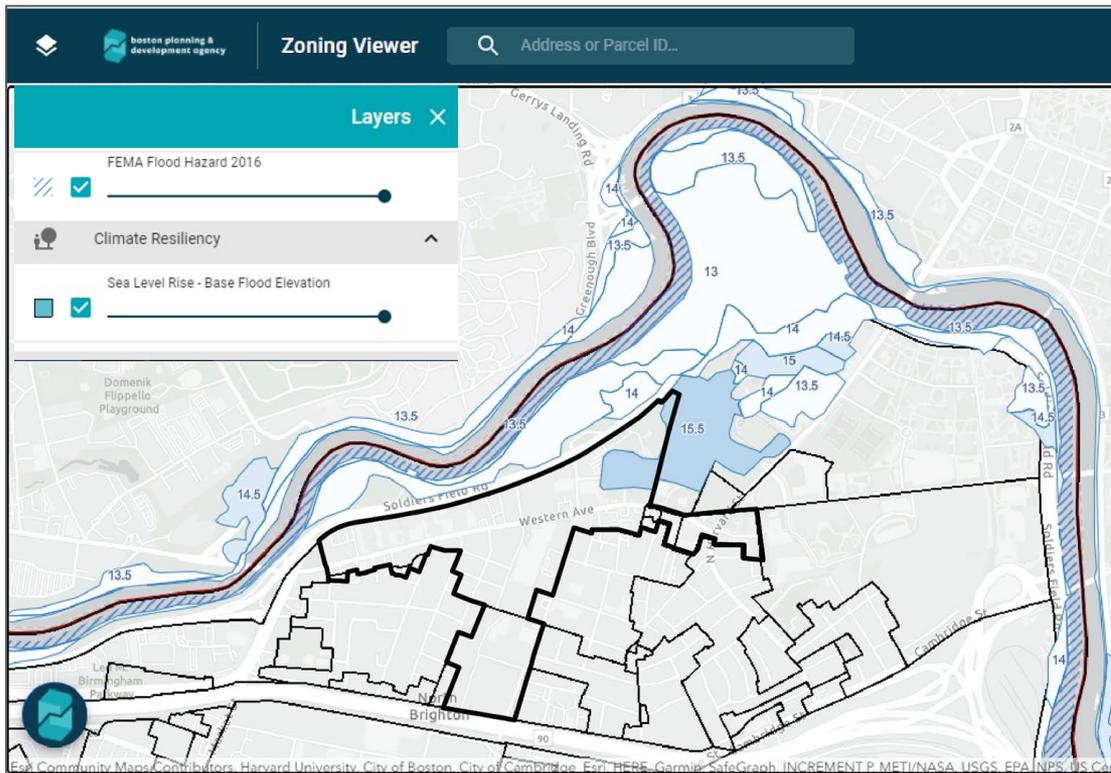
The northern portion of the Study Area is impacted by **stormwater**.

Explicitly allowing temporary flood control devices in setbacks and subgrade BWSC stormwater storage infrastructure and public access areas that protect adjacent properties is **one of the potential zoning recommendations**.



Flood Resiliency Building Guidelines & Zoning Overlay District

Boston Planning & Development Agency



Developed in partnership with the City's Environment Department as part of Climate Ready Boston, the intent of this effort is to ensure that development in **areas vulnerable to current and future flooding** is prepared for potential coastal flood hazards.

Only **marginal areas of the study area** fall within the extent of overlay district forecasted to 2070. No significant areas of neighborhood are vulnerable to coastal flooding based on current flood modeling.



