



Western Avenue Corridor Study and Rezoning

Closeout Meeting

Sept 29, 2022



boston planning &
development agency



bit.ly/westerncorridor
@bostonplans

Agenda

1. Introductions & Housekeeping
2. Overview of Planning Process
3. Plan Adjustments Made After Draft Release
4. Proposed Zoning Changes
5. Next Steps



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Introductions & Housekeeping



Staff Introductions

Joe Blankenship: BPDA Transportation - joseph.blankenship@boston.gov

Kathleen Onufer: BPDA Downtown & Neighborhood Planning -
kathleen.onufer@boston.gov

Adam Johnson & Matt Martin: BPDA Urban Design

Mark McGonagle & Patrick Horan: BPDA Community Engagement

Project Website

bit.ly/westerncorridor

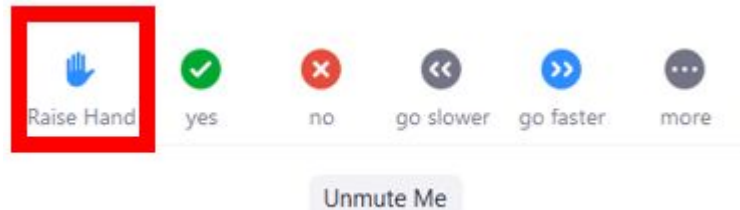
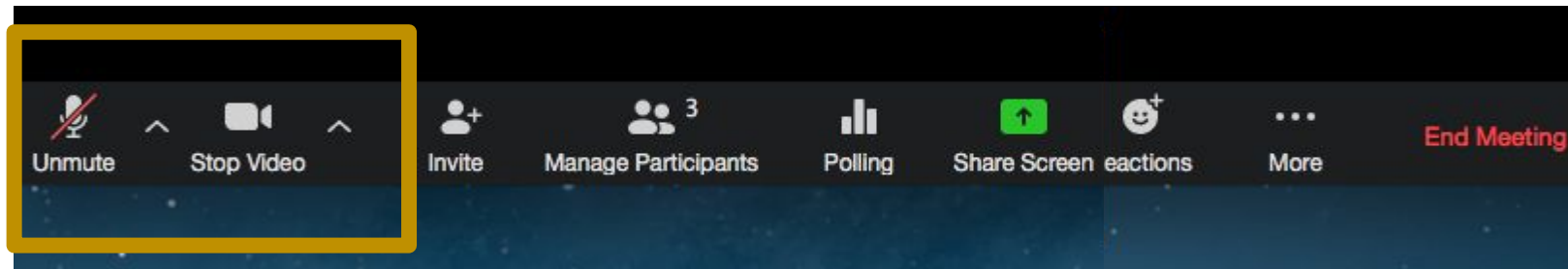
- Presentations (including tonight's!)
- Recordings from virtual meetings
- Project documents
- Draft report, draft zoning text, draft zoning maps



Zoom Tips

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

Clicking on these symbols activates different features:



Virtual Meeting Protocols

- Following the presentation there will be time for 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 the project team through **Joe Blankenship, joseph.blankenship@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.



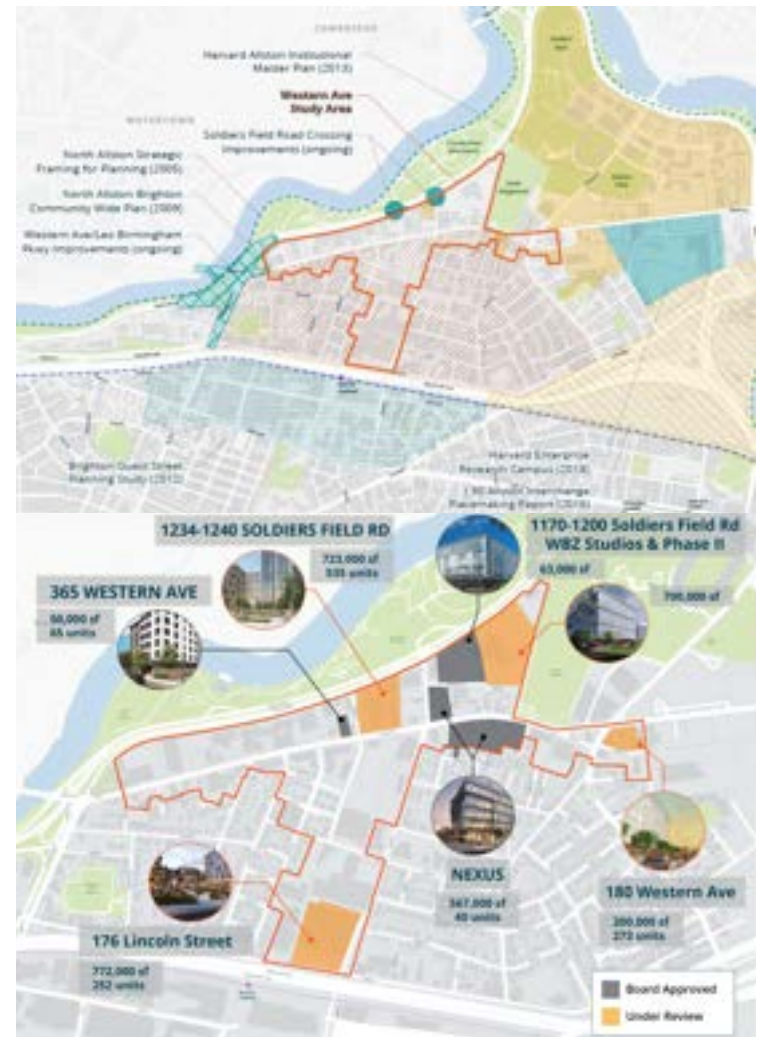
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Overview of Planning Process



Why Plan

- Planning has occurred over the past two decades
- However, current zoning does not support community vision of:
 - More housing & jobs
 - Community retail
 - Active sidewalks & open space
 - Improved transportation
- Demand for new development
 - Over 3M SF recently approved or under current review



Planning Process

- Began in Sept 2019
- In person meetings
- Zoom meetings
- Walk & bike tours
- Parking data collection
- Conversations with local businesses, local institutions, Watertown & Cambridge staff
- Interdisciplinary interagency working group
- Regular coordination & collaboration with partner agencies such as DCR & MBTA
- In person & virtual office hours



