

# Cleary Square

Squares + Streets Zoning Districts Deep Dive

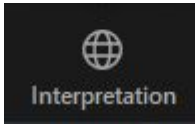


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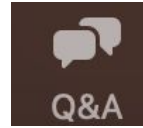
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# Zoom Tips

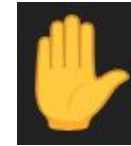
This meeting will be recorded and the recording will be posted on the Planning Department's webpage. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.



Use the interpretation function to access Spanish and Haitian Creole interpretation



Use the Q&A feature for written questions and comments (instead of the chat)



Use raise hand function (dial 9 followed by 6 if joining by phone) to ask questions after the presentation

# Meeting Goals

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- 1 What is Squares + Streets

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- 2 What is regulated through zoning and why

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- 3 What are the Squares + Streets zoning districts and how are they different from each other

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- 4 What is the process for mapping new zoning districts

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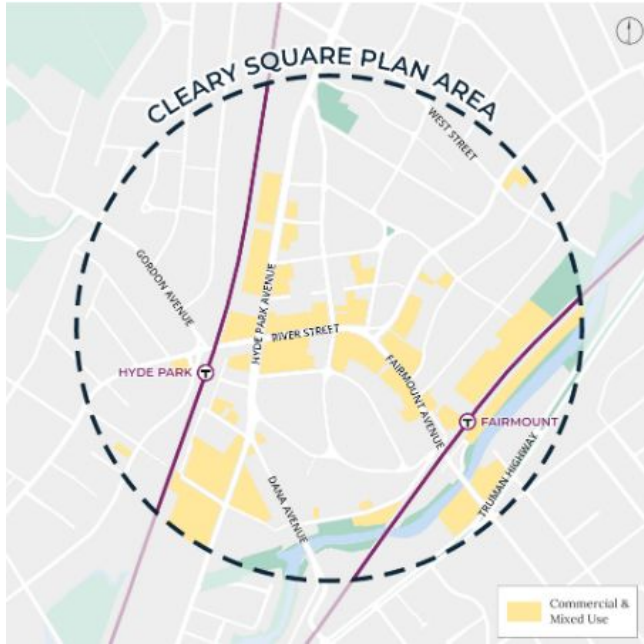
# WHAT IS SQUARES + STREETS?

## A PLANNING + ZONING INITIATIVE

Through **Small Area Plans**, this initiative will define and recommend **policy, programmatic, and zoning tools** to add, support, and improve housing, public space, small businesses, transportation, and arts and culture in transit-accessible areas.



# WHAT IS A “SMALL AREA” ?



- Neighborhood centers and along main streets.
- Small Area Plans focus on creating **recommendations** that can be implemented within **5-10 years**.  
← *This broader study area is where we do engagement.*
- Some recommendations will be more geographically directed, such as street improvements or zoning updates.

# THE GOALS

## These plans aim to:

- Update **zoning** for mixed-use development (i.e., housing, small businesses, services)
- Preserve affordable **housing** + **cultural spaces**.
- Coordinate **transportation** improvements.
- Allocate **investments** across City departments.
- Implement **design** interventions for **climate resilience**.



# Cleary Square Engagement



## What We Have Heard - Emerging Themes:

- **Transportation** - Concerns around pedestrian safety when crossing streets, walking through parking lots and navigating through the square. Frustrations around the closure of the River St. Bridge.
- **Public Realm** - Desire for a better connection with existing open spaces in the area.
- **Land Use** - There is a desire to develop housing that reflects the diverse population and range of incomes within the square, complemented by storefronts that cater to the community."
- **Arts & Culture** - There is a goal to create more spaces and opportunities for artists to thrive.
- **Small Business** - People want to preserve certain small businesses that are beacons in the neighborhood while wanting to see new businesses such as cafes and restaurants

Learn more about all our previous engagement on at the [Engagement Story Map](#)

# Rezoning process

**Zoning Amendment Community  
Engagement  
Oct 2023-Apr 2024**

*Including 6 meetings, 35  
hours of office hours, a two  
month comment period, and  
individual responses to every  
comment and letter*

**Small Area Plan  
Feb 2024 – Dec 2024**

April 2024

Zoning Amendment adopted  
which added S+S districts to  
Zoning Code (S0, S1, S2, S3, S4,  
and S5)

*December 2024 (goal)*  
Plan Including Land Use  
Framework + Map  
Amendment Adoption



# What is Zoning?



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# What is Zoning

**Zoning** is a set of laws that are used to guide development by dictating the **allowed use, shape, and density of a building or structure** in a given area. Some of what zoning regulates includes:



## Land Uses

*the types of activities allowed within a given area*

## Physical Building Dimensions

*how much space a building takes up, its height, and the open space around it*

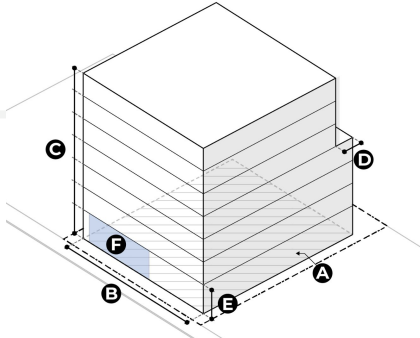
The **zoning district** a property is in dictates which zoning rules apply

# Article 80



- **Article 80** (a chapter of the Boston Zoning Code) provides specific requirements for the review of all large development projects in Boston (any project over 20,000 sq ft or 15 units)
- Requirements vary by size of project, but includes at least:
  - Review by Planning Department's Urban Design Division to ensure consistency with urban design principles
  - Community process

