

PLAN: Charlestown

# Planning Places: Original Peninsula and Lost Village

*June 29, 2021*

# Welcome

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*Jason Ruggiero, Community Engagement Manager*



# Meeting Recording

At the request of community members, this event will be recorded posted on the PLAN: Charlestown project webpage at <http://bostonplans.org/PlanCharlestown> for those who are unable to attend the Zoom event live.

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.

If your camera and microphone are off, you can still participate through the text chat feature at the end of the presentation.

# Zoom Tips

Welcome! Here are some tips on using Zoom for first-time users.  
Your controls are at the bottom of the screen



Use the chat to type a comment or ask a question at any time –  
Members of the PLAN: Charlestown team will enable the chat at the end.



To raise your hand, click on “Participants” at the bottom of your  
screen, and then choose the “Raise Hand” option in the participant box



Mute/unmute – Participants will be muted during the presentation –  
the host will unmute you during discussion if you raise your hand and  
it is your turn to talk



Turns your video on/off



# Zoom Etiquette

- Please remain muted until called on. If you'd like to speak during this time please use the "Raise Hand" function in Zoom.
- The chat function will be enabled during the discussion agenda item. (In keeping with convention from in-person meetings.)
- Please be respectful of each other's time.
- We ask that participants limit their questions so that others may participate in the discussion. If you have more questions, please wait until all others attending have an opportunity to ask questions.
- If we are unable to get to your question at this meeting please put them in the Chat at the end or email **Jason.Ruggiero@boston.gov**

# 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](https://boston.gov/coronavirus)**

Content available in 16 languages.

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". The text states: "The state has updated guidance on the Reopening Massachusetts website. We also continue to update City-specific guidance for Boston on our reopening website." Below this, there are navigation links for "TOPICS", "COVID-19 UPDATES", and "LATEST PRESS CONFERENCE". The date "BOSTON (AS OF FRIDAY, JULY 10)" is displayed. A prominent statistic reads "13,673 CASES | 9,683 RECOVERED". On the right side, there is a "PUBLISHED BY: PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION" logo and a "MULTILINGUAL CONTENT" section listing 16 languages: العربية (Arabic), Kriolu (Cabo Verdean creole), 中文 (Chinese), Français (French), Kreyòl ayisyen (Haitian Creole), Português (Portuguese), and Русский (Russian).

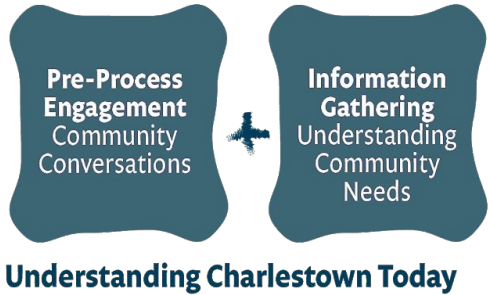
# Agenda

- Welcome (5 min)
- Travel to Charlestown 2040: Planning Places Framework (15 min)
- Parsing the Built Environment (30 mins)
- Charlestown's Preservation Tools (45 min)
- Next Steps and Discussion (5 min)

If you have a follow up item, please reach out to Jason Ruggiero (**Jason.Ruggiero@boston.gov**) and we will be in touch as soon as possible.



# Planning Process



**Planning for Charlestown Tomorrow**

Refine

Refine



**Implementing the Final Plan**



★ We are here

# Planning Places

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*Meghan Richard, Urban Designer II*  
*Anna Callahan, Planner II*

# Today in Charlestown...





# The built environment is always evolving...





# Some areas may change a lot.

**Sparsely used land**, such as land occupied by large parking lots and single story industrial buildings, **is more likely to be redeveloped and can provide public benefits.**





# Some areas may change a little.

Preservation and planning tools help to shape the **incremental change** that may occur.





# Why Plan?

Planning produces a framework to **predictably shape the future of our neighborhoods** and identifies opportunities to preserve, enhance, and grow.

Planning allows us to **think holistically about change in desirable areas**, rather than reacting to individual sites and proposals. We will **map out a path to implement our vision** for the community.

## We plan together.

We are the conveners and facilitators, but the planning process requires **meaningful and sustained participation** of all community stakeholders.

# Planning Places

The *Planning Places* workshop series focuses on **managing and shaping change**.

We will answer questions like:

- “What do we want these areas to look like?”
- “How do we preserve the elements of our community that we really love?”

# Tonight, we will...

- Identify and prioritize what elements best **define Charlestown's sense of place**.
- **Understand the planning and preservation tools** that helped create Charlestown's current built environment.
- Start the conversation on which tools are most appropriate to **preserve and manage holistic change** in Charlestown's residential areas.



# Parsing the Built Environment

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*Anna Callahan, Planner II*

# Parsing the built environment

- When you walk down the street, how do you know you're in Charlestown?
- What elements create a sense of place? For the following images:
  - You will know the photo was taken in Charlestown. How and why?
  - What do typical Charlestown streets look like? How would you describe that?
- Try pointing out objects in the following images that make Charlestown feel like Charlestown.