**boston planning &
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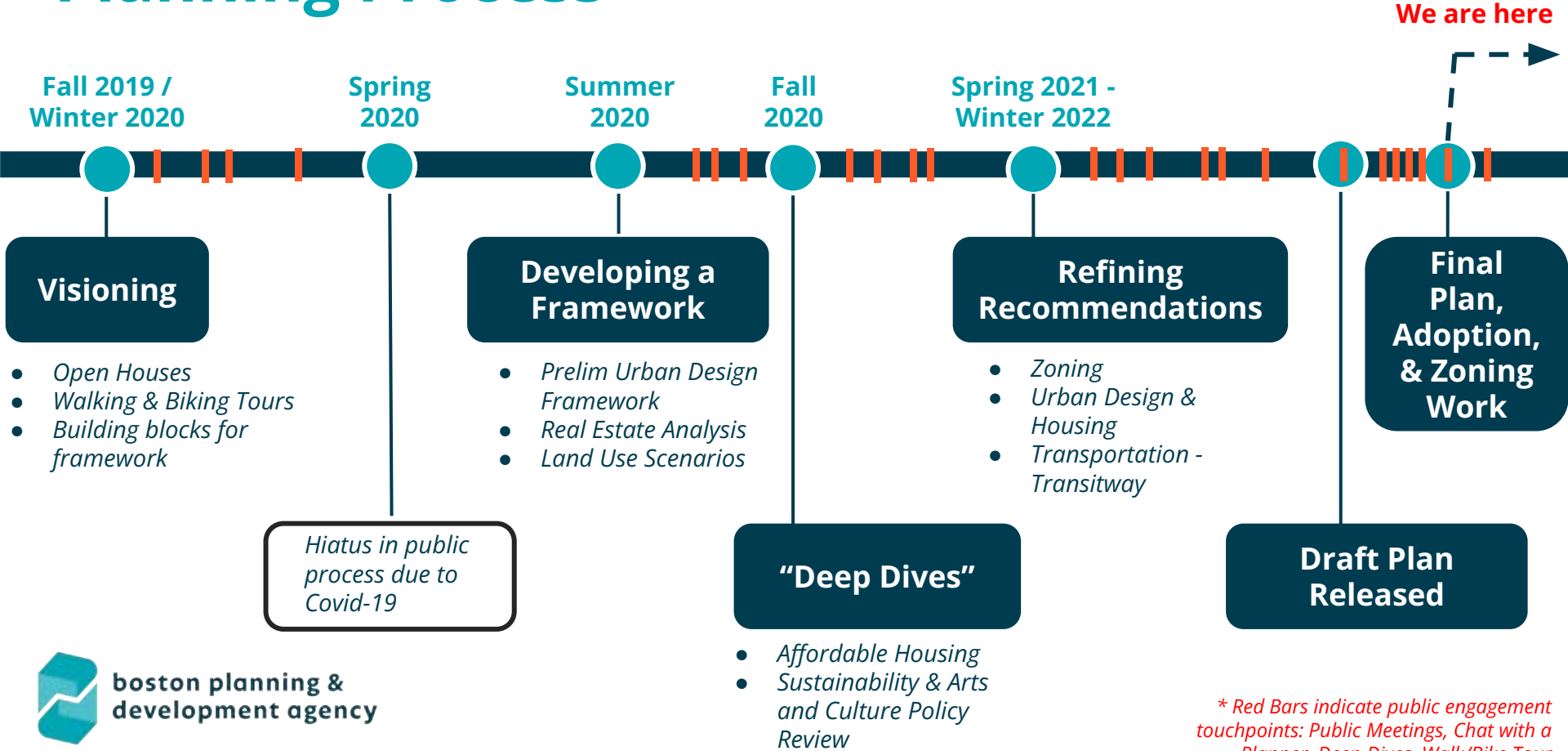


Image: Open House, Fall 2019



Image: Walking & Biking Tour, Fall 2019

Planning Process



BREATHE & ADAPT



CONNECT & MOVE



Planning Framework

LIVE & WORK



CREATE



Live, Work, & Create

- Mixed-use at higher densities concentrated in Barry's Corner and Boston Landing TOD Node
- Residential development and cultural uses allowed everywhere
- Western Avenue as retail & multimodal corridor



Breathe & Adapt

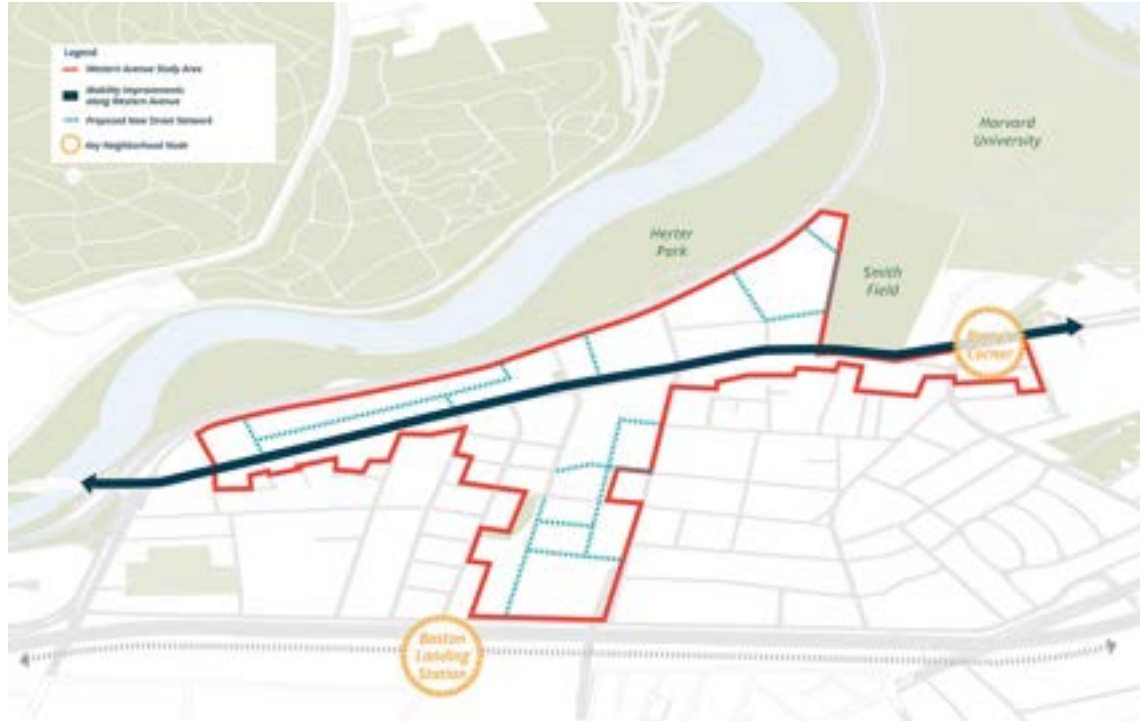
The planning framework envisions Western Avenue as a key multimodal corridor and seeks to improve connections to the Charles River & existing open space.