# Other Impacts on Development



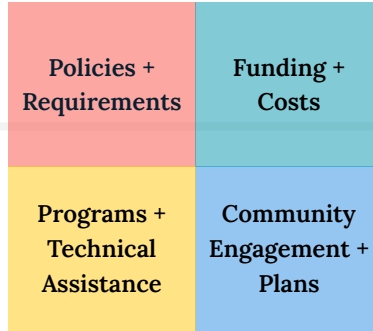
## ZONING ENVELOPE

Zoning creates a **maximum zoning envelope**

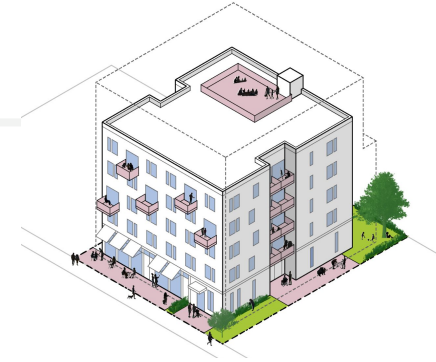


## OTHER IMPACTS

Things like building code requirements, financial factors, community processes for large projects, design review and more **help shape the project and its impact.**



## BUILT PROJECT



# Use Regulations



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# Use Regulations



- Each land **use** is designated as **allowed (A), conditional (C), or forbidden (F)** in each district of the City in a **use table**
  - **Conditional** means it requires a conditional use permit, based on set criteria, from the Zoning Board of Appeal
- On the S+S use table some uses are regulated differently depending on their **size**, or are allowed or conditional only on the **ground floors** of buildings.

	SO	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
<b>ACTIVE USES</b>						
Community Center	C	A	A	A	A	A
Grocery Store - Small	C	A	A	A	A	A
Grocery Store - Large	F	F	C	C	A	A
Entertainment/Events - Extra Small	C-G - F	A-G - F	A-G - F	A-G - C	A	A
Entertainment/Events - Small	F	C-G - F	A-G - F	A-G - C	A	A

# Use Regulations

	SO	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
<b>ACTIVE USES</b>						
Community Center	C	A	A	A	A	A
Grocery Store - Small	C	A	A	A	A	A
Grocery Store - Large	F	F	C	C	A	A
Entertainment/Events - Extra Small	C-G - F	A-G - F	A-G - F	A-G - C	A	A
Entertainment/Events - Small	F	C-G - F	A-G - F	A-G - C	A	A

Multiple sizes

Allowed on the ground floor, conditional above

Conditional on the ground floor, forbidden above

# Commercial Uses on Ground Floors



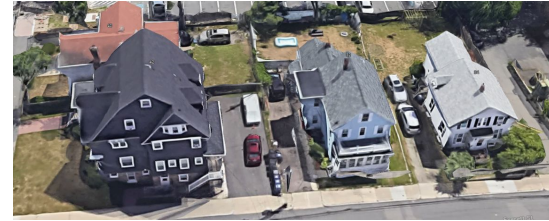
- “Commercial Uses” are distinct from Active Uses in the Zoning Code
  - “Commercial Uses” includes uses like banks and offices
  - “Active Uses” are limited to uses like retail stores and restaurants
  - Every Squares + Streets district (besides S0) has some commercial and active uses allowed. In S0, these are conditional.



Community Center  
Grocery Store  
Entertainment/Events  
Makerspace  
Museum  
Restaurant  
Retail Cannabis Establishment  
Retail Store  
Retail Store  
Indoor Recreation  
Service Establishment  
Social Club

- **Active Uses** are required to fill part of the ground floor in S3-S5
  - These districts are more likely to be able to support this requirement and not lead to vacant storefronts.
  - Every Squares + Streets district has some active uses allowed or conditional (even if they're not required)
- “Active Uses” distinct from “Commercial Uses” in the Zoning Code
  - “Commercial Uses” includes uses like banks and offices, while “Active Uses” are limited to uses retail stores and restaurants.

# Active Uses



Existing  
non-conformity

Compared to current zoning:

- Current zoning in Cleary prohibits ground floor residential in most of commercial districts (NS-1 and NS-2)
- In S+S, a limited number of high activity uses are required on the ground floor in some districts. This allows flexibility in some districts, and requires high quality activation in others.

## Residential

- Forbidden in current zoning
- Allowed in S0-S2
- Forbidden in S3-S5



## Commercial

- Allowed in current zoning
- Allowed in S0-S2
- Forbidden in S3-S5

# Active Uses

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Other ways to encourage non-residential uses through S+S zoning:

- The S2 district also requires a larger front yard for dwellings than other uses, which incentivises non-residential uses
- Non-residential ground floors could also be enforced through Article 80 design guidelines

# Article 8

	Squares + Streets (S)					
	SO	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
<b>OPEN SPACE USES</b>						
Cemetery	F	F	F	F	F	F
Private Open Space	C	C	C	C	C	C
Publicly Accessible Open Space	A	A	A	A	A	A
<b>CIVIC USES</b>						
Child Care/Adult Day Health Center	A	A	A	A	A	A
Municipal Use	A	A	A	A	A	A
Place of Worship	A	A	A	A	A	A
School, K through 12	A	A	A	A	A	A
<b>RESIDENTIAL USES</b>						
Artists' Live-Work	A*	A	A*	A*	A*	A*

You can find the full Use Table and the definitions of the uses in [Article 8 of the Zoning Code](#)

# Dimensional Regulations



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# Dimensional Regulations

*Illustrated Building Envelope Standards*

	A	Building Floor Plate (total floor area of a single story within a building)
	B	Building Width
	C	Building Height
	D	Highest Story Rear Stepback
	E	Ground Floor Ceiling Height
	F	Ground Floor Active Use Requirement
		Outdoor amenity space

*Illustrated Lot Standards*

	A	Building Lot Coverage (% of lot area that is covered by the building)
	B	Permeable Area of Lot
	C	Front Yard
	D	Side Yard
	E	Rear Yard

# Building Standards

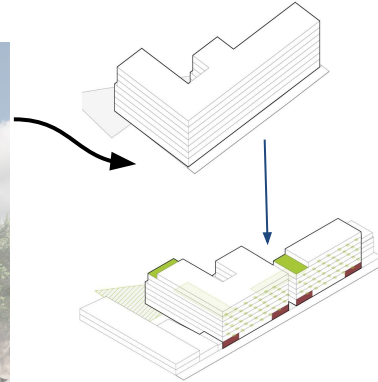
## Height (max ft/stories)