Shutters

Street Lamps

Dimension:  
Building face  
to building  
face

Dimension:  
Building  
height  
relative to  
street width

Materials:  
Masonry  
base under  
wood

View  
Corridors

Oriels &  
Bays

Lintels

Pedestrian  
-oriented  
sidewalks

Slow  
streets:  
1 travel  
lane and 1  
parking  
lane







Dental cornice

Lintels & shutters

Trees on private property

No setbacks

Materials: Granite base under brick



Oriels & Bays

Trees in Public Right-of-Way

Iron fencing

Setback









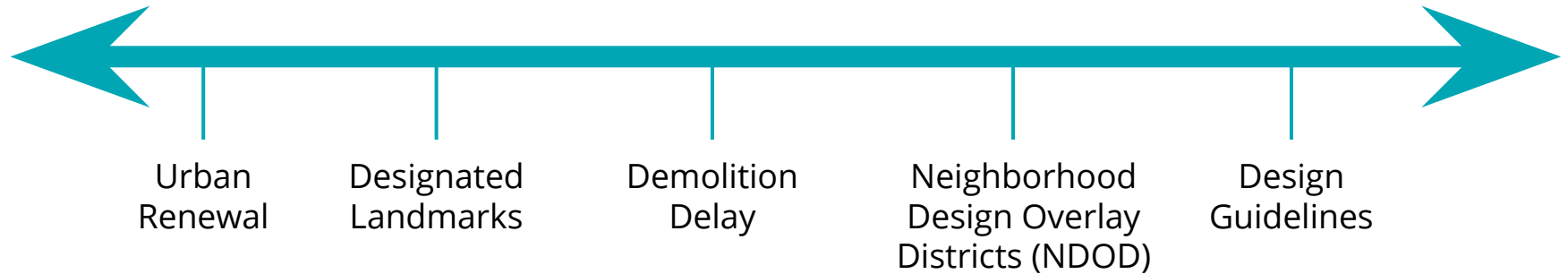


# Charlestown's Preservation Tools

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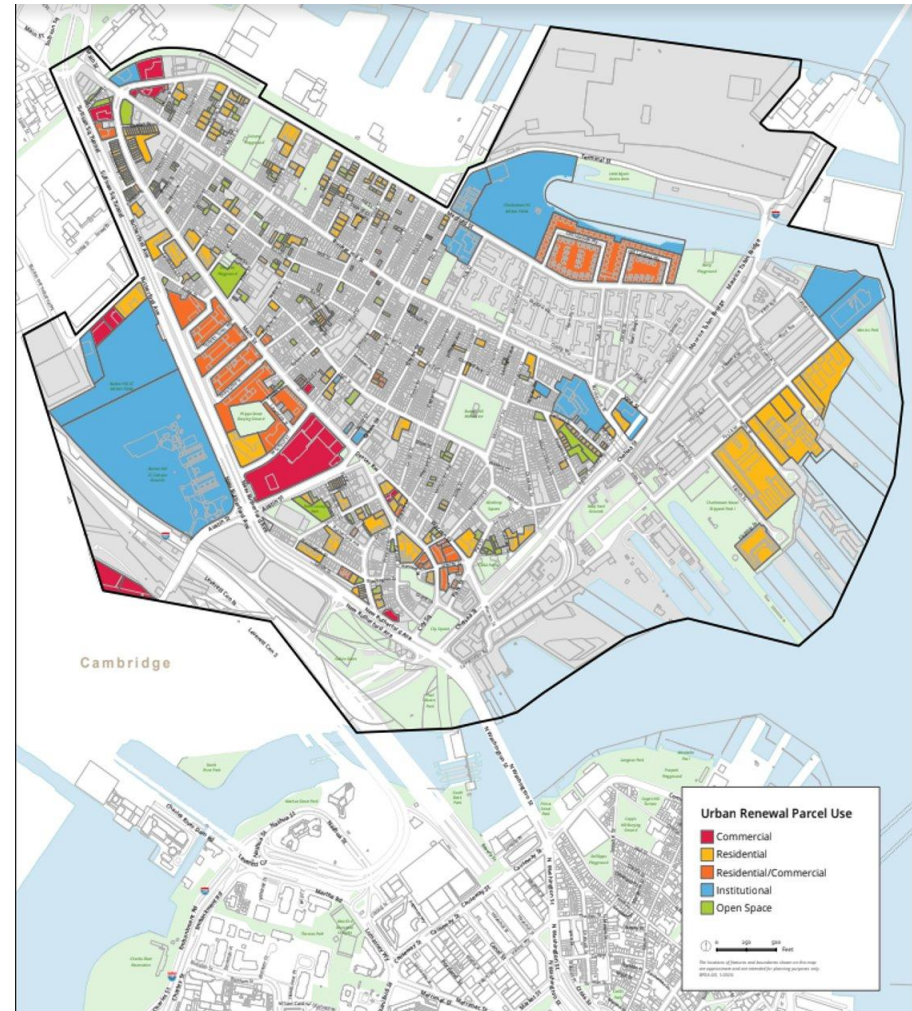
*Meghan Richard, Urban Designer II*  
*Chris Breen, Urban Renewal Manager*

# There are many local preservation tools at work in Charlestown....



# Urban Renewal

- Post-WWII federal investment through American Housing Act of 1949 to redevelop declining cities.
- **Shifted emphasis to create vibrant neighborhoods that blend historic and modern.**
- In Charlestown, UR led to restoration of housing stock, creation of new affordable/elderly housing and public infrastructure improvements.





