

Executive Summary

PLAN: Mattapan is a City planning initiative that seeks to craft an equitable, community-driven future for Mattapan.

Guided by a multi-year participatory process that launched in 2018, PLAN: Mattapan lays out a carefully considered, comprehensive vision that aligns future growth and investment with community values and identity.

Over the course of more than 150 community meetings, Mattapan residents and community stakeholders worked alongside the planning team to craft a vision and goals for their neighborhood's future and establish recommendations for how to achieve these goals.

“Preserve, enhance, grow.”

For centuries, Mattapan has been a place where families plant roots, dating back to the Pre-Colonial Era when the Mattahunt Tribe settled along the banks of the Neponset River. It's also a neighborhood that has welcomed generations of immigrant families, and today Mattapan is home to one of Boston's largest Caribbean populations. Yet, even though Mattapan has offered stable futures to generations of Bostonians—and is the neighborhood with the highest rate of Black homeownership in Boston—it still faces serious social and economic disparities, many of which are rooted in historic racial inequity.

With Mattapan's past and present in mind, PLAN: Mattapan seeks to chart a more equitable future for the neighborhood in the years to come. In particular, PLAN: Mattapan focuses on ways to increase generational wealth, address historic inequities, and avoid displacing existing residents. The result is a Plan that is guided by the principles of “preserve, enhance, grow.” These principles help ensure that existing residents and beloved community institutions will always have a home in Mattapan. They also help outline how the neighborhood can equitably grow over the coming years and how residents' quality of life can be enhanced through better access to jobs, transit, neighborhood amenities, and other important services. Importantly, PLAN: Mattapan outlines how Mattapan can eventually transform into a 10-minute neighborhood: a community where residents can access essential goods, services, open spaces, and transit options within a 10-minute walk of their home.

PLAN: Mattapan's recommendations are guided by a central **vision statement**, which was crafted by Mattapan residents and other stakeholders. PLAN: Mattapan will strengthen the existing culture and stability of the community through recommendations related to five planning topic areas: **Equity & Environmental Justice**, **Housing**, **Mobility**, **Jobs & Businesses**, and **People & Places**.

Plan Vision Statement

PLAN: Mattapan envisions a future where:

- Existing Mattapan residents are **stable in their homes** and new residents have **affordable housing options**
- Mattapan residents have **safe and reliable transit connections** to jobs, schools, and community spaces in Mattapan and throughout Boston
- **Mattapan Square** and other neighborhood nodes are home to **vibrant, thriving local businesses and cultural spaces** that reflect the needs of residents and uphold neighborhood identity

Equity & Environmental Justice

PLAN: Mattapan aims to improve residents' quality of life, promote healthy environments, and prepare for climate change. Recommendations include measures to preserve and grow Mattapan's urban tree canopy and enhance green infrastructure (i.e. permeable pavers, rain gardens, native plant species) through strengthened public realm guidelines and lot coverage requirements. It also outlines safer, more accessible bike and pedestrian connections to Mattapan's open spaces through improvements to Boston's Green Links.

Housing

PLAN: Mattapan encourages affordable, stable, and diverse housing to reduce displacement and maintain homeownership levels. Recommendations include expanding multifamily residential zoning and dimensional regulations in transit-oriented areas like Blue Hill Ave and Morton Street, and requiring greater affordability for projects that meet a bonus density threshold. PLAN: Mattapan also outlines a new Additional Dwelling Unit (ADU) policy, to allow for the construction of new, detached backyard structures to increase generational wealth and make space for multigenerational living.

Mobility

PLAN: Mattapan will guide increased access to high-quality travel options, supporting safe and reliable connections within Mattapan and the rest of the City. Recommendations include improved bus and rail networks that can make transit travel more reliable and provide more direct access to jobs, schools, and other important destinations on Blue Hill Avenue, Cummins Highway, Morton Street, and River Street and beyond. The PLAN also recommends improvements to bike/pedestrian infrastructure to facilitate safer travel to neighborhood destinations and implementing slow street design and infrastructure in localized high-crash areas and across the neighborhood in new development.

