

Squares + Streets Zoning Districts:

Responses to Public Feedback and Comment Form Submissions

This document contains individual responses written by BPDA Zoning Reform staff to comments submitted via the Public Feedback and Comment Form regarding the Squares + Streets draft zoning text amendment. This document was revised on 02.14.2024 to fix broken webpage links as well as improve the formatting and readability of comments and responses.

If a respondent below also sent in a letter via email or mail outside of the online form, then the response to their comments *and* that letter can be found in the “Responses to Public Comment Letter Submissions” document on the BPDA Squares + Streets Zoning Districts webpage in the “Public Comment Period” section

(<https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning/zoning-initiatives/squares-streets-zoning-districts#comment-period>).

Due to the length of this document to provide enough space for each comment and response to be viewed clearly, it is suggested that respondents looking for their specific comment use the “**CTRL+F**” or “**COMMAND+F**” shortcut, or the “**Find...**” tool in the document reader that they are using to search for their name or contents of their specific comment submission.

Timestamp: December 05, 2023 12:44:53

Name: Matt Rice

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I love the legalization by right for dense housing and mixed use buildings along the most lively places in Boston. I want to see more life and things to do come to my neighborhood.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

We need these zoning changes in city squares and main streets. Please do not let the loud minority descope this plan that will make our city better for current and future generations

Response:

Thanks for taking the time to comment, and please stay engaged as we create a Small Area Plan and updated zoning map in Hyde Park

(<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/cleary-square>)!

Timestamp: December 05, 2023 20:05:16

Name: Mary Tenenbaum

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The approach is excellent. I like the removal of parking minimums as that is a major driver of unaffordable development and congestion. The active use ground floor uses and outdoor community spaces are great. I like that the buildings are allowed to be mixed use with higher stories for residential use that bring residents to the community centers and make them vibrant places to live.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Maybe allow 5 floors instead of 4 floors on the smaller scale areas. Look at linking the double parking issue for delivery drivers to licensing process.

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. The proposed districts include both 4-story and 5-story options to provide as much flexibility as possible. Which of those will get mapped in specific areas will depend on working with the community during the Small Area Planning process for each square and main street.

Timestamp: December 08, 2023 17:26:12

Name: Milan Patel

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Off Street parking on affordable unit being zero.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Please add language regarding parking stacker systems and loading bay design. Currently ISD counts it as a zoning violation(Art. 69 Sec. 29.5). Plus, ISD is adding violations on loading bay design(Ast. 69 Sec. 29) due to backing into a loading bay and stopping traffic.

Response:

Thanks for these detailed comments. The BPDA and BTD are working on updates to the parking standards section of the code that will address topics like this. We expect to bring that forward in the coming year.

Timestamp: December 11, 2023 09:02:29

Name: Andrew Murray

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Increased housing density, focus on bike and public transit infrastructure, increased walk ability

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Further emphasis on alternatives to cars; further reduction of parking minimums

Response:

Thank you for your comments. The BPDA is actively continuing to pursue many of these broader goals alongside Squares + Streets, both this year and more broadly in an ongoing manner. Please stay tuned as greening parking design and standards is one specific area that we will introduce later this year. For additional information, visit

www.bostonplans.org/zoning.

Timestamp: December 11, 2023 09:48:28

Name: Evan Zinner

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It's a start I guess.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

More housing.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

The proposed changes do not go nearly far enough. We are in a housing crisis and have been for years. We can not be talking about small changes like this. We need to be building an order of magnitude more than we are in order to combat the raising rents. For God's sake, our rents are higher than SF now—let developers build housing. We need housing.

Response:

It is a start. More to come as the BPDA works on zoning reform across the city, including for PLAN: Downtown, as a result of the Allston Brighton Neighborhood Plan, Zero Net Carbon, and to enable ADUs in every neighborhood.

Timestamp: December 11, 2023 11:42:20

Name: Evan Zinner

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that Drive ins and Drive Throughs are forbidden. This should be expanded to the entire city.

I like that in general this is a move toward loosening zoning regulations. We have a housing crisis and we need to be making it easier to build housing. This is a decent first step.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Outlawing check cashing places (but not banks) is classist. There are (poor) people in Boston who use check cashing services. By outlawing them from the neighborhood squares, we are telling poor Bostonians “these places are not for people like you.”

I do not understand the need for the A-G designation. What could possibly be the downside of having an art studio on the second floor of a building? Or a restaurant having a second floor? Or a maker space or an art gallery? What are we trying to prevent?

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

It’s not clear (at least to me) where exactly these four new zoning designations will be used. At least historically, areas zoned for more housing have been directly on the busiest streets (for vehicular traffic) in the neighborhood. I hope that will not be the case here.

Every person I know who is looking to buy a home would prefer to live on a street with less vehicular traffic. This should not be surprising. Roads with high vehicular traffic have worse air pollution and noise pollution, and they are dangerous. You particularly hear this desire from parents with young children (a demographic Boston struggles to retain). And yet, we force almost all of the new housing to be built on the streets with the most vehicular traffic.

Some will say that by adding some density to the less-busy streets, we will make those streets just as busy. However, that is frequently not the case. In my neighborhood of Roslindale, the busiest street is Washington St, and most of the cars on Washington St are

going through Roslindale not to/from the neighborhood. All new residents should not be forced to live within earshot of the through traffic.

Density should not be pushed exclusively to the busiest streets of the neighborhood.

Response:

In the updated draft we have relaxed many of the limitations on uses above the ground floor, including arts studios, small retail, and others. The limitation on check cashing, as opposed to banks, is to reflect the significantly lower level of government oversight and potential for over-concentration of these uses in ways that can have negative impact on communities. We appreciate your notes on how density gets mapped, and hope you'll stay engaged in this process, as it's an important consideration for ensuring we're setting up zoning regulations that help facilitate great neighborhoods.

Timestamp: December 11, 2023 13:15:07

Name: Eileen McMahon

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

That there are 5 city wide districts

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Clarification of the classification of airbnbs - would multifamily homes with an owner living in an adjacent unit be considered residential living? a lodging house? a hotel? or something else?

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Please include a picture of an airbnb consisting of one unit of a multifamily home with an owner living in an adjacent unit in your Land Use Modernization Visual Guide.

Response:

AirBnbs are regulated through Boston's Short-Term Rental program. An Airbnb in a Household Living use is only allowed in owner-occupied condominiums, single-family, two-family, and three-family buildings. A Lodging House may also be considered an Airbnb, but does not need to be owner-occupied or restricted to 3-units.

Timestamp: December 11, 2023 16:57:14

Name: Jacob Oppenheim

Neighborhood: South End

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Increased Density, By Right Zoning, Mixed Use

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Higher Density --- the proposed zones are lower density than the downtown proximate neighborhoods everyone loves (eg Back Bay, South End, etc) that should be legal everywhere. In fact, they're likely lower density than South Boston and East Boston. You certainly can't build a booming new neighborhood like Fenway or Harrison-Albany/SoWa with them. That should change.

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: December 12, 2023 17:19:56

Name: Tim Burbridge

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This is a long time coming and I like that it is focused on the parts of the city that we desperately need more housing in, the squares and neighborhoods near transit.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I don't think any part of boston should be zoned single family when we have one of the most extreme housing crises in the country. Historic districts and commissions are fine to make sure that development keeps neighborhood character, but single family zoning effectively creates red lines around neighborhoods that keeps middle class, poorer, and DEI populations out of large parts of the city and should never have been allowed in the first place, never mind now. We also need better ADU rules, in general (similar to california and minneapolis), but that might be outside the scope of this amendment.

Response:

Separate from Squares + Streets, the BPDA is working to advance zoning reform that will legalize ADUs across the City of Boston this year.

Timestamp: December 12, 2023 20:13:40

Name: Shakira Alleyne

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Items in the works so far for improvements in the community

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Nothing else at this time. Love to see minority businesses still in the area.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Paving the streets as they are dug up or other things added.

Response:

Thanks for highlighting the importance of our minority businesses to Squares + Streets areas, and specifically Hyde Park. Please stay engaged as the Small Area Plan process kicks off.

Timestamp: December 13, 2023 10:38:13

Name: Gene Radwin

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It's not clear to me what is the amendment and what is the original draft to judge the amended changes against.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Clearer designation of what is proposed

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Unreasonable task to expect ordinary residents to work way through 120 page technical document to understand what is proposed originally, what is being amended etc. Public cannot be expected to offer feedback when document is complex and technical. Would have been so much better if there had been pictures showing what a current district looks like and what it would look like under the proposed Streets and Squares changes. Not at all clear how this proposal will make for a better city -- more affordable, more equitable, more oriented to needs of local residents and local businesses.

Response:

Thank you for your comments. Please visit www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares where you will find a reference guide which accompanied the text amendment. In addition, we gave a presentation in our public meeting on January 10 which provides a breakdown on how to read and understand the amendment as it is written. You can find that slide deck here:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/calendar/2024/01/10/squares-streets-citywide-draft-zoning-amendment>. The file is called "Amendment Update Public Meeting Presentation."

Timestamp: December 13, 2023 20:50:00

Name: domenico accetta

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Nothing. It gives more power to a non elected group to do what investors and developers want.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The BPDA needs to have neighborhood representation on its BOARD. These surveys make it appear that they are soliciting input when they are only checking a box.

There needs to be a plan for building in the City. (Dorchester does not have one that I know of). No just a "build it where you can" approach.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I attend the Article 80 Stakeholders Zoom meetings. All types of letters are submitted to the BPDA with no response. The group is politely ignored. (another box checked)

The BPDA needs to be abolished. That is what the Michele Wu said when she was running for Mayor. And what I am holding her to in the next election.

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. The Mayor has filed a home rule petition to move planning efforts out of the BPDA into City government, and has also filed a new ordinance with the City to create a replacement Planning Department, effective July 1. More information about the home rule petition and executive order can be found here:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/news-updates/2023/01/30/mayor-wu-submits-home-rule-petition-to-end-urban-r>. It is the goal of this planning initiative and those moving forward to be rooted in assessing and identifying community needs and recommendations. This is not tied to a singular development.

Timestamp: December 14, 2023 12:40:55

Name: Andy Feldman

Neighborhood: Allston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

More housing in more places! And no parking minimums. Keep those 2 parts please

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

As much density in possible and make it as easy as possible to upzone

Response:

While the specifics of Squares + Streets will not be appropriate for all parts of Boston, housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform project.

Timestamp: December 14, 2023 22:33:24

Name: Steven Gag

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

We need more housing in our neighborhood and city (and region and state and country!). Our zoning is outdated and doesn't allow for the density we need to build more housing. Concentrating density in squares and major streets makes a lot of sense because that's where most of our neighborhood commerce takes place and where public transportation converges.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I'm not sure if parking and pedestrian and biking safety have been addressed in the proposed zoning amendment but it needs to be changed from current zoning regulations. The City requires too much parking in transit rich squares and major streets. Substantially reduce the required parking ration to less than 0.5 parking spaces per unit of housing. Insure that free parking spots turn over quickly through metering and time restrictions. Install biking and pedestrian infrastructure that slows car movement and allows for plenty of daylighting around crosswalks and intersections.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Change is hard. If we want our City and neighborhood to thrive and be more equitable we need to create spaces for that to happen. Some people won't be happy with these changes. It's incumbent on political leaders, city workers and citizens to discuss this zoning amendment and make hard choices, even in the face of substantial backlash.

Response:

The proposed zoning districts do not require a minimum number of parking spaces to be built, which extends what is currently flexibility allowed for Article 80 Large Projects to all types of smaller development and changes of use. Thanks for your comments.

Timestamp: December 15, 2023 05:52:06

Name: Nikolas Varga

Neighborhood: Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like how most active uses are allowed by right or conditionally in Squares and Streets districts, and the removal of minimum parking requirements for these districts. That will definitely help make new construction and additions more feasible in these areas. I also like the lack of dimensional requirements in terms of facade and setbacks. I like the idea of creating varied intensities of district.

Overall, these changes are incredibly exciting and will improve the streets and squares of Boston! Not only will they allow mixed-use by right in these districts, but they retroactively make it possible for existing single story buildings, which occupy many square and streets, to build new residential on top.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Small retail should be allowed conditionally in S0. Give people the ability to have a little corner store in their building in a neighborhood if they so choose! I also think small entertainment should be conditional in S0, it would make more independent venues possible and support Boston's local music scene.

Max height in stories should be increased to 5 in S0, 6 in S1, 7 in S2, and 10 in S4, along with the corresponding height in feet. This will make more buildings financially feasible in these squares and streets and make more density possible in areas that most likely already support transit. I further think limiting S0 buildings to 14 residential units is pointless and will most likely lead to required variances for creative buildings. Having a large front yard requirement in S0 and S1 detracts from having active ground-floor uses because it does not encourage active uses to engage the street-front.

Zero-lot line conditions should be possible in all districts to allow for more interesting buildings and match conditions in some parts of the city where there are attached buildings already.

Language for point-access blocks in these districts would be great as well, to allow for skinny buildings. Along the Tremont street corridor in Mission Hill, many older buildings have a single staircase with retail on the first floor, and allowing for point-access blocks will allow this building type to be built in Boston. I understand it may not be possible in accordance with state law.

I would also like to see some type of acknowledgement of growth of areas in the amendment such that as an area develops within its designation it can be upgraded to the next one.

• Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I'm confused on what "abutting x district" means. Does this mean the parcel in question is on the edge of the district, or the zone itself touches that district?

Response:

Thank you for your comments.

1. We have updated the draft to conditionally allow small retail on the ground floor in S0.
2. We are excited to re-introduce the S5 district to the proposed districts, which will add to the range of heights available to be mapped beyond what is allowed in S3 and S4, and will make more density possible in areas that already support transit.
3. The S2, S3, S4, and S5 districts will allow zero-lot line buildings where there are attached buildings already.
4. Building access requirements are governed by the state building code. The proposed zoning is not meant to preclude the possibility of building larger point-access structures if the state building code were ever to change to allow them.
3. The "abutting x district" language refers to the parcel itself, i.e., if a parcel touches a residential district, a greater setback would be required.

Timestamp: December 15, 2023 10:11:14

Name: Paul Horn

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Hard pressed to say without being able to see how any of these new definitions, classifications and standards would be applied to any particular project or neighborhood circumstances, though it looks like a comprehensive effort.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It's hard to say without knowing how any of these new definitions, standards and classifications would apply to particular circumstances.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Asking ordinary residents, unfamiliar with current zoning and planning practices and lacking in most cases any real development experience, to judge and comment on the proposed changes seems like a well-intentioned but quite wrong-headed approach. It's a bit like asking me to buy you a variety of new tools and construction equipment without explaining how they'll be necessary or appropriate for as yet undefined projects or goals--or why the current zoning tools would make or do make any potentially desirable projects difficult to achieve. If you want meaningful engagement, I think you need to put the brakes on, go back to the drawing boards and rethink this entire approach. Speaking as both a resident and former city planner. Thank you.

Response:

Thank you for your comments. Please visit www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares where you will find a reference guide which accompanied the text amendment. In addition, we gave a presentation in our public meeting on January 10 which provides a breakdown on how to read and understand the amendment as it is written. You can find that slide deck here:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/calendar/2024/01/10/squares-streets-citywide-draft-zoning-amendment>. The file is called "Amendment Update Public Meeting Presentation."

Timestamp: December 16, 2023 21:50:21

Name: Bobbie

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Community involvement, zoning needs to be reviewed and updated to meet contemporary standards, open spaces that encourage community connection. Parking and ADU regulations being reviewed.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

A council on aging and senior center in West Roxbury is vitally important and I didn't see this mentioned specifically

Response:

Please stay involved with our Small Area Plans, which are intended to provide a more tangible set of opportunities for engagement and will help apply these broader ideas in a more specific way. We will take your recommendation to engage with the entities named in West Roxbury. The BPDA is also working to advance new zoning to enable appropriate ADUs in every neighborhood this year.

Timestamp: December 16, 2023 22:20:33

Name: Lew Finfer

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I'm hoping that you will allow housing to be built on main streets in neighborhoods for up to 3 floors above 1 story storefronts or 4 stories. This will enable many more units to be built.

Also since other buildings on the same main streets are often 3-4 stories, such building above storefronts would not be out of character for the neighborhoods. There also may be savings compared to project building from the basement up since these one story storefronts have basements and utility connections.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

See answers above and below...

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

In order to develop more widespread use of building above storefronts, could BPDA have a special initiative on designing such projects and offering some subsidies.

Also if 7 or more units are built, it should trigger either requiring an affordable unit or proportionate payment into the city's affordable housing fund to build these units on other sites as under the City's inclusionary Zoning policy.

BPDA could work with the BHA on citing some of the new Faircloth units of public housing that could be done above storefronts.

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. While zoning cannot require adaptive reuse of existing storefronts, we are hopeful that the building dimensions allowed in the proposed zoning districts will make it easier to build housing units above existing storefronts. We are also hopeful that the revised use table will also help to ease the task of filling storefronts. Inclusionary Zoning will be applicable in Squares + Streets districts as well as in the rest of the city! Further, the City will be working on a similar "special initiative" related to ADUs. Please take a look at the ADU Pattern Book RFP

<https://www.bostonplans.org/procurement/procurement-portal/rfp-listing-page?id=1355>).

Timestamp: December 19, 2023 10:58:29

Name: Patricia Alvarez

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

nothing

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

We cannot build large buildings in small, neighborhood business districts. Any building must be on scale with the existing buildings. We must add more trees (many per new building, not just 1). We must retain existing free 2 hour street parking in the small neighborhood business districts so seniors, people with disabilities and people with young children can access the business districts. Climate change is upon us. Climate scientists tell us that woodlands do more to mitigate climate change impacts than reducing car and building emissions. Even if new buildings are built to the highest environmental protection standards, the last thing we should do is create the massive density that this new zoning plan would allow. Instead, we should be preserving all remaining woodlands, whether privately or publically owned, and using Rent Control to create and retain affordable housing. While some building is necessary, we, the people who live, work and shop here, do not want our neighborhoods, or our city to become Manhattan!

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

The recent changes to Centre St in West Roxbury are a perfect example of ineffective planning for road design. They are extremely confusing and dangerous, not beneficial. We need planners and policy makers who understand how these planning concepts work (or don't work) in real life. I know the goal is to encourage biking rather than driving. However, the reality is that those who drive do so for many reasons that require them to use a car (small children, elderly, disabled, having to go to multiple places, including some with no mass transit, having multiple items to transport, etc). The changes in West Roxbury are going to cause traffic backups, inability to shop at stores that don't have parking lots (causing small business to lose customers). They are terrible, and I hope they will eventually be changed.

Response:

We do not think any of these zoning districts represent the scale of Manhattan. Small Area Plans will include a parking study, including on-street regulations, and make recommendations of how to increase green infrastructure (including opportunities for tree planting). Thanks for your comments.

Timestamp: December 21, 2023 10:42:19

Name: Milan Patel

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Density and less parking req. near T stations.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

After reviewing the latest zoning text amendment. I had several questions and suggestions.

Currently, the area near Cleary Sq, Dana/Hyde Park Ave, River Street and Hyde Park Station is zoned as NS-2.

I think this would be an excellent opportunity for a revision from NS-2 to either S3 or S4 district.

Being within 100-300 feet to the commuter rail station should be a definite use for higher residential density and less parking requirements.

Plus the BPDA owned lot on Pingree Street, abuts the MBTA Station, should be considered for S4. Currently the Pingree lot is being used as a parking lot.

Please add the use of car stackers and loading bays requirements within the amendments. Currently ISD is flagging the use of stackers in a recent project for zoning violations due to maneuverability. Same for 12'x25' loading bays.

Will there be any changes to small and large project thresholds? Such as any project over 50,000GSF as large and below as small.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the community feedback process. Thank you.

Response:

Thank you for this comment, and for taking the time to dive deeper into the existing zoning regulations for Hyde Park! As we move to the small area planning process for Cleary Square, there'll be continued opportunities to provide this specific feedback about where you'd like to see new zoning districts.

We are continuing to work on parking reform in the zoning code and will be working on regulations for car stackers in the coming months.

Regarding the Article 80 Small and Large Project thresholds, this would be best answered by engaging with the Article 80 Modernization process (<https://www.bostonplans.org/projects/improving-development-review-process-article-80>) currently underway at the BPDA.

Timestamp: December 22, 2023 16:10:37

Name: Noah Harper

Neighborhood: I don't live in Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I think it's a really exciting start to reinvigorating much of the City. While I don't currently live in Boston, this will provide more opportunities for me to be able to live in the City, while adding new shops and restaurants and much-needed housing!

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I do think we need to see the reinclusion of the S-5 Placemaking Squares in order to ensure predictable planning for the deciding criteria. I also think the criteria MUST be objective, we can't have bespoke zoning to preserve the darlings in tony districts, and allow the opposite in the less wealthy corners of the City.

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: December 22, 2023 19:18:41

Name: Andrew Feldman

Neighborhood: Allston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This initiative is a step in the right direction towards greater housing abundance and affordability in the city of Boston. It creates a framework the City can use to legalize the kind of homes we need to make Boston an affordable place to live. It also helpfully moves away from an over-reliance on discretionary review, which adds significant inefficiency, delays, and costs to every project. Greater predictability will encourage the creation of more homes throughout the City at all price points. This kind of zoning reform is long overdue and should not be delayed any further.

The elimination of parking minimums in all Squares + Streets districts is an important reform that will reduce the cost of housing, support the City's long term commitments to investing in transit and active transportation, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The land use modernization component is excellent. By updating and simplifying the categories for various residential and commercial property use, it will streamline permitting and support the creation of dynamic streetscapes and neighborhoods across all of Boston.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Previous presentations on the Squares + Streets initiative included the S5: Placemaker Squares district. This district is not included in the draft text amendment. This is a mistake. The BPDA should be stocking its toolbox with as many tools as possible to create more homes and invigorate neighborhoods. Some of the most successful recent redevelopments in the city (including Boylston Street in the Fenway and the Harrison-Albany district) fit the building types contemplated by the S5 district. The existing conditions in any given district should be the absolute floor of what is included in the nearby mapping, and we need to create opportunities for growth beyond that. The BPDA can make the decision where or even if to deploy S5 overlays. That's not an option if it isn't included in the draft language.

It is unclear exactly how the Small Area Plans will be created after this zoning amendment passes. While community engagement is essential, local feedback cannot be the deciding criteria for where S0 through S5 are mapped during the Squares + Streets process. Objective criteria must be used, including proximity to existing business corridors and

transit access. Every neighborhood in Boston must allow for greater density. If we want to equitably address the current housing crisis, loud opposition from wealthy homeowners in one neighborhood should not be allowed to shift even higher density to other areas of the city.

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: December 23, 2023 11:36:21

Name: Michael Gaffney

Neighborhood: Fenway

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I am strongly supportive of this effort to sensibly grow our city in key areas with good transit and walkability. We need more housing so badly; and this will allow existing residents to stay in their community and for new folks to join! A true win win for Boston

I also support the emphasis on retail -- we need lots more small scale retail with no restrictions on things like live entertainment etc

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Please keep Placemaking Square subtype in this process. Landmark buildings, like the Pierce in my neighborhood, define our landmark squares, while providing housing & jobs for so many. While scale might vary across the City this subtype makes a lot of sense in more dense parts of the city. I would even support there being no height limit in some districts -- Kenmore square for example could be an amazing extension of the "high spine"

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Can we add small scale corner store style retail to the smallest scale subtype? these stores are community assets & connectors and are often cheaper to rent. Plus they make Boston more interesting.

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. We have also carefully looked at retail and live entertainment size thresholds, allowing us to create more opportunities to allow (or allow with a conditional use permit) smaller uses across S+S districts. Thank you for engaging in the process and please stay engaged going forward.

Timestamp: December 23, 2023 16:01:01

Name: Laurie Radwin

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I appreciate the sincere efforts of the Squares+Streets team members. They clearly are eager for this reform, and make themselves quite available to answer questions and to explain the proposed zoning text amendment. We are being given the chance to comment on the text. However, this does not comprise true community engagement. True community engagement means that the community would have been brought together to help with the drafting of text, to reflect on drafts, and to review revisions. This is how Roslindale's Article 67 zoning code was generated -- and this project was conducted over a reasonable amount of time.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

A letter to Chief Jemison of the BPDA from approximately 120 Boston residents representing 20 organizations and 17 neighborhoods asserted that the zoning text amendment is not ready for "prime time" and that the process should be slowed, if not restarted. Concerns voiced by this group included that we do not know which neighborhoods will be targeted and in what order. Also, goals are not clearly articulated. Specifically, we do not know how much housing will be produced at what rate and at what affordability level. We do not know the goals for retail, laboratory space, office space and the like. Without clearly articulated and measurable goals, who knows where these plans will take us?

There is no clear policy and plan to prevent displacement. New height and stories regulations could mean that older buildings will be razed and new ones put in their place. We in Roslindale know how legacy owners and owners of color have been/will be displaced due to such developments. Owner has turned to the OEI, and they were not able to help financially despite applications for SPACE funds. Our Main Streets does not help these owners. The problem will be similar for renters. Other cities have anti-displacement policies in place -- Boston should, too. These policies need to be in place before Squares+Streets zoning is adopted.

Another serious concern is the definition of transit-rich areas and transit hubs. Roslindale Square has a commuter rail station. The form is there but the function is not. Specifically, the commuter rail runs once per hour, yet few if any Roslindale Square business employees come by commuter rail, as indicated by a BTD survey. We know that the MBTA is not reliable in getting employees to work on time. Riders on our bus lines inbound to Forest Hills report that, at times, the buses are too crowded and a bus rider must wait.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

The zoning text is theoretically driven and the theory is not a bad one. However, the theory can be, inconveniently, altered by facts. Facts include the reality of displacement that has occurred; we can predict with some reliability that it will continue to occur unless policies are put in place before the new zoning is adopted. Transit facts considerably alter the concept of transit-rich areas. Lacking measurable short and long term goals means that we will not be able to measure success or failure of the applied theory. There is merit in our request to slow down or restart the process.

Response:

Thank you for highlighting many of the important policy considerations for Small Area Plans and other city policymaking, as well as the importance of community process in how zoning maps are amended (and thus this zoning is made real). The dimensions and other regulations in the zoning text are based on 5 years of data for real projects, under contemporary building code; rather than theory, we've based this directly on practical drivers. Please stay engaged in the Roslindale Square Small Area Plan going forward.

Timestamp: December 24, 2023 01:19:28

Name: Hugo Olaciregui

Neighborhood: Fenway

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like the increased density

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Need to see higher density, less community engagement (lower chance for nimby derailing initiatives that our city needs), and elimination of parking minimums like Minneapolis, San Francisco and Cambridge.

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: December 26, 2023 13:15:55

Name: Mark ODonnell

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like the fact that parking minimums have been eliminated in this draft text.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I support Abundant Housing MA's position that S5 zoning must be added back to the draft text and objective criteria be used when overlaying these new zones.

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: December 27, 2023 10:12:31

Name: Tim Czerwienski

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This initiative is a step in the right direction towards greater housing abundance and affordability in the city of Boston. It creates a framework the City can use to legalize the kind of homes we need to make Boston an affordable place to live. It also helpfully moves away from an over-reliance on discretionary review, which adds significant inefficiency, delays, and costs to every project. Greater predictability will encourage the creation of more homes throughout the City at all price points. This kind of zoning reform is long overdue and should not be delayed any further.

The elimination of parking minimums in all Squares + Streets districts is an important reform that will reduce the cost of housing, support the City's long term commitments to investing in transit and active transportation, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The land use modernization component is excellent. By updating and simplifying the categories for various residential and commercial property use, it will streamline permitting and support the creation of dynamic streetscapes and neighborhoods across all of Boston.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Previous presentations on the Squares + Streets initiative included the S5: Placemaker Squares district. This district is not included in the draft text amendment. This is a mistake. The BPDA should be stocking its toolbox with as many tools as possible to create more homes and invigorate neighborhoods. Some of the most successful recent redevelopments in the city (including Boylston Street in the Fenway and the Harrison-Albany district) fit the building types contemplated by the S5 district. The existing conditions in any given district should be the absolute floor of what is included in the nearby mapping, and we need to create opportunities for growth beyond that. The BPDA can make the decision where or even if to deploy S5 overlays. That's not an option if it isn't included in the draft language.

It is unclear exactly how the Small Area Plans will be created after this zoning amendment passes. While community engagement is essential, local feedback cannot be the deciding criteria for where S0 through S5 are mapped during the Squares + Streets process. Objective criteria must be used, including proximity to existing business corridors and

transit access. Every neighborhood in Boston must allow for greater density. If we want to equitably address the current housing crisis, loud opposition from wealthy homeowners in one neighborhood should not be allowed to shift even higher density to other areas of the city.

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: December 27, 2023 16:47:35

Name: John Sullivan

Neighborhood: Charlestown

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

That it will lead to more development...and will be predictable for all involved.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

In the draft Building Form Standards table, there is a building width max for each subdistrict. What is unclear is what happens if a property is wider than the maximum lot width? Does it require some kind of internal party wall condition if someone is looking to maximize density? A better approach may be regulating the street wall rather than the building width. This would also larger parcels to be developed more efficiently but also get the massing break if that is the desire. Another idea would be to allow larger projects, subject to A80 Large Project Review, to have some of the building forms such as street walls and massing to be governed by the BCDC process.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. Maximum building width was chosen instead of street wall or frontage ratio as a way to discourage the aggregation of many parcels without a clear limit. BCDC's review will continue to focus on how the massing and public realm of projects can enhance Boston within the framework provided by zoning.

Timestamp: December 28, 2023 09:12:25

Name: Mark Gallagher

Neighborhood: Charlestown

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Absolutely nothing!

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Start over. This is Robert Moses all over again

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

The BPDA cares more about the changing Boston to their will than the citizens they serve.

Response:

All of the BPDA staff working on this project are citizens of Boston. Thanks for your comment.

Timestamp: December 28, 2023 16:25:20

Name: Graham Brown

Neighborhood: East Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that there are options for more density to foster more walkable, inclusive communities. This will allow businesses to open nearby that will help residents run errands on foot or via bike, scooter, transit, and reduce our reliance on cars and parking (which is a very wasteful use of our precious neighborhood and street spaces).

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

People like homeowners who have a financial incentive to restrict development should not be allowed to have influence over development as that is a conflict of interest. Reduce public oversight of these projects and allow for neighborhood input, not neighborhood control. Eliminate the legal instruments that groups have that slow down and increase the cost of development.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Thank you for doing your part to add more housing to our city and create a more livable, less car-oriented Boston. While I know that the city does not control the MBTA, I hope that these efforts can encourage state lawmakers to invest in better transit to complement the work being done here.

Response:

Thank you for these comments. The BPDA recognizes that improving the walkability of our own city is one of the steps needed to ensure that transit will serve our community for years to come. There will be opportunity to raise these concerns in partnership with our transportation consultant and to have them documented in the plan. We look forward to your participation.

Timestamp: December 30, 2023 15:35:19

Name: Lynn Sanders

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This proposed zoning amendment is a step towards greater housing affordability and availability of housing for people at all income levels across the City. Zoning reform in Boston is long overdue and shouldn't be delayed any longer. The language in the draft amendment creates a framework to allow development of the kind of housing Boston needs to be an affordable place to live, while creating a complementary business mix that creates walkable neighborhoods, helping mitigate the need for car ownership. Additionally, by updating and simplifying the various categories for residential and commercial property use, the land use modernization component will streamline permitting and support the creation of dynamic streetscapes across the City. Also of vital importance, the elimination of parking minimums in all Squares + Streets districts will reduce the cost of housing, and support the City's long term commitment to invest in transit and active transportation to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Lastly, this zoning amendment will hugely improve the development process, which is currently cumbersome, creates an over-reliance on discretionary review, which adds significant inefficiency, delays, and costs to every project. This kind of discretionary review on a project-by-project basis allows loud opposition from a minority of wealthy homeowners to block higher density projects in their neighborhoods, shifting density to areas of the city where residents have less influence. Greater predictability in the development process will encourage the creation of more homes throughout the City at all price points.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Previous presentations on the Squares + Streets initiative included the S5: Placemaker Squares district, which is not included in the draft text amendment. I feel excluding this district from amended zoning is a mistake. Amending zoning gives the BPDA the opportunity to stock its toolbox with as many tools as possible to create more homes and maintain and expand walkable neighborhoods, with vibrant business districts that can viably support independent small businesses. The BPDA can decide if it is appropriate to deploy S5 in mapping, but it's not an option if it isn't included in the amendment language. However, to equitably address the current housing crisis, every neighborhood in Boston

must allow for greater density. Some of the most successful recent redevelopments in Boston fit the building types contemplated by the S5 district (i.e. Boylston Street in the Fenway and the Harrison-Albany district). To create opportunities for growth, existing conditions in any given district should be the floor for what is included in the nearby zoning mapping.

