

# DRAFT PLAN: DOWNTOWN AMENDMENT SUMMARY

## Background

PLAN: Downtown was adopted by the BPDA board on December 14, 2023. The community planning process, which started in 2018, establishes a new framework for the growth, enhancement, and preservation of Downtown Boston as a 24-hour neighborhood, balancing livability, affordability, walkability, climate change preparedness, access to open space, and a dynamic mix of uses. PLAN: Downtown includes recommendations regarding growth and preservation, mobility, open space, and climate change resiliency. The plan also includes design guidelines to help shape future Downtown development projects, policy actions to implement the goals of the plan, and key zoning considerations.

This draft amendment incorporates additional feedback received throughout the zoning process. Comments received emphasized the need to provide additional planning context that prioritizes adaptive reuse and the historic preservation of significant buildings, facades, and character areas, encourages housing growth in key areas, and highlights additional design guidance for historic areas and tall buildings.

## Amendment Outline

Changes to PLAN: Downtown are outlined below. New pages are highlighted in the plan with the heading “**2025 DRAFT AMENDMENT**”

- Page 28-31: **Development Framework**
  - Emphasizes the Washington Street corridor as a key spine to Downtown, gateway to major transit, and opportunity area for housing growth that includes and borders significant lower-scale historic areas with historic facades and buildings that should be preserved and appropriately incorporated in adapted reuse.
  - Introduces an additional Growth Area, the Housing Focus Growth Area, in this area to prioritize adaptive reuse, preserve significant historic facades and buildings in the area, and ensure taller buildings

provide needed residential growth along Downtown's key commercial corridor and transit access points.

- Page 66-69: **Design Guidelines Introduction**
  - Clarifies how to use the guidelines, the importance of context analysis and available resources, and outlines the design review process.
- Page 71-72: **Design Guidelines - 1.2 Building Massing and 1.3 Tall Buildings**
  - Provides additional guidelines on stepbacks, building separation, and tall building design to ensure projects respect the scale and character of the surrounding context and mitigate impacts on nearby buildings and the public realm.
- Page 85: **Design Guidelines - 3.7 Enhance the Greenway**
  - Provides key references to the Greenway District Planning Study Use and Development Guidelines, which include design guidelines for projects adjacent to the Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway.
- Page 88: **Design Guidelines - 5.0 Historic Context**
  - A new chapter to the design guidelines providing historic context and additional location-specific design principles for each character area Downtown. This draft chapter was released in July 2024 with a public comment period until August 2, 2024.
- Page 128: **Zoning Considerations**
  - Outlines zoning considerations as they relate to height, use, and historic preservation for each of the Growth and Enhance areas.