## Floor Plate (max sq ft)



## Width (max ft)



## Blank Wall Facade (max ft)



## Rear Stepback (min ft)





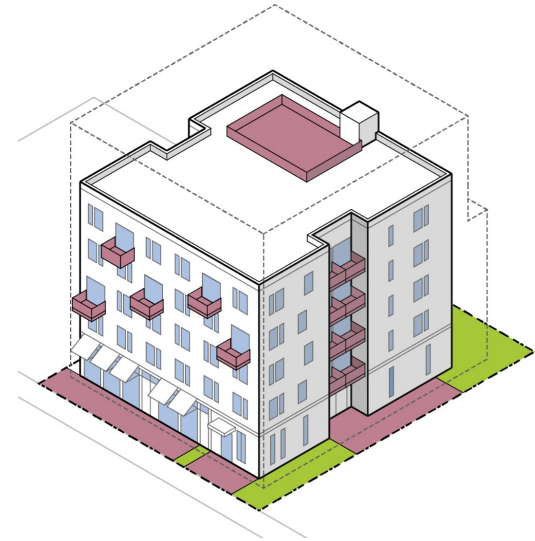
# Outdoor amenity space

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Some of the districts require a minimum amount of outdoor amenity space. This means outdoor space for gathering or recreation for a single dwelling unit, building residents, or the general public.

This can include spaces like:

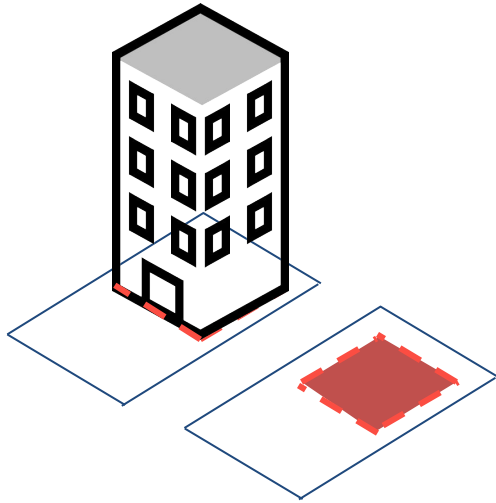
- Private balconies
- Rooftops
- Terraces
- Interior courtyards
- Porches
- Plazas
- Outdoor dining spaces



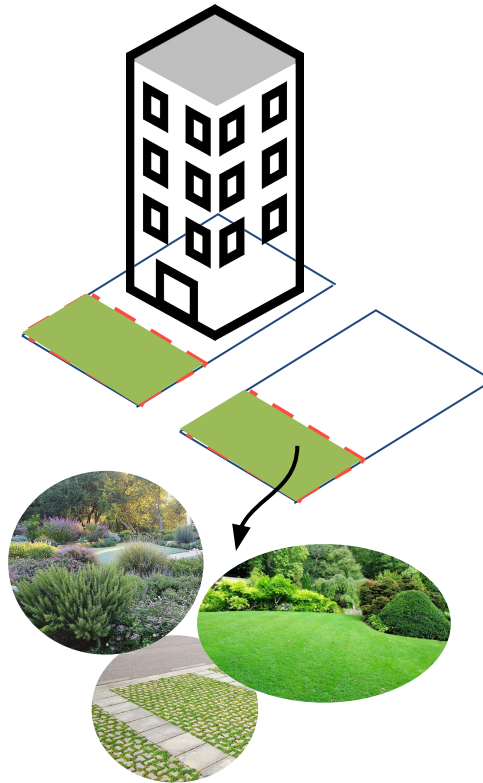
# Lot Standards



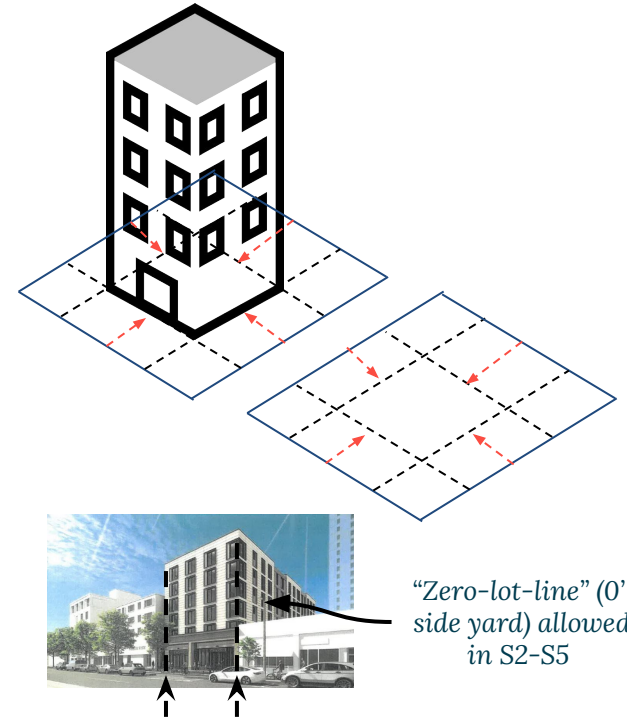
## Lot Coverage (max %)