Once a zoning amendment passes, the BPDA must ensure that objective criteria is used in mapping Small Area Plans, including proximity to existing business corridors and all forms of transit access (subway, bus, and commuter rail). While community engagement is critical, the most well-resourced city residents have the most time and energy to invest in advocacy for their personal interests, so local feedback cannot be the deciding criteria for where S0 through S5 are mapped. Loud opposition from wealthy homeowners in one neighborhood cannot be allowed to shift higher density to areas of the city where residents have less influence.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

To reiterate its importance: 1) Please include S5: Placemaker Squares district in the zoning amendment to avoid unnecessarily limiting opportunities for growth. 2) Please prioritize objective criteria when mapping Small Area Plans to ensure an equitable process and outcomes.

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: December 30, 2023 22:55:45

Name: Cole

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Elimination of parking minimums in these areas. Explicit acknowledgement of pedestrian activity and a mix of uses. That gas stations, motor vehicle sales/rentals, drive throughs, and airport parking are forbidden. That parking lots and garages are forbidden in most categories and conditional at best. That banks are at best conditional.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

That cannabis retailers are singled out differently from liquor stores, which are included in general retail. All squares should be Restricted Parking Districts. Curb cuts for off street parking are not eliminated.

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback here! We've included cannabis retailers as separate from general retail because of the unique City and State licensing requirements around this use.

The existing Restricted Parking Districts in the City require conditional approval by the Zoning Board of Appeal for any proposed parking lots, parking garages, accessory parking, or ancillary parking for any non-residential uses. With Squares + Streets districts, any standalone parking lots or standalone parking garages would also require conditional approval, even without the designation as a Restricted Parking District. Parking regulations like this will also be an appropriate topic to bring up during the Small Area Plans.

Any new curb cuts for projects in a Squares + Streets District will require an approved Curb Cut Application from the Department of Public Works. We'll be looking deeper at curb cut regulations and off-street parking regulations as part of a broader zoning reform effort in the coming months.

Timestamp: December 31, 2023 11:35:03

Name: Nate Stell

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Several things I like about the draft amendment:

1. I strongly support this effort to increase density in main street areas near transit.
2. I applaud the elimination of parking minimums for small projects in Squares + Streets districts, and would like to see it taken a big step farther by eliminating them entirely citywide. I think that developers, rather than the city, are best incentivized to determine how much parking is needed to meet the demand of their future tenants.
3. I also like the clarity and efficiency these zoning changes can bring to the development process. It's a terrible flaw of our current process that so many projects require variances, which adds time and cost that are inevitably passed on to future tenants.

As someone who favors radically increasing Boston's housing supply, this is low-hanging fruit. There are many thousands of people who want to live here to benefit from and contribute to our city's opportunities. We can make that happen, and we can do so without cannibalizing the things that make the city great to begin with.

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

1. Reinstate the S5 district to the amendment: An earlier version of the Squares + Streets districts included an S5 district for Placemaker squares. I would like to see that added back to the slate of districts in the draft amendment.
2. Add objective criteria for determining how the S+S districts will be mapped: The biggest worry I have with the transition to the Small Area Planning phase is that it'll get bogged down by hyperlocal resistance in certain neighborhoods, and result in an uneven spread of new density throughout the city. The issues that Squares + Streets addresses are bigger than any one neighborhood, so I think it's crucial to proceed with a citywide focus and a commitment to ensuring all neighborhoods do their part to accommodate greater density.

• Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I believe that speed is of the essence. Boston already lags behind other comparable cities in updating our zoning to allow for more housing and density. All this is to say: don't stop or slow down, keep going!

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: December 31, 2023 13:15:49

Name: Thomas Littrell-Greenler

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This initiative is a step in the right direction towards greater housing abundance and affordability in the city of Boston. It creates a framework the City can use to legalize the kind of homes we need to make Boston an affordable place to live. It also helpfully moves away from an over-reliance on discretionary review, which adds significant inefficiency, delays, and costs to every project. Greater predictability will encourage the creation of more homes throughout the City at all price points. This kind of zoning reform is long overdue and should not be delayed any further.

The elimination of parking minimums in all Squares + Streets districts is an important reform that will reduce the cost of housing, support the City's long term commitments to investing in transit and active transportation, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The land use modernization component is excellent. By updating and simplifying the categories for various residential and commercial property use, it will streamline permitting and support the creation of dynamic streetscapes and neighborhoods across all of Boston.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Previous presentations on the Squares + Streets initiative included the S5: Placemaker Squares district. This district is not included in the draft text amendment. This is a mistake. The BPDA should be stocking its toolbox with as many tools as possible to create more homes and invigorate neighborhoods. Some of the most successful recent redevelopments in the city (including Boylston Street in the Fenway and the Harrison-Albany district) fit the building types contemplated by the S5 district. The existing conditions in any given district should be the absolute floor of what is included in the nearby mapping, and we need to create opportunities for growth beyond that. The BPDA can make the decision where or even if to deploy S5 overlays. That's not an option if it isn't included in the draft language.

It is unclear exactly how the Small Area Plans will be created after this zoning amendment passes. While community engagement is essential, local feedback cannot be the deciding criteria for where S0 through S5 are mapped during the Squares + Streets process. Objective criteria must be used, including proximity to existing business corridors and

transit access. Every neighborhood in Boston must allow for greater density. If we want to equitably address the current housing crisis, loud opposition from wealthy homeowners in one neighborhood should not be allowed to shift even higher density to other areas of the city.

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: December 31, 2023 14:16:33

Name: Stefanie

Neighborhood: South Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This work is an important step in rebalancing our zoning to meet the needs of a modern city, where we want a diversity of residents (renters and owners, of all backgrounds and income levels) to find joy and life. I am so happy to finally see work toward seriously changing the zoning code and the ridiculous process that comes with every single project, including all the silly minor categories of zoning types that stifle small businesses. I believe that parking minimums are bad policy based on bad "science" and am glad to see them gone in the Squares and Streets designated areas.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I am disappointed that the highest density zoning proposal (S5) has been removed. This is a mistake and needs to be added back to the final draft. We need to have the *option* for taller buildings in areas well-served by transit. Allowing the potential for this type of zoning doesn't mean all buildings will automatically be so dense.

I am hopeful that the concurrent process to modify development review processes will result in a process that accounts for regional and neighborhood needs and is less reliant on, frankly (and proven by research here in Boston), white, wealthy, older homeowners. They are not the only people in Boston and are overrepresented in "local" processes. Because that engagement work has not yet concluded, the Squares and Streets process *must* identify objective criteria for use in Small Area Plans. This cannot be left up to the same handful of people who have the connections, wealth, and time to be involved. (And, financial stakes in the status quo.) Far more of Boston are renters, are lower-income, and are Black, brown, AAPI, queer, and other identities who are not always welcome to meetings, and if they are, have little time away from familiar and employment responsibilities. Please create criteria now that emphasizes their needs.

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial

characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: January 02, 2024 13:41:41

Name: Elvira Mora

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I applaud the Mayor and the City of Boston for launching the Squares and Streets zoning effort. Modernizing our zoning code with reforms that reduce the need for variances while enhancing simplicity and predictability are long overdue and should be implemented without delay.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Inclusion of the S-5: Placemaker Squares (highest density) District, which was presented in earlier presentations. We strongly believe this must be included in the draft text amendment as we need predictable planning. While community engagement is essential, local feedback cannot be the deciding criteria for where S0 through S5 are mapped during the Squares + Streets process.

Objective criteria must be used, including proximity to existing business corridors and transit access. Every neighborhood in Boston must allow for greater density. If we want to equitably address the current housing crisis, loud opposition from wealthy homeowners in one neighborhood should not be allowed to shift even higher density to other areas of the city. Housing should be built where needed, not just where the public doesn't object to it.

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: January 03, 2024 08:11:06

Name: Chris

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

nothing - this is not meant for establishing proper zoning - it is a bit misguided in that it will not focus on appropriate use for the area

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

the density is inappropriate for some areas. What will be created is a canyon like congested, non-human area. Density only follows when the street width are appropriate and at human scale. Adding this level of density in those areas like West Roxbury's Center st or Roslindale Square, will create a canyon like environment, with buildings that do not fit the neighborhood and are not at human scale. Additionally, the casting of shadows will dramatically change the sunlighting. If you go to other cities, like Paris, NY, London - you may see buildings that are 4-5 stories but the difference is the width of the streets. The distance between is large. Boston is designed in a very condensed landscape, so 2-3 stories work for Boston's landscape in WR and Rosi. There is nothing in the code that specifically calls out that development will NOT create a canyon like environment.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

While for some density in certain areas, it needs to be balanced with the landscape we have. Density does nothing for the quality of life.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. These zoning districts provide a range of options that are based on what is being built in Boston's squares and main streets today. The Small Area Planning process will work with the community to determine which of these zoning districts is appropriate for each square and main street taking street width, existing building heights, and access to transit into consideration.

Timestamp: January 03, 2024 11:33:28

Name: Alison Pultinas

Neighborhood: Mission Hill

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

a loaded question- good to consider citywide goals with planning initiatives but the character of each neighborhood shouldn't be swamped with 6 story boxes buildings.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

needs more clarity around definitions for transit rich neighborhoods. Redundancy is an important concept ,can't depend on just 2 bus routes that might be stuck in traffic. Also are you encouraging small local businesses or pricing them out?

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

A lot of marketing has gone into this effort but there's still so much that's vague and idealistic. My personal question is about Tremont Street in Mission Hill-factors to consider are topography, significant views that should be protected and the location of civic buildings. Also related to traffic and noise is the ambulance routes for the Longwood hospitals not to mention the helicopters..

Response:

Thank you for the note. Squares + Streets is about more than just transit rich areas, but to your point we will be working with a transportation consultant to develop clear analysis and make recommendations to improve the types of concerns you are raising. Squares + Streets is also about ensuring every Bostonian – current and future – has access to neighborhoods with everyday resources and services is foundational to Boston's commitment to affordability, resilience, and equity. As Boston's population grows by over 12% to 800,000 simply providing more housing is essential, but access to housing alone will not produce the high quality of life Bostonians deserve

When housing growth is paired with an abundance of commercial, civic, cultural, and transportation resources, residents and businesses appreciate benefits beyond access to housing (lower transportation spending, reduced space dedicated to parking, larger pool of business patrons, small CO2 footprints, efficient delivery of City services, etc.)

Zoning that does not match the built environment, which is true for many of the types of locations that may be eligible for Squares + Streets, makes for a longer, more expensive, more opaque development process.

We also look forward to our Urban Design team's work to document the architecturally unique elements of each Square which will complement this zoning and guide how development projects take shape.

Timestamp: January 03, 2024 11:37:02

Name: Benjamin Muller

Neighborhood: East Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like the additional variety of uses available, including maintaining residential uses in squares as an option. I also really appreciate focus on not encouraging the combining of smaller parcels into larger ones, as those projects have been much less welcoming and engaging in my neighborhood.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I think more uses could be made as of right, particularly small-scale craft / industry / retail uses that are called out specifically in use tables today, either by further consolidating use labels or by explicitly allowing them.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I'm curious how this aligns with the proposed zoning in PLAN: East Boston. The East Boston proposal dramatically increases the area zoned as MFR/LS from a few corners to roughly half of my part of the neighborhood, but the use tables for MFR/LS were not changed in that proposal. The result is that MFR/LS has more restrictive uses than ground-floor residential parcels in much of the neighborhood, despite the intention appearing to be the opposite. Will the proposed MFR/LS zones in PLAN: East Boston's proposal be converted to one of these S zones?

Response:

Based on the input of residents participating in PLAN: East Boston and elected officials, MFR/LS and other Squares and Corridors areas in PLAN: East Boston are being codified through changes to Article 53 and not included in Squares + Streets.

Timestamp: January 03, 2024 12:56:39

Name: Evan Zinner

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

More mixed use zoning options

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

In many of the new zoning districts, there are uses that are conditionally allowed. That sounds good in theory. However, my experience with this conditional approval process makes me think we should stay away from conditional approvals. Even if you meet all of the conditions, it can take well over a year to get approved. It's nearly impossible for a small business to deal with that uncertainty and those long timelines. We should just allow what we want to allow and stay away from conditional approvals.

Response:

Conditional uses permits are needed for uses that may or may not be appropriate for the area and therefore require some level of individual review. We are taking other steps to minimize the burden this puts on business owners, such as eliminating the need for many variances (which will shorten the back-log at the ZBA).

Timestamp: January 03, 2024 16:57:14

Name: Prashant Swami

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that it zones for additional housing and mixed use in key areas, providing supply to a critically low amount of housing in the city in a sustainable fashion.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I think if anything, height limits should be increased and zones should be larger. We need to be doing anything and everything to increase market rate housing supply.

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: January 03, 2024 18:08:01

Name: Andrea Rasmussen

Neighborhood: South End

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

curious how this will turn into another bonanza for developers (with kickbacks to bpda)

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

who will benefit?

Response:

Thank you for your comment. All of the City of Boston should benefit from a Zoning Code that works and the BPDA's zoning reform efforts are aimed at improving the function of our Zoning Code and better align it with citywide goals.

Timestamp: January 03, 2024 20:09:04

Name: Jaimie McNeil

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Zoning requires consensus building and this is a very thoughtful and innovative approach to consensus building

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

As we have seen in recent years, hotels with compact rooms and little amenity space are quite popular. A <50k sq ft hotel can have well over 120 rooms and produce the same number of guests and therefore impacts as a >50 sq ft "large" hotel with larger rooms.

My suggestion would be to either a. make small hotels conditional in S3 and S4 so each hotel proposal can be vetted based on its impacts or b. change the definition of "small hotel" from 50k sq ft or less to 50 rooms or less so there is a more accurate representation of the number of guest rooms and therefore impact on the neighborhood.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Great job at creating an inclusive and innovative process. Thank you!

Response:

Thank you for your detailed comment, which we have received from others in the hospitality field. We have updated the size threshold so that all Hotels over 50 rooms will be considered Large. We also maintained the threshold that all Hotels over 50,000 sq ft will be Large because this will allow the requirement of linkage fees. The update thresholds are as follows:

Small - Less than 50 guest rooms and total square footage less than 50,000 square feet.

Large - At least 50 guest rooms and total square footage greater than or equal to 50,000 square feet

Timestamp: January 03, 2024 20:18:52

Name: Colleen Doonan

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

More housing needs to be built along major T-lines to decrease rent and make Boston more affordable to live in as a working class individual. This initiative will hopefully address these concerns with it's amendment.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

N/A

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I would love to see this amendment applied to as much of Boston as applicable. We desperately need affordable housing and becoming more liberal with zoning and building would help that.

Response:

Thank you for your comments. While the specifics of Squares + Streets will not be appropriate for all parts of Boston, housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform work. Please stay tuned for additional zoning amendments here: www.bostonplans.org/zoning.

Timestamp: January 04, 2024 10:56:40

Name: Zack, Maddie, Skylar, and Zoe DeClerck

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Our family is in strong support of these changes, especially the removal of parking minimums and increased residential density. These changes will make Boston more livable, vibrant, and accessible. We look forward to our kids being able to enjoy a more walkable vibrant city without the constant fear of being hit by a car.

In order for this vision to succeed, we need to build up and allow more people to live in neighborhood centers.

Here in Egleston Square, there is a vibrant community of Dominican-owned small businesses with loyal customers. Many of these costumers used to walk to the businesses but now drive because the housing shortage has pushed them further away from the neighborhood.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Placemaker Squares were part of earlier S+S presentations, but were not included in the draft zoning language. The BPDA should be stocking its toolbox w as many tools as possible to create more homes & invigorate all our neighborhoods. Some of the most successful recent redevelopments in the city fit the building types contemplated by the S5 district. We need it included in this reform.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

We hope the city has the courage to be bold and definitive with these changes. Scaling back and being more incremental will not help the future of Boston and those of us who call the city home and would like to keep calling the city home.

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment.

Timestamp: January 04, 2024 11:01:04

Name: Larry Winer

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Nothing

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Where is the resident parking? All the city does is make life worse for residents while catering to commuters and non-Bostonians.

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to comment here! While properties within Squares + Streets Districts will not require a minimum amount of parking, they may be allowed to build it if they identify that as a need. Constructing parking can be expensive and limit feasibility for affordable housing, and can take up additional space on a site that could otherwise be used for permeable open space and amenities for residents.

The Small Area Plans will also be an opportunity to work on parking strategies for an entire area by working with our colleagues in the Transportation Department and Public Works Department to review curbside parking regulations within the Public Right of Way.

Timestamp: January 04, 2024 12:56:36

Name: Jakob Rodriguez-Seoane

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I appreciate the effort to modernize our zoning codes with reforms that reduce the need for variances while enhancing simplicity and predictability. These are long overdue and should be implemented without delay.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I support higher density squares, specifically the inclusion of the S-5: Placemaker Squares. District, which was presented in earlier presentations. I strongly believe this must be included in the draft text amendment as we need predictable planning. While community engagement is essential, local feedback cannot be a veto point or deciding criteria for where S0 through S5 are mapped during the Squares + Streets process.

Objective criteria must be used, including proximity to existing business corridors and transit access. Every neighborhood in Boston must allow for greater density. If we want to equitably address the current housing crisis, loud opposition from wealthy homeowners in one neighborhood should not be allowed to shift even higher density to other areas of the city. The investment interests of homeowners can not be allowed to determine where we as a city allow development. Housing should be built where needed, not just where the public doesn't object to it.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Boston, being the country's college town has the chance to be a city that huge swathes of the country call home and start their careers. If we made it cheaper for recent graduates and long time BIPOC residents to stay in our city we have the opportunity to create both a community renaissance and make Boston the Human Capital epicenter of the nation. This can only happen if we accept higher density and fundamental zoning reform.

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small

Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: January 04, 2024 21:32:48

Name: Thomas Hanno

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Daylighting intersections and reducing the speed of traffic will make it much safer for me when I'm biking to the store or the farmers market in Roslindale. I often bike with my kids on the back so it's nice if drivers are encouraged to drive more safely.

We used to live by Archdale/South Street and that intersection was a nightmare. Happy to see it's going to have a crosswalk and a little island thing!

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I'd love the speed humps all over the place. Like, on every street. (Or just make them super narrow so that drivers have to be much more careful, maybe by adding a bike lane...)

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I really appreciate the work being done on making streets safer for everyone.

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback here! While the proposed Squares + Streets Zoning regulates private property, the Small Area Plans will be a great opportunity to bring up these points when talking about the Public Right of Way.

We'd also encourage you to look at the Safety Surge program (<https://www.boston.gov/transportation/safety-surge>) that's being conducted by the Boston Transportation Department; they are working on implementing speed humps, signal changes, and other street design tools to make neighborhoods more comfortable for walking and biking.

Timestamp: January 05, 2024 15:50:32

Name: Matt Lawlor

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I think the zoning text amendment is headed in the right direction and is long overdue. We continue to labor under an ongoing housing crisis with no end in sight and so I applaud the administration on trying to find ways to unlock development potential in key squares and corridors that have significant existing mixed-use development and high levels of non-motor vehicular access (whether that's by foot, bike, or transit) to shopping, entertainment, and services. These amendments feel like they're finally playing to our city's strengths instead of trying to remake Boston in the decades-old, disproven, auto-focused suburban image that most of the zoning code tries to create.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Nothing at this time. I would reserve further comments for the specific planning efforts around each zoning district when brought forward for adoption on the ground.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I note that at least one respondent has used this additional comment box to complain about the recent safety improvements on Centre Street in West Roxbury. Please count me as someone who fully supports and appreciates those changes and looks forward to more such changes citywide. Thank you.

Response:

Thank you. There is a great deal of work to be done and Squares + Streets is a first step. Additionally, we are working with BTM to coordinate their transportation improvements along with our ongoing planning processes.

Timestamp: January 05, 2024 17:02:20

Name: Adam Shutes

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This is a welcome move in the right direction. Zoning needs reform, and needs to reflect the current and future city and not the City of 'Yesterday' where rules were unclear and confusing and didn't (and don't) match the City as it grew. I like the direct focus on areas of transit. The bottom line is we need more housing to be built with mixed zoning to produce liveable and self-sufficient (to some extent) neighborhoods. We need the zoning code to reflect the modern GROWING city.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Perhaps some way of helping small businesses and minority owned businesses exist in these vibrant areas (and when I say small, I'm talking < 10 employees).

Response:

We're looking forward to working on small business supports as part of the Small Area Plan for Roslindale - hope to see you there. The City's Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion also has existing programs to support small businesses, more of which can be found here:

<https://www.boston.gov/government/cabinets/economic-opportunity-and-inclusion>.

Timestamp: January 05, 2024 17:13:28

Name: Michael Rasalan

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Hyperlocal involvement, respect for neighborhood uniqueness and needs and focus on community engagement.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Nothing more.

Response:

Please stay involved with our Small Area Plans, which are intended to provide hyperlocal involvement. Our Urban Design team will also be a huge part of this process and we look forward to receiving additional recommendations for how to elevate each neighborhood's unique qualities.

Timestamp: January 06, 2024 12:49:27

Name: Kaleigh

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Happy with neighborhood growth while supporting beautification of existing structure.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Sidewalk repairs

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I have a question about the pryde project.

The new sidewalks abutting the building are so beautiful, thank you. When the city tore up Harvard ave years ago they ruined the sidewalks and now the juxtaposition of brand new versus decrepit sidewalks on either side of Harvard ave (and maybe surrounding Webster/central) looks awful. Is the city willing to address the other crumbling sidewalks in direct view and of use to this project?

Response:

The City of Boston uses the following process to determine repairs and new sidewalks: Constituents should use 311 to note repairs that are needed. Every request is evaluated for a safe repair, which, if needed, will either be done right away if it can be or flagged for permanent repair. The permanent repairs are done on longer timelines and the prioritization includes consideration of proximity to key destinations like transit and healthcare, as well as socio-economic need.

Timestamp: January 06, 2024 15:06:24

Name: Diane

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

too soon to say...Let's see if this really works and the residents are truly listened to. STOP the exemptions.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

STOP the exemptions.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Please FIX the DAMN sidewalks. They are a mess. And how about some of those flashing crossing signs like OTHER communities have and more STOP signs at smaller side st intersections...like OTHER communities have., And while you are at it. HP has so FEW NO PARKING due to street cleaning sections, like OTHER communities have.....so only the middle of the street gets swept because cars are parked along the curb....so why bother at all??? STOP NEGLECTING HYDE PARK.

Response:

Thank you for commenting. The goal of updated zoning is to stop relying on exemptions to allow the development Boston needs, and instead to plan for it and establish updated zoning rules that work. Please stay engaged in the Small Area Plan for Cleary Square.

Timestamp: January 06, 2024 17:11:41

Name: Barbara Parmenter

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I strongly support a citywide approach to zoning, and the S+S text amendments are a very good start, focusing on corridors, squares and areas near transit. This approach, applying citywide zoning districts to individual neighborhoods via small area plans seems like good planning - have the discussions around this more comprehensive look at an area, decide the zoning districts, then let development proceed more smoothly if it is in accordance with the updated zoning. I strongly support the strong focus on housing in the S+S text amendments, and I think the potential layering of zones (increasing density) will offer good opportunities to transition from less to more density. The zoning will support much more active streets and good street design. I like that parking minimums have been removed. We need to build for the future, not the past, and encourage as many people as possible to use transit and other non-vehicle options.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Nothing at the moment

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I have concerns about how local businesses will fare with updated zoning and potentially more development around them. The city will need to coordinate across agencies to support the survival of small businesses within new development, and also to manage impacts of construction on access to small businesses. And in general, construction mitigation may have to become a city responsibility, not just the responsibility of individual developers if many projects are going at once (as we see now with Western Ave in Brighton).

Response:

BPDA staff and the Planning Advisory Council are also presently working on an anti-displacement strategy with attention to residential, commercial, and arts and culture displacement concerns. The City does have programs that work towards alleviating anti-displacement issues, but those programs have not been packaged as an anti-displacement toolkit in the past. This process will be an opportunity to better package

and identify needs within those existing City resources for anti-displacement. Thanks for highlighting that construction mitigation should also be a focus of this effort.

Timestamp: January 06, 2024 19:23:55

Name: Rani Schloss

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I agree with the comments submitted by Abundant Housing MA -

This initiative is a step in the right direction towards greater housing abundance and affordability in the city of Boston. It creates a framework the City can use to legalize the kind of homes we need to make Boston an affordable place to live. It also helpfully moves away from an over-reliance on discretionary review, which adds significant inefficiency, delays, and costs to every project. Greater predictability will encourage the creation of more homes throughout the City at all price points. This kind of zoning reform is long overdue and should not be delayed any further.

The elimination of parking minimums in all Squares + Streets districts is an important reform that will reduce the cost of housing, support the City's long term commitments to investing in transit and active transportation, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The land use modernization component is excellent. By updating and simplifying the categories for various residential and commercial property use, it will streamline permitting and support the creation of dynamic streetscapes and neighborhoods across all of Boston.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I agree with the comments submitted by Abundant Housing MA -

Previous presentations on the Squares + Streets initiative included the S5: Placemaker Squares district. This district is not included in the draft text amendment. This is a mistake. The BPDA should be stocking its toolbox with as many tools as possible to create more homes and invigorate neighborhoods. Some of the most successful recent redevelopments in the city (including Boylston Street in the Fenway and the Harrison-Albany district) fit the building types contemplated by the S5 district. The existing conditions in any given district should be the absolute floor of what is included in the nearby mapping, and we need to

create opportunities for growth beyond that. The BPDA can make the decision where or even if to deploy S5 overlays. That's not an option if it isn't included in the draft language.

It is unclear exactly how the Small Area Plans will be created after this zoning amendment passes. While community engagement is essential, local feedback cannot be the deciding criteria for where S0 through S5 are mapped during the Squares + Streets process. Objective criteria must be used, including proximity to existing business corridors and transit access. Every neighborhood in Boston must allow for greater density. If we want to equitably address the current housing crisis, loud opposition from wealthy homeowners in one neighborhood should not be allowed to shift even higher density to other areas of the city.

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: January 06, 2024 20:04:29

Name: James Wang

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like the proposed uses. I believe that they will help the city be more vibrant.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Seems fine from a skim.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

We desperately need more housing as the vacancy rate in Boston is very low and rents are rising as a result of our housing shortage. For sustainable development, as much new housing should be located near areas with good transit, and I believe that Streets and Squares aims to do this.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. Increased housing production is a key goal of Squares + Streets and the City's overall zoning reform work.

Timestamp: January 07, 2024 11:38:53

Name: Ellie Littrell-Greenler

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This initiative is a step in the right direction towards greater housing abundance and affordability in the city of Boston. It creates a framework the City can use to legalize the kind of homes we need to make Boston an affordable place to live. It also helpfully moves away from an over-reliance on discretionary review, which adds significant inefficiency, delays, and costs to every project. Greater predictability will encourage the creation of more homes throughout the City at all price points. This kind of zoning reform is long overdue and should not be delayed any further. The elimination of parking minimums in all Squares + Streets districts is an important reform that will reduce the cost of housing, support the City's long term commitments to investing in transit and active transportation, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The land use modernization component is excellent. By updating and simplifying the categories for various residential and commercial property use, it will streamline permitting and support the creation of dynamic streetscapes and neighborhoods across all of Boston.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Previous presentations on the Squares + Streets initiative included the S5: Placemaker Squares district. This district is not included in the draft text amendment. This is a mistake. The BPDA should be stocking its toolbox with as many tools as possible to create more homes and invigorate neighborhoods. Some of the most successful recent redevelopments in the city (including Boylston Street in the Fenway and the Harrison-Albany district) fit the building types contemplated by the S5 district. The existing conditions in any given district should be the absolute floor of what is included in the nearby mapping, and we need to create opportunities for growth beyond that. The BPDA can make the decision where or even if to deploy S5 overlays. That's not an option if it isn't included in the draft language. It is unclear exactly how the Small Area Plans will be created after this zoning amendment passes. While community engagement is essential, local feedback cannot be the deciding criteria for where S0 through S5 are mapped during the Squares + Streets process. Objective criteria must be used, including proximity to existing business corridors and transit access. Every neighborhood in Boston must allow for greater density. If we want to equitably address the current housing crisis, loud opposition from wealthy homeowners in

one neighborhood should not be allowed to shift even higher density to other areas of the city.

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: January 08, 2024 08:03:09

Name: Charlie DiRienzo

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Ensuring mixed-use buildings and larger number of dwellings per land lot in neighborhood square districts

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Increasing the number of dwellings per lot allowed in S0 districts from 14 to 20 or a similar number.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Can you please ensure that recordings of meetings are provided after completion? Many people are unable to make meetings due to work or other obligations so a recording would be very helpful. Thank you!

Response:

Recordings of all public meetings are made available on the BPDA website, usually a day or two after they take place. The purpose of the districts with densities higher than S0 is to allow them to provide greater housing production, while S0 is more useful as a transition to existing residential areas. The S0 district is also sized to reflect predominant residential lot patterns, and to be below Art 80E Small Project Review thresholds (at 15 units).

Timestamp: January 08, 2024 13:59:02

Name: Conor

Neighborhood: South End

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I love that it makes for more vibrant squares with more housing / things to do at ground level, and generally more space for people. Our city has too much space taken up by cars that destroy the quality of the public areas. Tightening roads / giving more space to people will make Boston an infinitely better city, even if it requires hard change.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Even more space for housing, larger public squares

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: January 08, 2024 14:09:37

Name: Stephen Farlow

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Allows some more density

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Does not allow enough density by right. Should be very clear that these squares can be built up without a lengthy approval process

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

The city should allow more dense housing everywhere by right. Legalize triple deckers!

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: January 08, 2024 14:41:26

Name: Milan Patel

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Higher Density and less parking near transit station

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Currently, the area near Cleary Sq, Dana/Hyde Park Ave, River Street and Hyde Park Station is zoned as NS-2.

I think this would be an excellent opportunity for a revision from NS-2 to either S3 or S4 district.

Being within 100-300 feet to the commuter rail station should be a definite use for higher residential density.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Plus the BPDA owned lot on Pingree Street, abuts the MBTA Station, should be considered for S4. Currently the Pingree lot is being used as a parking lot.

Please clarify the use of car stackers and loading bays within the amendments. Currently ISD is flagging the use of stackers in recent project for zoning violations due to maneuverability. Same for 12'x25' loading bays.

Will there be any changes to small and large project thresholds? Such as any project over 50,000GSF as large and below as small.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the community feedback process. Thank you.

Response:

Thank you for these detailed comments - both about Hyde Park and the zoning code more broadly. The BPDA is working on parallel processes across the code, including Article 80 modernization and a look at our parking standards. We look forward to the Hyde Park Small Area Plan process.

Timestamp: January 08, 2024 16:12:41

Name: Joshua Terry

Neighborhood: Allston

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I'm glad to see better standardization and upzoning intentions in the new zoning and I'm happy to see Boston putting the challenges with building community through housing + commerce in squares front and center.

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

1. The minimum parking standards are so incredibly high, these should be completely eliminated for housing near squares given the city's environmental goals and mode-shift desires. We already admit this is suitable for affordable housing & "small projects", why not extend to large scale, market rate buildings in these zones as well? Not just "small projects" but ALL projects. Let the market decide what parking demand is.
2. Please allow for greater height near transit, I see no reason for 7 stories being a max by right.
3. Focus on making these zoning changes BY RIGHT not conditional, "concerned citizens" stonewall far too many projects.
4. Lets incentivize mixed use buildings with even lower parking minimums given the efficacies between daytime business use and overnight housing use.
5. The limits on buildings per lot and floorplate sizes won't have the intended anti-displacement outcomes, it'll just limit development and shift higher-income/cost housing towards renos of existing housing stock. Incentivize % of affordable housing in new developments but limiting size and density won't possibly help keep prices low.
6. Why are we requiring private outdoor amenities in S2-S4? All this does is drive up cost, why not let renters and buyers decide what amenities are important to them?