# Design Guidelines (Urban Renewal)

*This report was prepared for the Boston Redevelopment Authority and was financially aided through a Federal grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Comprehensive Planning Assistance Program authorized by the Housing Act of 1949, as amended.*



ROBERT L. FARRELL, *Chairman*

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PAUL J. BURNS, *Assistant Treasurer*

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ROBERT T. KENNEY, *Director*



# Urban Renewal



**1972**  
Main Street at Pleasant  
Street

# Urban Renewal



**2019**  
Main Street at Pleasant  
Street



# Designated Landmarks

- Overseen by the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC)
- Individual Landmarks, Landmark Districts, Architectural Conservation District
- Individual landmarks and landmarks districts have a higher threshold of significance (at the state and federal level) than architectural conservation districts. **Typically, landmark designation is used in rare instances not broad swaths of a neighborhood.**
- Each landmark and districts have their own criteria/standards which become **guidelines to evaluate proposed exterior work** that occurs at the site(s).



# Designated Landmarks

- **8 designated and pending landmarks in Charlestown:**
  - Charlestown Savings Bank
  - Austin Block
  - The Ropewalk
  - Town Hill Landmark District\*
  - Great House Archaeological Site
  - Edward Everett House
  - Baldwin Street Architectural Cons District\*

*\*denotes pending status (under study)*

# Designated Landmarks



**1972**  
Savings Bank Building,  
Thompson Square

# Designated Landmarks



**2019**  
Savings Bank Building,  
Thompson Square



# Designated Landmarks



**Future**  
Savings Bank Building,  
Thompson Square

Overall perspective of One and Two Thompson Square

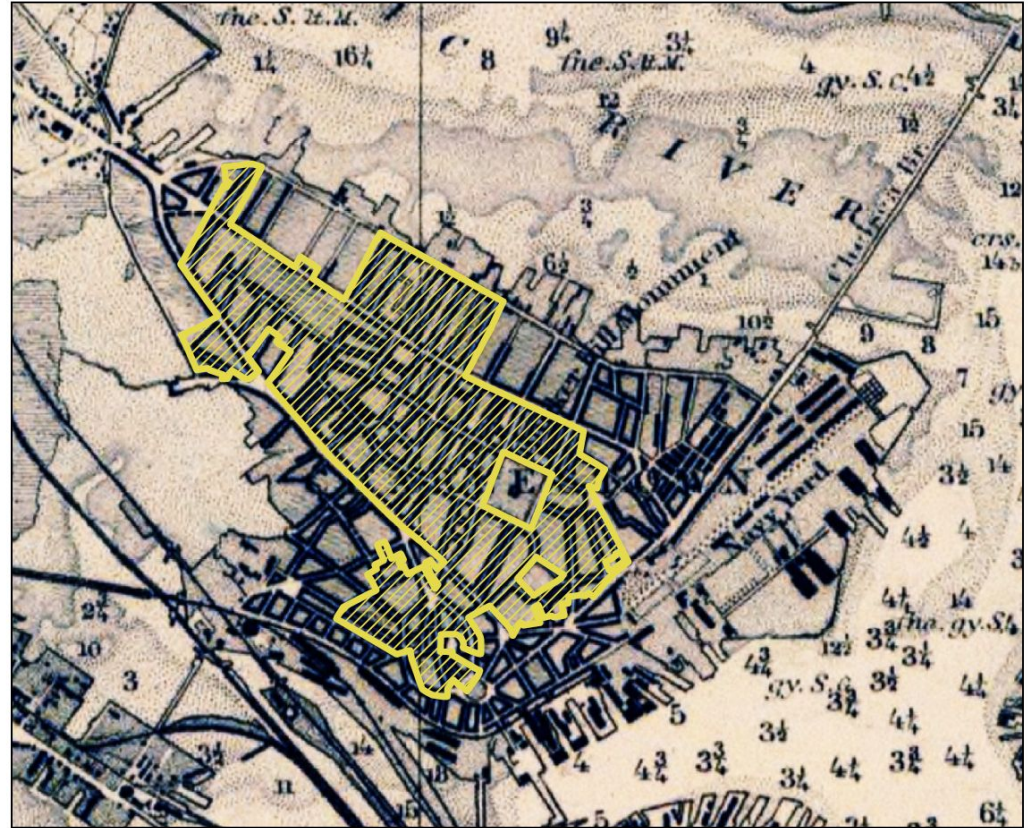
# Demolition Delay (Article 85)

- Applies to all buildings:
  - (1) In the Downtown or Harborpark areas
  - (2) **Located in a Neighborhood Design Overlay District (NDOD), OR**
  - (3) **At least 50 years of age**
- **Establishes a waiting period to consider alternatives to demolition** if a building is found to have historical, architectural, cultural, or urban design value to the City.
  - During this delay period, a petition may be submitted to the Boston Landmarks Commission (BLC) to study designation if the significance threshold is met.
- Tries to **minimize the number and extent of building demolition** where no immediate re-use of the site is planned and provides opportunity for public comment.

# Neighborhood Design Overlay District (NDOD)

Established to **protect the existing scale**, quality of the **pedestrian environment**, character of the **residential neighborhoods**, and concentrations of **historic buildings**.

Requires design review for significant projects that are allowed by zoning (as-of-right).