## Permeable Area (min %)



## Yards (min ft)

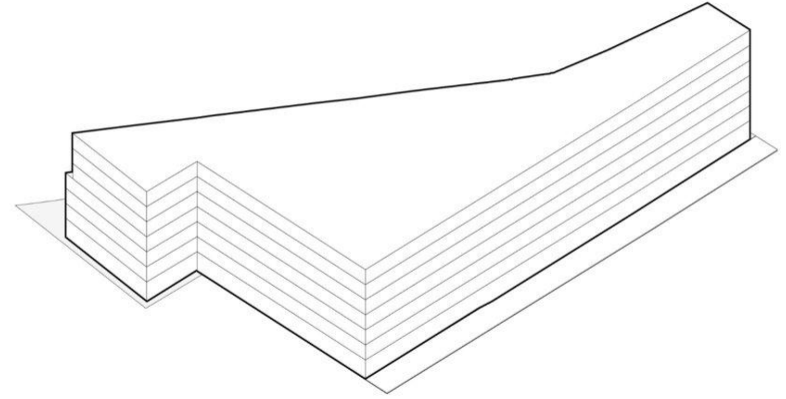


“Zero-lot-line” (0' side yard) allowed in S2-S5

# Example project

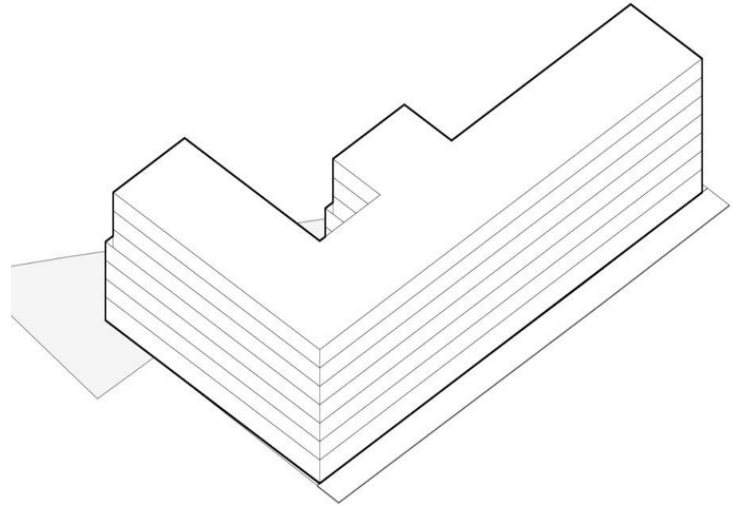
How does this play out on a real parcel representing the largest scale of development on the largest type of parcel in Squares + Streets districts?

Starting from the **maximum lot coverage** envelope for the most intense S4 district, on a large parcel...



# Example project

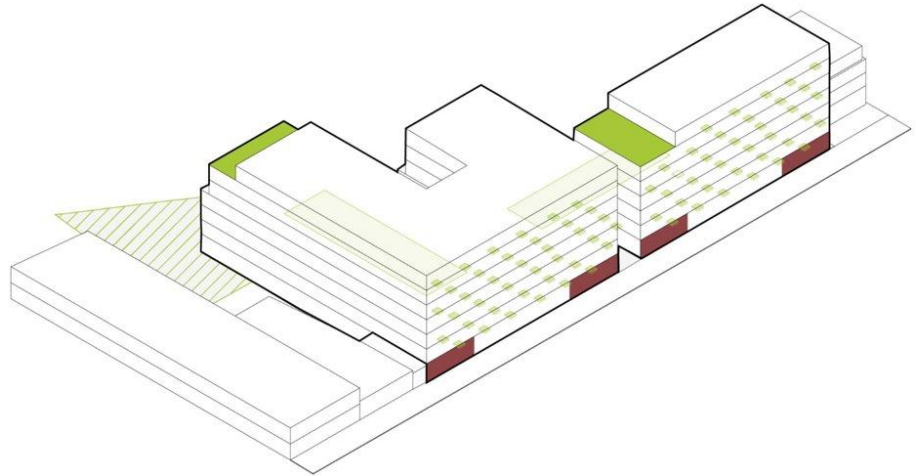
...add in **yards** requirements, **rear setbacks** requirements, and alignment with the **building code**



# Example project

The zoning sets a maximum **building floor plate** and **building width** that means there has to be two smaller buildings, rather than one giant building.

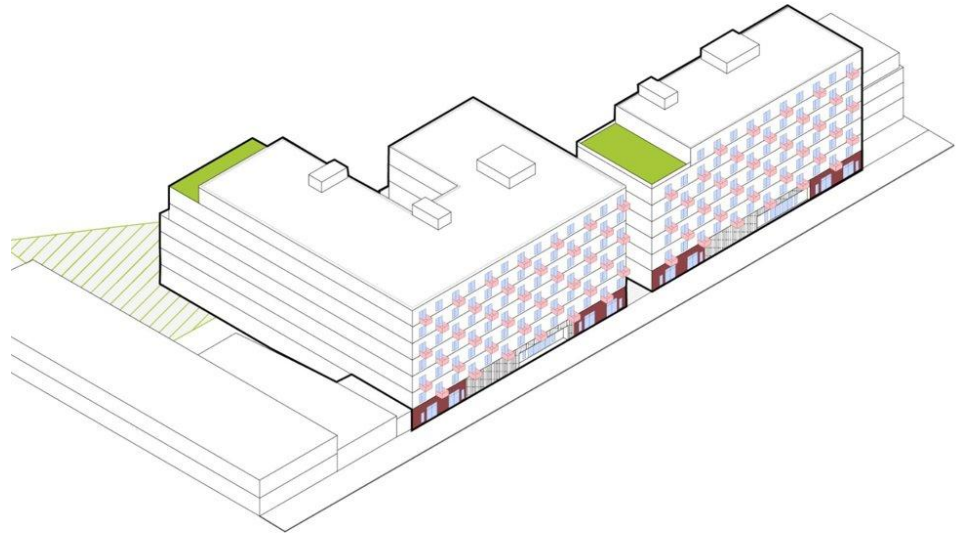
**Outdoor amenity space** requirements create more stepbacks and sculpt the massing.



# Example project

The **active use requirement** and **blank wall facade restriction** add texture to the building and shape the ground level experience.

Art 80 **design review** and the **community process** further shape the project and building design within the zoning envelope.