Connect & Move

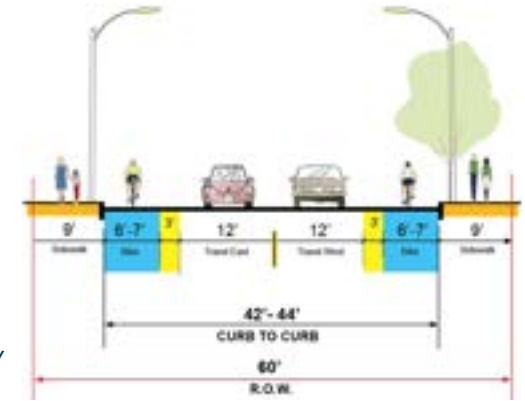
The planning framework envisions Western Avenue as an active, multimodal corridor.

- New street network and connections
- Strong Transportation Demand Management in Redevelopment
- New low-stress bikeway and Transitway on Western Ave

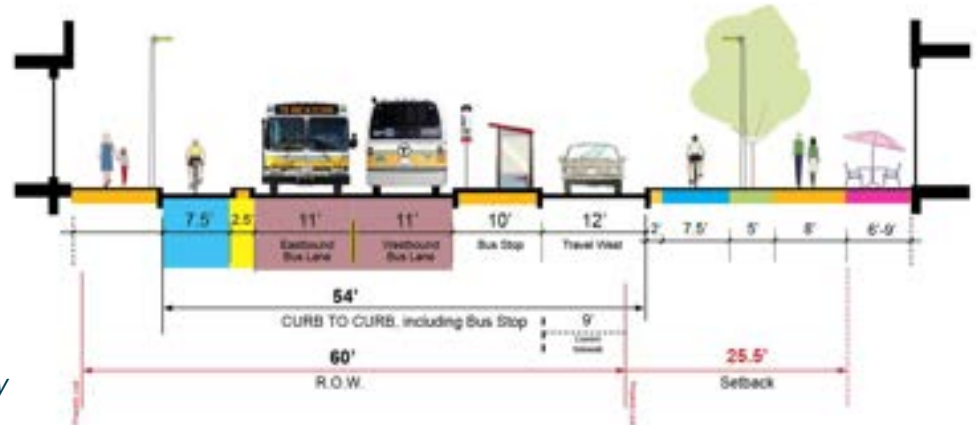


Connect & Move

- Short-term low-stress bikeway
- Transitway
- Parking Ratios
- Parking & curbside use strategies
- Transportation Demand Management measures



Short-Term Protected Bikeway



Long-term Transitway

Connect & Move

- Long-term multimodal goal
- Funding secured to further evaluate transitway through Harvard Phase A ERC mitigation
- Elements to evaluate include:
 - Expanded extent: Leo Birmingham Parkway to Soldiers Field Road
 - Impacts from DCR's proposed SFR Road Diet
 - Neighborhood roadway circulation and vehicle access
 - Coordination with DCR, MBTA, Watertown, & Cambridge
 - Design process



What is a transitway?

A transitway dedicates right-of-way on the street for exclusive use by transit vehicles (buses). In addition to bus lanes, transitways feature enhanced transit stations with real time arrival information, improved shelters, benches, and bus boarding areas. The center-running bus lanes and boarding platforms (referred to as "floating bus stops") on Columbus Avenue in Jamaica Plain are one approach to a transitway.

To accommodate a fully functional transitway, it is imperative that transit vehicles be able to access bus stops without interference from general vehicle traffic so that passengers may easily and quickly board and alight. To enable this direct access, where buses are not directly



14th Street Busway in New York City



14th Street Busway in New York City

adjacent to the curb, floating bus stops will be required for transit vehicle access. The resulting transitway increases person throughput, reduces bus delay, and increases reliability for buses. Examples of successfully implemented transitways in the United States include San Francisco's Market Street¹ and New York City's 14th Street Busway².

¹ <https://www.sfmta.com/projects/better-market-street-project>

² <https://www.scmshwarc.com/14th-st-busway/>

Implementation

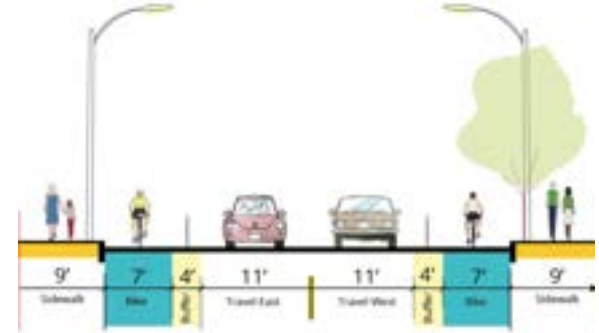
Implementing this Plan will occur via three key areas over time.



Zoning
Recommendations



Urban Design
Guidelines



Mobility
Recommendations

All of these regulations work in concert



These are all written into the plan, and implemented through zoning

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Recap of Feedback Received & Plan Adjustments Made After Draft Release



Feedback Received

Since Draft Plan Release:

- July 27 public meeting to release draft plan
- 4 listening sessions
 - 2 in-person
 - 2 virtual
- 1 informational zoning meeting
- Numerous emails and submitted letters
- September 7 public meeting & zoning hearing



Feedback Received

People were encouraged by:

- Desire for the creation of a vibrant corridor
- Focus on housing
- Creative approaches to transportation
- Movement toward swift zoning
- Supporters of height and bike lanes



Image: August 2022 office hours

Feedback Received

Types of feedback we heard included:

- Topics the WACRZ plan can address
- Citywide or neighborhood-wide planning issues
- Projects that require collaboration with other City or State agencies
- Project / development specific issues



Feedback Received

These topics were of primary points of discussion:

- Issues the WACRZ Plan can directly address:
 - Height & density at Barry's corner
 - Affordability approach - expand and clarify - not solely a plan question - both citywide and project-specific
 - Noting illustrative future aspirations vs. known planned improvements



Feedback Received

These topics were of primary points of discussion:

- Issues that are important, but can not be addressed solely through the WACRZ Plan:
 - Open space and parks at a neighborhood scale
 - Transportation impacts from development
 - Loss of parking on Western Ave to advance multimodal transportation on Western Ave
 - Desire for more clarity on the Transitway
 - Construction management at a district scale