Urban Forest Plan

Boston Parks and Recreation Department

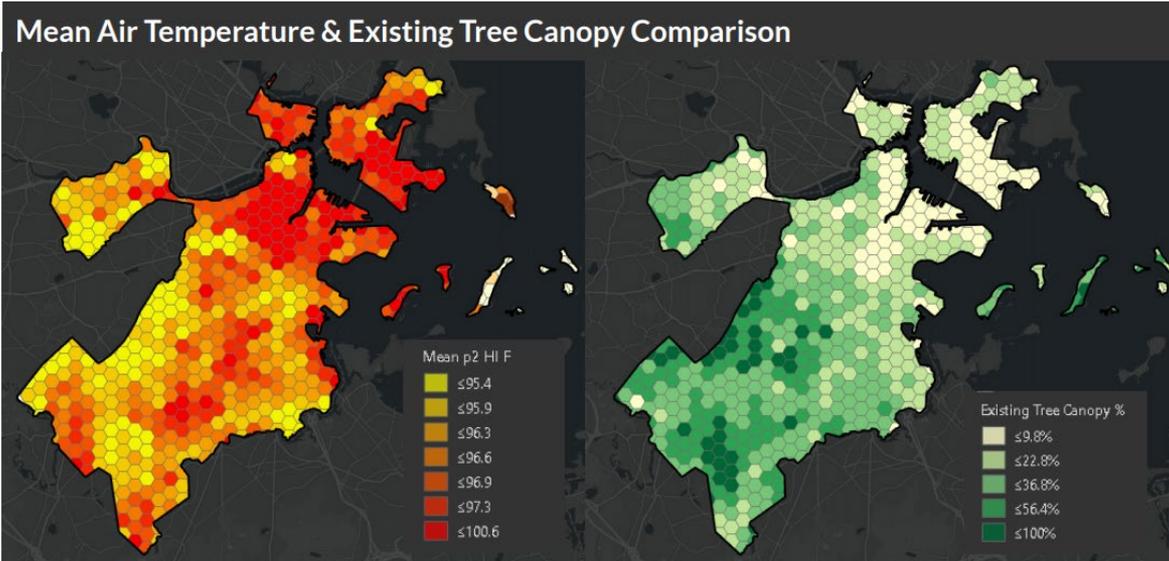


Figure 23: Heat Island metrics are summarized by 25-acre hexagons. 2019 Existing Tree Canopy (right) and Mean heat Index measured in Fahrenheit (left) for 3pm show that areas with low tree canopy experience increased heat.

The 20-year plan will set citywide goals for canopy protection, be responsive to climate change, and enhance the quality of life for all Bostonians.

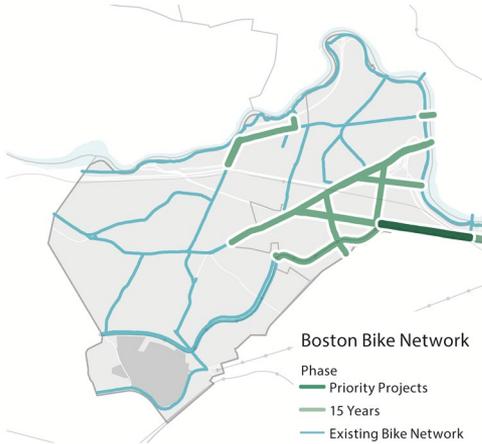
The growth and development of Boston's urban forest will serve to **reduce the urban heat island effect** and will also be coordinated with other resilience and equity efforts.



Go Boston 2030

Boston Transportation Department

Bike network projects



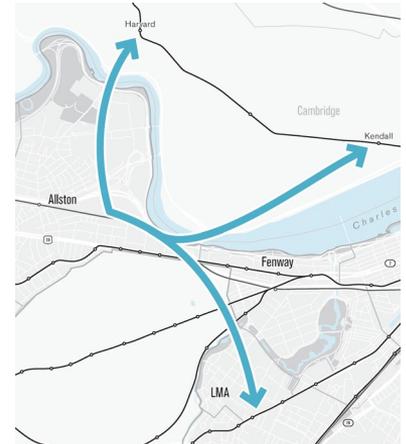
Oak Square to Packard's Corner Rapid Bus



I-90 Newton Urban Rail



West Station Rapid Bus to LMA, Kendall, Harvard



Mode shift goals: increase **transit by 33%**, increase **walking by 50%**, increase **biking by 400%**, driving down by 50%,



Carbon Free Boston/Climate Action Plan Update

Environment Department



The 2019 Climate Action Plan Update sets the stage for Boston's **transition to carbon neutrality** and describes our work plan for the next five years. The steps most relevant to the WACSZ are:

- Adopt a **zero net carbon standard** for city-funded affordable housing in boston.
- **Strengthen green building zoning** requirements to a zero net carbon standard.
- **Improve and expand** Active Transportation Infrastructure.
- **Encourage mode shift** through transportation demand management and sustainable parking policies.
- Plan for the **deployment of carbon-neutral** district energy microgrid systems.

Relevant climate-related plans and policies



DISTRICT AND BUILDING LEVEL

- [Green Building Zoning](#) (2007)
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Green Buildings & Climate Resiliency Zoning

Boston Planning & Development Agency



E+ Highland St (energy positive / LEED Platinum)

Existing zoning requires new projects to **assess and include strategies to mitigate adverse human and environmental impacts** utilizing the US Green Building Council's LEED standards and the City's Climate Resiliency Checklist.