# Article 26

LOT STANDARDS	S0	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
Building Lot Coverage (max) for Lots smaller than 11,000 sf	60%	70%	70%	90%	90%	80%
Building Lot Coverage (max) for Lots greater than or equal to 11,000 sf	60%	70%	70%	70%	70%	70%
Permeable Area of Lot (min) for Lots smaller than 11,000 sf	20%	15%	15%	-	-	-
Permeable Area of Lot (min) for Lots greater than or equal to 11,000 sf	20%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
Front Yard (min)	8'	6'	2 n	2' 1	2'	2'

You can find the full Dimensional Regulations Table are in [Article 26 of the Zoning Code](#)

# Squares + Streets Districts



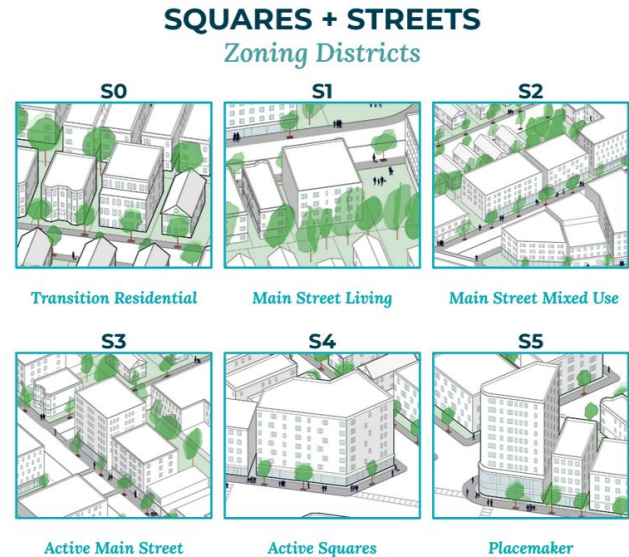
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# Squares + Streets Zoning Districts

- A **toolbox of six varying zoning options** created to promote mixed-use development of housing, commercial and cultural development in neighborhood squares across Boston
- **Establish new dimensional regulations** for buildings that promote housing growth, climate resiliency, and better consideration of relationship of buildings to their surrounding area
- **Based on analysis of:**
  - Existing zoning across the City
  - Zoning Board of Appeal cases
  - Article 80-scale development projects
  - Modern building, energy, and accessibility codes
  - Feasibility of using the zoning determined by ISD, local small-scale and affordable housing developers, and designers



# Squares + Streets Zoning Districts

## Shared Characteristics

- Give smaller projects the same parking flexibility as large projects by removing parking minimums and modernize loading requirements
- Allow uses including:
  - Most residential uses
  - Community uses such as schools, places of worship, child care, and publicly accessible open space
  - Accessory parking, shared parking, accessory EV charging
- Most industrial and vehicular uses are forbidden
- Some commercial/active uses conditional or allowed, regulated depending on their size and impacts

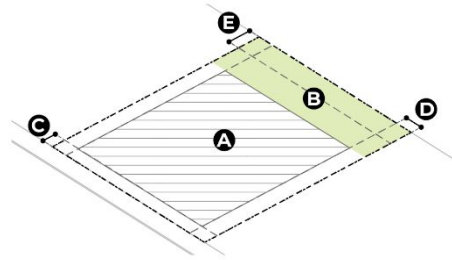
# Squares + Streets Zoning Districts

## Different Characteristics



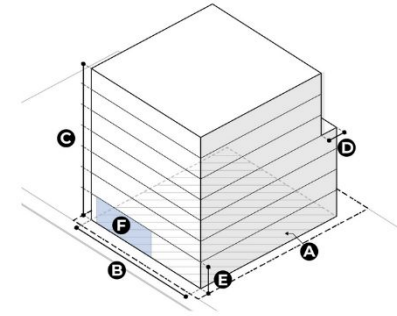
### Uses

- Allowed, conditional, or forbidden uses
- Size and location (ground floor vs. upper floor) of uses
- **Whether active uses are required on the ground floor**



### Lot Standards

- Minimums/maximums for building lot coverage, permeable area of lot, and size of front, rear, and side yards
- **Whether side yards are required**



### Building Form

- Minimums/maximums for building floor plate, building width, building height, and outdoor amenity space
- **Whether outdoor amenity space is required**

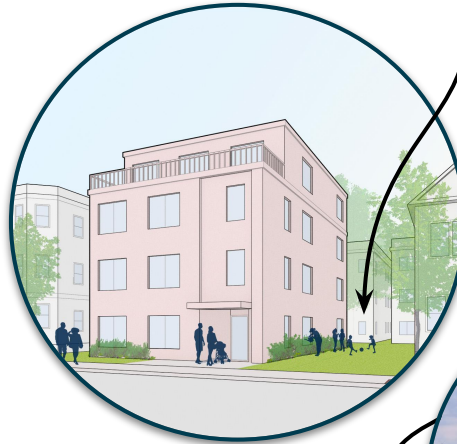
# S-0 District: Transition Residential

The S0 Transition Residential district is a primarily residential mixed use district that provides a transition from mixed-use and high-activity Squares + Streets to lower-activity residential areas.

Lot Standards	
Building Lot Coverage	60%
Front Yard	8' minimum
Rear Yard	15' minimum
Side Yard	14' cumulative (3' minimum)
Permeable Area of Lot	20%

Building Form Standards	
Floorplate	4,000 square feet max
Height	50' / 4 stories maximum

**Larger rear yard**  
(leaving room for trees and open space)



**Larger front yard space**



**4 stories with 14 unit maximum**

# S-0 District: Transition Residential

## Allowed uses:

- Mostly residential uses, limited to 14-units / sub-Article 80 scale.

## Conditionally allowed uses:

- A few active uses (community centers, small grocery stores, social clubs), **some restricted to the ground floor** (small restaurant, extra small entertainment/events, small retail, small service establishments)
- Small Offices allowed only on ground floor

*Small grocery stores and community centers are **conditionally allowed***



# S0 Areas in Mattapan



Increase frontage required when transitioning to residential areas. Require significant landscaping year round.