Response:

Thank you for your comments.

1. There will be no parking requirements for projects of any size in any Squares + Street zoning district.

2. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment, which will provide additional height and density beyond the 7 stories allowed in S4.
3. All projects that comply with the dimensions required in each zoning district will be as-of-right.
4. The S3, S4, and S5 districts will incentivize mixed-use development by requiring Active Uses to be included on the ground floor of new buildings.
5. The maximum floorplate sizes were chosen based on building code thresholds and current building trends, and are meant to strike a balance between being generous enough to ensure buildability and restrictive enough to discourage parcel aggregation.
6. The Outdoor Amenity Space requirements may include both private and publicly accessible space.

Timestamp: January 08, 2024 17:31:30

Name: Marcos Rodriguez

Neighborhood: Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

They will allow for more transit oriented and dense areas that will help with the housing crisis. We need more of this.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It is backwards and I do not agree at all with the fact that these types of buildings will STILL need a time consuming and biased (towards the wealthy, homeowners) community outreach step. We voted for the council and their pro housing initiatives. We voted for Mayor Wu for her policies. There needs to be more urgency because the housing costs are rising to absurd levels that are having a huge ripple effect to things from homelessness and mental disease to child hunger. This is a public health emergency and needs to be treated with that level of urgency. We should not be bringing this up for further discussion where wealthy people will argue that the "character" of their neighborhood would be ruined when the other side can't even attend the engagement process because they are struggling to afford shelter.

The zoning policy should also explicitly reduce parking. Housing costs need to go down and it is proven that removing parking will not only help with that, but will reduce congestion, increase safety for all road users, and even lower childhood asthma rates. These areas should be transit oriented and be geared towards pedestrians, transit users, and bicyclists. Too many people are killed by drivers. Our infrastructure needs to prevent and end this violence. All new developments should commit to having streamlined transit entrances, concrete protected or curb level bike lanes, and pedestrian safety improvements such as raised crosswalks, curb bumpouts, and more narrow travel lanes.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Reiterating that this zoning amendment's effectiveness will be lowered extremely with long and biased community engagement steps. Boston voted for this already when they elected the Mayor and said no to candidates that ran on specifically anti development/anti housing policies. This administration needs to know that they have support. The loud minority has

the privilege to complain about this or doesn't understand how housing works will always be there.

Response:

The Small Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: January 08, 2024 20:48:26

Name: Colin

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Form based zoning, streamlined and faster building of much needed housing

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I'd like support for more density. Any lot within a half mile of a subway station or bus route with 10 minute headways or less should be zoned for 6 stories of housing at a minimum. I'd like mixed use and commercial zoning to be able to easily shift to housing to meet demand (eg. Automatic approval for housing on a lot zoned for offices if the property owner wishes to change)

Response:

Thank you for your comment. Increased housing production is a key goal of Squares + Streets. While the specifics of Squares + Streets will not be appropriate for all parts of Boston, housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform project.

Timestamp: January 08, 2024 23:42:21

Name: Susan Rutkiewicz

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I don't know I have an experience it before and I can't comprehend it unless I see an example

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I don't know much about it

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I would like to see some photos of what you're talking about or a video

Response:

Please see the 1/10 Presentation and Recording

(<https://www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/calendar/2024/01/10/squares-streets-citywide-draft-zoning-amendment>) for photo and illustrated examples of the districts, as well as

the Land Use Modernization Visual Guide

(<https://www.bostonplans.org/documents/zoning/squares-streets-zoning-districts/land-use-visualization-guide>). I hope these are helpful to better understanding the districts, and

hope you will stay involved in the process as the zoning of specific places is studied, recommendations developed, and a new zoning map created in the planning process.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 06:37:25

Name: Rhonda Textor

Neighborhood: Charlestown

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I am in favor of any approach that updates and modernizes zoning in a way that encourages development, housing, and more walkable neighborhoods.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

n/a

Response:

Thank you for your comments. The BPDA is actively continuing to pursue many of these broader goals alongside Squares + Streets, both this year and more broadly in an ongoing manner. Please stay tuned to www.bostonplans.org/zoning for additional updates.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 07:07:19

Name: Matt

Neighborhood: I don't live in Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The increase in simplicity and the increased density and volume of housing.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Some requirements to encourage more access for public and non-car based transit modes as part of the zoning redevelopment.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I live in Union Square in Somerville so I am impacted by these changes and hope they continue to bring down the cost of Boston development and the total duration to create more housing development.

Response:

Thank you for your comments. Squares + Streets districts seek to maintain bike parking requirements and to clarify and simplify loading as well. We hope to work with residents and stakeholders to make additional recommendations around transportation modes/needs in the plans. The BPDA is actively continuing to pursue many of these broader goals alongside Squares + Streets, both this year and more broadly in an ongoing manner.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 07:08:01

Name: Barnabas Furth

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that the city is starting to think about this! We have to plan for more growth and it can't be through variances for every project

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Bring back the S5! We need so much more housing than most people can imagine. Increase the density of every single section

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

We need more homes. Every T station should be surrounded by apartments of 10+ stories. We need more homes for more people and we need them ASAP

Response:

Thanks for your note. We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. While the specifics of Squares + Streets will not be appropriate for all parts of Boston, housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform project.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 07:09:16

Name: Hope Perry

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

That our squares can get bigger

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

There should be greater density. Make every T stop an S5

• Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

We need to build more homes and I would like to see greater default density in all squares

Response:

Thank you for your note. Increased housing production is a key goal of Squares + Streets and the City's overall zoning reform work. While the specifics of Squares + Streets will not be appropriate for all parts of Boston, housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform project.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 07:11:10

Name: Josiah furth

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It will make it easier for developers to pencil projects

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The S5 should come back and we should increase the density of all plans

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Boston needs more housing and we should therefore push for max density across all squares. Centre St in JP should be all 5-10 story buildings

Response:

Thank you for your note. Increased housing production is a key goal of Squares + Streets and the City's overall zoning reform work. Additionally, we've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 07:12:51

Name: Charlie Furth

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that the city is planning for my future

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The densities are too low in the current plan. Also the S5 should not have been removed

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I would like to buy a home in Boston one day. Unless we build tens of thousands of new homes, that will never be possible. Increase the density across the blard

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 08:17:03

Name: Robert Wilson

Neighborhood: South End

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would like it to be easier for developers to build more affordable residences. Additionally, I would like the process for permitting and approvals for these developments to be fast-tracked. Ultimately, I believe the Squares + Streets zoning districts is designed to encourage more and easier development of residences, without hinderance from one or a few loud voices in a neighborhood who don't represent the will of that community but are allowed to delay and derail otherwise necessary developments.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would like the ability of people in neighboring neighborhoods to have the ability to weigh in and support or voice their lack of support for projects. For example, I live in the South End. I don't think I should be able to comment on developments in neighborhoods that are not near me (e.g., JP, Roslinddale, Charlestown, etc). However, I don't feel like I have any input on development in Chinatown, Southie, Back Bay, Bay Village, even though these neighborhoods are all very close to me. I'd like to see more input from adjacent neighborhoods to help bring more change and add more voices to the process. However, I feel like if you aren't in that particular neighborhood your voice is not heard.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I would like to see a priority on greenlighting multi use developments with commercial properties on the ground floor and residences above. I would like to see more done to develop more affordable housing. I don't see enough of this.

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 09:17:57

Name: Patrick Snyder

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

More varied, dense uses. Provisions for accessory dwelling units.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Clearer expectations/enforcement of farther back setbacks for all parcels, including Main Street ones. Too often I now see buildings built right up onto the sidewalk, which makes the urban landscape look too synonymous. It lacks breathing room.

Response:

Thank you for your comments. All projects built in a Squares + Street zoning district will be required to comply with the setbacks requirements. The less intense districts provide for greater setbacks. Our Urban Design colleagues will be working closely with the planners during the planning process to identify and document what makes each neighborhood unique in such a way that design guidelines will help to maintain and bolster these identities. These districts set a maximum size for what gets built, but there are still a number of ways that projects will get shaped beyond zoning:

Most projects built in these districts will be at the Article 80 scale, meaning BPDA staff and community voices will be able to work with each project to help it fit in with its specific context.

The Boston Design Vision

(<https://www.bostonplans.org/urban-design/boston-design-vision>) is a city initiative working to understand how residents can see themselves in the buildings and outdoor spaces that define our city, and especially how local, cultural, and historic differences can be implemented in design. This project is currently exploring how to embed itself within development review, design review, and other city processes.

Small Area Plans will include a comprehensive vernacular analysis exploring on-the-ground built conditions unique to each plan area.

Additionally, the Small Area Planning process will work with the community to determine which of these zoning districts is appropriate for each area, taking patterns of existing setbacks into consideration.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 09:19:26

Name: Helene Fakhery

Neighborhood: Charlestown

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Density results in crowded neighborhoods and is not done thoughtfully existing residents will be negatively impacted with over overcrowding, congestion and unhealthy living conditions. The mayor and the BPDA ask for comments, hold virtual meetings and then votes the way the mayor wants them too. It's not a democratic process and why bother asking for comments when they are ignored! How about building more housing outside Boston and all over Massachusetts so that no city is negatively impacted? Do you wonder why so many tax paying residents are leaving MA? Your policies and plans to double the population of Charlestown is making many reconsider living here. I did not move to Charlestown to live in a "dense" congested community. My job requires a car. Boston will continue to lose tax paying residents and instead be supporting those with housing and food subsidies. Overcrowded Boston, you will encourage residents to leave.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Be democratic. Put all suggestions to a vote and let the community weigh in. If the majority is against scrap the idea which should have been done with the constitution inn project. Also start to fast track building homes on Long Island so you can house those who are chronically homeless, and will require life time tax paying dollars to live under a roof. You can use ferries for transit until the bridge is repaired. Thus far you don't listen to residents and the article 80 process is broken and favors developer and there is no consideration to the residents as clearly done with the approval of the constitution Inn bringing in 48 PSH units for those addicts and those with mental illnesses into a small quiet and safe community like the Navy Yard.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Start listening to the majority of your constituents. We need more housing but no one community should be burdened and expected to double its population. Spread housing development all over Mass and don't allow PSH homeless housing in areas that are solely residential and don't have medical recovery resources to support the needs of the chronically homeless and mental illness. Also with any PSH housing it must go through a

IAG and not to allow resident a to weigh in is not democratic, or.fair. If your goal is to encourage law abiding , tax, paying residents to move, you're doing a great job with your strategy!

Response:

Thank you for commenting. We value all of our residents in the City of Boston. You may have heard of the MBTA Communities Law

(<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/multi-family-zoning-requirement-for-mbta-communities>), which will help ensure housing development happens across Massachusetts. However, as the City of Boston, we can only zone for what happens within our own borders.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 10:48:29

Name: Timothy Horn

Neighborhood: Fenway

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

See below

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Re: Text Amendment Application No. 518 – Waiver of Affordable Housing Article 80 Dear Commissioners,

Fenway Civic Association (FCA) is the Fenway's oldest volunteer organization that accepts no public or developer funds. Our mission is to promote a safe and vital neighborhood that serves the interest of our residents. We are writing regarding the proposed zoning amendment for Affordable Housing.

Fenway Civic has long supported the need to provide housing for city residents. Our consensus-based rezoning in the early 2000's created expanded height and density specifically for housing related development and recognized already existing gaps, seeking to create affordable housing and prioritizing the creation of housing at the 80-120% AMI level, recognized by the task force and community as in short supply.

We also support the need to preserve existing affordable housing in cases where building rehabilitation is needed and understand that undue delays in those processes cause harm. However, we unequivocally oppose the zoning text amendment that would waive requirements of Large Project Review to construct new Projects and place sole discretion in the hands of the BRA.

Zoning is intended to be applied evenly across the city, creating protection from impacts that would harm people and their environment. Until now, citizen review has been a critical part of development processes, working under the assumption that communities should be engaged in and able to meaningfully shape development and express views on its impacts. To singly circumvent or weaken those already fragile protections to accommodate a narrowly defined purpose is a step towards ineffective city governance and a loss of confidence in its ability to provide predictable and consistent protections for everyone. We as a city need to make holistic, long-term plans that ensure city planning supports sustainable building and protection of natural assets; that development is supported by adequate transportation; and that it is equitable and conducted in a transparent manner. Each time public processes are removed, this system is weakened and made more meaningless.

We ask the Zoning Commission to suspend approval of this amendment and to specifically oppose the removal of Article 80 review for projects that create (not rehabilitate) affordable housing.

Sincerely,

Tim Horn

President, Fenway Civic Association

Response:

This text amendment is not part of Squares + Streets zoning text amendment and is on the agenda for a procedural vote at the February 15, 2024 Zoning Commission.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 11:09:13

Name: David Benman

Neighborhood: Allston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It will lead to more housing and be done on a quick time-frame, removal of parking minimums

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Allow single stair buildings by-right. Allow multiple buildings per lot in S0 and S1 - possibility of row-houses, accessory units, additions, and other creative housing solutions. Increase max building heights in S3 and S4 or consider eliminating them all together. More housing!

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

More housing! The rent is too high

Response:

Thank you for your comment. Multiple detached buildings per lot are not allowed in S0 and S1 to discourage the combination of many small parcels to create developments that are out of scale with where these districts may be mapped; however attached buildings, such as rowhomes, that meet the dimensional requirements are allowed. Additionally, we are excited to include the S5 district as an additional option in the draft zoning amendment, which will provide additional height and density beyond what is allowed in S3 and S4. We will be working this year to enable accessory dwelling units across the City, which will be a more expansive change than exclusively in Squares + Streets. The regulation of building egress and how it affects building types, such as "single stair" buildings, is regulated by the statewide building code.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 11:43:47

Name: Rob Kerth

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

These zoning districts look like an improvement on much of the current zoning, and it would be great to see as-of-right approval for projects along e.g. the Washington St or Centre St corridors in JP. Elimination of parking requirements is good, and I appreciate the focus on simplifying the process of construction - we've seen too many projects that would have delivered needed housing fall apart during the current lengthy path to approval.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

First, the elimination of the S5 zone included in earlier versions of this plan looks like a mistake.

Second, what seems to be missing from this approach is an anchor to the city's overall housing production needs. Boston is in a serious housing shortfall, and while this plan clearly intends to take steps towards addressing it, a reference point for how much housing we need to create, and how that filters down to needs at the level of individual neighborhoods, will be important in deciding which S+S zones are applied in which areas (and, for that matter, in addressing Boston's residential zoning more broadly).

Response:

Thank you for your note. Increased housing production is a key goal of Squares + Streets and the City's overall zoning reform work. We have added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. We will be working on a citywide needs assessment (kicking off later in 2024) to help us identify citywide needs. Please stay tuned and we look forward to your participation.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 13:19:53

Name: William Devlin

Neighborhood: Charlestown

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Language per the proposal is difficult to understand, never mind how to determine the impacts to my neighborhood!

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

You need to explain this change in non technical language !!

Response:

Thank you for your comments. Please visit www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares where you will find a reference guide which accompanied the text amendment. In addition, we gave a presentation in our public meeting on January 10 which provides a breakdown on how to read and understand the amendment as it is written. You can find that slide deck here:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/calendar/2024/01/10/squares-streets-citywide-draft-zoning-amendment>. The file is called "Amendment Update Public Meeting Presentation."

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 13:51:31

Name: Christopher Hart

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Increasing density to support struggling businesses esp. sit down restaurants and non chain/convenience stores

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Please raise by right height to 6 stories, encourage designs that provide SRO housing as well as small footprint retail such as cobblers/florists that may need less than 500 sq/ft, encourage building designs that provide shelter for bus riders, explicitly requiring additional permits for check cashing, pawn, & convenience stores; incentivize preservation of masonry facades and general historic preservation; encourage coordination w Boston Landmarks Commission and Commission on Disabilities. Expand Inclusive Design/Universal Design principles previously imbedded within Boston CH.91 Harbor Plans from 2000-2015. Encourage public restrooms.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Zoning MUST ensure development near MBTA stations provides CAPITAL funding to improve ADA accessibility and State of Good Repair of stations. It is inexcusable that permitted / newly built towers on Tremont & Stuart are not funding elevators at the Tufts South Cove inaccessible entrance. Similarly the Bayside Expo/Columbia Point development is not funding the replacement of JFK/UMass Station and instead is funding K Circle/Morrissey Blvd improvements. Further afield major proposed developments around Readville are not funding elevators and full high platforms needed to make the Franklin platform ADA accessible and reachable from the Milton / Colchester St neighborhood. Likewise, the ongoing South Bay Mall expansion has not improved shelter for bus riders and development around Andrew & Broadway are not funding critical life safety upgrades to their stations. Finally, projects such as the redevelopment of Hood and various Sullivan Sq parcels are not funding Sullivan Station needed access and fire egress to the Cambridge St neighborhood.

As someone who is currently appointed to the Landmarks Commission, was very involved in Greenway and Downtown North planning for years, served on various CAC's incl the

previous Columbia Point effort and was a member of the Ch. 91 Harbor Use committee for nearly 12 years I would welcome a more in depth conversation with BPDA staff.

Response:

The BPDA looks forward to engaging with all of the stakeholders you note here as the planning processes continue.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 13:55:16

Name: Nate Deshmukh Towery

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that it should streamline the approval process for new housing in all Boston neighborhoods, which is desperately needed. The slate of options for communities to select a type of zoning makes sense, and I approve of all text that supports the removal of parking minimums.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I am concerned by the omission of an S-5 "placemaker" district option that was included earlier in the process - this option has the potential to jumpstart housing availability in appropriate locations in a way that the S-4 option does not, and leaving it out is short-sighted for comprehensive reform.

Response:

Thank you for your note. Increased housing production is a key goal of Squares + Streets and the City's overall zoning reform work. S5 is back! While the specifics of Squares + Streets will not be appropriate for all parts of Boston, housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform work.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 14:05:43

Name: Keoki M

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

There are options/ levels of building density/ heights, uses for different areas.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

There should be more consideration for lot setbacks/ green, natural spaces around and between structures. Minimizing parking may be idealistic and cheaper for developers, but not realistic for options of future residents. Significant added housing density will worsen on street parking conflicts --especially with ground floor retail in mixed use bldgs. Existing small businesses need to be supported and engaged in planning review.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Many of these comments are boiler plate and appear to be by supporters of 'Abundant Housing MA'-- even acknowledged by several commenters. Others appear to be by housing developers, real estate interests. More housing (most of it market rate or above) is not going to solve our critical 'Housing Crisis' in Boston. We need a balance of housing types, affordability, green infrastructures, natural open spaces (Trees, Urban Wilds), and Parks and public squares which all contribute to a livable City. Not Housing that destroys existing natural areas. At least this initiative is focused on existing developed areas which is a positive aspect.

Response:

Thank you. Increased housing production is a key goal of Squares + Streets and the City's overall zoning reform work, but you are correct that there are many inputs into what creates healthy neighborhoods. The Squares + Streets districts attempt to provide a range of housing types that are appropriate for specific geographies, but they are only a first step. S0 and S1 include more substantial setbacks and green space requirements, especially as Squares + Streets districts have proximity to lower-density areas. Part of the focus on minimizing parking is because of the transit oriented nature of this work and because oftentimes the cost to build parking facilities makes developments more expensive. We will be utilizing a consultant to complete a parking analysis to make recommendations for broader improvements in each square.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 16:56:19

Name: Brandon Coppola

Neighborhood: South Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

NA

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Inclusion of the S-5: Placemaker Squares (highest density) District, which was presented in earlier presentations. We strongly believe this must be included in the draft text amendment as we need predictable planning. While community engagement is essential, local feedback cannot be the deciding criteria for where S0 through S5 are mapped during the Squares + Streets process.

Objective criteria must be used, including proximity to existing business corridors and transit access. Every neighborhood in Boston must allow for greater density. If we want to equitably address the current housing crisis, loud opposition from wealthy homeowners in one neighborhood should not be allowed to shift even higher density to other areas of the city. Housing should be built where needed, not just where the public doesn't object to it.

Eliminate costly parking mandates citywide, following municipalities like Minneapolis, San Francisco, Nashville, Austin, and Cambridge.

Allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) by right citywide, following the lead of municipalities like Worcester and Salem.

Allow residential buildings up to 7 stories/85ft by mass transit stations

Allow residential buildings up to 5 stories/60ft by right citywide

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement. When it comes to ADUs, we plan on drafting zoning that makes ADU's as-of-right citywide later this year.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 18:42:06

Name: Chris Vaughan

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

We desperately need zoning reform, allowing for additional density by right. And simplification and standardization of zoning across the city is critical. I love the elimination of off-street parking minimums in Squares + Streets districts.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

We need options that allow for more density than S4. We should allow for more than 7 stories / 85 feet of height and without stepback requirements. Eliminate parking minimums for anything within 0.5 miles of public transit.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I fully support an expedited process for this. Don't go overboard with community engagement.

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 20:04:39

Name: Gene Radwin

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Just wanted to amend my original posting after reviewing more materials from Squares and Streets and attending Roslindale presentation

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would like to see specific, clear, and measurable goals -- intermediate and final -- for the program. Without measurable goals, there is no way for city officials or the general public to ascertain (1) how well the program is working/effective as it is rolled out and over time, (2) whether or not it is on track or revisions required to plans, and (3) determine what follow up actions are required. A lack of measurable goals also means that the city council will have no way of verifying what is being done or claimed.

Response:

Thank you for highlighting goals as an outcome for Small Area Plans.

Timestamp: January 09, 2024 20:42:05

Name: Ellen Scalese

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The idea of improving Cleary Square and offering housing.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I do not like the blanket approach that the zoning will apply for all Boston Communities, when each community is very different. I do not like the removal of the appeals process. I also feel the areas selected may be too broad.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

This needs to be paused and slowed down to allow public input in our own communities.

Response:

Zoning that does not match the built environment, which is true for many of the types of locations that may be eligible for Squares + Streets, makes for a longer, more expensive, more opaque development process. Oftentimes, these expenses are passed on to tenants. As Boston's population grows by over 12% to 800,000 simply providing more housing is essential, but access to housing alone will not produce the high quality of life Bostonians deserve. We look forward to our Urban Design team's work to document the architecturally unique elements of each Square which will complement this zoning and guide how development projects take shape.

Please stay involved with our Small Area Plans, which are intended to provide a more tangible set of opportunities for engagement and will help apply these broader ideas in a more specific way.

Timestamp: January 10, 2024 07:52:07

Name: Michelle Murray

Neighborhood: Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

For the most part I like the height/density as long as it does not interfere with existing climate mitigation efforts, like an abutter's solar array.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Case by case basis for some projects but overall I like the high and dense development in Nubian and along Washington street to Egleston

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Don't think I have any.

Response:

We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment that is modeled on projects like the Bolling Building in Nubian Square. The zoning preserves the Article 80 process to evaluate individual development projects.

Timestamp: January 10, 2024 09:53:45

Name: Elizabeth

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Not much! These changes open the door to allow developers to build whatever they want and remove any regulations that would protect residential neighborhoods from overdevelopment. Also, by not including green space requirement and tree protections you are pushing environmental improvements backwards !

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Remove ability for lot line to lot line building. Maintain Green space requirements in residential neighborhoods and add tree protections into the code.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Regular residents who are not in special interest group or otherwise involved have no idea that this is happening or what it means. Even if people read the new documents they don't understand the impact on their neighborhoods. For something this large and encompassing of the entire city more should be done to simplify explanation of what it means. Also, the BPDA should do a city wide mailing with a general explanation and how and where to comment. Finally, just because special interest groups organize , show up for meetings and provide comments meant to push their agenda's they Do Not represent the community at large and their opinions should be weighted as individual opinions of one group.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. While the specifics of Squares + Streets will not be appropriate for all parts of Boston, housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform project. That being said, BPDA is also working towards developing a zoning code that will be adhered to with the intent of reducing overreliance on the ZBA. Zoning that does not match the built environment, which is true for many of the types of locations that may be eligible for Squares + Streets, makes for a longer, more expensive, more opaque development process. Oftentimes, these expenses are passed down to tenants. Please note that through this process we have developed standards for permeable area of lot which creates a requirement for green space where one did not exist prior. Please visit

www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares where you will find a reference guide which accompanied the text amendment. In addition, we gave a presentation in our public meeting on January 10 which provides a breakdown on how to read and understand the amendment as it is written. You can find that slide deck here:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/calendar/2024/01/10/squares-streets-citywide-draft-zoning-amendment>. The file is called "Amendment Update Public Meeting Presentation."

Timestamp: January 10, 2024 10:24:02

Name: Eric Lee

Neighborhood: Allston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Easy to understand, simpler.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

N/A

Response:

Thank you - we try to describe the proposed changes in plain language in presentations and slides, while also including the less-fun-to-read legal language for full transparency.

Timestamp: January 10, 2024 10:35:21

Name: Sarah Freeman

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

ACTIVE USES: Ground Floor Active Use in S3 & S4.
Fewer variances will be needed for small changes.
Removing minimum parking requirements for small projects

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I wouldn't describe it as "minor"; it's a 118-page document, and residents (including myself) are having a hard time keeping up with all the City meetings. There is so much happening at the same time, it feels rushed. In addition to Squares & Streets, there are the proposed Article 80 changes, and to name a few others in the vicinity of Franklin Park: White Stadium, the Bear Cages, the ongoing Franklin Park Action Plan, the proposed Animal Shelter, the State planning processes for the Shattuck Hospital site (EOHHS/DCAMM), the Arborway Yard Bus Facility (MBTA), plus multiple neighborhood associations, neighborhood councils & related committees. We need time to attend the meetings, review the pertinent documents, write comments etc.

Re: Trees, Green space, natural areas: I'm still working my way through the text amendment, so I may still find some statements re: importance of trees, green space and natural areas, but I haven't seen much yet. In light of the climate crisis and the known benefits to environmental health & public health (physical health & mental health), I'd like to see this value reflected in the amendment.

Question re: page 8: Outdoor Amenity Space requirement calculation
"2. Every 1 square foot of Publicly Accessible Open Space may count as 1.25 square feet toward the total required Outdoor Amenity Space.": This is confusing. When I see a number of square feet, I interpret it as stated, e.g. 500 sq ft = 500 sq ft (without looking for any formulas for what it really means.

Clarification request: page 10: Section 26-2. - Establishment of Squares and Streets Districts
"A. This Section 26-2 establishes five Squares + Streets districts (S0, S1, S2, S3, and S4),

listed here in order of intensity.": Will these be 5 districts? or 5 types of districts? If it means "types of districts", please insert "types of" because some people are expecting announcement of 5 locations.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Can "live" links be created? e.g. page 19, ARTICLE 24 - OFF-STREET LOADING

"Amend off-street loading requirements to only include 2 thresholds: 0-15,000 square feet and 15,000 to 49,999 square feet (projects 50,000 square feet or larger will require Article 80 Large Project review). Add uses from new Table A in Article 8." It would be helpful to be able to click on "Table A in Article 8" (vs search for it).

Response:

Aligned with the City's Urban Forest Plan, the location of trees is always a key focus of Article 80 design review and mitigation and will continue to be. The calculation of outdoor amenity space was developed to reflect planning priorities that value publicly-accessible outdoor space, such as new sidewalk-level plazas and greenspaces, more highly than on-structure open spaces such as balconies and roof decks. Not all sites will be able to provide public spaces, particularly when existing buildings with high building lot coverage are being reused. We are looking to create more live links in the City's Zoning Code, currently hosted on Municode, for exactly that reason. With the addition of the S5 district, there are now 6 districts proposed. As the proposed zoning map for Mattapan shows, we envision that most Squares + Streets areas will include a variety of districts. Thanks for your detailed review of the zoning and these helpful comments - we hope you'll continue to be involved in the process going forward.

Timestamp: January 10, 2024 12:38:58

Name: Alec Papazian

Neighborhood: South Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Simplification and an emphasis on moving to by right housing development

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Less concern with letting each neighborhood decide things. You're not going to get a representative hearing and it'll always tilt toward NIMBYs

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Housing production and people over cars needs to be the #1 focus. The best parts of the city are those that were created before our horrible modern zoning regime. Let's get back to that. Housing over everything.

Response:

Thank you for your note. Increased housing production is a key goal of Squares + Streets and the City's overall zoning reform work. S5 is back! While the specifics of Squares + Streets will not be appropriate for all parts of Boston, housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform work.

Timestamp: January 10, 2024 14:48:17

Name: Kevin H

Neighborhood: Charlestown

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that it increases the amount of housing that can be built throughout much of Boston

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Allow more/taller housing to be built in all proposed districts, eliminate parking requirements for all new housing.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Make the highest density zones as large as possible to allow for more housing to be built

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: January 10, 2024 15:40:47

Name: Anne Wright

Neighborhood: East Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Great idea

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Include areas in East Boston

Response:

Thank you. With the exception of PLAN: Mattapan, areas that have recently undergone planning processes are not being prioritized as part of Squares + Streets, but please do take a look at the proposed PLAN: East Boston zoning, which introduces Mixed Use districts to the squares

(<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/plan-east-boston>).

Timestamp: January 10, 2024 15:59:21

Name: John Allen

Neighborhood: Longwood Medical Area

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Increasing density, making it easier to build housing

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Get rid of parking minimums for all residential usages. Seems unnecessary given transit options. Further subsidizing/encouraging car usage seems like the wrong direction for the city overall

Response:

Thank you for your comments. The BPDA is actively continuing to pursue many of these broader goals alongside Squares + Streets, both this year and more broadly in an ongoing manner. Please stay tuned as greening parking design and standards is one specific area that we will introduce later this year. For additional information, visit www.bostonplans.org/zoning.

Timestamp: January 10, 2024 16:06:52

Name: Pamela Bardhi

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This initiative is a step in the right direction towards greater housing abundance and affordability in the city of Boston. It creates a framework the City can use to legalize the kind of homes we need to make Boston an affordable place to live. It also helpfully moves away from an over-reliance on discretionary review, which adds significant inefficiency, delays, and costs to every project. Greater predictability will encourage the creation of more homes throughout the City at all price points. This kind of zoning reform is long overdue and should not be delayed any further.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Previous presentations on the Squares + Streets initiative included the S5: Placemaker Squares district. This district is not included in the draft text amendment. This is a mistake. The BPDA should be stocking its toolbox with as many tools as possible to create more homes and invigorate neighborhoods. Some of the most successful recent redevelopments in the city (including Boylston Street in the Fenway and the Harrison-Albany district) fit the building types contemplated by the S5 district. The existing conditions in any given district should be the absolute floor of what is included in the nearby mapping, and we need to create opportunities for growth beyond that. The BPDA can make the decision where or even if to deploy S5 overlays. That's not an option if it isn't included in the draft language. It is unclear exactly how the Small Area Plans will be created after this zoning amendment passes. While community engagement is essential, local feedback cannot be the deciding criteria for where S0 through S5 are mapped during the Squares + Streets process. Objective criteria must be used, including proximity to existing business corridors and transit access. Every neighborhood in Boston must allow for greater density. If we want to equitably address the current housing crisis, loud opposition from wealthy homeowners in one neighborhood should not be allowed to shift even higher density to other areas of the city.

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small

Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: January 10, 2024 16:48:09

Name: Tony lee

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

We need updated zoning, too many squares are righting archaic norms.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I'd like as much focus as possible on reducing the impact of cars in every way imaginable. Whether that be with safe design that limits speeds, reduced parking, enhanced public transportation and pedestrian capabilities....really anything to greatly lessen the impact of cars in these areas. Roslindale Square is my local square and it is dominated by cars, violent, unsafe, unhealthy, loud, ugly, etc. While I love the business/social aspect of my visits, I cringe at the manner in which cars have just taken over, honking, speeding, running reds and - in some cases - flying into buildings and killing people. Their unhealthy presence needs to be factored into any decisions to alter these squares for the better.

Response:

Thank you for providing your feedback here! The Small Area Planning process for Roslindale Square will include discussions about the Public Right of Way in partnership with our colleagues at the Boston Transportation Department.