- Large projects over 50,000 SF
- Holistic approach considering location, site, water, energy, materials, indoor environmental quality, and design process
- LEED certifiable (minimum) **or** higher including Gold, Platinum, and Net Zero
- Carbon emissions, extreme precipitation, extreme heat, and sea level rise



Zero Net Carbon Building Zoning Initiative

Boston Planning & Development Agency

"This carbon reduction plan works hand-in-hand with [Climate Ready Boston](#), our initiative to prepare our neighborhoods for the impacts we know we will face as a result of climate change..."

Mayor, Martin J. Walsh

This initiative will assess and identify **strategies to strengthen green building zoning requirements to a zero net carbon standard** for new construction.

The initiative will consider:

- Low Carbon Buildings - emission targets
- On-site Renewable Energy - minimum standards
- Renewable Energy Procurement - minimum requirements and reporting protocols
- Update Article 37 including thresholds, credits, minimum LEED standard and reporting





Boston Smart Utilities

Boston Planning & Development Agency



The Smart Utilities Program has resulted in **engineering and policy recommendations** for water, energy, telecommunication, and transit infrastructure.

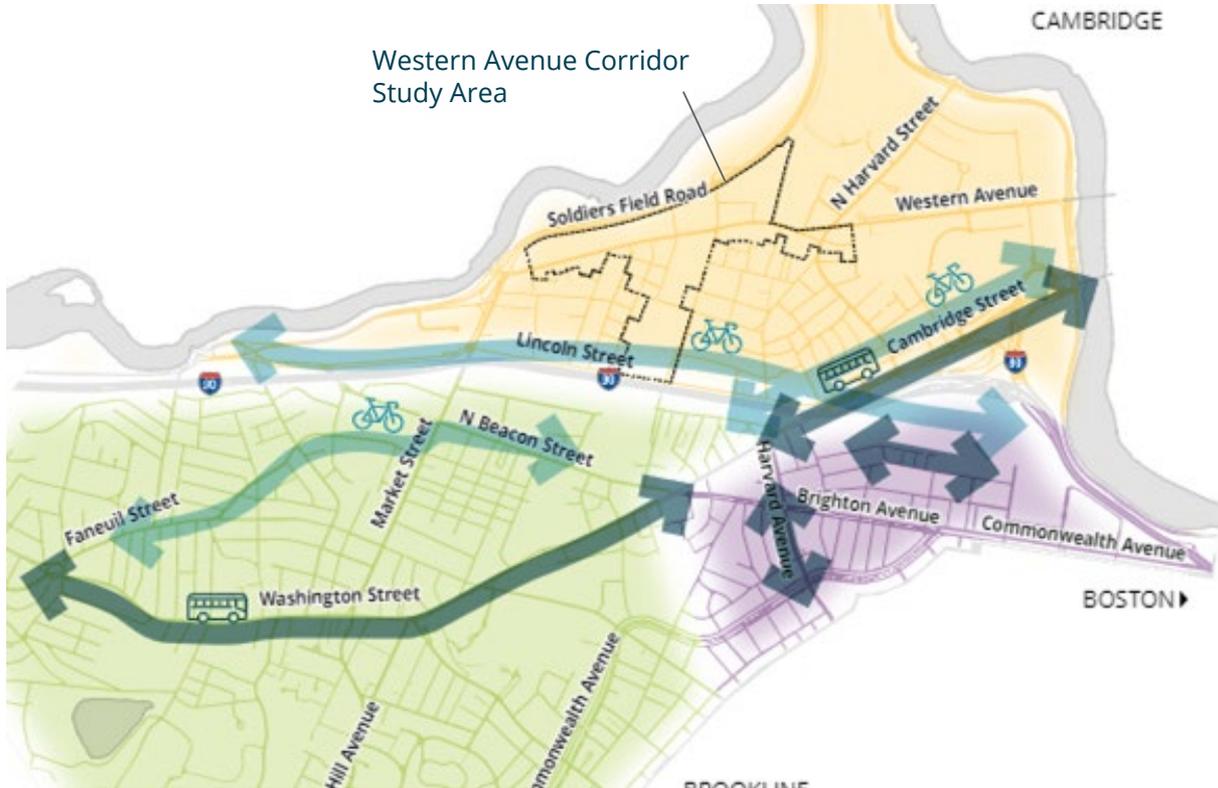
For all Article 80 projects, including along Western Avenue:

- Green infrastructure to mitigate 1.25 inches of **stormwater over impervious area** for private development projects over 100,000 square feet.
- **Smart street light infrastructure** when sidewalks are rebuilt.
- **District energy microgrids feasibility assessments and planning** for projects over 1.5 million square feet.