Plan Revisions

Based on feedback, changes were made to the following topics:

- Lot coverage
- Density
- Building Height
- Affordability Incentive
- Details on affordable & fair housing priorities
- Details on priorities for community benefits



Zoning

The plan includes zoning limits on:

- Land Use
- Setbacks
- Lot Coverage
- Density
- Building Height



Zoning

The plan includes zoning limits on:

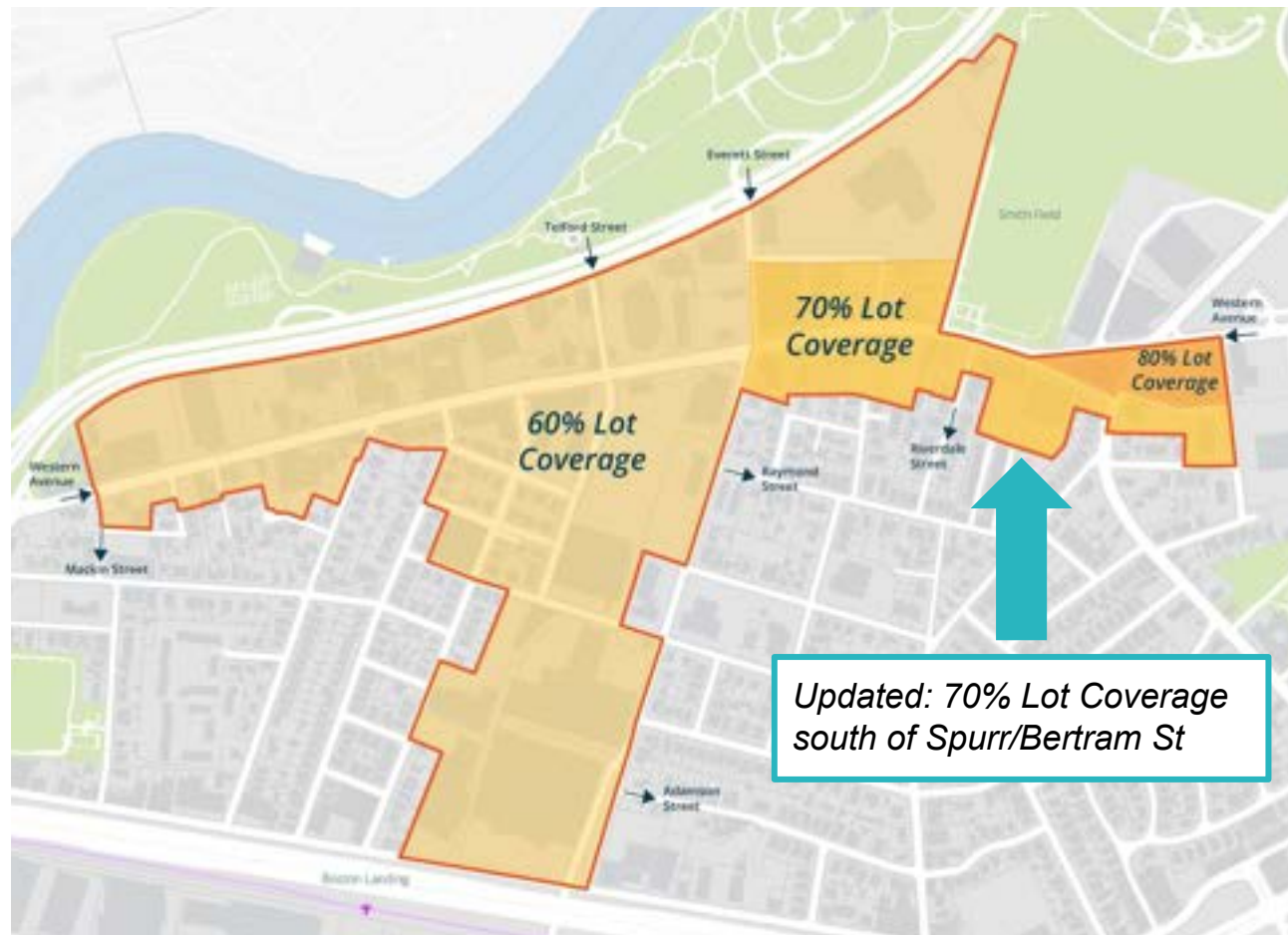
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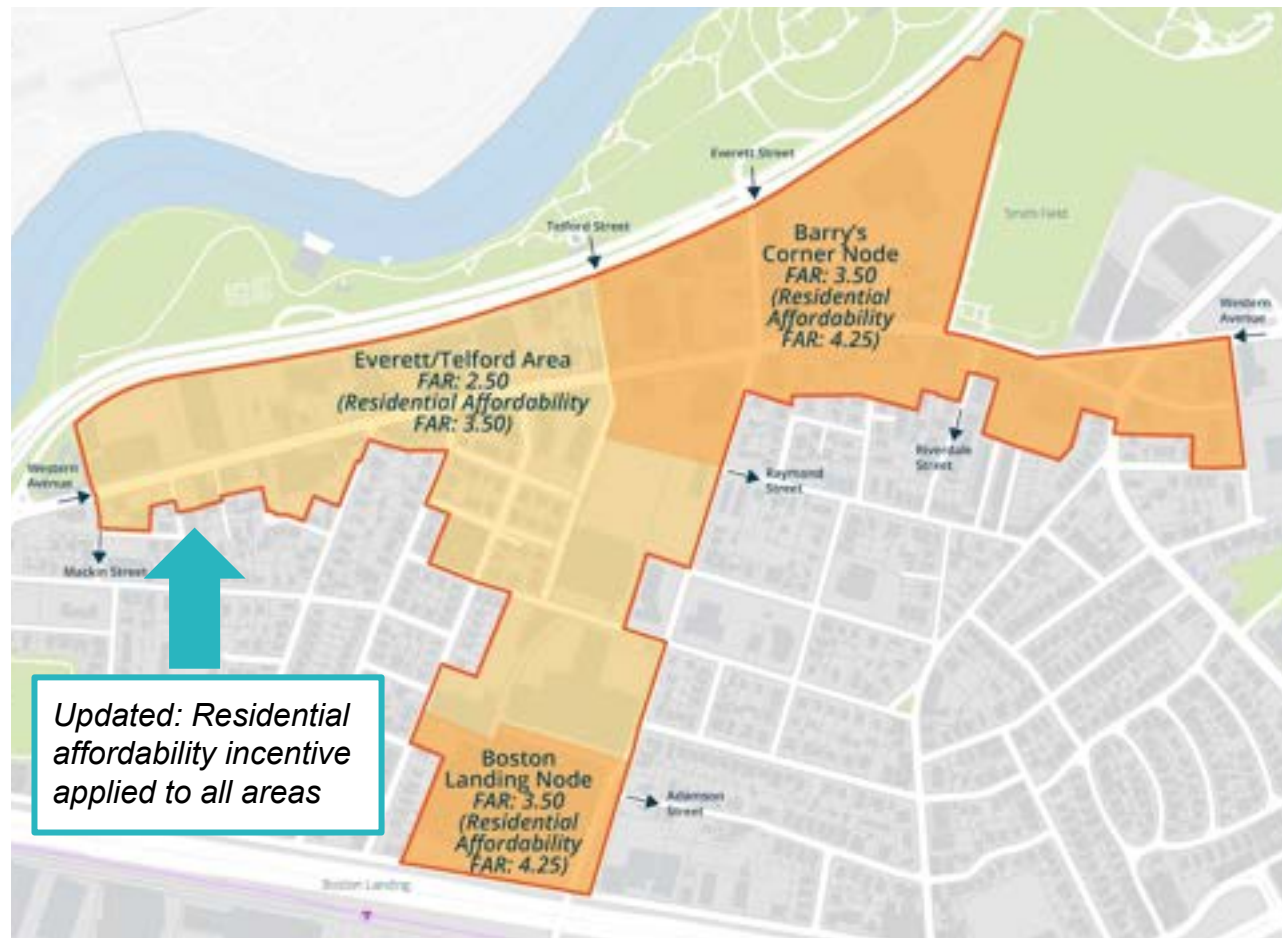
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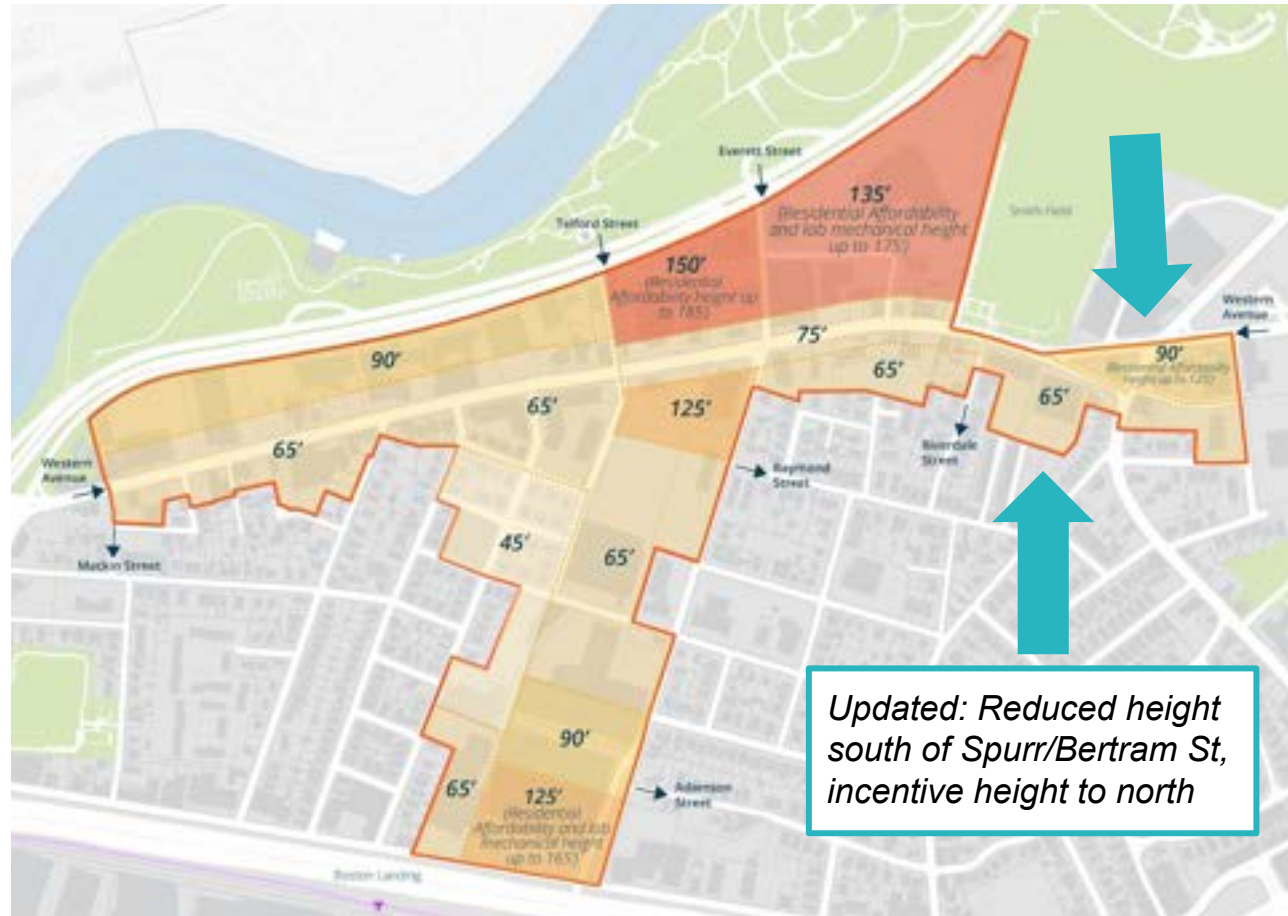
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Zoning