Consistent block of triple-deckers

1410-1416 Blue Hill Ave



Multifamily residential buildings with generous yards

559-601 River St



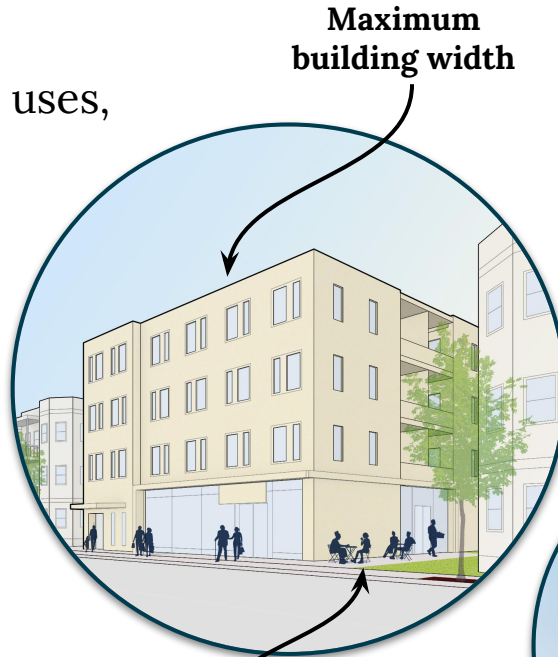
Residential adaptive reuse at former St. Angela's School

120 Babson St

# S-1 District: Main Street Living

Mixed-use district where buildings generally have principally residential uses, small-scale side and front yards, and minimum Permeable Area of Lot.

Lot Standards	
Building Lot Coverage	70%
Front Yard	6' minimum
Rear Yard	10'-15' minimum
Side Yard	10'-14' cumulative (3' minimum)
Permeable Area of Lot	15%
Building Form Standards	
Floorplate	8,000 square feet max
Building Width	120' maximum
Height	50' / 4 stories maximum



Larger, flexible side yard requirement

Small neighborhood retail on ground floor



Small front yard

# S-1 District: Main Street Living

## Allowed uses:

- **Most residential uses**
- **Small active uses** (grocery stores and service establishments), **some restricted to the ground floor** (small retail stores and restaurants, extra small entertainment/events)
- **A few other active uses** (community centers, social clubs, museums, makerspaces)
- **A few commercial and health care uses** (small and medium offices and clinics [on the ground floor] and art studios)



*Some small offices on the ground floor*

*Allowed active uses like small grocery stores, retail, and restaurants*





# S-1 District: Main Street Living

## Conditionally allowed uses:

- A few additional active uses on the ground floor (including small entertainment/events, large restaurants, retail cannabis establishments, and medium retail stores)
- Banks [on the ground floor], standalone ATMs, funeral homes, and major transportation facilities



*Large restaurants and medium scale retail*



*Ground floor banks and standalone ATMs*



# S1 Areas in Mattapan



Used today as an existing goods and services "node"

637-643 Cummins Hwy



Smaller-scale residential near commercial uses

1216-1220 Blue Hill Ave



Desire for mix of residential and small retail

577 River St



Medium-density residential existing

422 River St



# S-2 District: Main Street Mixed Use

Small- to medium-scale mixed-use buildings that can fill the width of the lot to help create a continuous and active main street.

Lot Standards	
Building Lot Coverage	70%
Front Yard	2' minimum (4' for residential)
Rear Yard	10'-15' minimum
Side Yard	5'-15' minimum (0' party wall)
Permeable Area of Lot	15%

Building Form Standards	
Floorplate	15,000 square feet max
Building Width	150' maximum
Height	65' / 5 stories maximum
Outdoor Amenity Space	20%



**Permeable Area requirement and lower lot coverage ensure space for planting and buffering**

**Limit on the amount of "blank wall"**



Mix of **active and residential uses** on ground floor

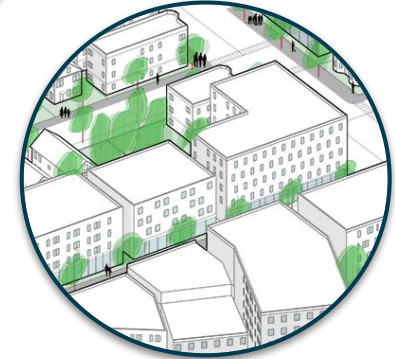


# S-2 District: Main Street Mixed Use

## Allowed uses:

- **Most residential uses**
- **Small active uses**
- **A few other active uses** (including medium retail stores and small entertainment/events [on the ground floor] and larger restaurants)
- **A few commercial uses**

*Small active  
uses*



# S-2 District: Main Street Mixed Use

## Conditionally allowed uses:

- **Most large active uses** (including service establishments, grocery stores, retail stores)
- **A few commercial uses** (including small hotels)

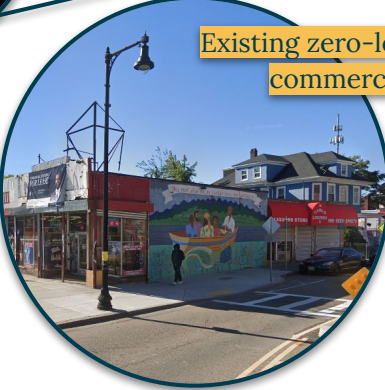


# S2 Areas in Mattapan



Active commercial uses along Blue Hill Ave

1286-1310 Blue Hill Ave



Existing zero-lot-line active commercial uses

7 Edgewater Dr



Residential development near commuter rail and active commercial spaces



872-884 Morton St

5-story development with active ground floor recently approved



1525 Blue Hill Ave

# S-3 District: Active Main Street

Mixed-use district of medium-scale buildings that require Active Uses on the ground floor.