Timestamp: January 10, 2024 17:02:41

Name: Jeremy Bohn

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Increased focus on walkability and transit accessibility is a clear positive. Also allowing for more housing construction as of right without an onerous variance process.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Nothing.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I am very excited about the proposal. Zoning changes like the ones proposed are absolutely essential to make the city more affordable, safer for pedestrians and bikes, and more inclusive.

Response:

Thank you for your note. Increased housing production is a key goal of Squares + Streets and the City's overall zoning reform work. Updated zoning which both reflects the current built environment and identifies how we can grow will help to reduce reliance on the ZBA. While the specifics of Squares + Streets will not be appropriate for all parts of Boston, housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform work.

Timestamp: January 10, 2024 18:36:06

Name: Diane Valle

Neighborhood: Charlestown

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Nothing. Abandon Square & Streets.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would like the BPDA to abandon Square & Streets as an initiative. It is a willful removal of community zoning protection. It destroys any possible community engagement. This is Robert Moses style destruction of the City of Boston. Community meeting after community meeting, residents object to BPDA proposals that are too big, developer driven, not in service to Boston residents now or in the future. Please listen to the people.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Mayor Wu ran on a policy which she wrote "Fixing Boston's Broken Development Process: Abolish BPDA." Mayor Wu's supporters worked for her, contributed to her, and expect her to follow through on her promise. Instead, she has done a 180 degree retreat from her policy. She has not explained to Bostonians why she has become a force to destroy community engagement and supporting BPDA contrived tools to eliminate zoning protections for the people of Boston.

<https://www.riw.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/00854411.pdf>

"Instead of delivering the resources to address our most urgent challenges, Boston's development process is making our problems worse. We're more and more anxious about rising home prices and rents, frustrated daily by increasingly awful commutes, and scared about the flooding and extreme heat that intensify every season. This report is not an outline of these crises or the steps to solve them, but a reminder that all of these issues are fundamentally related to how we are managing Boston's growth and development. And I hope after reading this report, you'll feel hopeful." - Michelle Wu

Hope is extinguished with Square & Streets.

We want to Fix Boston's Broken Development Process. We want to Abolish the BPDA. We want promises honored. We want our children and grandchildren to believe that

government works for the people, and that elected officials can be trusted. We want citizens to be engaged in Boston, and help "keep Boston beautiful"...which is another Mayor Wu comment, when you call 311.

Perhaps Mayor Wu will instruct the BPDA to "help keep Boston beautiful."

Please stop the gaslighting, the misinformation, the manipulation, the total disregard of community voices.

Stop Square & Streets.

Response:

The goal of this effort is to update zoning protections by creating a zoning code that governs development, rather than one that is a pretext to negotiation of development. Thanks for engaging in the process.

Timestamp: January 10, 2024 20:29:47

Name: Jacob Stevens

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Streamlines the process to help accelerate the development of needed homes

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would like to see a S0.5 that allows commercial use off "main street". A small convenience store or limited seat restaurant provides amenities throughout a neighborhood.

Response:

Thanks for commenting. While this zoning is focused on main street areas, we will be working on other changes to zoning over the coming years as part of reforming the code. Hopefully the small spaces we're allowing in the S0 now will provide more examples of how this may be able to be successfully implemented in other areas.

Timestamp: January 11, 2024 00:08:59

Name: Tadashi

Neighborhood: Back Bay

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Moves zoning in the right direction

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

More density, higher building, more greenspace, no parking space requirements. Zoning should be simplified to make it easier to comply, less rules, less complexity.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. Please stay tuned as the zoning reform process continues more broadly in the coming years. Visit www.bostonplans.org/zoning for additional information.

Timestamp: January 11, 2024 01:21:01

Name: Cam Juric

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Zoning updates (especially reducing single use zoning), local area plans, focus on housing and transit

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Culture - ignore it. Remove all historical designations and fire up the bulldozers. Old North Church would look better as a highrise apartment building. Remove all parking requirements while we're at it!

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Reduce public comment periods. Ironic coming in a public comment, but they often serve as a roadblock to needed development. Neighbors shouldn't get a say over the number of stories in a building.

Response:

Thank you. The specifics of Squares + Streets will not be appropriate for all parts of Boston, but housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform work. The Small Area Planning process will combine a robust community engagement process with a cross-departmental collaboration to ensure that future zoning changes are both appropriate for local needs and also constructively advance planning goals.

Timestamp: January 11, 2024 03:25:37

Name: Tarek Belkessa

Neighborhood: I don't live in Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Everything, this is incredible and provides an example for the entire state of Massachusetts on how to properly zone an area for those who need spaces to live

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

more of it in other streets.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

great job, please keep doing this.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. Please stay tuned as the zoning reform process continues more broadly in the coming years. Visit www.bostonplans.org/zoning for additional information.

Timestamp: January 11, 2024 09:39:36

Name: Domenic

Neighborhood: Allston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Anything that can help streamline Boston's complicated zoning laws is a win! Including some active ground floor (like commercial/ retail space) is great for making squares feel like more of a place to be

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

A map that shows where in the city this zoning applies to. Maybe I just missed it, but I hope that this updated zoning applies to a lot of locations across Boston

Response:

The BPDA has released a set of locations where Squares + Streets could potentially apply (www.bostonplans.org/squares), but it will not be mapped until a community process is complete. Stay tuned as we continue to announce locations for Small Area Plans and/or Squares + Streets zoning.

Timestamp: January 11, 2024 10:03:50

Name: Cullen Deimer

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that we are trying to modernize our zoning code as a city by remove barriers to development. Making it easier to build homes will keep rents from rising out of control and revitalize neighborhood centers across the city.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would like to see some element of objectivity in density allocations. For example, the highest level of density should be allowed by right next to EVERY mass transit station and along high frequency bus corridors. We cannot allow wealthy homeowners in any neighborhood to prevent the construction of additional homes, we must move forward equally as a city.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I am a renter and I hate to see my local neighborhood center, Brighton Center, half empty with vacant retail space lining the streets. Streamlining the development process would bring more customers and foot traffic to every Brighton Center business, making the neighborhood more vibrant for all.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. While the specifics of Squares + Streets will not be appropriate for all parts of Boston, housing production is a key goal of the City's overall zoning reform project. Part of the planning process intends to identify where and how to provide assistance to support small businesses. We look forward to your participation.

Timestamp: January 11, 2024 11:51:28

Name: Emily Pease

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I really support the initiatives to add more housing and focus on transit rather than car infrastructure!

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Include Roslindale Village commuter rail in Zone 1A, and add more car-free streets like Poplar alongside Adams park.

Response:

Thank you for these comments. The BPDA recognizes that improving the walkability of our own city is one of the steps needed to ensure that transit will serve our community for years to come. It should be noted that the City does not control the T, but there will be opportunity to raise these concerns in partnership with our transportation consultant and to have them documented in the plan. We look forward to your participation.

Timestamp: January 11, 2024 12:26:01

Name: Brooks

Neighborhood: South Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Modernizing our zoning code with reforms that reduce the need for variances while enhancing simplicity and predictability are long overdue and should be implemented without delay.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Inclusion of the S-5: Placemaker Squares (highest density) District, which was presented in earlier presentations. We strongly believe this must be included in the draft text amendment as we need predictable planning. While community engagement is essential, local feedback cannot be the deciding criteria for where S0 through S5 are mapped during the Squares + Streets process.

Objective criteria must be used, including proximity to existing business corridors and transit access. Every neighborhood in Boston must allow for greater density. If we want to equitably address the current housing crisis, loud opposition from wealthy homeowners in one neighborhood should not be allowed to shift even higher density to other areas of the city. Housing should be built where needed, not just where the public doesn't object to it.

Response:

Thank you for all your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district and to address the housing crisis during the Small Area Plans process. We are excited to include S5 as an additional option in the draft Squares + Streets zoning amendment. The Small Area Plans process will take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access among other criteria while also listening to community needs through engagement.

Timestamp: January 11, 2024 12:43:29

Name: John Infranca

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The text amendment thoughtfully addresses the city's desperate need for new housing supply. By focusing on neighborhood centers the changes will strengthen existing neighborhood businesses, enhance street life, and encourage development of housing near transit.

The shift towards thinking more holistically and moving away from discretionary reviews will both speed the development of needed housing amid a crisis and likely result in more and better, not less, consideration of legitimate local concerns. Discretionary reviews of individual developments are not the best way to adequately consider such concerns. And Boston is an outlier in terms of its reliance on such discretionary review (as I have studied and written about https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4188013 & <https://commonwealthbeacon.org/opinion/zoning-variances-are-out-of-control-in-boston/>) which is inefficient and inequitable in practice, raising costs of production and granting inordinate power to certain individuals and communities. This kind of zoning reform is long overdue and should not be delayed any further.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would encourage the city to move quickly on identifying areas for rezoning. Objective criteria should be used in determining where to place these new districts, including proximity to existing business corridors and transit access. Every neighborhood in Boston must allow for greater density. If we want to equitably address the current housing crisis, loud opposition from wealthy homeowners in one neighborhood should not be allowed to shift even higher density to other areas of the city. Too often in too many cities an emphasis on local control and local vetoes only serves to empower the wealthiest and most politically connected communities and individuals. Housing should be built where needed, not just where the public doesn't object to it.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I have lived in Jamaica Plain for ten years now after living in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Philadelphia, and Portland, Oregon over the prior decade. I also study and teach land use law. What has struck me since moving to Boston is two things: how slow new development occurs relative to other cities and how much discretionary review contributes to this. My neighborhood and others in Boston suffer from a lack of housing supply, which exacerbates a lack of housing affordability both regionally and at the neighborhood level. The evidence in support of this proposition is clear. But beyond that, our current system of excessive reliance on discretionary review for new development is an outlier among larger cities. Rather than maintain what residents like about their neighborhoods it serves instead, by slowing or stopping development, to increase displacement. When new housing cannot easily be constructed wealthier households in search of housing simply displace existing residents in a tight housing market. The city has thoughtfully designed this program and effectively and extensively conducted outreach to communities. Now is the time to move quickly. Allowing for more housing and population growth will provide significant support for area businesses, enhancing our neighborhoods for current residents and enabling those neighborhoods to welcome new residents. .

Response:

Many thanks for this feedback. We generally agree with these comments, and they underpin much of the agency's move toward comprehensive zoning reform both through Squares + Streets and other ongoing efforts.

Timestamp: January 12, 2024 10:09:40

Name: Mae Tobin-Hochstadt

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Removing parking minimums. Increased opportunity for housing in the new districts.
Promotion of mixed use buildings.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

N/A

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. We hope you'll stay engaged in the Small Area Plan for Roslindale Square.

Timestamp: January 12, 2024 12:50:39

Name: Robbie Stewart

Neighborhood: East Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

High density housing zoning lowers carbon emissions, makes neighborhoods more diverse, provides the people to support more local businesses

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Day Square in East Boston returned to an actual square. The parking eliminated to make open, accessible space for the community. Like a European plaza

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. Please see the recently adopted PLAN: East Boston (<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/plan-east-boston>) for more work on what the future of Days Square could be. Zoning changes to Article 53 implementing PLAN: East Boston are currently pending Zoning Commission approval.

Timestamp: January 12, 2024 13:47:18

Name: Doreen Miller

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

While building up squares might make sense, we lack the infrastructure to support such changes.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

There needs to be less height and density and greater set back to allow for more trees and green space. Building right up to the sidewalks creates a claustrophobic atmosphere rife with wind tunnels and shadow caverns - not a very inviting place to live. Wall to wall high rises are not conducive to building community. I know. I've lived in high rises and never really knew my neighbors. The lack of yards and play areas for children is highly concerning.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Just because a development is "transit oriented" does not mean people will opt to have no cars or will actually take the decrepit and very unreliable T. Continuing to build greater density with limited infrastructure to support that density is a recipe for utter disaster. You think our streets are clogged now? If you want to destroy the character of Boston and its lovely historic neighborhoods, keep overdeveloping. Where is the humanity in all this development?

Response:

We have tried to balance the need for green space and space for trees with the fact that existing squares (and the historic buildings in them) are areas with higher building lot coverage. We anticipate that other zoning districts, meant for other areas of the City, will include lower lot coverage with a strong emphasis on more space for trees on private property. Thank you for engaging in the process.

Timestamp: January 12, 2024 14:52:42

Name: John Barrows

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Patrol!

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would like to address the side streets in Hyde Park. People are not reading signs, also parking on both sides of narrow streets, blocking emergency vehicles. This really have to be addressed. Talk of safety? Lawn have been driven on 3 times . They don't care about signs, children, nor property. Where I live is a parking on one side street. No one have gotten a ticket for parking on the fire lane. They think it's ok and getting away with it!

Response:

Thank you for highlighting ongoing enforcement challenges with on-street parking. While this is not part of zoning, enforcement is very important to making sure our public and on-street parking works well.

Timestamp: January 12, 2024 14:56:05

Name: Matthew Hibbert

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that decision making responsibility will be more equitable to groups outside civic associations.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

NA

Response:

Thank you for your feedback. Hope you will stay engaged in the process going forward, including Small Area Plans in Dorchester.

Timestamp: January 12, 2024 17:10:09

Name: Jahvarie Alexander

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I love that there is an intentional effort to have more consistent and clear zoning regulations to facilitate growth throughout Boston's neighborhoods.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I think Hyde park Ave and River street in Hyde park need to be rezoned as s4 and s5, particularly in Cleary square, as well other established commercial districts, especially the "strip malls" scattered across the neighborhood (such as the American food basket on Hyde park Ave, or the shops at Riverwood on river street.)

I think the Main Streets between cleary square and the other established commercial districts should be zoned s3/s2. There is not enough mixed use development or activity on long stretches of Hyde park Ave and River street, making it uncomfortable, unsafe, and quite frankly, boring to walk around.

We should be intentional in transforming the abandoned industrial lots and auto repair shops along the main streets into mixed used 4/5 over 1 apartments. We need to transform Readville station into a new mixed use commercial district, zoned s3/s4/s5, 7 floors max.

Response:

Cleary Square will be a first location for Squares + Streets's small area planning processes, where these kinds of detailed comments will be especially helpful! Please continue to engage in the process.

Timestamp: January 12, 2024 17:23:39

Name: Sharon Eaton Hinton

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

That there are different times for public comment.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The time frame for decision making should be slowed down.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

When is the next meeting for Hyde Park?

Response:

Thank you for your comment. We have accepted commentary throughout this process and it has shaped and changed this proposal in very tangible ways. Please take a look at our February 6 presentation which speaks to some of the changes that were made as the result of public comment. www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares under "helpful resources." The Hyde Park kickoff meeting is February 25 at the Menino YMCA from 11am-1pm.

Timestamp: January 12, 2024 17:31:26

Name: Joyce Judge

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Please let me know which address is being developed in Roslindale Square. I'm having difficulty navigating the map to show the location.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Address and street names on the map.

Response:

There are no proposed changes to the zoning map in Roslindale at this time. Any proposed zoning changes will come as a result of the Small Area Plans. We're looking forward to the planning process together and encourage you to stay involved in the process for the Roslindale Square area:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/roslindale-square>.

Timestamp: January 12, 2024 21:22:05

Name: Joshua Price

Neighborhood: South Boston Waterfront

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I support the inclusion of S-5 and hope it is applied frequently at transit hubs. I also like that there are no parking minimums.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

My #1 concern when it comes to zoning in Boston is that I want the city to loosen its regulatory restrictiveness and allow for higher density buildings to be developed in a reasonable time frame and at reasonable cost to developers (and as a result, to homeowners and renters). Boston is facing a housing affordability crisis. Homeownership in the city is largely out of reach for individuals and families who make less than six figures. If I could change something in this proposed zoning text amendment, I would increase the building height limits, particularly for S-3 and S-4, to allow for higher density squares and streets.

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: January 13, 2024 13:57:10

Name: Yousif Abdallah

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like the idea of up zoning for more housing.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

More up zoning and green space.

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: January 13, 2024 18:57:38

Name: Patricia Alvarez

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

NA

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The map of Cleary Square includes a 1/3 mile radius around the business district. This is not appropriate as it includes many fully residential neighborhoods where there is no space to build anything. These are homes with small yards and some trees in their yards. The area also includes several urban wilds - all land owned by the Conservation Commission. This land is protected as conservation land in perpetuity. For all these reasons the map should be revised to make the radius truly include the business district only, not residential neighborhoods.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

We need several more months for the community to digest the zoning text amendments and help the planners get to know and understand our neighborhoods up close. This is a critical process that will forever change our communities and our lives. It is irresponsible to rush it. It must be done correctly.

Response:

There are no proposed changes to the zoning map in Hyde Park at this time; that will come as a result of Small Area Plans and will be mapped not based on a circle/radius. We're looking forward to the planning process together.

Timestamp: January 14, 2024 14:21:33

Name: Amy

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like the two hour metered parking

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Would like to see the public parking lot to be at least 4 hour parking and any new developments should have parking even though builders think nobody drives anymore.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Please be mindful of the businesses and who is visiting them. Don't do anything that will harm the local shops and restaurants.

Response:

Thank you for taking time to comment here! While properties within Squares + Streets Districts will not require a minimum amount of parking, they may be allowed to build it if they identify that as a need. Constructing parking can be expensive and limit feasibility for affordable housing, and can take up additional space on a site that could otherwise be used for permeable open space and amenities for residents.

Additionally, conversations around public parking lots and on-street parking regulations will be part of each Small Area Plan in coordination with the Boston Transportation Department.

Timestamp: January 14, 2024 16:38:43

Name: Nate Stell

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Previously submitted

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I'd really like to see ground floor retail added as a conditional use for S0 districts, and not just on corner parcels. It'll make for more interesting, walkable neighborhoods, and increase the number of lower-cost retail opportunities for small businesses.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Previously submitted

Response:

Thank you for commenting - due to the many comments on this topic, we have updated the draft to conditionally allow small retail on the ground floor in S0.

Timestamp: January 15, 2024 11:28:30

Name: Chris Vella

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Clear zoning process for main neighborhood downtown areas. Creates an overall blueprint and guideline for both developers and the community of a plan and not a project by project development process. This helps to streamlines planning and speed up timelines.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

A guideline or option for taller buildings to be included. The "Placemaker" option presented in earlier BPDA meetings.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Requirements for architectural connection with the existing neighborhood.

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: January 16, 2024 04:20:53

Name: Paul bloo

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Nothing

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Density

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

We can't rezone our housing problems! Who is behind this? Developers?

Response:

The City of Boston and the Boston Planning & Development Agency are behind this effort to reform our zoning code. Thank you for engaging in the process.

Timestamp: January 16, 2024 09:35:35

Name: Theresa Fitzgerald

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

My household and business district does not have enough information to form an opinion

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The time line and input from all parties

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

The Square's and Streets zoning proposal and process is another Mayor Wu and her team piece of work that is not taking the time to properly inform it's neighborhood residents and business owners, and truly allow for their input. As tax paying and voting citizens of Boston we deserve and have the right to be heard and listened to, and then work with the city officials to create a zoning plan for our neighborhoods. We live and work in the neighborhoods of Boston that make it so special. Each neighborhood is unique and a cookie cut plan will not work across the board. Each neighborhood should be represented by its residents who as a collective group know their area and what would be best for it. Having one or two meetings in the winter season is unfair. Zoning should take its time. Please delay this immediate process for 6 months or more. Have ongoing and more meaningful meetings. We all need to be represented and assured we are making the best decisions for our neighborhoods and our city of Boston. Thank you

Response:

Thank you for your comment. We have accepted commentary throughout this process and it has shaped and changed this proposal in very tangible ways. Please take a look at our February 6 presentation which speaks to some of the changes that were made as the result of public comment. www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares under "Helpful Resources." You can find all of our past presentations there as well.

Timestamp: January 17, 2024 09:30:16

Name: Patrick Kroyak

Neighborhood: I don't live in Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like the switch to a form of hierarchical zoning that lets local areas grow and change naturally

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I didn't see anything listed for guidance on how an area of the city could change zones, either up or down. While care should be taken to avoid malicious actors (NIMBYs changing to S0 to disallow any development for example) some guidance on how to evaluate when a zone should be changed may save a lot of headache decades down the road

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Overall I really like the plan, but wish there was a pilot project publicly funded that doesn't rely on private investors relying to turning a profit. This is a step in the right direction.

Response:

While there is no current intent to repeatedly zone areas up or down, we do recognize the importance of more clear processes around requests like property owner requests to rezone. We are working on broader zoning reform efforts, including changes to Article 80. The Small Area Planning process will try to more specifically map out where these zones will apply in a particular square or street. Thank you for engaging and please stay involved going forward.

Timestamp: January 17, 2024 14:28:41

Name: Quaime V. Lee

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I appreciate the effort to simplify the zoning process in ways that are innovative and relevant to changing conditions.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would like more clarity on how this will impact existing zoning ordinances in the city's neighborhoods. Boston is a complicated mosaic of neighborhoods with unique histories and needs and developers should be obliged to recognize that.

I also believe that the process for implementation of the plan has been hurried, without sufficient notice and comment. I would move for a 6-month stay and public comment and community engagement period.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. We have accepted commentary throughout this process and it has shaped and changed this proposal in very tangible ways. Please take a look at our February 6 presentation which speaks to some of the changes that were made as the result of public comment. This and all past presentations can be found at

www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares under "Helpful Resources." We also look forward to our Urban Design team's work to document the architecturally unique elements of each Square which will complement this zoning and guide how development projects take shape. These districts set a maximum size for what gets built, but there are still a number of ways that projects will get shaped beyond zoning:

Most projects built in these districts will be at the Article 80 scale, meaning BPDA staff and community voices will be able to work with each project to help it fit in with its specific context.

The Boston Design Vision is a city initiative working to understand how residents can see themselves in the buildings and outdoor spaces that define our city, and especially how local, cultural, and historic differences can be implemented in design. This project is currently exploring how to embed itself within development review, design review, and other city processes.

Small Area Plans will include a comprehensive vernacular analysis exploring on-the-ground built conditions unique to each plan area.

Timestamp: January 17, 2024 15:58:01

Name: Meg Kelly

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

We don't know much about it and reading through a 115 plus page document does not make us residents feel like things are clear in Roslindale. Please slow it down.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

We don't know much about it and reading through a 115 plus page document does not make us residents feel like things are clear in Roslindale. Please slow it down.

Response:

Please visit www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares where you will find a reference guide which accompanied the text amendment. In addition, we gave a presentation in our public meeting on January 10 which provides a breakdown on how to read and understand the amendment as it is written. You can find that slide deck here:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/calendar/2024/01/10/squares-streets-citywide-draft-zoning-amendment>. The file is called "Amendment Update Public Meeting Presentation."

Timestamp: January 17, 2024 20:10:17

Name: Kendra Halliwell

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I appreciate the shift to form based rather than use based regulations/ guidelines

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I support increased density

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

thanks for taking this on!

Response:

Thank you for this feedback -- please stay involved as the process continues.

Timestamp: January 17, 2024 21:08:11

Name: Peg Preble

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

choose not to answer

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I have seen many small businesses getting forced out of neighborhoods to make way for housing. Many of those businesses are needed for the residents. I am a residential electrician. My small electrical supply was moved from Forest hills to make way for a building that needs that business for its infrastructure. What used to take me 10 minutes to get supplies now takes me 45 minutes to drive to Mass Ave. When that area becomes housing it will be even longer. That adds to the cost of doing business that I have to pass on to my customers, raising the price of owning their home. Same has happened to the plumbing supply and the glass store. Do not force the businesses out of the city that are needed to have a city.

Response:

Thank you for commenting. One of the goals of these zoning districts is to create a regulatory framework that allows for both - a wider range of commercial businesses AND housing growth. The City and BPDA (which will be the City in 5 months) are working on a cross-cutting series of strategies that brings multiple departments together to combat displacement.

To an additional comment you passed along to BPDA staff concerning the displacement of other similar businesses (like auto repair shops), we agree that the role of existing businesses like these in commercial districts is an important issue. Some of the example businesses you mentioned are in Local Convenience or Neighborhood Commercial zoning subdistricts in existing zoning, and are already nonconforming. Others are currently in Local Industrial, and are currently conforming. While there will not be a direct one-to-one relationship between Local Convenience / Neighborhood Commercial zoning and Squares + Streets, areas which generally have that commercial or shopping subdistrict overall sense are the general focus of Squares + Streets.

For heavier commercial or industrial businesses that are currently nonconforming and will continue to be in Squares + Streets, the City will continue to support their ongoing important presence in neighborhoods. For the location of new businesses of this nature, places like Local Industrial will continue to be key locations. As part of a general goal of avoiding that businesses like new car dealerships try to relocate themselves inside Squares + Streets districts, vehicular uses will be forbidden in Squares + Streets districts.

The City affirms that these are critical to Boston's day-to-day functioning, which is separate from allowing them from being placed anew in the middle of commercial districts where new development is being expected or encouraged as a feature of transit service and pedestrian-oriented travel.

Timestamp: January 18, 2024 09:47:20

Name: Linda Sartori

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Buildings too high = stay at max of 3 at least near Adams Park. Traffic issues and parking on street without garages for new builds - not cool.. Affordable is not \$60,000 income level. Too many luxury condos going up - and let's face it - they're not so luxurious! The square is not all that attractive so I'm not opposed to new buildings - just not ugly college style dorm-looking ones made cheaply. Developers need to class it up.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Close up alleys next to Knights of Columbus on Washington St. People sleeping there. Do we have enough civilized shelters and social workers for these folks? Build something that street sleepers with drug, alcohol, and mental health issues would want to use. While we're add it - please don't renovate that ugly building - replace it with a nice building for low income folks that looks nice - in keeping with NE architecture. Mayor Wu -cough up the funds.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Trees are nice, but the two that are behind me, will knocked down power lines and houses. keep trees in tight residential areas appropriately sized when adding trees.

Response:

Thanks for the detailed comments on Roslindale Square - we look forward to advancing this as part of Small Area Plans. Please stay involved in that process in Roslindale Square as that begins soon:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/roslindale-square>.

Timestamp: January 18, 2024 12:25:28

Name: Kate Phelps

Neighborhood: Roxbury

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Five premises of Squares + Streets are laudable:

- 1) a complex, outdated, inconsistent, ever-variable zoning policy leads to endless, costly and inequitable delays in construction projects;
- 2) the single provision that currently permits the Zoning Board of Appeal to change virtually any provision it wishes, invites opportunism and corruption in public decision-making;
- 3) building needed housing closer to efficient transit hubs allows for more homes to be built for those residents who don't require their cars;
- 4) making ADU's as-of-right allows for more housing with little adverse impact; and
- 4) a few clear models for urban design can help Boston move toward a simpler and more enforceable zoning code.

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Preserve the Article 80 provision for neighborhood feedback on those projects that repair and build affordable housing. Do not place sole discretion over these projects in the hand of the BPDA/BRA - historically infamous for destroying neighborhoods.

Give communities the time and information to be involved in the planning and design of standardized design models, and invite feedback in how best to apply these models in our existing neighborhoods.

Tie the planned construction of new housing with identified need. So far, no clear goals have been set for how much and what kind of housing needs to be built in each area.

Establish plans to prevent displacement of existing residents before new projects are permitted to build as-of-right.

Establish plans to ensure affordability, commensurate with the actual incomes of residents, and not the existing AMI reflecting the whole of Greater Boston.

Spread the affordability of homes equitably across Boston, so that areas, like Roxbury, that already have 54% affordable housing, are not unduly saturated with tower blocks of poverty, while other areas of Boston still have less than 10%.

Link the zoning efforts with other, politically essential efforts, to stabilize rents, slow the growth of university enrollment, forcing rents up in our neighborhoods as institutions fail to house their students. Tax unoccupied spaces, like the many investment properties in Seaport.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Forcing through this sweeping zoning initiative without the support of Boston residents only feeds suspicion, resentment and harm. The Wu administration clearly has the support of developers, investment capitalists, realtors and organizations like Abundant Housing MA. Take a moment to bring the rest of us on board.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. We have accepted commentary throughout this process and it has shaped and changed this proposal in very tangible ways. Please take a look at our February 6 presentation which speaks to some of the changes that were made as the result of public comment (www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares under "Helpful Resources." You can find all of our past presentations there as well. Please stay involved with our Small Area Plans, which are intended to provide a more tangible set of opportunities for engagement and will help apply these broader ideas in a more specific way. Finally, please also stay tuned for more from BPDA's Article 80 reform work.

Timestamp: January 19, 2024 12:38:38

Name: Bradley Russell

Neighborhood: I don't live in Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Boston is a city of squares, with many of the neighborhood outside downtown centered around squares which function as activity centers surrounded by dense housing options. This zoning formalizes that model and makes it much easier to build the kind of transit oriented, walkable, dense communities that set the city apart.

I particularly like that the plan allows for small shops/retail in neighborhood streets, while reserving larger commercial activity for the squares. That fills a need for local neighborhood shops without overwhelming the residential streets. This plan seems to draw a lot of inspiration from streetcar suburb style design, which is a big positive in my eyes.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Better provisions to secure rights-of-way/corridors for transit options, particularly between the various squares. Connectivity between neighborhoods on transit is often challenging because it requires either riding a bus, which can get stuck in traffic, or riding the subway, which requires going downtown to transfer. A dedicated right-of-way speeds up transit by removing any traffic from the corridor, so making provisions to secure space on major corridors for exclusive transit use can help make transit fast, reliable, and competitive with driving in the future. Perhaps an additional density bonus for buildings along major corridors, in exchange for setback requirements from the road, would be workable. That would eventually allow space to build dedicated bus lanes or light rail service along the corridor without undermining the economics of building new housing/shops/etc along the corridor. Incorporating that aspect into the zoning early on seems like a good idea to me.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Keep up the good work!

Response:

Thank you for your comments! We will be working closely with BTM as the Small Area Plans processes continue!

Timestamp: January 19, 2024 18:15:54

Name: Justin Brothers

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The indication that Boston is trying to think of creative, workable solutions to the housing crisis that won't destroy the character of our neighborhoods.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Strong protections and incentives for lacking cultural infrastructure, such as grocery stores in areas that lack them and protection for the hurting arts scene. Brighton and Allston in particular have reason to be skeptical of "urban renewal" esque projects.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Maybe contract the architecture firm of Vishaan Chakrabarti.

How to Make Room for One Million New Yorkers

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/12/30/opinion/new-york-housing-solution.html?smid=nytcore-android-share>

Response:

The proposed zoning districts create a greater range of allowed cultural uses (including smaller venues) and separate out grocery stores from other retail so they can be allowed (and allowed to be larger than other retail) across the districts. Thanks for these detailed comments.

Timestamp: January 20, 2024 14:01:24

Name: Ben Allen

Neighborhood: Back Bay

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This initiative is a step in the right direction towards greater housing abundance and affordability in the city of Boston. It creates a framework the City can use to legalize the kind of homes we need to make Boston an affordable place to live. It also helpfully moves away from an over-reliance on discretionary review, which adds significant inefficiency, delays, and costs to every project. Greater predictability will encourage the creation of more homes throughout the City at all price points. This kind of zoning reform is long overdue and should not be delayed any further.

The elimination of parking minimums in all Squares + Streets districts is an important reform that will reduce the cost of housing, support the City's long term commitments to investing in transit and active transportation, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. The land use modernization component is excellent. By updating and simplifying the categories for various residential and commercial property use, it will streamline permitting and support the creation of dynamic streetscapes and neighborhoods across all of Boston

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

There is still far too much control given to local groups. Local feedback should not be the deciding factor for ANY development in the city. We need lots of homes, and fast. If every home needs approval from a myriad of neighborhood groups (which costs time and money and dissuades development), we'll never get there. This is a critical moment and we should use this opportunity to zone as high as possible and streamline the approval process. Objective criteria must be used, including proximity to existing business corridors and transit access. Every neighborhood in Boston must allow for greater density. If we want to equitably address the current housing crisis, loud opposition from wealthy homeowners in one neighborhood should not be allowed to shift even higher density to other areas of the city.

I'd also encourage the team to continue to include the S5: Placemaker Squares district. The existing conditions in any given district should be the absolute floor of what is included in the nearby mapping, and we need to create opportunities for growth beyond that. The BPDA can make the decision where or even if to deploy S5 overlays.