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★ Plan notes that 5' of additional height may be appropriate for Art 80 projects accommodate higher floor-to-floors of restaurants and other uses in retail spaces.

Residential Affordability Incentive

Updated: Applies to all areas

**All inclusionary development recommendations are subject to update with the forthcoming Mayor's Office of Housing Inclusionary Development Study, expected fall 2022

	Floor Area Ratio	On-site Affordability Requirement
Everett / Telford Area	Max. 2.5	Non-residential projects are limited to FAR 2.5. No fewer than 15% total residential square footage provided in IDP units - affordable to households averaging 60% AMI.*
	Affordability Incentive 2.5 - 3.0 Within the residential incentive zone, all projects approved through a Planned Development Area with an FAR between 2.5 and 3.0.	No fewer than 17% total residential square footage provided in IDP units - affordable to households averaging 60% AMI.*
	Affordability Incentive 3.0 - 3.25 Within the residential incentive zone, all projects approved through a Planned Development Area with an FAR between 3.0 and 3.25.	No fewer than 19% total residential square footage provided in IDP units - affordable to households averaging 60% AMI.*
	Affordability Incentive 3.25 - 3.5 Within the residential incentive zone, all projects approved through a Planned Development Area with an FAR between 3.25 and 3.5.	No fewer than 20% total residential square footage provided in IDP units - affordable to households averaging 60% AMI.*
Barry's Cordern Node and Boston Landing Node	Max 3.5	Non-residential projects are limited to FAR 3.5. No fewer than 15% total residential square footage provided in IDP units - affordable to households averaging 60% AMI.*
	Affordability Incentive 3.5 - 4.0 Within the residential incentive zone, all projects approved through a Planned Development Area with an FAR between 3.5 and 4.0. Non-residential projects are limited to FAR 3.5.	No fewer than 17% total residential square footage provided in IDP units - affordable to households averaging 60% AMI.*
	Affordability Incentive 4.0 - 4.25 Within the residential incentive zone, all projects approved through a Planned Development Area with an FAR between 4.0 and 4.25. Non-residential projects are limited to FAR 3.5	No fewer than 20% total residential square footage provided in IDP units - affordable to households averaging 60% AMI.*

Additional Narrative Added

- Further detail on affordable and fair housing priorities (pg 32 of plan)
 - Greater affordability for a mix of housing sizes and incomes
 - Innovative models, including all-affordable projects
- Further detail on priorities for community benefits (pg 32 of plan)
 - Greater affordability for mix of housing sizes and incomes
 - Cultural uses
 - Locally-owned, minority, and small businesses



Implementation Update: Western Ave low-stress bikeway

- On Sept 6 the Mayor and BTD announced priorities for low-stress bikeway implementation
- Western Avenue is on that list & will build on the work this effort brought forth
- Design & engagement to occur into 2023

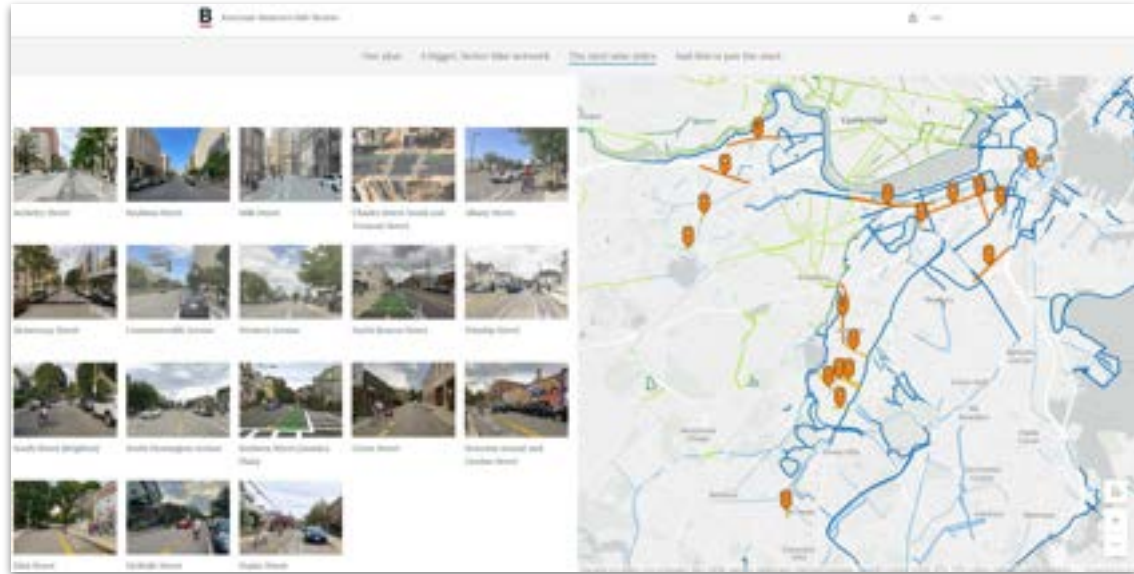


Image: Screenshot of BTD website
Website: [Access Storymap here](#)

Implementation: Western Ave Transitway

- \$500,000 to further evaluate & design the Transitway from the Harvard ERC Phase A project mitigation
- Drafting Transitway RFP underway
- Goal to release RFP in the coming months



*Image: Columbus Ave, Boston
Source: MBTA*



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Proposed Zoning Changes



Base Zoning Changes

- Antwerp St houses:
Rezone from LI to
3F-4000



Base Zoning Changes

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Rezone from LI to
3F-4000



Base Zoning Changes

- Western Ave parking lots: Rezone from 3F-4000 to CC-1, make PDA-eligible



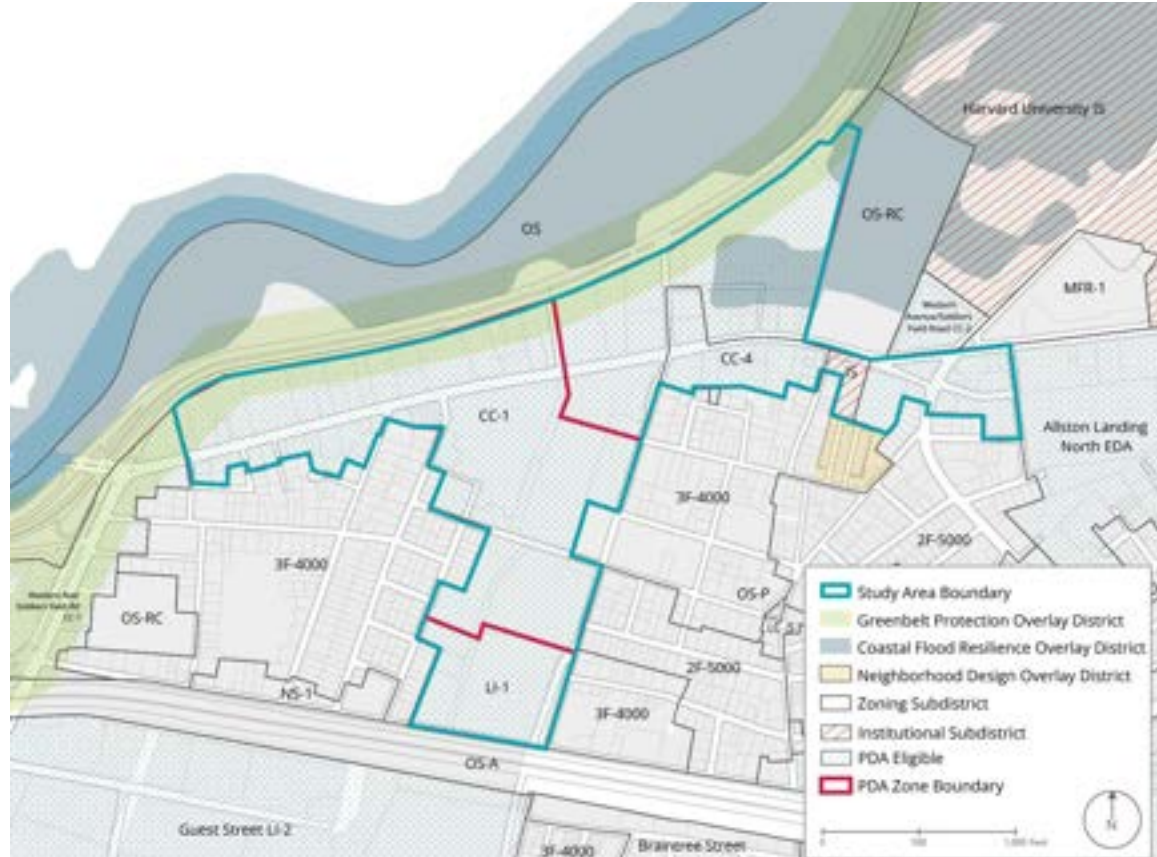
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Base Zoning Changes