Jobs & Businesses

PLAN: Mattapan will drive inclusive economic growth through support for local business and increased access to jobs within and outside Mattapan. The PLAN recommends that Mattapan's local business scene is amplified by the development of in-demand commercial like sit-down restaurants and event venues, and that transformative growth in Mattapan Square is supported by new and existing City programs that target historic disinvestment, absentee property owners, and improvements to the public realm. It is also recommended that mixed-use development be prioritized within Mattapan's commercial nodes (such as Mattapan Square and the River Street Shopping Center) and along corridors like Blue Hill Ave and River Street.

People & Places

PLAN: Mattapan envisions new art and cultural projects that celebrate Mattapan's identity and encourage a welcoming public realm. Recommendations include the adoption of design guidelines to promote active ground floor uses, programming, and human-centered streetscapes

along corridors and within nodes, as well as encouraging new developments to support community-based arts programming and the creation or restoration of public art that celebrates Mattapan's unique history. PLAN: Mattapan also recommends the implementation of modest zoning changes, mobility improvements, and public realm activation strategies to transform Mattapan into a 10-minute neighborhood.



Children play in Almont Park (photo by Ed Wonek).

How to Use PLAN: Mattapan

PLAN: Mattapan is not just a vision for Mattapan's future, it's also a call to action. It is the responsibility of the Boston Planning & Development Agency, the City of Boston, and other public entities to adhere to the recommendations in this document, while working closely with the Mattapan community to ensure that the goals and recommendations outlined in this PLAN are relevant to the community's needs over the coming years. While some of the recommendations will require more time and inter-agency collaboration (i.e. MBTA, MassDOT), PLAN: Mattapan will be the basis for new programs and policies in the neighborhood. Private entities, particularly real estate developers, should refer to and comply with the recommendations in PLAN: Mattapan. For more information on implementation and evaluation of PLAN: Mattapan and its recommendations, including current initiatives that have been implemented as a result of the planning process, turn to Chapter 6.

PLAN: Mattapan Study Area and Proposed Zoning

The following map shows the proposed zoning changes discussed in PLAN: Mattapan. Neighborhood zoning provides the foundation for sustainable, community-centered development that will support equitable growth in Mattapan. Zoning changes are mostly focused in expanding opportunities for local business and affordable, multi-family residential development, as well as creating new opportunities for small-scale, local business to be situated closer to residents' doors. These zoning changes are the first, critical step in transforming Mattapan into a 10-minute neighborhood, a community where residents can access essential goods, services, open spaces, and transit options within a 10-minute walk of their home.

- Mattapan's **corridors**, like Blue Hill Avenue and Morton Street, keep Mattapan moving.
- Corridors link residential areas to local business within the neighborhood and support travel to Downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.
- PLAN: Mattapan recommends expanding multi-family zoning along the majority of Mattapan's corridors, encouraging transit-oriented development projects to locate people closer to jobs, transit, and other services.

- Mattapan's residents should have access to essential goods and services, such as markets, daycares, or laundromats, within a 10-minute walk from their doorsteps.
- PLAN: Mattapan recommends the introduction of new zoning that will allow local business to be developed **closer to residential areas**, creating future commercial areas outside Mattapan Square.

- In the **residential fabric**, future zoning changes and infill development will reflect the existing built form and use in Mattapan, whether 1-, 2-, or 3-family.
- Additional Dwelling Units (ADUs) will be enabled to be built as-of-right, offering an option for homeowners to generate extra income by creating a rental apartment or creating extra space for family members to move nearby.

- **Mattapan Square** is the cultural and economic heart of the neighborhood. It features a bustling transit hub and a mix commercial spaces.
- PLAN: Mattapan recommends modest zoning changes to height, density, open space, and other requirements that will allow a mix of commercial and residential uses to flourish in Mattapan Square.

- Corridors like River Street play a crucial role in linking Mattapan residents to essential business. Creating new opportunities for local business to be **located along corridors** will allow residents to get the goods and services they need, right in their neighborhood.