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: January 21, 2024 12:58:36

Name: Lee

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Not sure. The document is over 100 pages and requires more time to digest and form questions

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Slow the entire process down for at least 6 months to allow for a more vigorous community process. There is an upcoming meeting hosted by multiple community groups that invitations have been extended to BPDA and Mayors Office. Attend that meeting and be prepared to answer as yet to be answered questions. This meeting is hosted by a broad base of community groups and leaders not single special interest entities.

Response:

Please visit www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares where you will find a reference guide which accompanied the text amendment. In addition, we gave a presentation in our public meeting on January 10 which provides a breakdown on how to read and understand the amendment as it is written. You can find that slide deck here: <https://www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/calendar/2024/01/10/squares-streets-citywide-draft-zoning-amendment>. The file is called "Amendment Update Public Meeting Presentation."

Timestamp: January 21, 2024 17:58:50

Name: James McKernan

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Not much, I'd like to understand this more. Just learned about this 1/20/24. Seems your taking out the community input. The ones who live here, have valued property should have a say in what gets done in its town. Sounds like your only looking to skirt the normal process we've been using for years to speed up construction for housing the city wants. You government people don't look to future consequences caused by excessive housing. Traffic and carbon pollution caused by it is a serious existing problem as you continue to remove traffic lanes. Government overreach w/o community input seems to be the theme, causing more harm then good.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

For starters, spend more time making the community aware of exactly what your proposing and have "real" community input and transparency. Instead of jamming it down our throat and not listening to the community concerns.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Don't remove Neighbourhood input, make sure there's understanding and transparency

Response:

Thank you for your comment. We have accepted commentary throughout this process and it has shaped and changed this proposal in very tangible ways. Please take a look at our February 6 presentation which speaks to some of the changes that were made as the result of public comment. This and all past presentations can be found at www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares under "Helpful Resources." Please stay involved with our Small Area Plans, which are intended to provide a more tangible set of opportunities for engagement and will help apply these broader ideas in a more specific way.

Timestamp: January 22, 2024 01:10:55

Name: Matthew Petersen

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I'm happy to see the inclusion of the S5 district! We need to have big buildings on the table to maximize the potential for housing production. I'm also happy to see many uses allowed by right in all of the districts. The removal of parking minimums is great, and should be rolled out to all zoning districts in Boston. I like the figures that illustrate and describe the changes. I'm also happy to see small residential buildings disallowed in the S4 district - we should be having unit minimums rather than maximum.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

There are still some restrictions that I think don't serve a useful purpose. If there's an active frontage requirement, why do we have any A-G designations at all? I am also unhappy to see many kinds of housing, such as lodging houses, student housing, temporary shelters, and others, categorically forbidden in S+S districts. These should be allowed in all S+S districts. It doesn't make sense to categorically ban student housing and lodging houses when these fill high-density housing needs. I also think that social clubs should be allowed in all districts - S0 isn't a residential district, it's the first level of this active district category, and social clubs are low-impact uses that can serve important social functions.

I would also like to see a more nuanced restriction of industrial and logistics uses. Industrial, manufacturing, and technical establishments provide vital jobs and services to a vibrant city. It is important that businesses like machine shops, small manufacturers, clothing producers, welders, art fabricators, bike shops, workshops, and other craft, technical, and light industrial uses be permitted in our commercial districts. We should regulate things like noise and pollution rather than prohibit an enterprising small business owner from opening a machine shop or small manufacturing facility. These jobs should have a place in the city and not be relegated to the suburbs. We should have places for the blue collar worker as well as the white collar worker in our Squares and Streets.

I would also like to see accessory parking be a conditional use rather than permitted use. Parking should be subject to evaluation by the city and should be subject to maximum parking ratios.

I would also like to see single family homes banned from all of these districts, and I'd like to see height minimums of at least two or three stories. We should be looking at higher maximum heights for all of these S+S districts, and we should have minimum heights and minimum unit counts so that parcels are not underbuilt for housing, as is currently happening across the street from me. We need to not just encourage and allow housing construction, but require it.

I am also a little confused as to why we feel the need to ban multiple buildings on a single parcel in some districts. If the owner wants to meet the required lot coverage with two buildings instead of one, why should we care if they're inside the envelope?

I also think that we should allow more zero side yard buildings in more districts. Zero side yard buildings, like Philly's row homes, create legible street walls and maximize housing in our dense neighborhoods. We should be flexible with our zoning and not restrict buildings unnecessarily.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I believe we should have the city take a less active role in design review. We should set out standards for safety, health, and quality of homes and buildings, but we should not unnecessarily quibble over articulation, massing, and other aesthetic concerns. Not every building is going to be a masterpiece, and the process costs imposed are considerable. Every additional meeting and design revision adds time and cost that means higher rents and less affordable housing in Boston. We must be laser-focused on making our approval process fast, predictable, and equitable, and focused on getting more housing on the ground faster. We are in a housing emergency and we need net new units as quickly as possible.

I also think the city needs a stronger anti-displacement policy. Of course, this would have to be accompanied by rent control, rental registries, and tenant opportunity to purchase to have any effect. But we need protections to ensure that we can have development without displacement and to ensure that anyone who is renting in a building that is getting torn down only has to move once and doesn't have to move far. There must always be a universal right of return, and we must begin to treat housing as a human right, and landlords as partial stewards of that right, rather than as unfettered private property owners with no responsibility towards our common societal needs.

Response:

Thank you for your letter. We've adjusted some of the housing use tables accordingly, including allowing Lodging Houses in more locations, and clarifying that temporary shelters exclude emergency shelters relative to the statewide right to shelter.

As you are likely aware, the BPDA has done a great deal of thinking around the future of industry in the city, most recently in PLAN: Newmarket, which helped to define the role of 21st century industry in Boston in the coming decades. We do want things like makerspaces and small scale creative work in Squares and Streets districts, but are not currently sure that larger-scale (but still light!) manufacturing can directly co-exist in the exact same location where we are focusing housing and (when possible) small scale commercial. We very much agree that these kinds of uses are critical in the coming years, and believe they should continue to be in and around many commercial cores and districts in the city, if not directly in these Squares + Streets districts. This will absolutely need to be part of zoning reform as it continues.

Re parking, while we're eager to work with BTM on ongoing changes to parking regulations in Article 23 in the coming months and years, we are also trying to balance future goals of planning and removing nonconformities. Part of why some things are conditionally allowed (like standalone parking, among other things) in S+S districts, among other intents, is to discourage future parking growth while not simultaneously create a whole new cascade of new ZBA hurdles via variances.

We continue to work with city departments on many of the other things you touch on, like developing a consistent and comprehensive anti-displacement policy that includes but is not limited to many of the tools in the BPDA's collective belt. We also expect that many of the dimensional and density questions you discuss are especially pertinent in some of the other initiatives we are working on, including ADU legalization, and other district development outside of S+S. Please stay tuned as we work on these issues together!

Timestamp: January 22, 2024 16:47:49

Name: Lisa

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I support the economic growth of neighborhoods, but this process should be led by (or have significant input from) the residents and business owners in each neighborhood. The city should not tell each neighborhood what is in its best interest.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

- I am concerned that this plan will not take into account that even a central neighborhood location (a "square") has many streets of many different sizes and densities. What is an appropriate development on one street may be completely oversized for the next street over. I am also concerned that this plan will not take into account the impact of higher density development on abutting and nearby smaller streets.

- I also ask you to consider that residents often purchase their homes based on the abutting properties. For example, when I purchased my house about 10 years ago, I purposely bought a house that is immediately adjacent to single and two-family houses. I did not want to live next to an apartment building or a commercial property. I would be very upset if the new zoning code allowed single and two family houses to be torn down and the land used to build larger structures. In my neighborhood, there are many 100+ year old Victorian houses, and a change to the zoning code could have a drastic impact on the character of my neighborhood if it becomes permissible to tear them down and build apartment buildings.

- There has not been an adequate description of what the community involvement will be in developing these plans. The BPDA should be more explicit and state how they will involve the community in the planning process. Without that, I don't believe that the city cares about what the community thinks at all. It is just words to make the city look good.

- The Hyde Park commuter rail station is Zone 1. The fare is \$6.50 one way to get into the city. For a couple to go into the city from the Hyde Park station, they would have to pay \$26 round-trip fare. The city needs to work with the MBTA to change all Boston commuter rail stations to Zone 1A. Otherwise, the city should not build their squares and streets plans around commuter rail stations because it is not economically feasible for many people to rely on the commuter rail. The Fairmount Line fare is much less expensive but does not go to Ruggles (near the Longwood Medical Area) or to Back Bay.

- Finally, in Article 3, Establishment of Zoning Districts, why is there no Hyde Park Neighborhood District?

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Please provide additional time for comments and understanding. Please do not rush this process.

Response:

Thank you for the note. Squares + Streets is about more than just transit rich areas, but to your point we will be bringing on a transportation consultant to develop clear analysis and make recommendations to improve the types of concerns you are raising. Squares + Streets is also about ensuring every Bostonian – current and future – has access to neighborhoods with everyday resources and services is foundational to Boston’s commitment to affordability, resilience, and equity. As Boston’s population grows by over 12% to 800,000 simply providing more housing is essential, but access to housing alone will not produce the high quality of life Bostonians deserve

When housing growth is paired with an abundance of commercial, civic, cultural, and transportation resources, residents and businesses appreciate benefits beyond access to housing (lower transportation spending, reduced space dedicated to parking, larger pool of business patrons, small CO2 footprints, efficient delivery of City services, etc.) These districts set a maximum size for what gets built, but there are still a number of ways that projects will get shaped beyond zoning:

Most projects built in these districts will be at the Article 80 scale, meaning BPDA staff and community voices will be able to work with each project to help it fit in with its specific context.

The Boston Design Vision is a city initiative working to understand how residents can see themselves in the buildings and outdoor spaces that define our city, and especially how local, cultural, and historic differences can be implemented in design. This project is currently exploring how to embed itself within development review, design review, and other city processes.

Small Area Plans will include a comprehensive vernacular analysis exploring on-the-ground built conditions unique to each plan area.

Please stay involved with our Small Area Plans, which are intended to provide a more tangible set of opportunities for engagement and will help apply these broader ideas in a more specific way.

Timestamp: January 23, 2024 15:42:48

Name: Susan Donlan

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Effort at trying to reach an agreement

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The unknowns concerning the future.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

The taking of land by eminent domain. The actual zoning restrictions ie size Decisions made by the few Taking into account the decisions of the actual neighbors on the area

Response:

The BRA has not used eminent domain in decades, and the BPDA will not use it during Squares + Streets or other zoning reform efforts.

Timestamp: January 23, 2024 16:04:46

Name: Dennis Kirkpatrick

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Nothing at this time

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This is too broad based and lacks specifics.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

This plan is expecting people to accept several "concepts" with no specifics. The people do not know what they are approving without specifics. This needs to be re-thought and slowed down. Zoning needs to be specific rather than broadly presented ideology. Documentation issued to the public is rife with errors and maps that extend over planned change areas.

Response:

The only map that would use the proposed Squares + Streets zoning districts at this time is Mattapan. While the text is specific, its application to specific locations, through the amendment of the zoning map, will be highly-local following a planning process.

Timestamp: January 23, 2024 16:24:30

Name: Martha McDonough

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

See my response at the end of this comment form.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Look below - last paragraph says it all

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

This 118 page draft just came out and since then, there have been revisions. Certainly, there has not been time to adequately review this document along with its changes. Why the rush??? Get out to every neighborhood with plenty of notice to all residents about any presentations regarding changes that can impact our neighborhoods and listen to their responses both positive, negative, and whatever suggestions they might have.

Response:

Engagement on drafting of zoning began in September 2023 and will continue through projected Zoning Commission consideration in April 2024.

Timestamp: January 23, 2024 16:31:13

Name: Heidi Moesinger

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

City goals of overpopulating Boston will be reached.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Add language regarding fixing infrastructure before adding density to an area. Criteria for determining when space is appropriate to be developed and when adding more density to an area would overpopulate an area. More green space and open outdoor space for families and children to play outside by their home, and not have to schedule outings to a local playground or park to enjoy the outdoors. This green space area should be determined per person living there; it should NOT just be a small porch per unit. Street trees every so many feet and set-back for outdoor activity. You are building homes, not dorms.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

This will allow the city to take more control over development and not feel bad about not listening to civic associations when the city wants the development, but the neighborhood doesn't. Boston has issues that need to be fixed before adding more density.

Response:

The zoning districts use a combination of land use and building form to regulate density. We do not believe that anything in this initiative will overpopulate Boston, which is still well below the peak of its 20th Century population.

Timestamp: January 23, 2024 16:47:40

Name: James Michel

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I am in favor of expanding the housing stock in the city of Boston, which I believe is the intent of this proposed amendment.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The process has been rushed and non-transparent.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

PLEASE EXTEND THE COMMENT PERIOD TIMELINE. It is unclear to me why the establishment of as-of-right overlay districts needs to be rushed and approved prior to full engagement in a community planning process. There are important elements of this proposed zoning code amendment language that are unclear and require further discussion, such as:

- Who decides whether or not to apply a certain overlay zoning district to a neighborhood? Is it the BPDA Board? Is it the neighborhood residents, and if so by what process?
- Are the dimensions of an overlay district set in stone? If a neighborhood business district is designated as a square, does this mean that all development within a 1/3 mile radius of the center falls within the overlay. Currently many neighborhood business districts have residential streets in close proximity. Are we allowing for demolition of single- or two-family homes to be replaced by 7 story apartment buildings because they are within a third of a mile of the business district center?
- The new language does not appear to address climate-related issues such as green space requirements, tree canopy preservation, etc. Is this intentional?
- It is not clear how this new zoning language will support affordable housing development.

These are just a few examples. I am in support of expanding the existing housing stock in the city of Boston, and agree that density clustered around public transit hubs makes sense. I do not think this proposed amendment language is anywhere close to finished.

The BPDA has an opportunity to create a much more inclusive process as it slows things down and works to deeply engage the community. Why not start the planning process and let the zoning language evolve in parallel? Thank you for your consideration of this matter; again, please extend the comment period deadline.

Response:

Climate-related provisions apply universally across all districts in Boston (see Article 37: Green Building). We believe the new zoning will support many kinds of housing development, including affordable housing development through inclusionary zoning requirements and clear zoning pathways for mixed-income and all-affordable housing development. The districts are meant to be base zoning, not an overlay, and will be mapped through a planning process that takes into account the larger planning context of a 1/3 mile radius. Please stay engaged in the Cleary Square Small Area Plan process: <https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/cleary-square>.

Timestamp: January 23, 2024 17:11:47

Name: Shon

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I love the idea of making space for artist of all genres.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would love to see more space made available in the streetwear and e-commerce fields allowing for more pop up shops and events for artist.

Response:

We think these changes should help streamline zoning for retail and events, including for streetwear and e-commerce that you mentioned. Thanks for engaging in the process and hope you'll stay involved as we plan for Codman Square and Fields Corner later this year.

Timestamp: January 23, 2024 18:11:09

Name: John Harding

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like the focus on mixed use. I like the focus on existing example properties. I generally like form based zoning. I also like the focus on 3 story and taller buildings. Overall, my concerns are not with the zoning text itself. My concerns are with implementation. Well done and thank you.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I dont love the first 4 areas under consideration (Hyde Park, Roslindale Square, Fields Corner, and Codman Square. All 4 are great areas and I am sure would benefit from this rezoning. However, I would like to also see a wealthy area (e.g. Beacon Hill, Back Bay, South End, or even my area of Centre St in JP) rezoned to add density. It is a common theme in the US that middle to low income neighborhoods have to accommodate the challenges of growth. I think all neighborhoods need to grow. Also, development works financially better in wealthier neighborhoods and in Boston those areas typically have better transit access as well.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

My largest concern with this change is that each rezoning will run into opposition at public meetings and will end up zoning for the same of less density than currently exists. If that happens this entire zoning exercise will have failed. I hope that the city requires all of these rezoning plans to add density and in most cases to add significant density, no only choosing S0 and S1. I also hope the city utilizes public comment in a flexible way. Public meetings are rarely representative of the general public and the city needs to represent the interests of the larger Boston area that desires more and more affordable housing.

Response:

As you've identified, the vast majority of the City of Boston needs updated zoning, which also interacts with rules established by the Landmarks Commission for many areas of Back Bay, Beacon Hill, and the South End that supersede dimensional regulations established by zoning. Appreciate the challenge to us as a city planning department to make sure we build in equity across the city as part of planning for growth.

Timestamp: January 24, 2024 07:56:10

Name: Jay Paget

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The vision of a vital commercial district where people live in walking distance of a variety of businesses and restaurants is understandable. This sentiment may be its core but at this stage the instrument as proposed may be too blunt.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

At this point we are unclear if SQs + STs supplants Articles 67 and 69 or where the SQs & STs specific boundaries are. The documents say 1/3 of a mile from the squares, but it's not precise. And if 1/3 mile radius is the footprint you're deep into residential streets around Cleary and Roslindale Squares and the form-based zoning will not work on a residential street with mostly one to three family homes.

Another concern is not to require any off-street parking. It is hard to imagine a 3-5 story apt building where there would not be a sizable parking need. The "shared parking" suggestion in SQ + ST. literature appears untested and should be fully vetted before assuming it will work. In addition, the River St Bridge, one of the main throughways in Hyde Park, will have been closed for three years once it opens again this spring. This has triggered immense traffic issues. And the entire bridge is still being slated for a complete replacement in the near future. Taking these realities into consideration before adding more housing with no parking requirements should be carefully weighed.

So, we need time to understand the implications of this proposal.

We ask you walk us through the changes and compare it to what we have now. And let us have the benefit of giving each other in the community our best ideas, and in turn the BPDA and the City.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

By any measure, there's a lot to consider in this zoning proposal. The sequence of having form-based zoning approved by the Commission first, then going to each neighborhood

and asking for their input on a preset menu of options before we've had a chance to fully analyze weigh in on what the BPDA is referring to as Districts S-0 through S-4 is very different than how Hyde Park's zoning code was updated in 2011, and Roslindale's in 2007. At that time a series of public education and input meetings were held prior to updating the zoning code.

From that very public process came a vision, a strategy, and a series of recommendations that not only updated the base zoning code but articulated our collective aspirations for both neighborhoods and see where there may be an opportunity to translate those visions into the built environment. I hope you get a chance to read both Strategic Plans it or at least refer to them as we go forward.

Response:

There are no changes to Article 67 or Article 69 at this time, and the S+S districts are not mapped anywhere but in Mattapan (Article 60). We do not anticipate that these zoning districts will be applied in a 1/3 mile radius, but rather mapped according to the results of the planning process. We look forward to walking through all of this as part of the Small Area Plan.

Timestamp: January 24, 2024 09:56:09

Name: Matthew

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I agree that Boston needs more mixed-use zoning to create more livable communities. I hope that the promise to "coordinate local transportation and public space improvements" is genuine and that we will see these improvements happen.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I am concerned that the theme of "activating Roslindale square" will entail gentrification and continue to displace immigrant neighbors who live, work and access cultural community resources in Roslindale Square. While we need traffic calming measures and a more walkable community, the reality is that service industry workers who provide the services that upper middle class/white collar residents want (restaurant workers, delivery drivers, Uber drivers, etc) rely on cars because of the nature of their jobs or because the MBTA doesn't accommodate them in terms of routes and service hours. So, we DO need to consider parking when planning for new development. Just because Roslindale offers numerous bus routes and highly limited commuter rail service does NOT make it a public transit-friendly community (unless you work a 9-5 job in downtown Boston or can easily get to where you need to go from Forest Hills). Finally, I want to express concern about public space. Public spaces like Healy Field are in disrepair (crumbling structures, dying trees, etc) and attract loitering, public drinking, etc. If we are going to increase development and promote public spaces, we need to make sure that these spaces attract a variety of users and are safe spaces for all.

Response:

A full Parking and Curbside Study for Roslindale Square led by the Boston Transportation Department was recently completed and is expected to be implemented soon. For more information about that study and plan, please visit www.boston.gov/departments/transportation/roslindale-square-parking-and-curb-use-plan. This plan includes both in-field data collection to identify use patterns as well as feedback from business owners, employees, and commercial land owners. Proposed Squares + Streets zoning will not prevent any future project from building parking as part of their project. While zoning will not require parking to be built, it also does not prevent it from

being built. In addition, special attention was given to creating zoning sub districts that make it easier for private property owners to share parking spaces across projects.

Timestamp: January 24, 2024 10:25:45

Name: Sara Sezun

Neighborhood: Allston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It like that it's going to help individual neighborhoods.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

N/A

Response:

Look forward to talking about zoning with you in the Allston Brighton Neighborhood Plan.

Timestamp: January 24, 2024 10:46:34

Name: Nina Vansuch

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

We need zoning reform and the efforts of the planning team are commendable. It would be good to give our community more time to review the 115+ pages of the S+S plans and even the shorter Roslindale-specific plan. (a month+ would make a difference for us regular folks).

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

More time is needed for our community to fully absorb and assess the documents. January 28 is not enough time for our community to fully understand the document's data and offer suggestions, concerns, etc (another month+ would help!). The documents are densely technical and it is not clear that the proposed changes will truly make our neighborhoods affordable and equitable for all, as in "Who is the target population this is being created for?"

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Our neighborhood will surely be the focus of many developments in the near term, and we welcome the creative opportunities this can afford our community. We also need more time to absorb what has been proposed. We certainly need more housing, safer walking options (a crosswalk at Target?, reversing Firth and Bexley for safer traffic flow, etc.) and I hope we can address the issue of truly affordable housing. We need housing for people whose income is reflected in the 30 to 50% AMI. These include child and elder care workers, people serving our community of boomers and their millennial children. As we all know, these workers are grossly underpaid (a whole other department there!), and 60% AMI is out of reach for them. As a retired childcare worker and program developer, the staff people I worked with have not been able to afford to live in our neighborhoods and communities where they work. They either live in housing developments like Archdale or Beech or have to live out of town. They feel isolated and disconnected from where they work and the greater community. Restaurant and retail workers are also not in the 60 to 70 % AMI range considered affordable by the city. We also want to ensure that the new developments are not predominantly studios and one-bedroom apartments. We also would like to see that already established businesses are protected by these changes.

Keeping the height of the building to 4 stories would be optimal and attention to the overall design, so we don't look like a monolith of flat-faced buildings without personality. We look forward to meeting with S +S teams to discuss these issues more completely and hope that the deadline for public comments can be moved up, as well as the general timeline. We are not saying "no". We are saying, "Include us more completely." Not everyone supports gentrification.

Response:

The Roslindale Small Area Plan process will be kicking off on February 24, and running for 6-9 months. You can find out more about the Small Area Plan process here:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/roslindale-square>. Thank you for these detailed comments on exactly the type of issues the Small Area Plan will tackle.

Timestamp: January 24, 2024 10:54:49

Name: Nina Vansuch

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Please see my previous entry

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Please see my previous entry

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I would like to add that allowing ADUs and one, two, & three-family conversions (adding top floors or converting basements and garages into legal dwellings, etc) would be of value to our communities.

Response:

The BPDA is working on a citywide initiative to update zoning to allow ADUs. Stay tuned for more information on that process over the coming year.

Timestamp: January 24, 2024 14:01:27

Name: Kendra Beaver

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

More density in places where there's higher foot traffic and close to transit

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Make the "affordable housing" aspect of the proposal actually affordable. 100% AMI is not affordable for most people, myself included who is a full time working professional. At least 30% AMI will support truly low-income people. Otherwise, you will continue to push out middle and lower class people via this housing that they cannot afford. I am someone who wants more density and transit oriented development, but it's no good to me or other Bostonians if only high-earning folks can afford it, especially since there is other market rate housing they **can** afford.

Additionally, I would like to see more climate-related and climate resilience requirements in the zoning, such as a ban on clear cutting woodlands for development, no matter the type of housing. The climate benefits of more density is totally cancelled out if trees, which are one of the biggest and easiest tools in our climate mitigation and adaptation toolkit, are cut down in the process. Additionally, the creation of new and preservation of existing green spaces is critical as well.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Please slow down the process to allow at least 6 more months of community input/process so that we can support our neighbors in weighing in on changes coming to their communities.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. We agree that creating new green space is important in development and an important focus of our planning. The City of Boston, as well as the region, has a cross-cutting housing crisis that requires many different strategies to address. We think these zoning changes will help affordable housing serving 30% AMI by making such affordable housing projects, which are frequently delivered as multi-family buildings,

possible under zoning. The City of Boston, as part of its climate planning, is looking to grow in transit-rich locations like Squares + Streets to help reduce our emissions.

Timestamp: January 24, 2024 15:39:06

Name: andrew giannino-curtis

Neighborhood: Allston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I appreciate the increase in density in these crucial community spaces that will offer the opportunity for us to make homes for people of all walks of life who want to call Boston home, while providing space for public amenities in the form of increased retail and commercial square footage in these critical areas. Most importantly, I would like to express my strongest support for the re-inclusion of the proposed S5 district type and the increased height, density, and resilient and sustainable construction typologies that it will hopefully encourage. Additionally, the removal of parking minimums within these districts will serve to create more sustainable development that the city has been in pursuit of for the last decade plus. The proposed S+S districts broadly seem to be in line with creating a zoning compliant path forwards for the types of development that the city and the development community have historically sought to create and should help us to give residents and developers a more predictable outcome moving forward instead of the sometimes patchwork process that we have seen in the past. The higher density districts' ground floor 'active use' requirement will also serve to further improve the pedestrian experience of our main streets, and create more livable neighborhoods for residents who live in and visit these places.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Dimensional Standards:

Overall: I would like to see a firmer definition of what the intended use of the front yard setbacks is in all districts. Given some discussions I have come to understand the required setbacks as being primarily in pursuit of enlarged sidewalks and pedestrian right of way, however the smaller districts require large enough setbacks that would imply a traditional "suburban style" front yard. Many of the most vibrant cities in the world are composed of almost entirely zero lot line buildings with large rear yards and I would hate to see Boston codify something that would prevent that form of building here.

Additionally, where height limits are given in feet, it can be counterproductive to also artificially limit them by number of stories as well. With new construction typologies (mass timber, CLT, DLT, hybrid construction, etc.) room for an extra story can often be found

within the historic heights of buildings built over the last century. Gross height is often the only true way to define how people experience a building from the street, and we should decide what we want a street experience to be rather than using a measure of 'usable internal volume' to limit density in a way that is not perceivable from the exterior. This change has already been made in the proposed S5 district, and would make sense to bring down to at least S3 and S4 as well.

S0 Districts - Current dimensional standards would limit the number of homes per building to 14, in my opinion this should be stricken entirely and the dimensional constraints should limit the number of units, but at minimum it should be increased to 16. In the maximally sized building capping the unit count at 14 yields average unit sizes far larger than the average size of existing and new construction homes in the city.

Use Tables:

Parking Garages and Lots are currently listed as conditional based on form and performance in multiple districts, these should be Forbidden. We should not be encouraging the use of land in these districts that we hope to be pedestrian oriented areas of activity to have NEW automotive infrastructure added to them regardless of what form it takes.

Assuming that S5 will follow the same use table standards as S4, S5 should allow Hotel - Large, and Retail Use - Extra Large on an Allowable basis. Boston has a longstanding shortage of hotel spaces and siting new large hotels near activity and transportation centers just makes sense. Given the floor plate dimensions allowed in these districts, allocating just 2 floors of a building in them would immediately trigger an issue.

Finally as an absolute moonshot of a goal, forbidding the location of electrical transformers and switchgear outside of building's within the S3 and higher districts would be an incredible improvement to the street experience. I'm not sure if this is even legal but just wanted to throw it out there.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I just want to express my thanks to all the staff who have been a part of this process, this is shaping up to be a transformative change for planning in Boston and I appreciate all the time and care staff have given to this effort.

Response:

Thank you for your detailed comments, and your acknowledgment of the time and care staff have given to this effort. We're going to respond item by item:

Front Yards: Yes, in the smaller districts, we do envision that these will provide the type of front yards that we see in many of our neighborhoods across Boston, but at a maximum of 8 feet for the S0 district, we don't think this counts as suburban style. This is deliberately meant to be a transition district, where yard dimensions mirror those of other districts. You are correct that in higher districts, we find that small front yards (2') are important to help provide an effective streetscape where we have narrow sidewalks (including many historic squares + streets). We expect the Small Area Plans will dig deeper into right-of-way and streetscape recommendations for specific locations.

Height: We are trying to balance predictability for the community with creating space for innovative sustainable construction techniques. We think it's important to see how this works in taller height districts first.

S0: Currently, Article 80 Small Project review begins at 15 units; this district would avoid that threshold, which shows up as a "cliff" in our data because of the time and expense of navigating the process for small buildings. We also think this can help provide larger unit sizes to accommodate a range of household sizes and types, as requested in many of these comments and in planning processes across the city.

Parking Garages/Lots: You are correct in that our planning does not encourage these uses, which would be used in any conditional use determination. However, one of our goals in these areas is to continue to encourage more district-based parking solutions - where uses do not need to provide parking on their own lot, but can take advantage of a parking facility serving the whole area. Many Squares + Streets areas of the city already have models of this with public parking lots. That's why these uses have been made conditional.

Large Hotels: These have been made conditional because hotels over 50,000 square feet constitute a Development Impact Project, which requires zoning relief for the assessment of linkage payments to mitigate their impacts.

We're working on a series of modernizations and updates to the Utilities section of the code (Article 88) in light of electrification across the city. More to come on that effort this year.

Timestamp: January 24, 2024 19:46:42

Name: Sandra Serkess

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

nothing

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Everything-- the mayor does not listen and we have learned that from the road diet. So dangerous for fire and police, but that is not her problem.

Response:

Thank you for your comment and concerns about listening to community voices. We encourage you to review the Squares + Streets engagement plan template (<https://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/6b3dddaf-cfa3-4aa4-b638-808c061e4426>) to find out more about community involvement in the creation of Small Area Plans and the mapping of zoning districts as part of this initiative.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 04:33:20

Name: Judy Ulman

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

S&S does not give all the information that Boston towns need. S&S does not engage in answering peoples concerns and anxieties.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Understand and Answer concerns and of our city neighborhoods before engaging in these changes. Show support for our communities - real support. Mayor Wu does not have concern for our communities or the people living in the neighborhoods. These towns in the city will become so dense, there will be no clean air to breathe, no parking, no green areas, no space for families to bring up their children. Boston will become so overcrowded our quality of life will be lost. Seniors will be pushed out because there is no such thing as affordable housing. Seniors will be the next homeless people.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Stop and think about how our future will look. This new process takes time and thought. Please think about what you are fast tracking. Don't just think about tackling the present crisis. S&S has to do their homework in how this plays out. Rome was not built in day!

Response:

Thank you for your comments about the timeline and schedule of Squares + Streets. There has been over 6 months of work on Phase 1 of this effort, development zoning templates. The next phase, Small Area Plans, will involve 6-9 months of focused work in the community, starting with Roslindale Square and Cleary Square.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 10:34:42

Name: Scott Minkin

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that it will increase development in Roslindale Square!!! WE NEED MORE HOUSING and this is a critical step to helping Roslindale thrive. I like S-5 Placemaker Square districts being in the plan.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I want walkability, street safety, and public transit prioritized. This is critical to me and my young family. Please also develop a plan for displacement generated by new development (e.g. new luxury housing driving up real estate prices in a time of high interest rates). I also want to ensure low income neighbors of mine are included in the process, so please make a specific targeted engagement effort for these folks who often work multiple jobs and can't attend meeting times afforded to 9-5 workers. Please ensure meetings have childcare and food available, as well as translation services to the linguistically isolated neighbors in Roslindale.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Rezoning is so important and I'm glad it's happening! Housing is the hardest social determinant of health to fulfill due to its high cost so I'm very grateful for changes to zoning that will make more housing to ease supply & eventually prices.