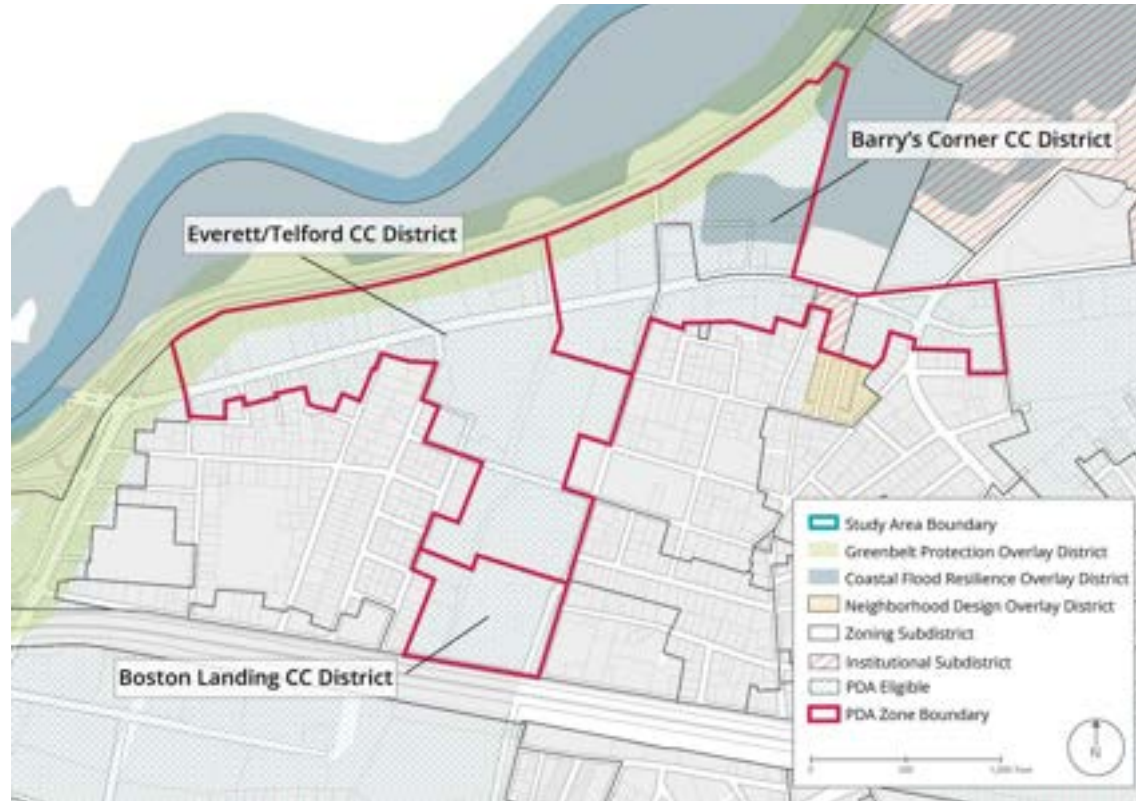
- Rezone Local Industrial to CC-1
- Add to areas that are PDA-eligible
- Create three PDA-eligible zones with density limits that match the plan