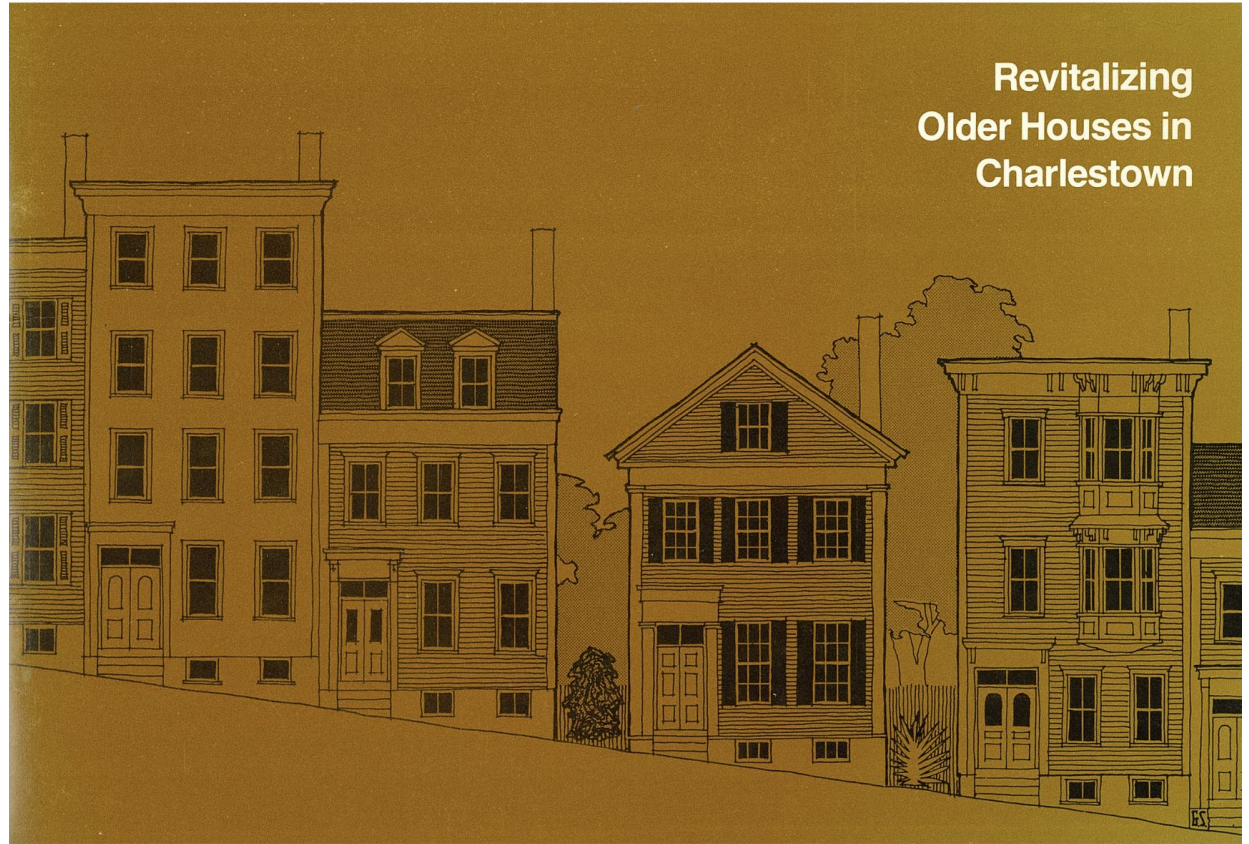
This map depicts the Charlestown Neighborhood Design Overlay District in yellow, over the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's 1878 Boston Harbor Chart



# Design Guidelines

Intended for homeowners and urban design staff when making decisions about the rehabilitation of Charlestown's buildings.

The goal is to sympathetically **preserve and enhance the design qualities of the neighborhood.**



# Design Guidelines

Design principles used by BPDA staff when reviewing NDOD and ZBA projects.

Design guidance on typical building types found in the neighborhood.