Allston-Brighton Mobility Study

Boston Planning & Development Agency

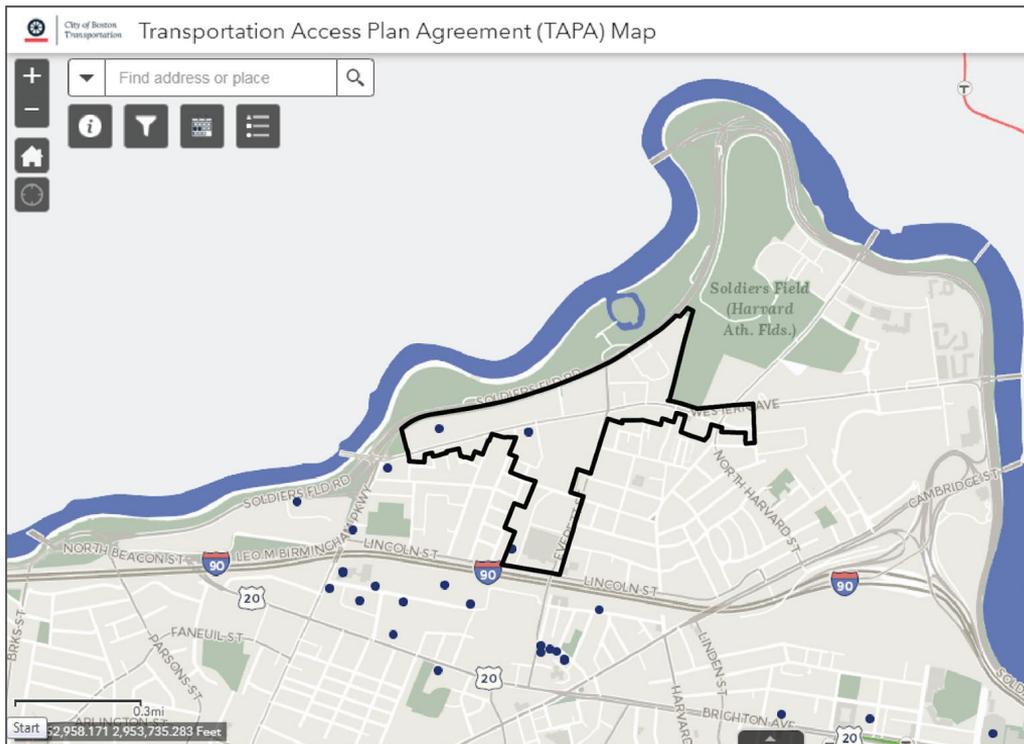


- **Expand** the transit network
- **Improve** the bike network
- **Increase** walkability
- **Enhance** the main street and neighborhood street experience
- **Simplify** intersections for all users
- **Increase tree canopy** on key corridors.



Transportation Development Review

Boston Transportation Department



At the end of the [large project review process](#), the developer signs a legal agreement with the Boston Transportation Department (BTD) called a **Transportation Access Plan Agreement (TAPA)**.

Through the transportation development review, the following guidelines and policies guide the development:

- [Bike Parking Guidelines](#)
- [Electric Vehicle Readiness Policy](#)
- [Transportation Demand Management](#)
- Parking Ratio Maximums (in progress)

Poll Question 4

How do you typically move around the Western Avenue study area?

- I walk everywhere!
- I bike
- I use public transit
- I use carshare (Uber, Lyft, etc)
- I drive
- A combination of many modes



Summary of Key Points for Western Avenue

1. The area is **vulnerable to urban heat island conditions**. City policy informs strategies related to tree canopy and project-level and district-level strategies (e.g. green space) are also important.
2. **Coastal and riverine flooding** is not a major concern until later in the century, but should be mitigated in areas at risk of future flooding. **Inland flooding is a concern**. New stormwater infrastructure, combined with redevelopment according to BWSC standards and green infrastructure can reduce flooding and pollutant runoff to the river.
3. Boston continues to require and encourage **higher standards of sustainability at the building level**. New projects should meet higher green building and zero net carbon standards.
4. **Enhancing mobility options** is one of the main focuses. Identify strategies to increase transit, bicycle and pedestrian mode shares.

Poll Question 5

How was this meeting?

- Thank you, I learned something today
- I want to follow up on some of these ideas in more detail (feel free to elaborate in chat)
- I will set up a follow-up conversation with staff

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Sustainability & Resilience Q&A and Discussion