PDA Eligibility

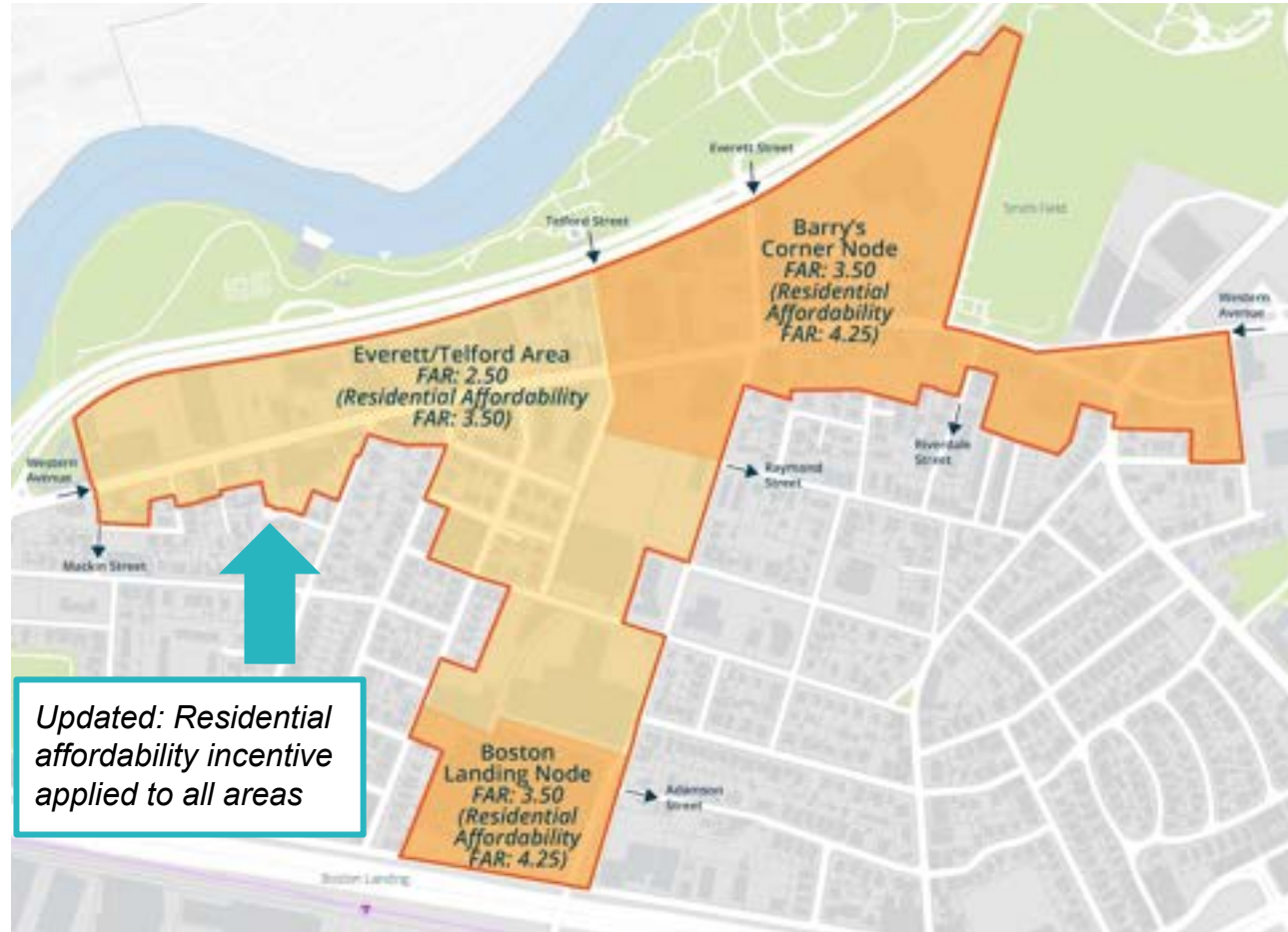
Break into 3 new districts with limits from plan:

- Barry's Corner CC District
- Boston Landing CC District
- Everett/Telford CC District



PDA Limits

- Includes FAR limits by use and affordability in plan



Why is the zoning changing in two stages?

- Criteria for PDA eligibility - including density limits - are essential and urgent
- Potential for neighborhood-wide or citywide approach (defining cultural uses, defining lab uses, limiting rooftop mechanicals)
- Avoid sub-parcel mini-spot zoning for height and other features



Why is the zoning changing in two stages?

- Addressing base community commercial zoning at later stage - want to carefully consider, study, and avoid any negative impacts on existing uses and small businesses
 - **One exception and update:** added multi-family dwelling as an allowed use to Article 51, Table B: Community Commercial Subdistricts Second Story & Above Residential Uses (currently a conditional use)



Included in plan to provide guidance for PDAs and Art 80, including variances

- Lot coverage maximums
- Setbacks and future right-of-way connections
- Height, including height guidance across a site/parcel
- More specific use guidance for cultural uses and balance of residential, including labs limited to nodes
- Parking maximums

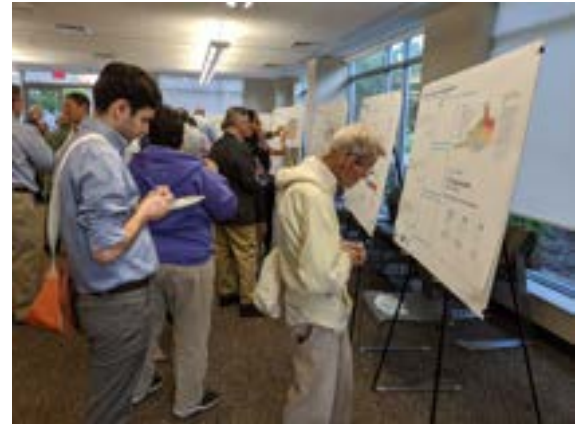


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Next Steps

Next steps

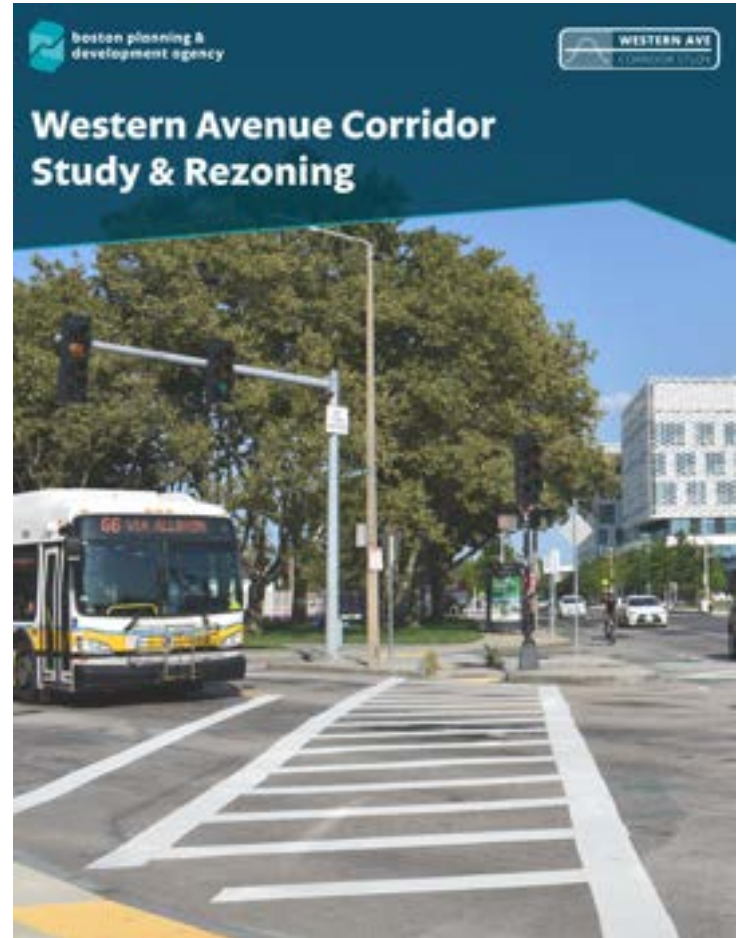
- BPDA Board consideration of Plan and Zoning - October 13
- Zoning Commission vote - November 9



Draft for Adoption Report and Zoning

Draft for adoption posted on
website at

<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/western-avenue-corridor-study-and-rezoning>



Thank you