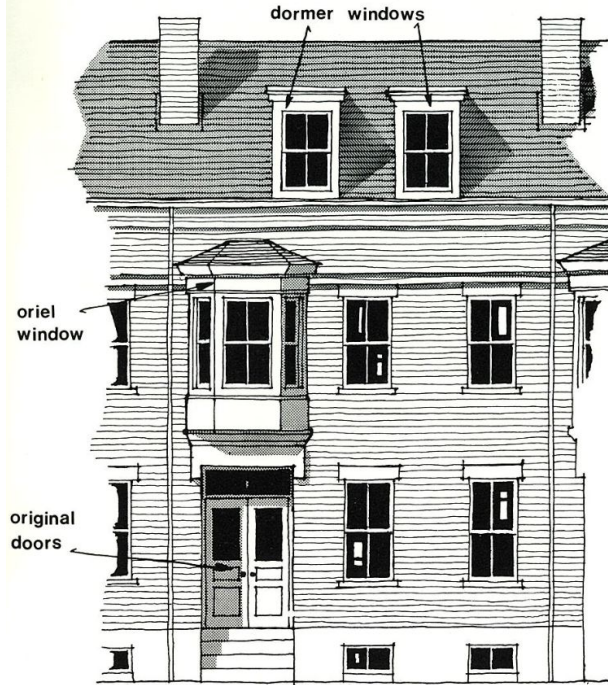




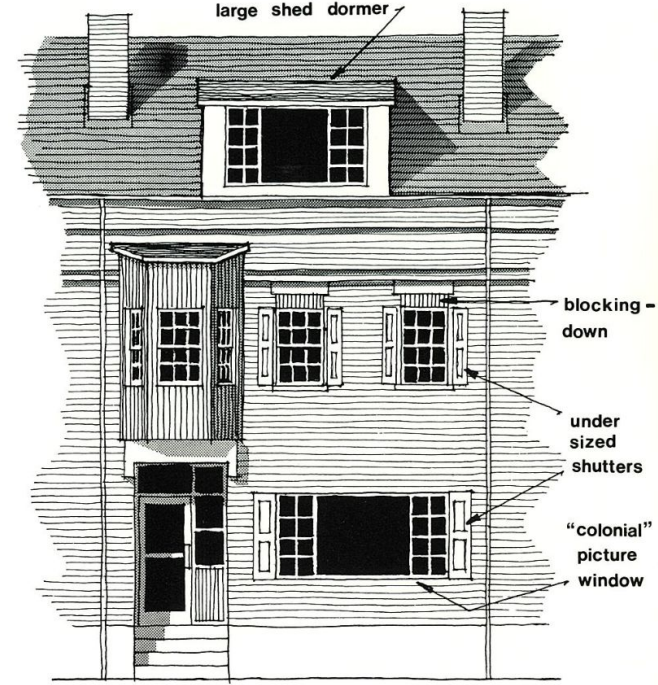
# Design Guidelines

Retain original door and window openings.

Proper detailing: cornerboards, door and window trim, retention of sills and lintels, etc.



THE ORIGINAL FRONT  
*Figure 1*



BAD REMODELING OF SAME  
*Figure 2*



# PLAN: Charlestown

# Q&A

# Next Steps

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*Anna Callahan, Planner II*



# Next Steps

**Share your input on Map.Social throughout the summer!** Join us on **Thursday, July 1st** for a Virtual Chat with a Planner and bring your map.social questions.

Next Workshop: **September/Early Fall**

Next Advisory Group Meeting: **August 11th**



# For those unable to join tonight,

Please share the map.social link! <http://bit.ly/mapcharlestown>

We will also host a Chat with a Planner on **Thursday July 1st** on using Map.Social. Bring any questions you have.

All meeting content available:

[www.bostonplans.org/plancharlestown](http://www.bostonplans.org/plancharlestown)

# Appendix

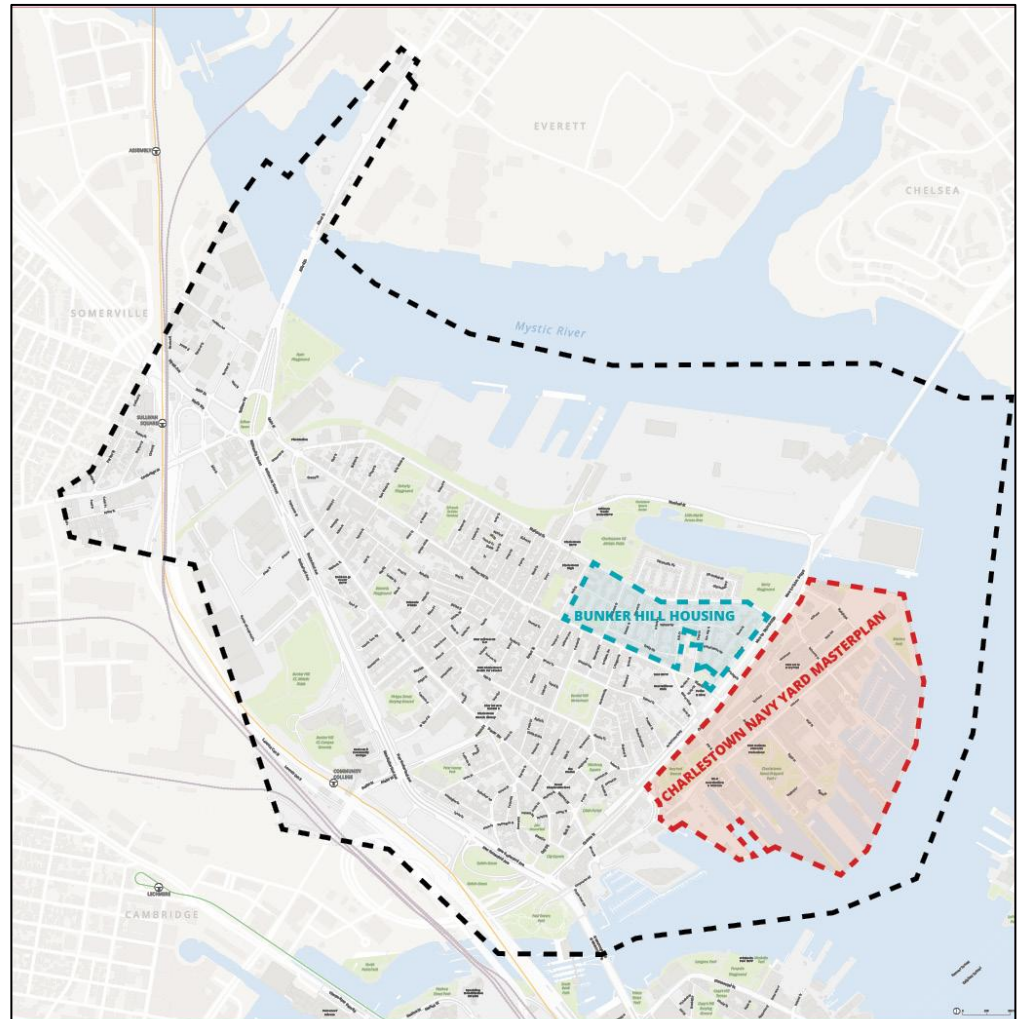
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# Study Area