Lot Standards	
Building Lot Coverage	90% (70% on large parcels)
Front Yard	2' minimum
Rear Yard	5'-15' minimum
Side Yard	5'-15' minimum (0' party wall)
Permeable Area of Lot	0% (15% on large parcels)
Building Form Standards	
Floorplate	20,000 square feet max
Building Width	150' maximum
Height	85' / 7 stories maximum
Outdoor Amenity Space	20%

Required outdoor amenity space



Active uses required on ground floor and higher-intensity commercial uses allowed



Tighter setbacks and lot standards for main street continuity

# S-3 District: Active Main Street

## Uses:

- **Most residential uses** are allowed
- **Most commercial uses** are allowed or conditionally allowed.
- **Most active uses** are allowed, although **some are only allowed on the ground floor.**



*Medium entertainment/events are allowed on the ground floor*



*Medium offices are allowed*



*Clinics are allowed*



# S3 Areas in Mattapan



Precedent of active ground floor uses with residential above

1170 Blue Hill Ave



Zero-lot-line "mainstreet" condition

1140-1156 Blue Hill Ave



Some underutilized larger lots fronting Cummins Hwy

885 Cummins Hwy



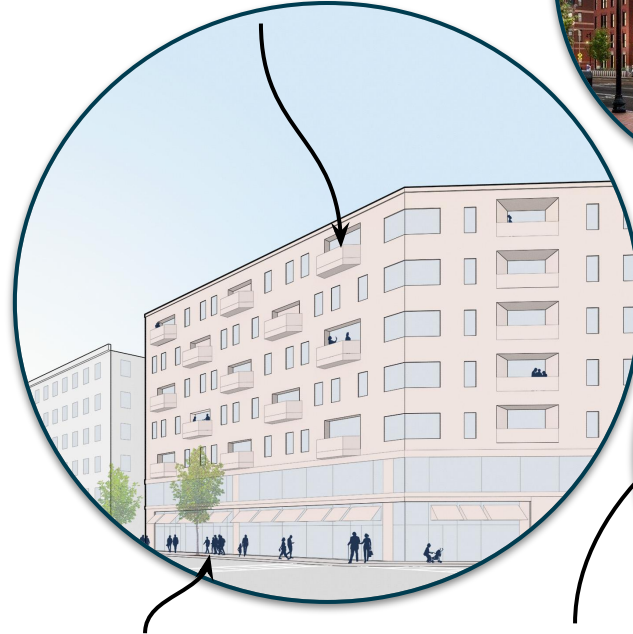
# S-4 District: Active Squares

Medium to large-scale mixed-use buildings with the widest range of allowed uses compared to the S-0 to S-3 districts.

Lot Standards	
Building Lot Coverage	90% (70% on large parcels)
Front Yard	2' minimum
Rear Yard	5'-20' minimum
Side Yard	5'-15' minimum (0' party wall)
Permeable Area of Lot	0% (15% on large parcels)

Building Form Standards	
Floorplate	25,000 square feet max
Building Width	200' maximum
Height	85' / 7 stories maximum
Outdoor Amenity Space	25%

Increased outdoor amenity space requirement



Active uses required on the ground floor



More active uses allowed above ground floor

# S-4 District: Active Squares

## Uses:

- **Most residential uses** are allowed.
- **Most commercial uses** are allowed or conditionally allowed.
- **Most active uses** are allowed with **on the ground floor and upper stories.**



*Large entertainment/events are conditionally allowed*



*Extra Large retail stores are conditionally allowed*



# S4 Areas in Mattapan



Affirming existing health uses like the Mattapan Community Health Center

1575 Blue Hill Ave

Can you build residential on top of existing commercial?



Additional floors can be housing or community/cultural space

500-510 River St



Recent 7-story development w/ ground floor retail

466 River St

# S-5 District: Placemaker

Taller mixed-use buildings that support efficient sustainable building methods such as mass timber alongside greater housing and job growth - limited to highly active areas that can support higher density.

Lot Standards	
Building Lot Coverage	80% (70% on large parcels)
Front Yard	2' minimum
Rear Yard	5'-20' minimum
Side Yard	5'-15' minimum (0' party wall)
Permeable Area of Lot	0% (15% on large parcels)

Building Form Standards	
Floorplate	25,000 square feet max
Building Width	250' maximum
Height	145' maximum
Outdoor Amenity Space	30%



# Rezoning Process



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# PROCESS



## Planning process

Small Area Plan including analysis and community feedback.

## Land use framework

The planning process will result in a plan, which will include a land use framework.

## Zoning map

The land use framework will inform the proposed zoning map amendment, which will be released for comment soon after the plan.

# Land use framework example

Plan: Mattapan

## Recommendations at a Glance

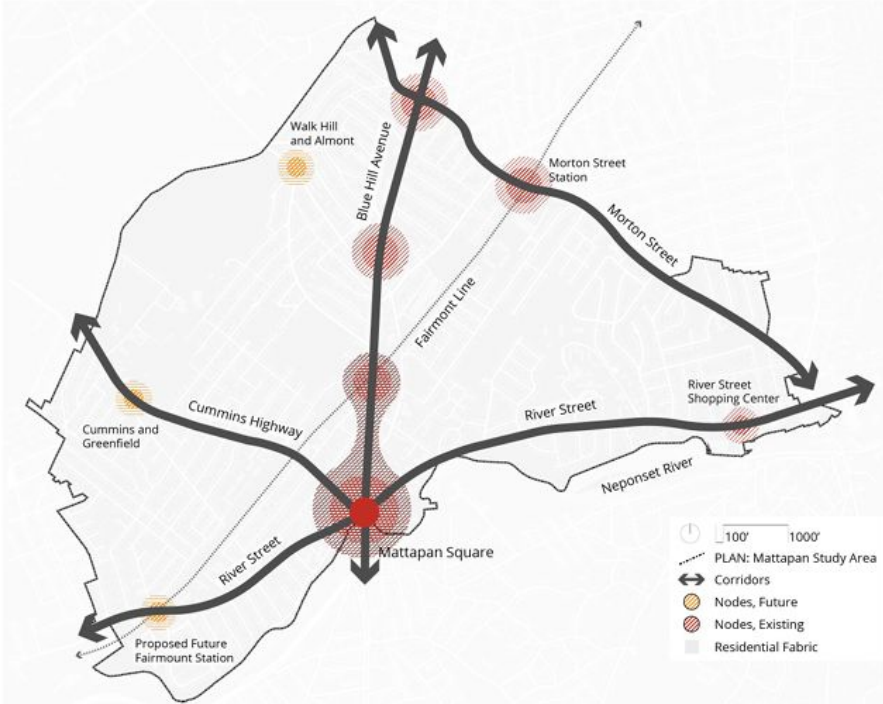
**Equity & Environmental Justice**  
Strengthen public health and combat urban heat island effect by planting more street trees and implementing green infrastructure and lot coverage requirements

**Housing**  
Increase development of housing supply within nodes, particularly of affordable housing. Support existing households and mitigate displacement risks.