Response:

The BPDA is working alongside other City departments to help the City develop a more consistent citywide policy regarding anti-displacement. We expect that Squares + Streets small area plans will, like other ongoing zoning reform work, both support and also need to be aligned with that broader effect. In our engagement work for the small area plans, we will indeed work to ensure that broad access is available, so that we can get the most wide-ranging set of feedback and participation that we can.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 11:23:31

Name: Rachael Kraft

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that it will remove barriers to increased development -ESPECIALLY HOUSING- in areas that just make sense (easy access to existing transit infrastructure). We need more housing for renters and households with earnings under \$150k/year.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I'd like to see low and medium cost housing development highly incentivized. Developers need to be rewarded for developing this type of housing versus high-end housing. We need to ensure that these developments are not only for the rich. I'd actually like to see percentages- as in, only 10-15% of new units in these districts can be for buyers above median income. I'd also like to see smart architectural review. Current architectural review is fairly non-existent in Roslindale and we are losing neighborhood character. The process does not need to be cumbersome, but it should exist. Otherwise we end up with characterless boxes and soulless neighborhoods. Boston should still look like Boston!!!

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Homeowners within or very close to these zones should be able to create Additional Dwelling Units for low or median income earners with relative ease in the permitting process. Incentivizing this (through tax credits?) would help to create a much larger stock of housing within reasonable walking distance of transit-heavy areas.

Response:

The City's Inclusionary Development Policy

(<https://www.bostonplans.org/projects/standards/inclusionary-development-policy>) is our main tool for encouraging development of income-restricted housing. We expect this initiative to encourage more growth subject to IDP, and also expect that it will better enable fully income-restricted projects, like those developed using Low Income Housing Tax Credit funding, to become more viable.

Similarly, we are working to legalize ADUs by-right across Boston in the coming year. Please stay tuned to our zoning reform work as we begin that process in the coming weeks.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 13:22:28

Name: Andrea

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Revitalizing our village!

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Slowing down traffic, improvements to public transportation, pedestrian SAFETY

Response:

Thank you for your comment. Part of the Roslindale Small Area Plan will include working with the Boston Transportation Department on mobility and safety within Roslindale Square.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 13:36:27

Name: sammy nave

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I'm very in favor of increasing development in Roslindale Square! I'm extremely in favor of S-5 being included in the plan. We need as much housing as possible which means density and prioritizing people over cars/parking.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Prioritizing walkability, pedestrian and bike safety, and public transit are what I want most for Roslindale. I have a 2 and a 5 year old and we walk to Sumner and Village Preschool every day, rain or shine. We've seen so many close calls and drivers driving at excessive speeds. I hate that we have to actively think about how to stay safe on our neighborhood sidewalks. We will only walk on the sidewalk protected by parked cars on Cohasset and after walking up Birch street we have to walk down Penfield 10 yards or so before crossing over and continuing on Birch because NO ONE stops at those stop signs and the visibility is incredibly poor, especially when drivers take those turns at 10+ mph.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Thank you for taking this on! Affordable and available housing is so important for our neighborhood and community!

Response:

Thank you for your comment. Part of the Roslindale Small Area Plan will include working with the Boston Transportation Department on mobility and safety within Roslindale Square.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 13:49:56

Name: Susan Sheffler

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I appreciate the focus on more development and more housing - greater density and reliable public transit will help our community thrive!

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would also like a focus on TRUE full capacity for the various commercial spaces in Roslindale Village as there are some spaces (like the former pet store) that are statistically considered "filled" when it's a completely empty eyesore which could instead be building the local economy and community. If there is anything that can be done to encourage landlords to lease their properties to active tenants/punish them for leaving them vacant in this manner, that would be a great addition to this plan.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I would like a greater focus road safety for non-drivers (pedestrians and bicyclists). The drivers are very unsafe, distracted and aggressive and frequently put the life of myself and my children in danger. There should be more slow streets, stop signs, stoplights, etc. and more enforcement by BPD (including of the Washington St bus lane hours - there are constantly cars blocking them in evening rush hour) - I would like there to be a clear and easily available way for members of the public to report reckless drivers with actual consequences BEFORE they maim and kill people.

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to comment. Through the Small Area Plan process, we will be collaborating with our colleagues in the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion to address small businesses and commercial activity in the area.

Transportation is another key component of the Small Area Plans, and we will continue to work with the Boston Transportation Department on improvements to mobility and safety within Squares + Streets areas.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 13:56:29

Name: Elizabeth Tobin

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Focus on increasing housing and walkability

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Avoiding displacing existing renters and businesses

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I strongly support the points made in the comment letter from Walk-Up Roslindale. The new Squares and Streets initiative is great. Roslindale needs it. I walk to the square several times a week, would like to see more businesses, which would be supported by more housing and greater density. I support less emphasis on cars and parking.

Response:

Thank you for your comment here! We are continuing to work with other City departments on developing a consistent and comprehensive anti-displacement policy that includes but is not limited to many of the tools that we have at the BPDA.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 15:43:01

Name: LUCAS FEININGER

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Not very much

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I want more clarity on exactly what the changes to the zoning districts re going to mean for the neighborhoods. I want more engagement from our elected officials. Many of our officials, including my district city councilor, have very few details about the S + S initiative. These officials have to hunt for answers like everyone else. I want the process slowed down so that the impacted communities have time to understand and react to the proposals. The mayor promised to run a transparent administration and build community by involving city residents. That is not happening with S +S. A few major concerns are: Some of the new height limits are excessive. Seven stories in neighborhoods with mostly two and three story buildings is totally inappropriate. The lack of parking for new S + S developments is also wrong. Despite what city planners may think, a lot of people own and use cars, if not for every day commuting for other purposes. Neighborhoods that are already congested are going to be flooded with cars belonging to people living in the new housing built under S +S rules. There are no provisions for affordable housing other than the current rules. Most of the housing that will get built in the S +S zoning districts will be market rate. I would also like to see a design review component included in any new zoning codes. Many of the condo buildings that have been recently built are ugly boxes designed for maximum utilization of a lot and maximum profit with no regard to design or aesthetics.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I feel like Squares and Streets is a huge giveaway to developers who want to profit off the "housing crisis". Under current zoning rules developers have to go through a public review process and react to and perhaps incorporate changes requested by concerned residents. Yes, the zoning process can be complicated but there are good reasons for that, and it has not prevented developers from building in my neighborhood, West Roxbury. Another factor to be considered is, is the city ready for a building boom? By that I mean are the planners and inspectors in place to administer the possible increase in construction activity? Owners at a fairly new development here in West Roxbury, 1400 Centre Street, are now suing the

developer for shoddy construction, including problems that should have been flagged by ISD during the building process. Please do NOT rush the Squares and Streets through BPDA and the Zoning Commission.

Response:

At this time, S+S districts are only proposed to be mapped in Mattapan. In your neighborhood, West Roxbury, proposed updates to the zoning map would be developed as part of a future Small Area Plan; no changes are proposed at this time.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 16:12:26

Name: Amanda H.

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

To be honest, the text is much too heavy and specialized for me to truly be able to comment with any objectivity or expertise. What I do like overall is this approach to modernizing and growing Clearly Square for future residents to live in and enjoy.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This probably doesn't fall under Zoning, but I would like to see landlords hit with tax penalties for vacant spaces in their commercial properties. Currently there is no incentive for landlords in Clearly Sq to sign tenants and it's evident in more than a few rundown buildings that someone to do anything about (or that the tax penalties aren't currently enough to illicit upkeep and occupancy from landloards).

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Currently too many commercial spaces are vacant or run down or both. I also think city government (or government of any kind) moves much too slow and despite what our neighborhood associations are advocating for, I'm in favor of taking this faster approach towards building more affordable housing, improving the commercial spaces/offerings in our area, and hoping attracting a broader demographic of residents to live/play/work in Hyde Park.

Response:

Thank you for this comment. While zoning does not have anything like tax penalties associated with it, we do agree that vacant commercial space is a big concern for Boston's neighborhood commercial centers. Much of the underlying reasoning for increasing housing production in these areas is to help increase the potential customer base for these businesses, and add enough new density and surrounding supporting types of development to ensure that these active main streets storefronts have everything they need to be lively and play the role that we all want in our community.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 16:27:08

Name: Matthew Proctor

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I love that it will increase development in Rozzie Square! I'd like to see more housing, more restaurants, and more commerce in that area. There are too many empty store fronts with landlords just sitting on the leases and leaving them empty. Roslindale has a vibrant community and it should grow and thrive!

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Prioritize more walkability, more street safety, and more public transit access. The commuter rail is great but Forrest hills is hard to get to from the square.

On road safety - we've seen too many vehicles crash into buildings in this area and too many drivers run into pedestrians and bicyclists. We need to prioritize safe streets.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. Part of the Roslindale Small Area Plan will include working with the Boston Transportation Department on mobility and safety within Roslindale Square.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 16:36:12

Name: tseli mohammed

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Super excited to see the proposed plans! More specifically and I want to echo the comments of WalkUp Roslindale, especially those related to this initiative's impact on displacement.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Hope this is just the start of real change and progress in revitalizing the our neighborhood.

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to comment - hope to see you as we create a Small Area Plan and updated zoning map in Roslindale!

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 17:11:25

Name: Gwynne Morgan & William J. Golden

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

see comments sent to Zacharia at Squares & Streets, To Michael Wu; Arthur Jemison; Ruthzee Louijeune, Erin Murphy, and Ben Weber on 1/25/2024

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

see comments referenced

Response:

Please see our response to this submission in the “Responses to Public Comment Letter Submissions” available at

<https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning/zoning-initiatives/squares-streets-zoning-districts#comment-period>.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 17:41:55

Name: Mandana Moshtaghi

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Boston is my adopted city, and it is a beautiful and lovely city, but not for all, as home prices whether it is renting or buying have become out of reach for most. High housing costs and struggling small businesses are not breaking news. It is a reality that we have been living for some time and it needs to change. We need more mixed-use projects and in the hearts of our neighborhoods to keep them lively and our small businesses afloat. So increased density and the proposed zoning reform in our business districts to add more housing of all kinds makes absolute sense. It is indeed a good start and I wholeheartedly welcome this effort by the Wu administration!

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Objective criteria must be used, especially proximity to reliable and equitable transit, so I am asking for Zone 1A commuter rail fee for all neighborhoods within the city of Boston! If not now when?

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

More late-night dining. Easy liquor licenses for bars and restaurants...distributing more licenses. Restriction of huge delivery trailers within the city, restricting by time or altogether.

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to comment - the City of Boston now has their own dedicated seat on the Board of the MBTA, so we are excited for this additional avenue to help advance transportation improvements envisioned in our plans. Focus on the importance of the commuter rail and improvements will be important to the first two Small Area Plans in Hyde Park and Cleary Square.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 19:40:49

Name: Marie Oser

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Need to know more about what's being proposed for my neighborhood of 2 and 3 generation families.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Have been opposed to the 5 story, 31 unit bldg approved by zoning board at Basile and Washington St. so cannot agree with additional buildings being added to an already dense neighborhood.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

The idea of having everything we need within a "15 minute walk" doesn't appeal to me because I like the freedom of being able to drive to other areas for variety.

Response:

We fully appreciate the importance of having full access to not only nearby businesses, but to also allow car owners to reach all parts of the city and greater metropolitan area. Even still, we believe that reducing the need of some residents to drive as much will still benefit driving, by reducing the net number of people on the road, which should accordingly improve traffic and other similar concerns.

Timestamp: January 25, 2024 20:02:51

Name: Nia Lewis

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This 118 page document contains some vague descriptive text that has the potential to be interpreted differently by different people. Once there are comprehensive and clear edits made I would be able to way in properly.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

See above. This process feels rushed - it started in Oct/Nov and that was just yesterday...the speed at which it is being pushed feels unhealthy. Please slow down.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I understand there is a housing crisis - this is not limited to Boston. I understand there is a need for more housing units and I welcome that - however - I would like to ask that these changes be slowed down and the following issue be truly addressed : 1. Does S&S really make affordable housing? 2. Are water drainage/utility infrastructure improvements being considered as you plan to allow more development? 3. What about climate resiliency - the Harbor is moving inland Folks, what is the plan for that as more development is allowed? 4. Community engagement - the city needs to be open, honest and direct and acknowledge there are many opinions and voices in the city and we are not all necessarily represented by the ones you are most familiar with and consider "community leaders" AND this does not mean anyone who questions the swiftness of S&S is a NIMBY or ignorant. There a lots of different people in the world and we all need to listen to each other rather than bully and ignore voices that are different than ones own. Happy to engage in future dialogues across the radius.

Response:

We are looking forward to comprehensive, in depth dialogues during the Small Area Plan. You cite many important, cross-cutting and existential crises that Boston is facing, including the housing crisis and how climate change will shape our future city. These, along with making sure projects have necessary infrastructure, are things we think about every day and across all of our work, and will look forward to working with you during the Small Area Plan.

Timestamp: January 26, 2024 09:50:15

Name: Ben Bruno

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I strongly support the Squares + Streets initiative and believe it is vital for the future of Roslindale and all of Boston to enhance the livability, diversity, and vibrancy of our communities.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I especially agree with the points made by WalkUP Roslindale in the letter (dated 1/24/24) advocating for objective criteria, reduced conditional uses, using existing conditions as the floor, S-5 Placemaker Squares, anti-displacement measures, and inclusive engagement in the planning and zoning process. These recommendations are sensible and necessary to ensure that the Squares + Streets initiative achieves its goals and benefits all residents and businesses.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I sincerely hope these processes will indeed move quickly as planned. I have witnessed many housing developments in Roslindale be killed or delayed indefinitely by the weaponization of the process. We desperately need housing to be built and I am cautiously hopeful about the Squares and Streets initiative.

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to comment - hope to see you as we create a Small Area Plan and updated zoning map in Roslindale!

Timestamp: January 26, 2024 10:40:26

Name: Mary Moniz

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I was hopeful when I saw a Squares and Streets public meeting slide presentation on 2024-01-10. It showed 5 Squares and Streets districts, simply explained with more in-depth and understandable explanations later in the presentation. I envisioned an updated process where developers could no longer use money and influence to seek and obtain variances for impactful neighborhood projects. But in reading the confusing amendment text...I saw that developer and lawyer appeals could be made and the resulting neighborhood chaos would remain. I like that the plan emphasized the importance of hyper local citizen engagement. People most impacted by and respectful of their neighborhoods should be the loudest voices heard. I like that there is a requirement for permeable areas at least at the front of the buildings. How about making the yards (they used to be called setbacks!) also permeable. Acknowledgement of how development can impact the 'climate' of a neighborhood is important, although I did not see any of that laid out in the zoning changes. I like that some recommendations from my neighbors resulted in changes in the plans. I like that there is an acknowledgement that rent and the cost of housing causes a burden to 34% of Roslindale families but where do you call for affordable and family sized housing in the Roslindale Squares and Streets Plan?

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I fear that buildings will come too close to corners and each other. Lot size and side yard requirements, although they seem to be clearly defined, might still be taken to Zoning for variances. Where are the requirements for affordable housing? I see that there are specifications for student housing...what about apartments big enough for families? Add specifications about the materials used on the outside of the buildings. There must be strict guidelines for off street parking for deliveries and ample off-street loading facilities for dumpsters etc. That means delivery cars and truck should be able to pull in and pull out...backing out of off-street loading facilities is dangerous. Please do not waver on this!!!

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

According to your information about Zoning Code requirements a large percentage of Roslindale properties are non-conforming with lot size regulations and Floor Area Ratio. It is hard to imagine that the working-class 20th century families who purchased and lived in the 1 and 2 and 3 family homes in the neighborhoods of Roslindale ever thought of variances or zoning codes and the contractors who built these houses obeyed the zoning rules. My guess is that parcels with non-conforming zoning happened within the last 10-15 years. My endorsement of this Squares and Streets plan hinges on the affordability of the housing, the availability of housing for families who will build community in Roslindale and the ability of the BPDA to ensure that neighborhoods are not called upon to defend their community from developers

Response:

It is true that this idea of nonconformity is relatively recent in Boston's history. When the buildings you speak of were built, the zoning code was either not yet in force (pre-1927) or dramatically less strict (before the 1980s). Our goals line up with your hopes for what this initiative will achieve -- increased affordability, predictable rules around safety and transportation, and ensuring that our neighborhoods continue to be good places to live not only for current residents but also those who want to call them home.

Timestamp: January 26, 2024 10:44:46

Name: Nancy Kressin

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I agree with the goal to simplify the zoning rules and process, in order to streamline the process of development in the City and to reduce 'zoning by exception'.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This document is nearly incomprehensible to the average resident of Boston, so it is almost impossible to know where to start to suggest changes. My City Councilor, a lawyer who is accustomed to reading dense technical documents, indicated that he could barely read the amendment draft. So, I suggest that a lay summary be prepared and offered to residents for review. This will necessitate an extension of the comment period, but it is the only way for residents to be able to provide informed input. The project overview document provided on the Squares and STreets webpage is laughably simple - no details. Something needs to be provided to bridge the gap between utter simplicity and total technicality.

I am very concerned about the areas where commercial districts meet existing, historic neighborhoods, and the prospect of tall buildings abutting smaller homes. I believe that homeowners who bought and invested in such neighborhoods (like Shawmut/Ashmont in Dorchester, Baker Street in West Roxbury, Centre Street in West Roxbury) should have some protection against 4+ story buildings being built immediately adjacent to them. I am also concerned about the impact on commercial districts; the ability to build 4+ story buildings may incentivize current landlords of smaller buildings to sell to developers who will build tall buildings without meaningful commercial space, which in turn may decimate commercial districts. I asked about this issue when meeting with S&S staff but did not receive reassurance of any protections of either homeowners or commercial districts.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

1. please extend the comment period
2. please provide a meaningful lay language summary
3. please assure existing homeowners that their property values/sight lines/sunlight/neighborhoods will be protected in this new zoning.

Response:

The zoning includes provisions that require larger side and rear yards to be provided when new development may abut a residential zoning district, to ensure that there is adequate buffering between them.

Timestamp: January 26, 2024 14:15:37

Name: Thelma Pierce

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The idea of looking at providing more affordable housing, monitoring parking, encouraging more diverse businesses (restaurants, etc.) and maintaining the green spaces.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

In looking at the diverse businesses, consider ones that are sustainable. A number of the current businesses are in a place for a year and fold. We do not need any more automotive, hair, and nail shops. Parking is a big issue as well, double parking on Washington in front of Subway, around Poplar St in front of Seymour Green and the side of the library, as well as other areas.

Response:

Thank you for your comments. We hope you will continue to participate in the Roslindale Square Small Area Plan

(<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/roslindale-square>).

Timestamp: January 26, 2024 14:25:23

Name: Lewis Barnes

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It is transit focused.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

There needs to be a minimum number of units (more than 7) to access the 7 story maximum. Otherwise no affordable housing will be created, and rezoning lots where there is already housing to demolish and build higher cost housing is a recipe for displacement. There is nothing in the plan to mitigate that.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

You are moving too fast! People need to know what you are doing. You have only come to my neighborhood once!

Response:

In general, because of the extent of the housing crisis and changing size of households in Boston and the region, we do not see developers looking to propose 7 story buildings with less than 7 units. This is something we will continue to monitor.

Timestamp: January 26, 2024 17:04:11

Name: Carol Streiff

Neighborhood: Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

N/A

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

N/A

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

There should be no further action on this proposal until such time as a comprehensive city-wide plan for ALL zoning changes is designed and presented to the public for review and comment.

Thus far we have had zoning change dribbling out, one-by-one, with no city-wide context and no accessible way to compare these changes with existing zoning. The process has been confusing and time-consuming for residents and businesses that want to engage in a meaningful way with the city's reform of an outdated zoning system.

We have had changes to affordable housing, new ADU requirements, a change to park/green space to allow a private entity to purchase rights to a public stadium, a new "business center concept" in "Squares and Streets", and finally this week, a proposal to increase substantially mayoral authority over the BPDA. There have been omissions: no comprehensive parking plan, inadequate protections for climate resiliency, housing that is truly affordable, failure to consider the requirements of small businesses, especially minority. There have been unclear and obfuscating statements from BPDA and zoning staff. Nobody seems to know which neighborhoods will receive the "Sq/St" treatment. We have had PLANS for some but no indication as to whether this concept will be carried to other neighborhoods. How can anyone evaluate "Squares and Streets" in isolation from potential PLANS? For that matter, how can we evaluate any zoning change if we don't have a complete picture of the proposals currently in the works — proposals that we fairly certain will be coming?

One of the chief complaints about Boston's zoning process is that changes are being made to the code continually to accommodate a particular development. The City is now doing the same thing: asking us to comment on yet another change that will impact a few particular sites.

What we need is PLAN: Boston that will include all recent, present and planned changes to zoning, development review (Article 80), and the structure and responsibilities of the BPDA and other agencies involved in planning and development. A city such as Boston, with its thousands of involved citizens and committed staff and access to locally available expertise, should be able to create such a comprehensive master plan. I look forward to seeing it.

Response:

Please see our response to this submission in the "Responses to Public Comment Letter Submissions" available at

<https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning/zoning-initiatives/squares-streets-zoning-districts#comment-period>.

Timestamp: January 26, 2024 17:18:02

Name: Toney Jones

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It doesn't expedite the approval of the urban design process

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Expedited urban design approval

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Recommend more outreach and extended comment period

Response:

While this effort will not directly expedite the design review process, we believe that by setting clear regulations for building and lot dimensions the design review process can focus more quickly on other elements of design. Thank you for engaging in the process.

Timestamp: January 26, 2024 20:36:19

Name: Charlie Vasiliades

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Honestly, I'm not a big fan- while there are some sound concepts to it, I'm afraid much of it amounts to just "upzoning" areas, taking power away from neighbors, and tilting things too much to developers. My issues are not so much with adding density, but adding height- setting the lowest height limit for any of the categories at 50 feet I feel will overpower many of the surrounding streets and homes. Increasing density with 3-4 story buildings (35-40 feet) I think fits in a lot better with the scale of what are mostly 2-3 story homes abutting most of the squares and corridors. I know this might seem like a nuanced difference, but I feel strongly that it makes all of the difference in many of the smaller squares and corridors.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

See above- but to be specific, (1) have a less tall 40 foot category height limit district available; (2) apply the new zoning to commercial strips or parking lots, NOT residential stretches of corridors that are lined with existing 2-3 family homes. Otherwise developers are going to outbid homeowners trying to buy homes along these corridors, leading to the wholesale destruction of sound neighborhood housing along these corridors, replaced by what I would consider walls of boxes.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I'm sorry to sound so negative, but as a city planner by trade, who has worked for years in Allston-Brighton to promote both affordable housing, but also development that fits the scale of our neighborhood- rather than overpowering it- it is frustrating to feel that we're pushing water up a hill so to speak to make our voices heard, and it's disheartening.

Response:

Through working with our colleagues in urban design, we developed a 50 foot height limit to accommodate a 4 story building (with taller retail space on the ground floor, and effective residential floor-to-floor heights, including space for mechanical systems). As shown in the zoning, the height of districts, with the exception of S5, is listed in both stories and height, including a limit of 4 stories AND 50 feet. Thank you for your comments.

Timestamp: January 27, 2024 10:36:12

Name: Luke Winslow

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I am excited about the densification, new housing opportunity, and removal of parking minimums in these key areas.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

None. Move it forward more quickly.

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to comment - hope to see you as we create a Small Area Plan and updated zoning map in Roslindale!

Timestamp: January 27, 2024 12:07:00

Name: William Bedell

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that the new districts permit greater density of housing in places that can easily support it. I like that the new districts eliminate parking minimums. I like that the districts have simplified rules that allow any project (even small ones) to come to the table, not just huge redevelopments.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I want the new text to make it clear that zoning changes will be made objectively and according to the needs of the city. Zoning changes should not be blocked by loud land owners who have already secured their own homes in these neighborhoods.

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to comment - one of the major goals of this effort was to create more pathways for smaller development (not just large ones) to occur under consistent zoning rules. We think that by adding these districts to the code, and then mapping them following planning processes, we can create the most appropriate zoning map for Boston that is nuanced to individual neighborhoods and the context on the ground. As you and many others have commented, it will be important for that process to also take into account citywide needs and equity among neighborhoods. Please stay engaged in the process, including as small area plans are created for Fields Corner and Codman Square this year.

Timestamp: January 27, 2024 12:51:09

Name: Danilo Rafael Mesa

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like making it easier to build more housing

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

If there's any single family zoning it should be upzoned to more residential dwellings

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to comment! The new Squares + Streets Zoning does not have a single family land use. The lowest intensity district, S0 Transition Residential, has a residential unit maximum of 14 units.

Relatedly, we are also working to legalize additional dwelling units (ADUs) by-right across Boston in the coming year. Please stay tuned to our zoning reform work as we begin that process in the coming weeks.

Timestamp: January 27, 2024 17:12:30

Name: Ellen Scalese

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

affordable housing

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would like to see it delayed for 6 months to allow better input

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Please allow a 6 month delay to allow for better input from residents.

Response:

We are looking forward to comprehensive, in depth dialogues during the Small Area Plan focused on Cleary Square to identify housing strategies for the area. Please stay engaged and thank you for engaging in the process.

Timestamp: January 27, 2024 18:50:34

Name: Keoki M

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It's so detailed and lengthy--such a great read?? Ugh!

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Increase lot building setbacks on all sides, especially in S0, S1 and S2 subdistricts. Require more open, permeable, natural space on the lot. Set back larger buildings from the public sidewalk /street to allow for tree plantings. Large buildings right up to the front lot lines produce more shadows and a visual street canyon effect, with wind and sound attenuation. Residents of these larger buildings and neighbors deserve better quality of living environments too.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

BPDA staff have indicated that related issues of housing affordability and stability, and for business stability, especially for minority, small and legacy businesses, are being addressed separately. If so, it is critical that discussion of these strategies occur concurrent with the review and approval of the zoning amendment, and that protections are in place prior to approval of any S zoning, since the issues are inextricably related. Climate resiliency, including use of fossil fuels, energy efficiency, water management, and tree canopy, should also be addressed in or concurrent with planning for Squares and Streets. A comprehensive parking strategy is required to address the needs of legacy businesses, who rely on parking for established customers that are no longer local, and successful new businesses that attract customers for whom public transit is not an option.

Response:

You're right that zoning is not a very good read - sorry about that (we blame the lawyers) :) Green building and climate resiliency are provided for through citywide articles, rather than at the district level, to ensure that no development is left out - see Article 37 Green Building and Article 25A for the Coastal Flood Resiliency Overlay for clear examples. We are currently working on amendments to Article 37 to strengthen it into Net Zero Carbon Zoning for Boston.

Timestamp: January 27, 2024 19:48:59

Name: Martin Beinborn

Neighborhood: Mission Hill

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I do NOT support this initiative in its current form and top-down implementation. The plan appears to be to first add new Squares + Streets zoning districts to the Zoning Code, and then work with affected communities to pick and choose from this menu of pre-defined options for re-zoning targeted locations in the City that the BPDA declares to be “transient rich”. We are assured to trust that the BPDA will listen to each targeted community and use its new powers only in a way that the agency finds to be in the best interest of “the people”. There is currently not enough faith in the BPDA to take this leap. Many have asked for more time to take a step back and re-start with more community engagement. I agree with that request.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Instead of further commenting on specific details, I have concerns about the big picture behind the current approach. My suggestions are outlined in the next field, “additional comments”.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

This initiative was launched in a rush and is pushed through without enough time for meaningful community involvement. The new zoning categories to be made available to the BPDA are contained in a highly technical and hard to fully grasp 120-page or so legal document, which people are urged to support before the impact is entirely clear. As others pointed out, this document in its current form has significant omissions (including safeguards against displacement and measures to ensure reasonable parking, environmental protection as well as historical preservation, among others), inconsistencies, and contradictions with what BPDA staff said at office hours. It is not ready for prime time.

A better approach would be to start with discussing pilot proposals to consider concrete changes in one or two initial neighborhoods, without prior empowerment of the BPDA with blanket templates in the zoning code. There should be enough time to engage the affected communities and their neighbors in meaningful discussion, i.e. input should not just be collected and then judged by the agency but needs to be seriously addressed. This would

also serve to reveal whether or not concerns and suggestions are taken seriously, a critical condition for supporting such an important citywide initiative.

There must be a willingness to trust the people who know and love their neighborhoods, that they will make a constructive effort to support the need for more housing while reasonably balancing quality of life, in the best interests of both current and future residents. The existing 120-page or so proposal, with required modifications, could be taken as a starting point for such discussions of rezoning in pilot areas, but should not be prematurely adopted into the zoning code before being tested and potentially further modified in pilot locations.

Office hours with BPDA outreach staff are appreciated and gave me hope that common ground can be reached in frank discussions among open-minded people. However, it does not help if true community engagement appears to be not a priority of the powers who are actually in charge.

Suggestion: The presentation of comments on the current website needs improvement. There should be a clearly delineated table where comments by one person are more visibly separated from those made by another person.

Response:

The Squares + Streets initiative started in August 2023, with public engagement of analysis completed beginning in October 2023. As you've identified, zoning is a legal document, and thus is limited in what it can directly address and often involves clunky language. The vast majority of what has been released is the existing Boston Zoning Code - and we agree that it needs a rewrite! We are glad you took advantage of office hours and hope to see you again at one of the upcoming sessions (<https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning/zoning-initiatives/squares-streets-zoning-districts>).

Timestamp: January 27, 2024 21:12:32

Name: Andrew McDonough

Neighborhood: Charlestown

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It's great that the city has added back the S5 plan, and that it is meant to facilitate use of new mass timber residential construction. I hope the city is simultaneously working to ensure that mass timber residential construction will be feasible under the building code and other appropriate regulations.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The justification for removing the "feet-and-stories" restriction from S5 (increased flexibility) would seem to apply equally to at least the S3 and S4 districts. Capping an 85' building at seven stories reduces the number of new homes such a building could provide by more than 10%. Assuming that height restrictions serve primarily aesthetic values, this restriction is basically pure deadweight loss (an 85' building is going to have basically the same visibility and cast basically the same shadow whether it has eight stories of homes or seven). To the extent this may be based on occupant preferences, while some people might prefer to live in units with higher ceilings, others might prefer a slightly lower ceiling compared to the alternative of a higher rent or smaller floorplan than would otherwise be within their budget. Allowing the construction of a large and diverse housing stock is likely to enable the greatest number of people to live in a place they like.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

There is a severe housing shortage in the city and the state from decades of underbuilding. I hope the city seeks to broadly apply the new Squares + Streets zoning districts throughout the city, particularly the high-density S5 district. The existing character of our neighborhoods is that the rent is too high.

Response:

Thank you for your comments and highlighting the need for the S5 district. One reason that flexibility is only in the S5 district is because of its larger scale and the wide range of commercial and residential uses it allows. We will continue to evaluate as new construction techniques are more widely adopted for smaller-scale development.

Timestamp: January 28, 2024 11:27:08

Name: Dave Ratcliffe

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This zoning amendment appears to further serve the interests of investors and developers who pay for the government that suits their designs.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Proposed max height for new buildings is way too high: put a cap on maximum height at 4 stories - 3 is more in keeping with the character of this community. Do not turn Roslindale into another urban canyon with soul-less box-store designed buildings.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

In the pending 6-9 month zoning reset for Roslindale, the issue of creating additional housing - focusing on precisely WHO the projected demographic is for new buildings developers seek to construct - is not currently reflecting people and families in 30% to 50% Area Median Income. To make living in Roslindale truly affordable for workforce families that serve the essential life-needs of the community, S+S planning MUST expand its AMI range for all housing construction it will approve and be responsible for going forward. Further, S+S, in concert with the BPDA and ZBA, could demonstrate its interest in and commitment to genuine transparency by creating an ongoing public database of how many units, once they are available in the to-be-constructed buildings, are actually occupied and how many are vacant. I often wonder what the actual occupancy and vacancy percentages are for all the recently constructed (since 2015) units in and around Roslindale.

Response:

The S0 and S1 districts have a maximum height of 4 stories. You can find out more about housing vacancy in Boston and the region here:

<https://www.tbf.org/news-and-insights/reports/2023/november/2023-greater-boston-housing-report-card>. Thank you for your comments.