--- PLAN Charlestown Study Area

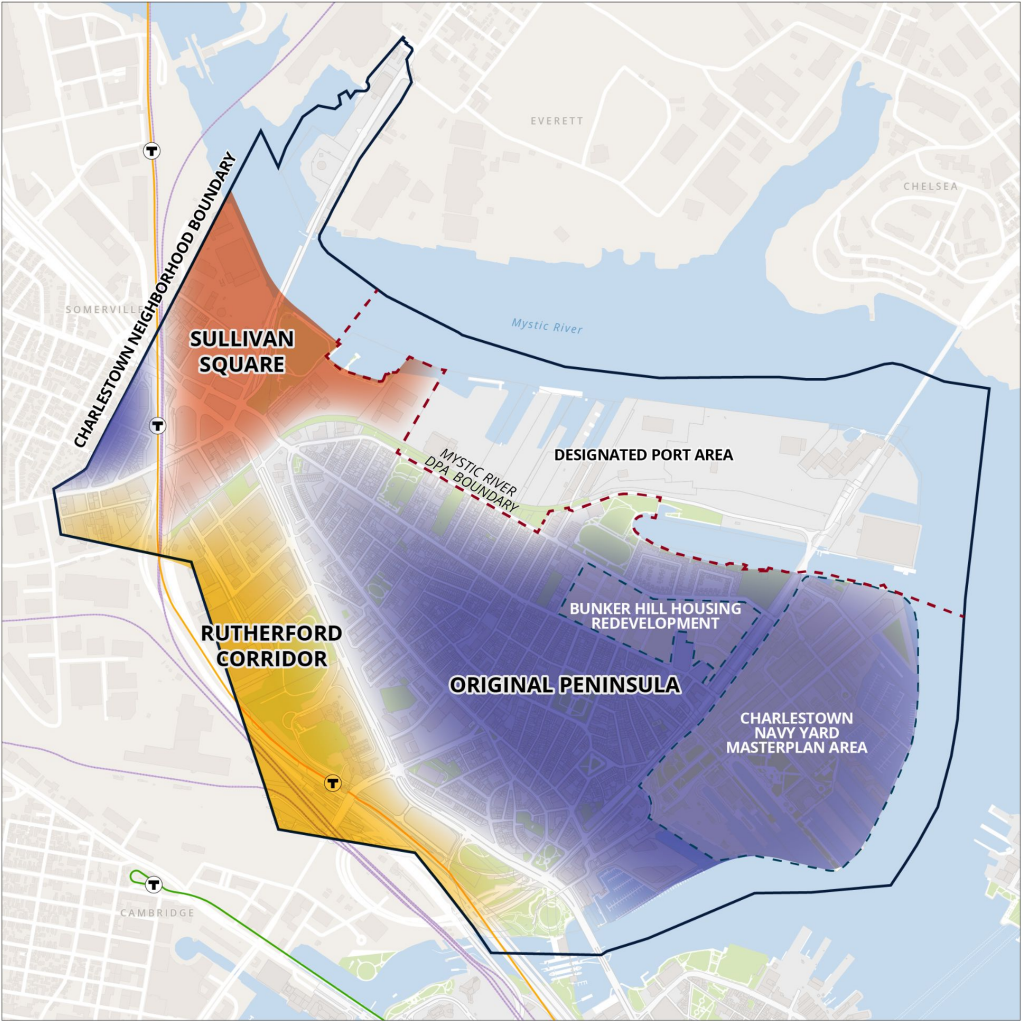
 Bunker Hill Housing

 Charlestown Navy Yard Master Plan





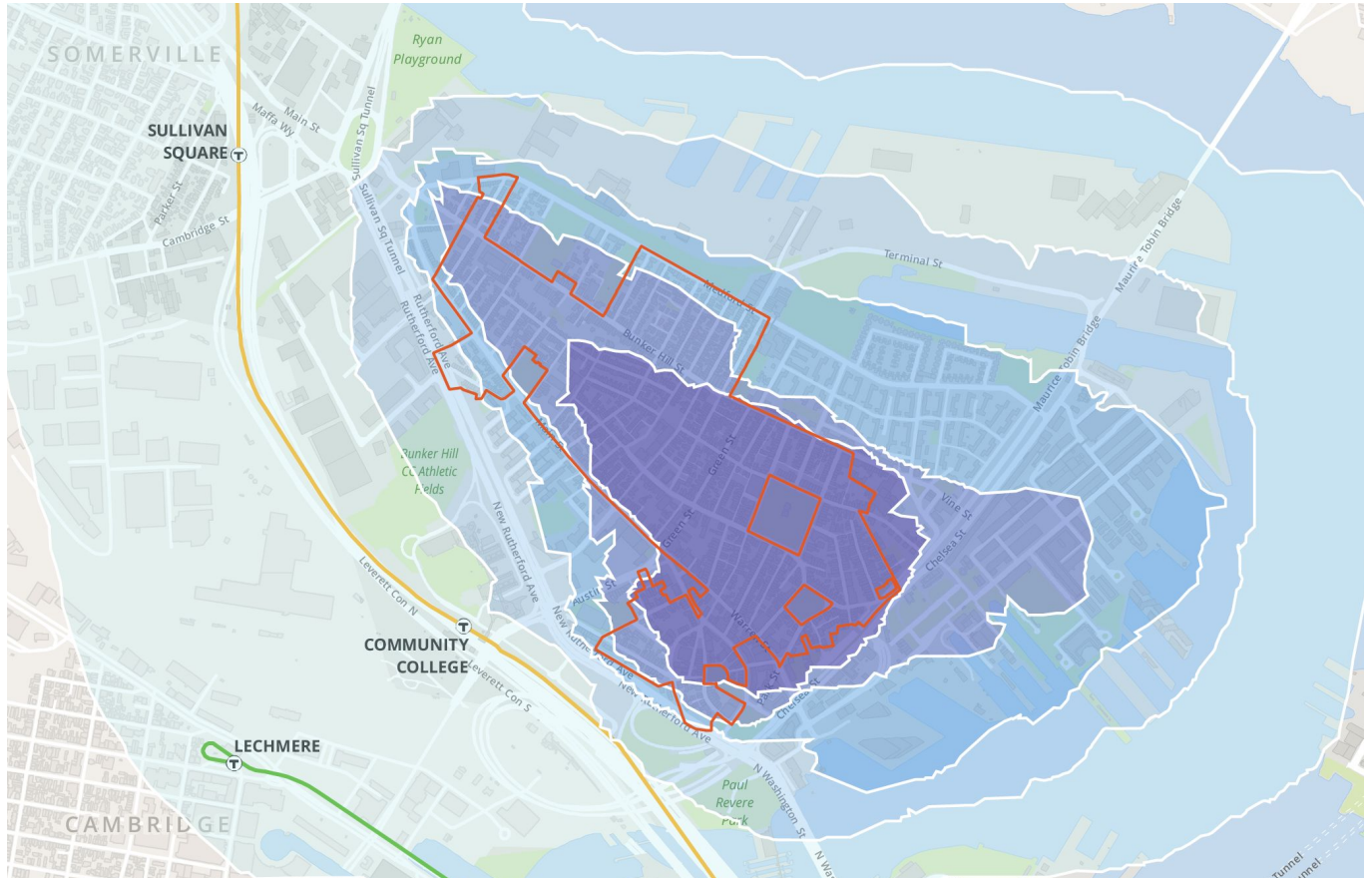
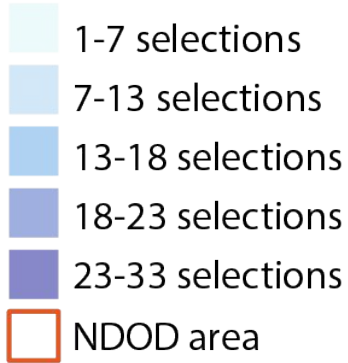
# Draft Subareas



# Districts



# What area is considered “historic”?



Land Use Through Time Part I Survey



# Design Guidelines

## Historical Background

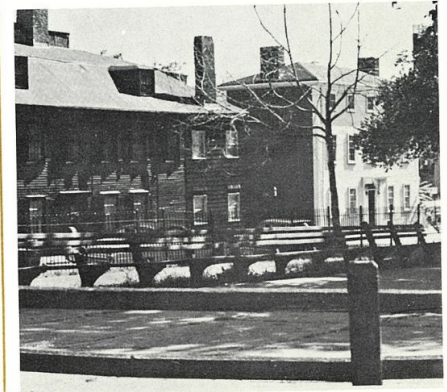
The residents of Charlestown are famous for their loyalty to their community and for their pride in their homes and neighborhoods. In a town of family houses, many families have lived here for five or six generations. They are the “Townies,” part of a close-knit, stable and proud community.

Complementing this strong family tradition is the distinct physical character and shape of Charlestown. Partly, this image is due to topography. The town is built almost all on the flanks of a hill, with the commanding Bunker Hill Monument at its summit. The lowlands are bordered by the Mystic and Charles Rivers, isolating the town from its neighbors. The general appearance of Charlestown is a mixture of wood-frame clapboard and brick houses, constructed in the various architectural styles of the nineteenth century. The shape of the community is strongly expressed, in the rows of these attached houses, which closely hug the edges of the sloping streets. The streets, in many cases, lead into the historic landscaped parks – Monument Square, Winthrop Square and Harvard Mall – that provide a contrast of open space and greenery.

In the last year or two, as the blight that once threatened to overwhelm the town has been arrested and much new construction of housing and community facilities has taken place, there has been increasing interest in repairing and modernizing these older houses. The number of owner-occupied houses has grown, and more younger Charlestown families are showing renewed faith in the future of their town. These owners are aware that their homes