**Mobility**  
Expand access to travel options and redesign high-crash intersections and streets to encourage sustainable, pedestrian-friendly access to nodes.

**Jobs & Businesses**  
Foster new, diverse retail within nodes. Connect existing businesses and future entrepreneurs with City programs that support their success.

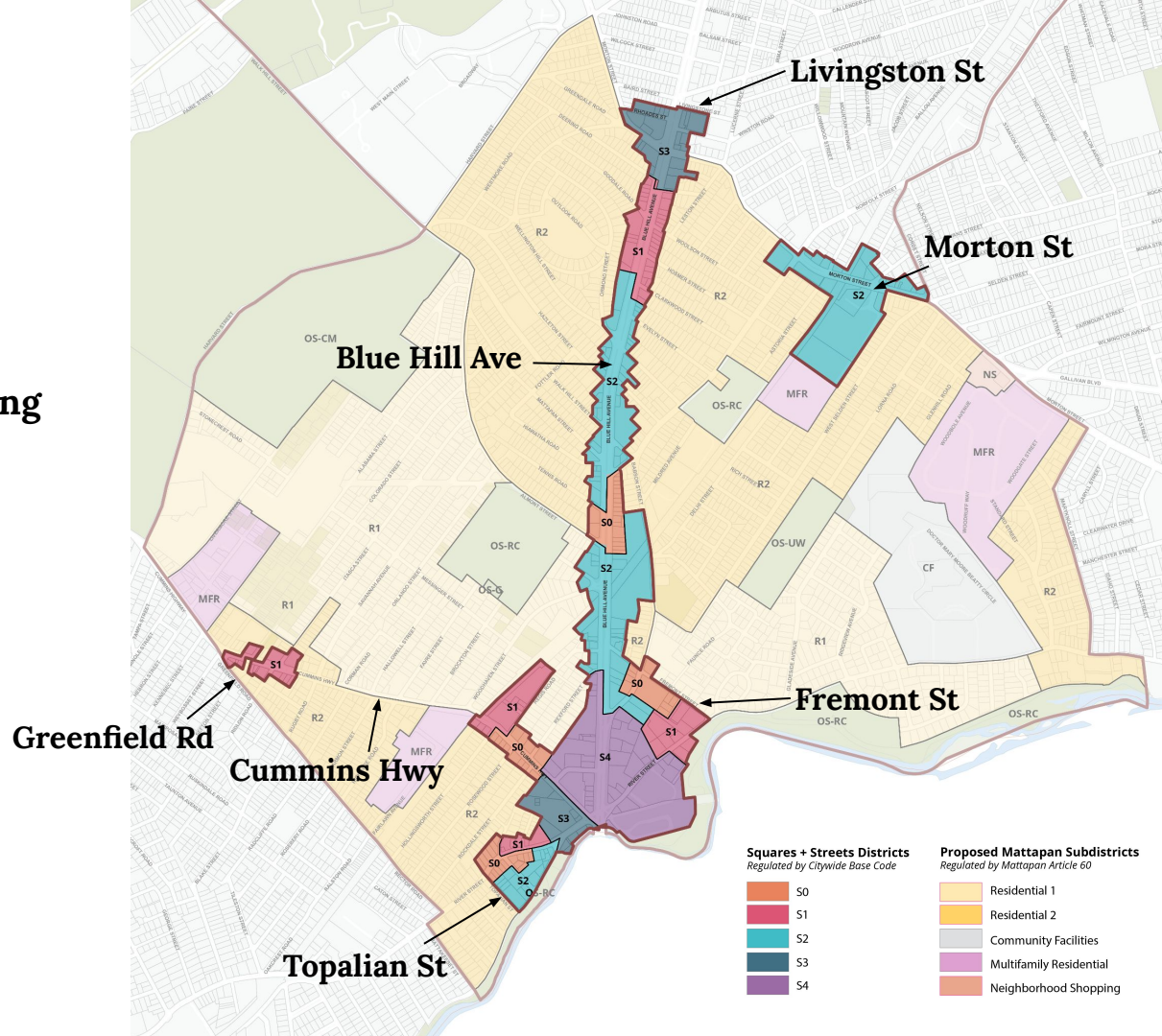
**People & Places**  
Increase investment and maintenance in Mattapan's public realm, ensuring that nodes are clean and welcoming and reflect the vibrant cultural histories of residents.





# Squares + Streets Zoning in Mattapan

An entire Square or Street does not need to be mapped with the same Squares + Streets District; they are tailored to fit better into the existing and planned context.



# Stay Involved

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## Webpage

[www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/cleary-square](https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/cleary-square)

## Newsletter

<https://www.bostonplans.org/about-us/get-involved>

## Small Business Focus Group

August 8th, 8am, Hyde Park Municipal Building

## Cleary Square Land Use Framework Visioning Survey

We created this survey to gather additional feedback on the community's vision for the built form and uses in Cleary Square, inform the recommended zoning map amendment.



# THANK YOU

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We appreciate your time and hope you enjoyed this presentation.

## HAVE QUESTIONS?

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Zoning Lead      [maya.kattler-gold@boston.gov](mailto:maya.kattler-gold@boston.gov)

OR VISIT:

[www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/cleary-square](http://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/cleary-square)