Timestamp: January 28, 2024 11:37:29

Name: Mary Burns

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that this is a reasonable way to grow a neighborhood, providing more housing at a human scale with more opportunities for small businesses, gathering spots, and services. I travel a lot and have seen neighborhoods elsewhere transformed to high-rise offices and apartment buildings, with only high-end boutiques or financial services and tech companies and the like. I was most recently in Canary Wharf in London where my Irish father labored in the 1930s - it's completely transformed into a very hollow global space. He emigrated to Boston where I am still today. The Streets and Squares approach seems to be geared to protecting neighborhoods while at the same time growing them for the future. I also like that is mostly focused on housing. Recently in Allston Brighton, developers have been building a lot of lab and office, so this would definitely help us here.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would like to see lower maximum lot coverage in S1 and S2 (currently 70%, I would prefer it at 60%).

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I love the diversity of our neighborhood. We definitely need supports for renters and small businesses to stay in the neighborhood and not be forced out. So it's not a change for this zoning, but a need for very robust policy supports. Also, while I'm glad S5 is back in the mix, I hope it is indeed used very sparingly as there are some places it is appropriate but not many.

Response:

Thank you for these comments - S1 has a maximum lot coverage of 60%. S2 is meant to be applied in areas where we're transitioning to existing building stock with higher lot coverage. We will continue to monitor how the minimum yard requirements, minimum permeable area of lot, and maximum lot coverage work in concert across all of these districts to make sure we keep them up-to-date and working well. As you've identified, robust policy supports will be critical.

Timestamp: January 28, 2024 15:06:11

Name: Melida Arredondo

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

More housing

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

1. Increase in low income housing and 2. Permanently make parking available in the Square for disabled and senior residents.

• Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Further inclusion of business owners, especially BIPOC and Latino Roslindale Square business owners.

Response:

Thank you for this clear vision for the future of Roslindale Square. I hope you'll stay engaged in the Roslindale Square Small Area Plan launching on February 24 (<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/roslindale-square>).

Timestamp: January 28, 2024 15:45:06

Name: Matthew Petersen

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I'm glad to see S5 included now! I'm also glad to see 0' side yards for party wall developments.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

S5 should have a taller maximum height, and should have a minimum height somewhere in the 100' range - land zoned for tall buildings should not be underbuilt. The adopted WACRZ rezoning has a maximum height in some areas of 180', and I think we should have S5 permit buildings of at least 20 stories if not more. The recently completed tower in Central Square in Cambridge is 195' tall and does not disrupt the neighborhood any more than a 145' tall building would. We need housing supply, and with appropriate measures such as as unit size maximums and minimums, we can be sure that taller buildings will supply more units and not just more palatial penthouses.

I would also like to see more uses permitted in S0, and in all S districts - I noticed that small retail is forbidden in S0, which is contrary to the many convenience stores and small shops existing in residential neighborhoods today. S0 is the transition zone to residential - it's not a residential-only district, nor should it be. I'd also like to see makerspaces permitted at least conditionally in S0 - we have noise and pollution ordinances that regulate all uses, and those should be the determiners of what we allow, not arbitrary decisions about what "fits" in a neighborhood. I've already commented similarly about light industrial and trade uses - blue collar jobs, particularly those that don't service automobiles, belong in our commercial centers. Machine shops, commissary kitchens, small food manufacturers, t-shirt printers, print shops, repair shops, specialty machinery companies, small factories - we should be regulating the effects of a business, like noise and pollution, rather than forbidding it outright. If we're allowing offices like insurance agencies and tax accountants, we should allow other kinds of commercial operations as well.

In particular, the zoning districts should allow for the kind of flexibility in use necessary for businesses and spaces to transition easily between retail, foodservice, and manufacturing, uses which could use much of the same equipment and space, but would be regulated

separately under these codes. We should focus less on regulating uses, and more on regulating outcomes.

Additionally, I'm still a little wary of the side yard and yard requirements in general - I think we should permit rowhouse-style development in S0 and S1 as well as the other districts.

Response:

Thank you for your comment and highlighting the need for the S5 district and flexibility! On its own S5 and other Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston, but as a part of ongoing citywide zoning reform we will continue to determine what's appropriate for higher and denser areas of the city beyond S5.

S0 is intended to be primarily residential, in more residential contexts, but we updated S0 so small retail stores are conditionally allowed in the basement or the ground floor for circumstances where small shops may be appropriate.

We have the yard requirements in S0 and S1 to help ensure space for plantings and that the districts fit in their potential context- less active and more residential. However, we updated the provision on allowing multiple building per lot to ensure attached or party wall buildings such as rowhouses are allowed on a single lot.

Timestamp: January 28, 2024 16:22:20

Name: Nikolas Varga

Neighborhood: Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like the readdition of the S-5 district! This will enable high densities of housing and services that can reduce car dependency and bring more people closer to small businesses. We shouldn't be artificially restricting building heights that are excepted anyways through zoning relief. The densest streets and square deserve the ability to build high-density buildings in them.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

anything mentioned in my previous comment

Response:

We are pleased to have added it back as well, based on feedback from the public so far. We do want to acknowledge that on their own the Squares and Streets districts are not the only options that zoning reform envisions across the whole city.

Timestamp: January 28, 2024 18:16:19

Name: Jonathan and Ginny Gass

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Boston is a gem of a city. Let's keep it that way!

The proposed re-zoning amendment draft, "Squares + Streets" is a shadow looming over Boston neighborhoods. The amendment is symbolic in that the so-called "planning experts" have decided to throw out a zoning code which has worked reasonably well and replace it with federal codes which are only suited for large cities. Boston is a small city, unlike Los Angeles or Miami, both cities from which these plans have been borrowed. Squares + Streets is inappropriate for a small city. Each of our neighborhoods has its own character. As such, each Square should be respected for the flavor it brings to the City.

In addition, Boston's neighborhoods are unique because of its residents and business owners. Both, however, have been grossly disrespected with the lack of community input that has been allowed in the creation of Squares + Streets. Engagement by residents is a must if you wish to maintain the character of individual sections. Small business is at the heart of our neighborhoods. Let them maintain vibrancy by talking with them.

The speed with which the Wu administration has conducted the multitude of Zoom meetings can be compared to the speed with which it wants to change the zoning code. We've had three months to listen to folks preach about a non-specific set of plans. The quick in and out meetings have cast a symbolic shadow over the city. Businesses need and want to be involved in making the place where they are investing their money the best it can be.

Please remove the shadow you've cast over our neighborhoods and put these ideas to a vote. Treat Boston like the gem it is, a wonderful small city.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would like to see the Zoning Committee involve each neighborhood in the re-zoning effort. A small group of people like the Zoning Committee should not be able to change previous zoning laws without some kind of neighborhood input. A referendum is a submission of a proposed public measure for vote by residents. You are proposing to change public law. A referendum vote should be considered.

Response:

Thank you for commenting. While we disagree with your assessment that our zoning code is working, we agree that Boston is a gem of a city. The zoning districts were based on 5 years of data of recent development here in our gem, the City of Boston, as well as the building code of Massachusetts. These text amendments will go to the BPDA Board, who can vote to petition the Zoning Commission. The Zoning Commission, established by the 1957 law establishing a zoning code for Boston, then can vote to adopt the amendments. They would then be mapped, and thus made effective in any neighborhood of the city, as a result of a planning process, including community engagement as well as a second legal process. Please stay engaged in the process when it may come to your neighborhood in the future.

Timestamp: January 28, 2024 20:57:02

Name: Erik Gehring

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Removal of minimum parking requirements; enhanced building heights; the S 5 districts; the intent to create dense, affordable, transit friendly housing.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Please make sure you limit conditional uses.

Response:

Thanks for commenting. One of the reasons we've relied on conditional uses in the draft is because we think it allows us to offer greater flexibility, with a sound legal basis. Where we have put a conditional use, it is either because we think the appropriateness of the use depends on the context (subject to the conditional use criteria), or because it represents a scale that would be a Development Impact Project subject to linkage (which requires zoning relief alongside an evaluation of those impacts). We're going to continue to monitor how conditional use permits are considered by the ZBA under this zoning as part of keeping this zoning up to date.

Timestamp: January 28, 2024 21:00:58

Name: Ben Stone

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like this proposes to regularize zoning with many more uses as-by-right, with a focus on housing production. More predictable zoning will help more, critically needed housing projects go forward with more money spent on construction instead of process! I like the elimination of parking minimums - parking is a major cost driver for housing projects, and developers in dialogue with the community should decide how much parking a building needs, not arbitrary zoning rules. I also like how it generally simplifies zoning for Boston, making land-use rules more accessible both for developers, community groups, and the general public.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I'm disappointed that S5 Placemakers district was removed; with the pressing need for housing the city should have denser as-by-right districts in its toolbox.

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: January 28, 2024 22:50:12

Name: Cathy slade

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Nothing. I, as a very active community organizer am upset that there was not any opportunity to publicize this new planning initiative of the city. I will mention that people believe that one active community group has been very much involved in Roslindale. If this is true, and the entire community had not been aware of this until plans ere prevented to community members, i do not feel this is the appropriate way to gain support. I have been involved in community affairs for many, many years, and Feel the there should have been a process that allowed for give and take in the community.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I have not seen the entire plan, but would like the administration to know that our community has always had input in new initiatives from the very start

Response:

Thank you for your comment. We have accepted commentary throughout this process and it has shaped and changed this proposal in very tangible ways. Please take a look at our Engagement Report posted at www.bostonplans.org/squares which outlines actions taken in Fall 2023 to this end. You can find all of our past presentations there or at www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares. Please stay involved with our Small Area Plans, which have not yet kicked off and which are intended to provide a more tangible set of opportunities for engagement and will help apply these broader ideas in a more specific way. The Small Area Plan for Roslindale Square has not begun - it's launching on February 24. You can find out more about that process to come at the website here (<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/roslindale-square>).

Timestamp: January 29, 2024 10:26:55

Name: Estefany Benitez

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I was unclear as to where this amendment was?

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Adding personal services to active uses

Response:

This amendment is currently being added as text to the zoning code, and mapped in Mattapan in order to implement PLAN: Mattapan. We will map it in the future in other locations based on a planning process with community engagement. Happy to report that personal services (named service establishment in our use table) are included in active uses. Thanks for the comments and hope you will continue to stay engaged.

Timestamp: January 29, 2024 10:40:07

Name: Lisa L

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like the idea of some additional housing but also must have similar consideration for green space (and parks or community centers) and off street parking

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

1. The community engagement process for changing the zoning of our neighborhoods ("small area plans") is unknown. Please involve the community in this process
2. I am concerned about parking. People who move into the new housing generated by S+S should have dedicated off street parking options. If not, visitors and business customers will have no where to park. Give folks who want to live here an easy and safe place to park their cars (not on a public street).
3. Building heights above 35' will likely not mesh well with the surrounding homes and buildings; please don't build crazy gigantic cramped apartment buildings right next to 80-100 year old homes - it will affect the look of the area and it will end up being a negative impact on those who live next to it (loss of sunlight/view).

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I would like more awareness about the specific spots that are proposed to be changed. As well as more in-advance opportunities for residents near those spots to have some input and say in what gets changed in and around their neighborhoods. Because they will be impacted too.

Response:

Thank you for your comments. The Small Area Plans process will work closely with the community to take a closer look at each Squares + Streets area, analyzing spatial characteristics, current land uses, open space, and transit access, among other criteria, to determine which districts get mapped in that area. Please note that we have included a definition of permeable area of lot and a requirement for it in some districts where there was none before. We look forward to working with you to develop additional recommendations for greening our neighborhoods.

Timestamp: January 29, 2024 10:46:56

Name: Christine

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

As a non-planner it is hard to digest all the content, but I'm happy to support less parking and a lot more allowable housing of significant height to fit in more units.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I just want to advocate for wider sidewalks and building set backs to make room for summer sidewalk activity with vendors and first floor commercial entities - and for walking or bicycling (for kids and elders) when the road is too dangerous. Boston's sidewalks on older streets are too narrow for active pedestrian use.

Response:

Thank you for taking time to submit your feedback! Part of the Small Area Plan processes will be taking a closer look at the Public Right of Way and identifying needs for roadways, sidewalks, open space, and more.

On private property, an effective way to widen sidewalks is through the Article 80 Small and Large Project review process, where community input and City Staff shape how developments are designed and what they can provide as mitigation for their impacts.

Timestamp: January 29, 2024 14:14:02

Name: Jeanne Black

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Nothing. IMO the process is being rushed to fruition with little to no consideration of residents concerns. Not sure why but would have to say motives seem purely political.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

More community input. Limiting height and density of buildings. Maintain green space. Take a deep dive on BPDA and fix it not ditch it.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Planning for future needs requires thoughtful consideration, collaboration and recognition that both sides have reasonable POVs. Continue the conversation for several months given the magnitude of changes being proposed.

Response:

We believe these districts encompass a range of height and densities that, in different combinations, are appropriate across the mixed use areas of the city. In Mattapan, for example, we have not mapped the S5 district because we do not think it is appropriate to the plan for growth in Mattapan Square. We look forward to continuing to engage with you on this process.

Timestamp: January 29, 2024 21:01:32

Name: Karen Book

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I support this draft. Cleary Square has amazing potential for a walkable, liveable neighborhood surrounded by great transit options. I walk "into town" all the time and would love to see a denser, more vibrant downtown Hyde Park. I like the removal of parking requirements and the move toward a mixed use residential area.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

n/a

Response:

Thank you for your comments! We look forward to hearing more from you as the Small Area Plan for Cleary Square gets underway.

Timestamp: January 30, 2024 10:59:15

Name: Kelly Staunton

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It will give needed revitalization to Cleary Square especially if it supports current and new small businesses.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

A plan for future traffic, parking and public works enforcement; staff critically needed in these roles to ensure upkeep and safety in our neighborhoods.

Response:

Thank you for your comment. The Small Area Plan process will be an opportunity to work on curbside management and parking with our colleagues in the Transportation Department and Public Works Department.

Timestamp: January 30, 2024 13:34:23

Name: Alexandra Markiewicz

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I am so happy that the Mayor and BPDA are taking on rezoning and aiming to create a simpler zoning code that supports the creation of more housing and other uses in our City. More housing and more building in dense, walkable/transit accessible areas is critical to solving our affordability and climate crises. Streets and Squares seems to be a great first step in that direction - though could certainly be complemented by other measures to support financing and streamlining construction :). I like that streets and squares will help to legalize the types of housing and buildings that we already see in many neighborhoods but that current code doesn't allow. It needs to be easier to get through zoning and permitting. I also really like the elimination of parking minimums

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Consider parking maximums and even higher buildings.

Also, as you look to the local area plans, please consider how you can run an efficient public process to recognizes that the people most affected by the long-term impacts of zoning (e.g. younger people, students, etc.) are likely those with the least amount of time to participate in this effort and demonstrate support for these changes. In contrast, those with a vested interest in the status quo (retired homeowners) have plenty of time to air concerns. As a mom of newborn and a toddler (who is planning to raise them in Boston), I likely only have time to submit this comment because I am on leave from my job. I doubt I will be able to attend in person meetings. Many others are in the same boat (and likely have way more demands on their time than I do), but are similarly supportive. Please think of us as you shape the public involvement for the area plans, as I fear a small group of people against change will have an outsized voice!

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback! Right now, we use the Boston Transportation Department's maximum parking ratios (<https://www.boston.gov/departments/transportation/maximum-parking-ratios>) for Article 80 Large Projects, but that is not written into the zoning code. Parking maximums for

smaller projects is definitely an area for future conversation as part of broader zoning reform efforts.

With respect to public engagement, we are planning to continue with many different mediums and venues for engagement throughout the Small Area Planning processes. We understand the amount of time it can take to attend some of our events, and are continually working to improve how we share information and gather community input.

Timestamp: January 30, 2024 19:49:24

Name: Gene Radwin

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

see earlier comments

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

[NOTE: These comments are from an email sent to the Mayor and to Chief Jemison]

The city's Squares + Street playbook is incomplete. The existing "playbook" is like a board game that only consists of playing pieces (e.g., predefined building formats) and broad, worthy goals (more and more affordable housing, climate resilience). What is lacking is a detailed set of rules that identifies who gets to play, how play is to proceed, who decides disputes, what constitutes success. and so on.

Without establishing such "rules of engagement" at the very outset, the city's new rezoning efforts

- threaten to be chaotic and inconsistent from neighborhood to neighborhood,
- enable loudest voices to have too much sway,
- overlook the impact of displacement on residents and local businesses,
- allow "victory" (or failure) to be declared without having any metrics against which outcomes can be measured.

The administration is right in pointing out the many deficiencies of the existing zoning codes. Unfortunately, the city's efforts to establish new zoning codes may end up just as muddled as the existing ones. Why? Because there are no defined processes to engage the community. Because there are no guidelines for community decision-making. Because there are no clear, measurable goals to be achieved.

Thus, it is not surprising that residents across the city are calling for a six-month moratorium. The delay in implementing Squares + Streets is needed so that city residents and elected officials can help the administration make critical decisions:

- Who gets seats at each community's planning table? Residents in S2 districts? Residents from other parts of a neighborhood? Business owners? Property owners? Renters? Neighborhood groups?
- What outreach efforts are required to build trust? What outreach goals need to be attained for a community planning group to be truly representative?
- Do all planning group participants have an equal say or should some participants be given greater sway?
- Who runs planning group sessions? How do moderators establish trust? How frequently are sessions held? Are sessions open to the community? Are minutes kept and made public?
- How do planning groups come to decisions? Majority rule? 60% approval?
- How much discretion do local planning groups have? Can they modify Squares + Streets approved building formats? Can participants decide that an S5 format should be 160 feet high? Can a group decide that parking should be required? Can a group decide that 30% of a building's units need to be affordable at 60% AMI?
- What are the guidelines/mechanisms to ensure the planning group decisions are consistent with local infrastructures --power grids? sewage systems? emergency access requirements?
- How are planning groups to account for the potential impact of S2 plans on other development initiatives in a neighborhood?
- What role do various city agencies have in regard to planning group proposals? Do such agencies (and which agencies) need to be part of planning meetings? Do such agencies have authority to modify or overrule community proposals?
- What milestones should planning groups be aiming for – e.g., in two months a draft plan needs to be ready for larger community review? What happens if milestones aren't met?
- What measurable goals should planning groups have to achieve – e.g, increase housing units by X%? And what is to happen if such goals are not achieved?

The answer to these and similar “rules of engagement” issues need to be incorporated into the city’s rezoning initiatives. It should not be up to each individual city neighborhood to decide how the process should proceed, who should be involved, how decisions are made, and how outcomes are measured. Squares + Streets now offers consistency in its building blocks. Squares + Streets needs consistency in its community processes and clarity in its goals.

Response:

Please see our response to this submission in the “Responses to Public Comment Letter Submissions” available at

<https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning/zoning-initiatives/squares-streets-zoning-districts#comment-period>.

Timestamp: January 30, 2024 23:05:26

Name: Stefan Poltorzycki

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Districts provide needed zoning reform

I approve overall of the number and types of new districts

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

My #1 concern is to maximize publicly accessible green space. In my opinion, this is best done through taller buildings with smaller footprints and limited parking. I would not have height limitations (FAR or another metric instead).

Density should be correlated to an honest assessment of quality of nearby public transportation

In Allston-Brighton the best public transportation is the Commuter Rail at Boston Landing (much better than Green Line, bus, or express bus)

Requirements should be eased for buildings that meet increased standards for affordability and environmental sustainability

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I hope this process is not slowed down

Response:

Thank you for providing your feedback here. A significant factor in determining the building lot coverage requirements is to encourage more space on a lot to be devoted to permeable areas and outdoor amenity space. The tallest district, S5, has a lower maximum building lot coverage requirement than the S3 and S4 districts. Outdoor amenity space requirements also ramp up from 20% in the S2 district to 30% in the S5 district.

We plan to map these districts following planning processes, whether it's in Mattapan (where PLAN: Mattapan was adopted in 2023), in the Small Area Plans, or in ongoing planning initiatives like the Allston-Brighton Community Plan.

Timestamp: January 31, 2024 14:14:54

Name: Dan Elton

Neighborhood: I don't live in Boston

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Any provisions that deregulate and make it easier to build tall apartment buildings (aka YIMBY Fishtanks).

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

We should putting more highways underground

Response:

Thank you for your comments.

Timestamp: January 31, 2024 15:44:08

Name: Megan Putney

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Housing growth and density close to public transit. Bringing new commercial business to neighborhoods to ensure that the neighborhood is vibrant and meeting the needs of its community.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

N/A

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to comment - hope to see you as we create a Small Area Plan and updated zoning map in Roslindale!

Timestamp: January 31, 2024 20:02:55

Name: Preston Buehrer

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

- I LOVE that parking minimums are eliminated for all zoning districts!!
- I really like that buildings up to 50' and 14 units are allowed by right in all areas. This should reduce so much strain on housing. I REALLY look forward to the day when I don't have to attend countless night meetings, write comment letters, or respond to zoning code surveys, just to see a small building built in my neighborhood. It should not be this difficult to get new neighbors!
- I like that the S-5 zone was brought back. This is an important tool for us to have. Knee-capping our most transit served districts at a maximum of 7 stories would be ridiculous.
- I appreciate that we're limiting the amount of blank wall that can be presented on a Main Street. "Blank wall" should include entrances that primarily serve vehicles (ie - garage doors)
- I love that we're limiting vehicular uses in these areas. These should be the hearts and arteries of our walkable, bikeable, and transit-accessible neighborhoods!
- Lot permeability requirements are great. We should discourage paving an entire lot, which is seen far too often in our neighborhoods. The use of porous paving, or other material intended to simply facilitate parking while meeting this requirement, should be defined as a conditional use at best, with strict requirements to ensure the porosity is properly maintained.
- Greater flexibility with existing non-conformities is great!
- I like the S1 to S4 designations as steps in intensity of use. I would prefer they were only treated that way, with all S1-S4 districts having the S4 dimensional requirements

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

- S0 and S1 should not have side yard requirements, or these requirements should be notably reduced. We should be allowing for row-housing or closely spaced housing in any residential area.
- S0 and S1 should allow for small-scale commercial and active uses as of right.

- Standalone parking garages and standalone parking lot should be forbidden in all Squares and Streets zoning districts. These are transit served districts, and our zoning should reflect our intent to support transit, walkability, and bikeability.
- ADUs should be allowed (not conditional) in S0 and S1.
- Accessory parking and shared parking should be conditional in S0 and S1, and forbidden (or conditional) in S2 through S5
- Framing S5 as limited to "key areas". None of the other zoning districts are framed this way. There is nothing particularly noteworthy or intense about a 14 story building in a major, transit-served city.
- S1 and S2 are limited in height and floor count. S1 through S4 all describe "main streets" conditions. We should not be limiting our main streets to 4 or 5 stories. We should be encouraging density on these streets!

• Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

- Does this zoning code affect minimum lot sizes? We should ensure small lots, which are part of the beauty of an urban fabric, can be well utilized (even if this requires some relief from typical dimensional requirements).
- How does (or will) this interact with recent BPDA initiatives that might require pedestrian easements to increase the public right of way? I'm thinking specifically of the newly wide sidewalks along Boylston Street, or the potentially wide sidewalks along Dorchester Avenue (between Andrew and Broadway)
- I notice that the Mattapan Square zoning (Slide 24, Jan 10th) shows mostly S1 and S2 along Blue Hill Avenue. Given the (enormous) scale of that street, how do we ensure the S3 through S5 designations are well utilized? Currently, these are the only designations that allow for over 5 stories. Limiting so much of Blue Hill Ave - a HUGE street with many, many bus routes - to only 5 stories feels like a missed opportunity.
- Also, on the topic of Mattapan, what's the plan for the rest of area? So much of the non-Squares and Streets areas are also very walkable and very well served by transit. I get that this is a starting point, but these zoning districts feel like they should apply throughout the City. Especially since S0 exists! This is Boston - there is nowhere that a triple decker shouldn't be allowed.

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to comment! Broadly, each of these districts is intended to fit a different role in a squares + streets area. The yard requirements for S0 and S1 are specifically intended as more transitional areas between predominantly residential areas that already have yards and setbacks, as opposed to a rowhouse typology. In terms of uses for S0 and S1, we've continued to hear feedback about including smaller-scale commercial in the S0 and S1. We're revisiting the use allowances here to expand small commercial allowances. These districts will ultimately be mapped following a public process, so we'd

encourage you to stay connected with the Small Area Plans to advocate for what districts you'd like to see mapped.

Squares + Streets zoning does not include any parking minimums, which is a substantial change in lessening reliance on private vehicles. We've included parking garages and parking lots as conditional, so that they cannot be built as-of-right, and instead would be evaluated for the purpose they're serving in the area. Removing accessory parking would also create nonconformities in many of these areas, such as the private driveways that residential properties already have.

We are also working to legalize additional dwelling units (ADUs) by-right across Boston in the coming year. Please stay tuned to our zoning reform work as we begin that process in the coming weeks.

Squares + Streets zoning does not have minimum lot size requirements, but it does include requirements for building lot coverage and permeable area of lot based on the size of the lots. Any changes to the public right of way will be discussed through the Article 80 Small and Large Project review processes.

The Mattapan Squares + Streets Zoning was mapped based on community feedback throughout the PLAN: Mattapan process from 2018-2023. The rest of the Mattapan neighborhood was rezoned through the residential rezoning process and was adopted by the Boston Zoning Commission on January 10th of this year. Following recommendations from the PLAN, this new residential zoning includes the allowance for ADUs to be built as-of-right. The R1 subdistrict allows two dwelling units plus one ADU for a total of 3 dwelling units, and the R2 subdistrict allows three dwelling units plus one ADU for a total of 4 dwelling units.

Timestamp: January 31, 2024 23:31:25

Name: Charles Denison

Neighborhood: South End

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I am very much in favor of the idea in general and the idea of making zoning (a) reflect what is currently or historically built and allow for more of it and (b) reduce the number of variances needed for new development. Having clear rules up-front will make it faster and cheaper for us to add much needed housing, small businesses, etc to our city, while also resulting in buildings that match what we want to see!

I also very much support this: "Give small projects the same parking flexibility as large projects by removing parking minimums and modernize loading requirements." Shared/public parking should be encouraged in our neighborhood squares rather than single-use privately owned parking.

I am very glad S-5 was added back. Placemaker buildings on prominent corners and locations add much needed density and also act as visual anchors to an area.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It seems like S-0 districts do not allow for attached townhouses/rowhouses. Should it?

It seems like S-1 districts REQUIRE a side yard for every building. Does that make sense? I would think it is ok and in many cases we would want some buildings to be closer together or even touching in order to create a continuous street wall.

It may be good to allow for small neighborhood office space above retail in S2 districts, to provide spaces for local businesses.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

There was a slide that asks to define Active Ground Floor Uses. I would add: Gym/Fitness Center, Library

"Should small retail be conditionally allowed on the ground floor in S0 (similar to restaurants)?" YES! "Allowed on corner parcels?" YES!

"What do you want to see S-5 Placemaker districts do differently in scale and uses from other districts?" Placemaker buildings should emphasize verticality while still having human-scaled architectural details and dimensions. For example the Pierce Building in Fenway is a pretty good example of a modern Placemaker building. They should not feel like big bland boxes that overpower.

"Social Clubs: Which of these types of organizations do you think should be allowed in Squares + Streets? Should there be another restriction in the definition of social clubs (such as being regularly open to non-members)?" If a social club is present on a main street or in a prominent location, I think it should be regularly open to the public. If it is primarily a private club with little public access, I think it should be encouraged to be located on a side street or in a less prominent location.

Please revisit on and off street public parking pricing and regulations throughout the neighborhoods. In many places, free parking means that parking is scarce at times when people are trying to park to visit local businesses (for example Allston Village.) Customer parking is important, and we should prioritize off-street parking as the cheaper and more appealing option for someone parking for a longer period, and more expensive on-street parking and loading zones for people simply making a quick trip or errand. Regulations should discourage people from parking on-street all day in our neighborhood business districts.

The proposed text for Article 23 states: "Each car space shall be located entirely on the lot and shall be no less than eight and one half feet in width and twenty feet in length, exclusive of maneuvering areas and access drives." You may want to consider flexibility here, for example if off-street parking is angled or parallel, the minimum dimensions would be different. You may also want to add language stating that it is recommended that parking areas be buffered from adjacent lots or streets by vegetation, trees, or aesthetically pleasing fences or walls.

Why is student housing forbidden in S0, S1, and S2? Perhaps small-scale student housing should be allowed?

Response:

Thanks for your detailed comments. We've included Gym/Fitness centers in service establishments (counting as an active use), and library's are municipal uses that are exempt from this requirement (agreed they are very active - we're so lucky that our Squares + Streets across Boston have so many great BPL locations). We've similarly implemented some changes to when we allow smaller office uses on upper floors and throughout the districts. For S-1 districts, we do not intend to map these districts in locations where we look to provide a continuous streetwall, and think that the Boston Design Vision has proposed some interesting ideas about how sideyards can be part of expanding an active

streetscape in Squares + Streets areas. We will continue to monitor how that plays out in development.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 08:01:36

Name: Sheila Burke

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Unsure

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

1)Housing - stop development of new housing being built anywhere and everywhere through the communities in Boston. You can't house everyone no matter how many units you build! It's ridiculous and not safe . The length, width, sq feet/foot and space is not healthy for children at all. 2) More Green Space 3) Parks for children, skate boarding and other fun activities to keep the children safe. 4.) Dog parks are much in need as well.

• Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

1)To renovate abandoned buildings such as schools, churches, warehouses, city properties into housing units. It's more cost efficient, and it will be utilized for individuals and families in need! 2) Stop developers coming into Boston buying up numerous properties and destroying ozone with all these unnecessary buildings. All the gas fumes coming from all these Apts buildings are destroying the health of people with sickness and diseases such as cancer. Not to mention the tearing down the habitat of the homes of our animals who thrive on living out in the woods and areas near the trains that are wild areas for them such as the coyotes, deers, rabbits, and others that humans are unaware of. Stop the building and renovate what we have left behind all for the mighty dollars! Don't let greed destroy our city!

Response:

Thank you for commenting. Boston is in a housing crisis, and the City has made plans through the City Land Audit to identify opportunities to develop city properties for housing. We hope you will continue to stay involved in the Cleary Square Small Area Plan.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 12:21:38

Name: Paul Horn

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I appreciate the GENERAL INTENT of this initiative but haven't had enough time to analyze how any of the proposed categories would or would not be a good fit for our neighborh

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

A version in plain English (along with the glossary you have developed) rather than technical, legal zoning jargon could be helpful to gain understanding and support.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

A few questions to start with:

During the anticipated 6-9 month planning process in individual neighborhoods, following adoption of the new code, how exactly does the City intend to reach consensus within these neighborhoods as to where these new zoning categories would be applied? By vote?

What would happen with a residential or commercial development proposal that may arise but which does not fit neatly into any of the specific new categories and nevertheless enjoys strong neighborhood support?

Will some variance-like process be available in the proposed new S \$ S framework to allow some tailoring of these S-1 through S-5 categories (e.g. to allow more off-street parking)?

Laudable as the general goals of S&S may be, even those residents who had heard about it were hard-pressed for time (especially during a busy holiday season) to study and understand it. That was certainly apparent at the heavily attended 1/29 meeting with the Mayor in Hyde Park.

So what's the rush? It's not as though there's a deadline here for a federal grant. Why are the Mayor and BPDA unwilling or reluctant to allow at least a couple more months of outreach to promote better understanding and presumably win more support for this initiative before going to the ZBA for formal adoption?

Response:

We recommend looking at past presentations (either slides or recordings) where we have tried very hard to explain the proposal in as plain of language as possible. As you identify, zoning is a legal document; we release the full text out of a commitment to transparency and our appreciation of community member's strength rigorously vetting anything we put forward. You can find out more about Small Area Plans [here](#). The goal of updating zoning is to avoid over-reliance on the variance process; while there may be unique circumstances of a lot with a genuine hardship or new uses that arise that aren't yet contemplated in the proposed zoning, we intend to maintain the zoning by updating it rather than enable projects by exempting them from zoning. The legal right to variance will continue to exist, and the Zoning Commission is the board that adopts amendments to the zoning map and code, not the ZBA. We think it's important to finish this phase so that we can move on to Small Area Plans that will address many of the deeper planning conversations that these comments show people are hungry to have.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 13:02:32

Name: Nikki Hightower

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like that it is supporting the economic growth of neighborhoods, but this process should have significant input from residents and business owners within the impacted neighborhoods.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

- I would like this plan to take into account that central neighborhood locations "squares" need to be planned so that nearby historic smaller single and two-family home streets are not negatively impacted by close proximity to large apartment buildings or torn down and replaced by them.