contribute to the distinctive quality of the neighborhood and have architectural merit, but they still face the dilemma of determining the most appropriate and economical method to rehabilitate the building exteriors. This booklet, prepared by the B.R.A.'s Urban Design staff, was written to help answer that question.

Before getting into details of remodeling, it is appropriate to review how and when these houses were built. The major historic events which took place in Charlestown have been well documented, but the history of the town's development is less familiar.

Founded in 1629, Charlestown is one year older than Boston. Originally settled by English immigrants, the first village was built at the southeasterly tip of the peninsula, on the shore between Breed's Hill and the lower Town Hill, opposite Boston. The town developed around its market place (City Square) and extended from the waterfront back to the Phipps Street Cemetery and the Militia Training Ground (Winthrop Square). In the eighteenth century, the principal industries of this colonial seaport were on its wharves and shipyards, as later it would be in its Navy Yard. Charlestown also grew to be known as a center of American Colonial craftsmanship. This was the celebrated town of approximately four hundred dwellings and public buildings that, on that fateful day in 1775, the British completely burned to the ground. Only some of the street pattern and the location of the early major public open spaces survived to record the first 140 years of the town's growth. Consequently, Charlestown's oldest existing houses date from the rebuilding period which followed the Revolutionary War. These few late Georgian (1780-1795) clapboard



# Design Guidelines

than would be appropriate on the front of the house. Often, all that is necessary to transform a drab area into an attractive and useful space is a little imagination, some brick or concrete paving, some greenery, and—if there is room—a shade tree.

Lastly, for satisfactory results, it is important in all cases to select the right type of trees, shrubs, and plants which will thrive both in Charlestown and in the particular location where they are to be planted—whether it be sunny, partly sunny, or with no sun. Below is a suggested list of possible choices.

## **LARGE SHADE OR STREET TREES:**

Amur Corktree Little-leaf Linden London Planetree Sargent Cherry  
Scarlet Oak Thornless Honeylocust Zelkova 'Village Green'

## **MEDIUM SIZE SHADE TREES:**

American Yellow-wood Chinese Scholartree Fringetree Sourwood

## **TREES FOR NARROW AREAS:**

Bradford Callery Pear Columnar Norway Maple Katsura Tree  
Maidenhair Tree—Ginkgo Biloba (Male)

## **FLOWERING TREES:**

Dogwood Downy Shadblow—Amelanchier Flowering Cherries Flowering Crabapples  
Saucer Magnolia

## **DECIDUOUS & FLOWERING SHRUBS:**

Azalea Cotoneaster Forsythia Japanese Quince Rose Bushes Winged Evonymus

## **EVERGREEN SHRUBS:**

American Yew Azalea Japanese Holly Rhododendron Spreading English Yew

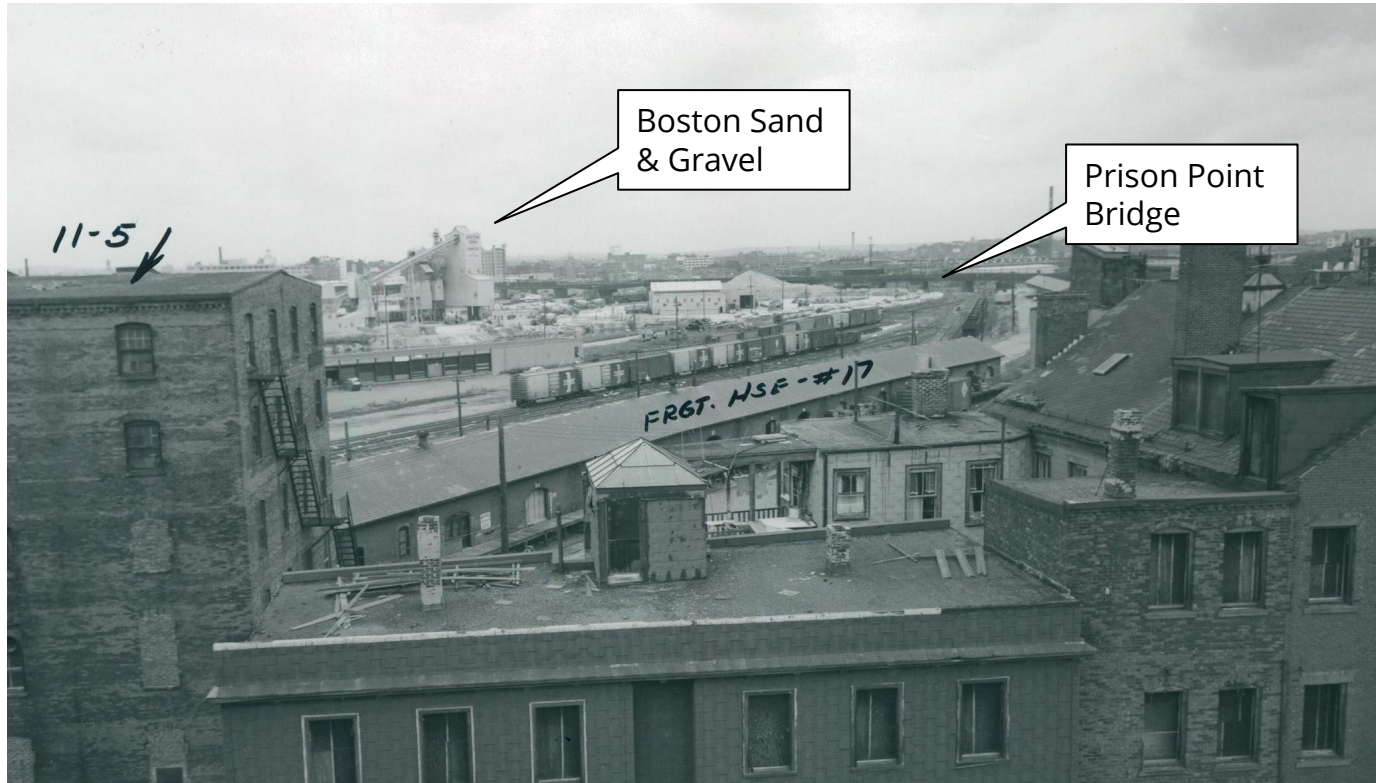
## **VINES:**

Boston Ivy Chinese Fleece Vine Hardy English Ivy Virginia Creeper

## **ANNUAL—SUMMER BEDDING—POTTING PLANTS**

Coleus Geraniums Marguerites Marigolds Patience Plant Petunias Tobacco Plant  
Wax Begonia

# Preservation tools actively shape our places



1966



# Preservation tools actively shape our places



**2020**