- Also, the BPDA should be more explicit in describing what the community involvement will be in developing these plans.

- Please include a Hyde Park Neighborhood District in Article 3, Establishment of Zoning Districts.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Please ensure residents have additional time to understand and provide input in this process.

Response:

One way the zoning has taken this into account is requiring larger side and rear yards where a S+S zoning district abuts a residential zoning districts, so there is sufficient buffer between them. We also included a transitional zone, S0, that is meant to help make sure we're providing a transition from more intense development. You can find out more about community involvement in the engagement plan template here:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/6b3dddaf-cfa3-4aa4-b638-808c061e4426>. We have corrected our predecessors' inadvertent oversight and added the Hyde Park Neighborhood District into the Establishment of Zoning Districts in Article 3.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 13:14:41

Name: Mimi Turchinetz

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The concept of form zoning is a good one, however there may be limited ability to have creative forms, the bigger the buildings become on each lot. We do not want big, ugly boxes in Hyde Park.

I appreciate the goal of increased affordable housing, equity and resilience. I am concerned that the affordability metrics are not clear. What is the number of units we want to see in HP? What is the current inventory of units that have been approved, and what is the affordability mix? Affordable housing must be deeply subsidized due to the need. We don't see that need being met in this proposal. We are also extremely concerned about legacy businesses and their displacement. Businesses must have the right to return if there is demolition. If rents are no longer affordable, there should be tax breaks or subsidies available to retain mom and pop establishments.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I am deeply concerned about overdevelopment and the corprotization of the neighborhood. How will this be addressed? Currently there are 6 zones, with S0 as the transitional residential zone. I would like to suggest adding more residential protection through adding an additional zone, maybe S0a, which limits the unit size and lot coverage. So instead of 14 units, this zone is up to 4-6 units, and less than 50 % lot coverage. Many of the outlying streets in the 1/3 radius, Dell, Central, Oak, Maple, and many others are historic and built in the 1800s. They do not have Landmarks protection and they should. This should be addressed in this document. We need protections for our historical buildings and we need the code to comport with historical Hyde Park.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

This process is moving too rapidly and must be slowed down. People do not understand the document, nor its significance. Bus tails and bus shelter ads are not civic participation. This should move at the speed of trust, not the speed of light. What is the hurry? We need at least 90 days, a reasonable time to inform our neighbors, to work with you, to do outreach, to create metrics and visuals. Any less disrespects the residents of the City.

Please reconsider your timeline so our evaluation and comments can be more thorough, which will improve the outcomes of the planning process.

Response:

Thank you for identifying many topics that are directly within the scope of Small Area Plans that we look forward to working on with you and your neighbors in Cleary Square. Please stay involved with that process:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/cleary-square>.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 15:25:56

Name: Daniel Bisers

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

S5 Placemaker districts

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Apply S5 Placemaker districts within 1/4 mile of any heavy rail, light rail, commuter rail or bus rapid transit station.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Boston and eastern Massachusetts is in a housing crisis and our city should act like it is. We must urgently expand the supply of housing. Squares and Streets zoning must be applied with objective measures so that the privileged can hijack the process. Squares and Streets must allow for much greater density around transit infrastructure than the current zoning framework. Additionally, multi family housing should be developable by right in all areas of Boston.

Response:

We've added the S-5 Placemaker district back to the draft zoning. Squares + Streets is but one of the many ongoing and planning zoning reforms the BPDA is and will be working on. On its own the Squares and Streets districts are not entirely applicable to every part of the City of Boston.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 16:41:10

Name: Milan Patel

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Density is a real big plus for creating more affordable housing.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Need to address loading bays and car stacker use in square + streets. No mention in draft. ISD has been issuing zoning violation on either item.

Response:

Thanks for commenting again - we are working on a larger effort to address parking dimensions and design standards across the code (with our colleagues in BTM and ISD). We appreciate you flagging that we need to make sure we address stackers as part of that effort, which is a priority for this year.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 17:38:00

Name: Mimi Turchinetz

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

N/A

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

N/A

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Folks really need more time for this first step in the process. Our comments are not anywhere near as comprehensive or thoughtful as they should or could be. I put in comments today about adding a zone before S0 that is really more of a transitional zone. It needs more work, but you should allow it b/c you added the last zone due to the prodding of Walk up.

I am still not convinced about equity, affordability or resilience in this process. Please show me. We are just not on the same page at all. I would like to get there but there is not enough time.

I reiterate, we need a reasonable amount of additional time before comments are closed and this goes to the BPDA Board.

Response:

The zoning districts are proposed to go to the BPDA Board in March 2024 (a delay of a month to allow for additional time to review the revised draft of the zoning), and then the Zoning Commission in April 2024.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 19:35:53

Name: Eileen Vélez

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Not much

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Less density, more time before finalizing this, much more input from neighbors and associations, small groups, simplify the 118 page document. No one knows what's in the plans.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

No one really understands what the impact will be. Article 3 is incoherent. Are you removing single family zoning??

Response:

The S+S districts are mixed-use districts. Like other mixed-use districts in the City's zoning code, they are not limited to single-family development but rather a range of uses. Please stay engaged in the Small Area Plan for Cleary Square, which will kick off on February 25.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 19:42:41

Name: Anne Devaney

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

.....

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

-----/

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Please I need more time to comprehend the amendment.

Response:

I hope that some of the presentations available on the Squares + Streets zoning website (<https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares>) will help - we try in the presentation to use as plain of language as possible for what is a complex legal text. You can also sign up to attend one of our office hours over the coming month. Thank you for engaging.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 20:16:50

Name: James Michel

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

In general I support trying to create housing density near transit hubs.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The primary concern for me revolves around the question of who decides which, if any, overlay zone applies to which streets or square. What is process for gaging community consensus?

I am also concerned about each zone conferring 'as of right' development powers. This change removes the ability of neighbors and community members to challenge any development that meets any of the broad uses allowed in the new overlay zones.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

It is unclear to me why the BPDA is rushing to enact this zoning amendment as a necessary precondition for local planning. Why not do these in parallel? Relatedly I repeat the request that the amendment not be finalized until a more robust community engagement and education can occur.

Response:

You can find out more about community involvement in the creation of Small Area Plans and the mapping of zoning districts in the engagement plan template here: <https://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/6b3dddaf-cfa3-4aa4-b638-808c061e4426>. The Article 80 process, which entails a process for identifying the impacts of any proposed development of Small or Large Project scale and mitigating them, will be an important way that communities continue to be involved in reviewing individual development projects.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 09:31:41

Name: Cindy Walling

Neighborhood: Mission Hill

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

What a loaded question! One size does not fit all. There is zero consideration for historic buildings and views.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Bus routes along Tremont Street; decreased height of buildings

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Proposed changes are to the benefit of developers and to the detriment of the communities. All the housing projects in Mission Hill are short term, transient oriented developments that do not build up the fabric of a community, but rather tear it down.

Response:

As planners, it is our mission to value all Boston residents, regardless of their housing tenure. The proposed changes are meant to create a zoning code that works - with predictability for communities about what the growth that Boston needs will look like. Thank you for commenting.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 10:59:11

Name: Barbara Parmenter

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I made earlier comments supporting the draft zoning text, but wanted to add that I am very happy to see that PDAs will NOT be allowed in any of the Squares+Streets S districts. Please keep that prohibition of PDAs in the text - having a simpler code will help community members engage in the small area planning process more effectively, with more certainty that the results will be in keeping with what is eventually built.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I read the letter from the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, and I strongly support ALL their suggested changes to the draft text and their concerns. This is especially important to Allston-Brighton, where arts and music are the foundations of our community. We especially need event venues with a maximum of 250 people to support our local artists so please include this size in the Primary Use Table rather than as an accessory use and allow that use in S0 through S4 districts.

Also please allow arts studios and arts-related uses across all Squares+Streets districts, including S0 where it is now forbidden. This will help artists to stay in our community and increase the quality of our neighborhoods at the same time.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Thank you so much for all your work!

Response:

Thank you for engaging with the process. We've updated Article 8 to address comments from MOAC, including adding a use under 250 seats and clarifying where others are included.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 11:24:52

Name: Kristin Peterson

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

This is a great step in doing the necessary work to bring more affordable housing and high-density units to areas close to public transportation. We need to stop prioritizing homeowners who have been lucky enough to secure housing and to instead think of the future of Boston. It is nearly impossible for young families and working class people to afford to live in Boston. We need to offer plenty of housing opportunities that are near business districts and public transportation. I support multi-family housing, high density buildings, eliminating parking minimums, and ADUs.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Nothing in particular

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to comment and engage - we think that the S+S will help us achieve more housing near transit of all scales. More information on the public process for ADUs coming later this month!

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 12:10:04

Name: Marlon Solomon

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The attention to fixing historical issues with our zoning

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The document is too large/complex to come up with proper analysis.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I would like a clear qualitative and quantitative definition of 'community engagement'. I do not think if the BPDA cannot show 50% people of Hyde Park knows about S+S and out of that a majority have not weighed in, you have not achieved sufficient community engagement to move forward with your plan.

Also you provide no visual and models that allow for lay people to understand what your plan will do to their communities. Inconsistent verbal explanations, meetings with community leaders and sending people to website links , QR codes and lengthy pages are simply insufficient. There is a digital divide and educational divide that you are not bridging to people who are working multiple jobs and taking care of their families. The technical nature of your plan has not been simplified.

Your planning did not take into account the wealth of knowledge many members of the community already had.

You have no long term community engagement infrastructure or plan, this engagement effort is a one off and this makes no sense as you will be dealing with communities long term.

Response:

You can find out more about community involvement in the creation of Small Area Plans the mapping of zoning districts in the engagement plan template

(<https://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/6b3dddaf-cfa3-4aa4-b638-808c061e4426>).

Thank you for commenting and we hope you will continue to be engaged.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 12:38:29

Name: Laila

Neighborhood: Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like the focus on mixed use space, walkability, on increasing and preserving green space, public outdoor amenities and permeability.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Public restrooms should be expected of active spaces, at least those over a certain size.

This is less of a specific textual change, but in emphasizing trees and green/permeable space, we should not only prioritize native species, or species that are most primed to adapt and survive the changing climate, but also fruit trees and other edible fauna that could be publicly enjoyed and used as foci of learning and education (ie. pop-up maple harvesting or what is pollination that could be coordinated by the city or local groups...).

If there is a way to encourage mixed income truly affordable home ownership opportunities (in varying models, but including co-ops, condos, subsidies, and with maintain affordability over time but also allow owners to grow and build equity).

Yes social clubs should be regularly open to non-members in order to be conditionally allowed.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Considering how user friendly your events were I think this process could have been improved - such as yes offering the detailed amendment document, but guiding people first to a graphic or simplified abridged version (perhaps with page reference numbers to the full version). I definitely think everyone should have access to the complex version but it can be difficult to respond to or even now how to start or know what is changing. The green and red helped.

I will say that returning to it a second time helped greatly, and I can see that there was effort, but not everyone will do that and when I first opened the documents they were

overwhelming. If my attention had been directed to something as readable as the slides first that may have helped.

Best,
An interested Bostonian

Response:

Thank you for your in-depth comments - we have worked hard to make presentations/slides accessible in plain language while also keeping to the legal document. We've annotated this final draft, and are hoping that also helps - let us know if you think it improves this as we're always looking to improve how we explain zoning.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 14:38:42

Name: Kara Verrochi

Neighborhood: Mission Hill

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Shaping development to the local sizes and shapes.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The roll-out was not handled well. The events were not well-publicized. The process must always include public process (for real, not just a box-checking requirement) as that is how democracy is supposed to work :) Top-down imposition always breeds resentment. The residents of this city have been traumatized by their experiences with the leadership of this city for a hundred years.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

While some neighborhoods have had the political and economic power to dictate what they have (or have not), many neighborhoods have not had that luxury. To expect long-time residents to just get over it is unrealistic and in fact irresponsible and a refusal to acknowledge the many mistakes made in the past.

Response:

Thank you for highlighting the importance of ensuring we approach zoning reform across the city to ensure equity among neighborhoods. Please stay engaged in the process.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 14:42:25

Name: May Jew

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The City is attempting to update zoning laws

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

1. S+S can only succeed if the community and residential abutters have a bigger say in approval of developments in each neighborhood. This should be clearly stated in the draft as people bought their properties in good faith and should have a say when the rules are changing.

- A strong commitment to residential abutters of a proposed S+S area plan that allows abutters to have a stronger position in any approval process of a proposed development that would override current height and setback limits. The current draft doesn't allow for this, and it would be a great disservice to property owners who would be negatively/positively affected.

- In this regard, each neighborhood has its own characteristics. We know, and it's stated on the BPDA and Boston. gov websites, that West Roxbury is noted for its tree lined streets and suburban feel. We want the village character to be maintained and recognized that it's on the outer edge of downtown Boston. Neighbors here are more apt to need vehicles to travel to the neighboring towns of Dedham and Newton for shopping and work and access to Route 128/95.

2. Critical requirement of placement of large buildings in a small area such that one side of a street does not have the predominance of tall buildings.

- This requires a look back of what's been built in the past 15 years of buildings which exceed the 1-2 story building heights that have existed for decades.

- In West Roxbury, 1721 & 1789 Centre Street and 425 La Grange Street developments which are all on the odd numbered side of Centre Street.

- Future planning should be incorporated as there are several properties ripe with potential for development on the even numbered side of Centre. The 1820, 1870, 1890, 1990 Centre Street blocks come to mind.

3. If access to transit is a major reason for changing the zoning laws, then an analysis of best location for new development is imperative. Centre Street accommodates bus lines

but if the commuter rail is included in the analysis optimum placement for residential development would be on the even numbered side of Centre Street.

- Improved safety for pedestrians based on access to both commuter rail and bus lines
- Majority of retail stores are on that side of Centre and allows for increased foot traffic.
- MBTA needs to improve services for reliable transportation to meet the objective of fewer vehicles needed by residents of denser housing.

4. One of the reasons to incorporate S+S is to increase opportunities for work in the area. Employment opportunities are lost or limited if a multitude of residential units are built without corresponding adequate retail/office/service space.

- A 1000 sf space on a ground floor plate of a mixed-use residential building doesn't meet this need.
- Some parking needs to be included in development when the ground floor is designated as commercial space.

5. Traffic impact studies must be incorporated when off street parking is not required in a development especially in a business district where parking spaces are already at a minimum. Such impact studies should include the potential for increased parking on side streets particularly those which are one way.

6. Assessment of infrastructure stability in order to support increased utility needs (I e. drainage of water & sewer). Many pipes and drains underground of main streets throughout the City are decades (maybe even 100 years) old. The onslaught of increased waste and utilization of systems could create tremendous problems if not anticipated and accommodated in the planning process.

7. The need for buffer zones in addition to setbacks (regardless of rear and side lot lines) between these districts and residential districts.

- Include a requirement for trees to be used in buffer zones to be maintained by the building owners

8. Accommodations for higher barriers based on grade (a 6-8' wall is not sufficient as a barrier when 4' of it reaches the ground level of the property behind it)

- Require trees and/or higher barriers to provide a minimum of 8' from the ground level in the uphill side and to be maintained by big building owners

9. The need for green space as small area plans are being determined (there's no green space on Centre Street in the Highland and Bellevue Hill areas).

- There doesn't seem to be any inclusion of green space in consideration within an area plan. Careful thought should be given to current available green space in a given area before approving a development. If a 4 or 5 story building is allowed (increasing the population in an area) there should be green space to accommodate the additional pedestrian traffic.

10. Regarding ADUs, LLC owners of 1-4 unit housing should be allowed to build ADUs if their properties meet ADU requirements. Limiting this option to owners who do not have LLCs and who live in their properties severely limits the potential for increasing housing within the City. Many owners of such dwellings have opted for LLC ownership to protect themselves in this litigious environment.

• Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Please extend the timing of implementing the initial S+S area plans for another 6 months so that the proposed changes can be read and understood more thoroughly. The current draft is complicated and does not provide any assurance that neighbors and abutters will be heard during the approval process. The S+S plan is very top down yet taxpayers should be allowed more say in the process during every phase.

It appears that much thought has been given to the proposed changes to provide a cookie cutter approach to zoning in the City of Boston.

A developer said in a Small Project Review that citizens should have spoken up during the zoning law changes that took place in 1960s-1970s. It is now our chance to have an impact on new zoning changes. Please don't minimize this process now when changes can have a critical impact on the way we live and work in the City. It has long been felt that developers have had an upper hand in the approval process placing an unfair burden on the very citizens who pay taxes and have vested interests in living in the neighborhoods they've chosen. It seems that many of these developers aren't based in the City and/or in the very neighborhoods where they may be making a negative impact.

Response:

Thank you for your detailed comments. We will attempt to address them one-by-one.

1. The draft zoning provides for increased yard requirements when a Squares + Streets district abuts a residential zoning district, to ensure there is an adequate buffer. The Article 80 process, which includes community participation in the design review, evaluation of impacts, and mitigation of those impacts for development subject to Small and Large Project review, is another important value.

2. We look forward to discussing the specific placement of zoning districts in the planning and re-mapping process, beginning with Cleary Square and Roslindale Square.

3. Yes, the location of transit and how it works in context of a place will be an important part of creating a new zoning map.

4. We believe we've created mixed-use zoning districts that will increase opportunities for work in the area while also supporting small businesses, particularly in ground floor spaces. While parking will not be required for commercial uses, it is allowed to be built to meet the needs of tenants and employers.
5. When a project triggers Article 80 Large or Small Project Review, it requires analysis of transportation impacts and mitigation of them.
6. When a project triggers Article 80 Large or Small Project Review, it requires analysis of infrastructure impacts and mitigation of them. We are confident that through the mapping process we can identify any district-wide impacts.
7. The City is drafting ordinances, rather than zoning, to directly address trees on private property. We've indirectly worked to make sure that the yard and permeable area requirements leave space for trees.
8. Since grade is site-specific, we believe this is also something best addressed through the Article 80 process or individual projects.
9. Identifying areas to expand or improve public open spaces will be part of Small Area Plans.
10. While this effort is not focused on ADUs, your comments on the different kinds of legal owner-occupancy of a residence are noted.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 15:04:31

Name: Bill Walczak

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It's a change from the current zoning which sends most projects to the Zoning Board of Appeal

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

There are many complex aspects of the Squares + Streets proposed regulations which are very difficult for people who do not have a background in planning and development are having a difficult time understanding. There clearly was not enough time to both educate Boston residents on zoning and planning and have an opinion on what is good and what needs changing in Boston's zoning code. I have spoken with my neighbors on the proposed regulations and none of them have an understanding of what is called for and what would change in how development happens. I join many others in asking for six additional months for commentary, along with a program to educate Boston's residents on zoning policy.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

I've been a community activist for over 50 years, and I do not fully understand what the impact would be on my community from passing these regulations.

Response:

Please see the engagement plan template for Small Area Plans (<https://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/6b3dddaf-cfa3-4aa4-b638-808c061e4426>) for more on how we plan to approach community engagement, zoning education, and engagement on zoning in the Squares + Streets initiative. We know that people care very deeply about their neighborhoods and specific places in their neighborhoods, and that's why we're not proposing to map this zoning anywhere besides Mattapan (where it will implement PLAN: Mattapan) until we have time to engage very deeply on what the zoning map should look like in a given area. Thank you for your comment and I hope you will stay engaged.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 15:06:35

Name: Karen Payne

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The draft assumes that residents are familiar with current zoning codes and can make an informed comment on the draft. That is not true for most renters, homeowners, and business owners who rent space or own property. I think the proposed draft amendment would have served better if there were focus groups in each community that would be impacted by S&S project that would have been composed of renters, property owners, senior population, educators and business owners that live and work in the community. The draft does not address Green buildings, accessibility, access for residents.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The Streets and Squares proposal transparent if the comment period took place after each community Open House event. The draft should have actual streets identified in documents so residents can understand the impact to them. The height of buildings should be indicated in the drawing. Streets and Squares project should indicate the type of housing that would be built, the affordability, and who S&S is going to serve. All buildings must be Green in design. The project is to increase housing, we must address transportation and the lack of new, appropriate, and up to date schools in Roslindale. The needed housing also brings the need for better transportation and schools.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

This project should have an overview of current zoning codes that are to be changed and the proposed replacement zoning codes. This will give everyone a clearer understanding of the proposed changes and the impact on our community.

Response:

Please see the engagement plan template for Small Area Plans (<https://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/6b3dddaf-cfa3-4aa4-b638-808c061e4426>) for more on how we plan to approach community engagement, zoning education, and engagement on zoning in the Squares + Streets initiative. We know that people care very deeply about their neighborhoods and specific places in their neighborhoods, and that's why we're not proposing to map this zoning anywhere besides Mattapan (where it will

implement PLAN: Mattapan) until we have time to engage very deeply on what the zoning map should look like in a given area. Thank you for your comment and I hope you will stay engaged.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 15:42:57

Name: Marilynne Smith Quarcoo

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

As I understand the zoning amendments there will be more flexibility for contextualizing these amendments to be more inline with community input. There will be flexibility and no one size model for zoning will prevail. Community members will have voice throughout the finalizing of these amendments

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

More opportunities to make the proposed text amendments better understood by none development/zoning literate residents and more examples of how these amendments could negatively and positively impact residents in the 1/3 mile radius of S/S as well as all residents in the neighborhood.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

1. We need to understand the limitations of the malleability of BPDA process. In December, Chief Jemmison said he had no problem extending the start up process (6-9 months) and Mayor Wu stated that she cannot delay the start up timeline, so what might you and the staff do differently, do more of, and/or stop doing in order to ensure the initial start up has integrity and broad acceptance in all neighborhoods of HP?
2. What's the relationship between these proposed zoning changes and Article 80 and The HP 2011 plan?
3. What additional ways can be explored to visually/graphically clarify aspects of the zoning changes, Article 80, and The HP 2011 plan for the current demographic of residents that were not included in this earlier effort?
4. What specific aspects of the HP 2011 plan will not be changed (and why)? What specific aspects of the HP 2011 plan will change? I wasn't a part of this process and need to understand why some HP stakeholders are clinging to it.
5. When will those who don't have a voice or presence at meetings or not aligned to neighborhood groups or other CBOs get an opportunity to understand why their voices are important, especially those living in the 1/3 mile radius

I want the process to start, though winter does not seem to be an ideal time to do outreach to some of the demographics not represented. I trust you have a rationale for launching disenfranchised engagement at this time. I will reach back out to Catherine.

Response:

The Hyde Park Neighborhood Association heard directly from Mayor Wu and Chief Jemison on January 29 responding to these questions. We look forward to working with the Hyde Park community on the Small Area Plan for Cleary Square (<https://www.bostonplans.org/planning/planning-initiatives/cleary-square>), which kicks off Feb 25

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 15:47:16

Name: Barbara Van Dyke

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The idea of trying to provide more housing.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Much more information needs to be provided for anyone to truly comprehend the proposal. Expecting people to support zoning changes which are not fully explained or actual examples given leads to a great deal of confusion. Fast tracking this whole idea through the busy holiday season with a document that has many errors does not provide any confidence that this has been well thought through. The idea of a six month extension is a VERY good one. A fully comprehensible mailing to EVERY resident of Boston is essential so that ALL residents of Boston can understand the impact of these plans and respond accordingly

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

The concept of transportation centered development that does not have appropriate parking for residents does not make any sense. The transit system, as we are all well aware, has many, many issues and is NOT dependable for getting taxpayers to work on time. Focusing on getting the transit system up to speed is essential for people to consider using it rather than driving. Listening to the constituents is the responsibility of representational government. It, unfortunately, is not evident in the process that we have seen here.

Response:

Please see the engagement plan template for Small Area Plans (<https://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/6b3dddaf-cfa3-4aa4-b638-808c061e4426>) for more on how we plan to approach community engagement, zoning education, and engagement on zoning in the Squares + Streets initiative. We know that people care very deeply about their neighborhoods and specific places in their neighborhoods, and that's why we're not proposing to map this zoning anywhere besides Mattapan (where it will implement PLAN: Mattapan) until we have time to engage very deeply on what the zoning

map should look like in a given area. Thank you for your comment and I hope you will stay engaged.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 15:53:42

Name: Luanne Witkowski

Neighborhood: Mission Hill

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Good to consider citywide goals with planning initiatives, however, the character of each neighborhood shouldn't be over-run with 6 story boxy buildings. We have a rich architectural legacy that is being demolished, ignored and vanishing before us along with the community it carried.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

There's still so much that's vague and idealistic. Specifically, factors to consider for Tremont Street in Mission Hill are topography, significant views that should be protected, iconic architecture, the location of civic buildings, schools, and small Main St businesses. Also related to traffic is the constant noise of ambulance routes and helicopters for the Longwood hospitals, not to mention the additional impact of a 'constant stream' of buses through a 2-lane main street district.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

As mentioned by some of my neighbors, I do NOT fully support this initiative in its current form and top-down implementation. The plan appears to be to first add new Squares + Streets zoning districts to the Zoning Code, and then work with affected communities to pick and choose from this menu of pre-defined options for re-zoning targeted locations in the City that the BPDA declares to be "transient rich" – (what does that even mean?) We are assured that we can trust that the BPDA will listen to each targeted community and use its new "authority" in a way that the agency finds to be in the best interest of "the people" – yet how do we know that they know our "best interests"? There currently is not enough faith in the BPDA. Many of us have asked for more time and to take a step back and re-start with more community engagement. We have concerns about the big picture behind the current approach. This initiative seems launched in a rush and being pushed through without enough time for meaningful community engagement. The new zoning categories to be made available to the BPDA are contained in a highly technical and hard to fully grasp 120-page or so legal document, which takes time to digest and understand and people are asked to support it before the impact is entirely clear. As others pointed out, this document in its current form has significant omissions (including safeguards against displacement

and measures to ensure reasonable parking, environmental protection as well as historical preservation, etc), inconsistencies, and contradictions with what BPDA staff said at office hours. It is not ready for implementation. A better approach would be to start with discussing pilot proposals to consider concrete changes in one or two initial neighborhoods, without prior empowerment of the BPDA with blanket templates in the zoning code. There should be enough time to engage the affected communities and their neighbors in meaningful discussion, and input should not just be collected and then judged by the agency, but seriously addressed. This would bring to light whether or not concerns and suggestions are indeed taken seriously, a critical and necessary condition for supporting such an important citywide initiative. There must be a willingness to trust the people who know and love their neighborhoods, that they will make a constructive effort to support the need for more housing while reasonably balancing quality of life, in the best interests of both current and future residents. The existing 120-page or so proposal should be taken as a starting point for such discussions of rezoning in pilot areas, but not be prematurely adopted into the zoning code before being tested and potentially further modified in pilot locations. Office hours with BPDA outreach staff encouraged me to believe that common ground can be reached in direct discussions among caring and open-minded people. It does not help if true community engagement does not appear to be a priority of the authorities who are actually in charge.

Response:

Please see the engagement plan template for Small Area Plans (<https://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/6b3dddaf-cfa3-4aa4-b638-808c061e4426>) for more on how we plan to approach community engagement, zoning education, and engagement on zoning in the Squares + Streets initiative. We know that people care very deeply about their neighborhoods and specific places in their neighborhoods, and that's why we're not proposing to map this zoning anywhere besides Mattapan (where it will implement PLAN: Mattapan) until we have time to engage very deeply on what the zoning map should look like in a given area. Thank you for your comment and I hope you will stay engaged.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 16:17:10

Name: Janet

Neighborhood: Dorchester

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like the idea of blending both residential and commercial use to create a village.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

more consideration on parking in these neighborhoods where streets are been narrowed even more than the already are creating more congestion.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Constant conversation

Response:

Thank you for being engaged - we hope you will join us for the Codman Square and Fields Corner Small Area Plans launching later this year.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 16:37:53

Name: Joan Seamster

Neighborhood: Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

nothing

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would like the document to reflect ALL the questions posed in each of the Squares & Streets meeting - that ARE NOT reflected in this work. If community is to be engaged, then the work has to reflect their feedback.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

This initiative is far reaching, and will impact the future of Boston, and it is the most poorly-executed initiative I have ever witnessed - full of confusion, lack of trust, and misinformation. Boston should be able to do better!!

Response:

Thank you for engaging in the process.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 16:42:00

Name: Marie A. Turley

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

See the analysis by a group of neighborhood folks with almost 100 years of neighborhood zoning experienced after volunteering over a week of our time, submitted. We look forward to reasonable extension of 6 weeks to the comment period for a true dialogue and the best possible outcome==QUIMBY ---Quality in everyone's neighborhood.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

See our extensive document

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Please grant a 6 week extension so we can all get our questions answered and reviewed so we can have the best possible S&S across the COB

Response:

Please see our response to this submission in the "Responses to Public Comment Letter Submissions" available at

<https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning/zoning-initiatives/squares-streets-zoning-districts#comment-period>.

Timestamp: January 28, 2024 00:00:00

Name: Rick Yoder and Lisa Beatman

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

See following comments

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

See following comments

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Dear Mayor Wu and Chief Jemison,

We appreciated your presence at the Squares and Streets public meeting on January 29, 2024 at the Hyde Park Municipal Building.

A question raised by the BPDA and others was - Who is typically engaged in a local development review process and why is this question worth considering?

The city points out that there is a mismatch between the residents most typically engaged and the city's overall population.

The BPDA found that response to its survey on community experience and mitigation was skewed toward homeowners (75 percent), long-time residents (70 percent, and residents who were over age 55 (56 percent) or white (80 percent).

The response to the community barriers survey was drawn from a sample with a much higher representation of renters (88 percent and people of color (80 percent). The sample was also younger, with 40 percent under the age of 35.

Our experience as neighborhood association leaders is that it is very difficult to interest renters in development project presentations or any other neighborhood improvement initiatives. Over the last ten years we and some neighbors have flyer'd the 500 front doors of our neighborhood sixty or seventy times with our notices of coming meetings, in addition to our monthly neighborhood emailing. Our neighborhood has a mix of renters and homeowners.

The result is that homeowners are almost always the neighbors who show up, listen and speak up at these local meetings. They are the ones who go to city hall hearings. They show up for the Spring neighborhood cleanup.

It is not hard to understand why this is true. Renters know that they have no ownership stake at their current address. They may be evicted unexpectedly or may decide to move somewhere else on short notice. Homeowners are building equity with every monthly mortgage payment, feel more secure than renters and may feel that investing work and time in their neighborhood is worth it.

Younger residents, whether renters or homeowners often are stretched thin with both work and family obligations leaving little time for much else.

All this tends to leave mostly older residents whose children are out on their own, those without children and the retired to be the ones with time and interest for this community work.

Our neighborhood meetings are represented by a mix of racial and ethnic diversity reflecting our neighborhood. Translation is not offered due to lack of resources and unclear need.

And yes, we all want more people to engage in development issues.

It is worth pointing out that vetting a development proposal successfully takes a good deal of time and work from these individuals, all unpaid time. See the following three examples of vetted projects. They would not have turned out as well without a good deal of community work.

If the BPDA believes that including these other categories of residents for sufficient community input means only a video presentation with a BPDA generated questionnaire, they are making a mistake. Even small focus groups that exclude experienced community people will more likely miss the problems with any specific development proposal. It takes experience and work to uncover the flaws and consequences of many of these proposals.

Main questions:

What is the city doing to:

1. Ensure that all the alternative methods of engagement are used to elicit participation from those most impacted by each proposed development?
2. Connect those stakeholders so they can know each other and collaborate in their advocacy?
3. Ensure that the respondents have comprehensive access to accurate, evidence-based information about each development and its potential impacts?
4. Require that developers submit evidence-based accurate information, including transportation studies, photos of site existing conditions, and unbiased descriptions of the neighborhood?
5. Require that developers meet or exceed standards set by the most beneficial developments in the area, not use the worst nearby examples as excuses for 'good enough' projects?
6. Bring together and listen to those most impacted about true mitigation and community benefits that will be to the benefit of those most impacted, and not given to generic city-wide funds or city wide non-profits?

Neighborhood Review Improves Development Proposals

Mt. Hope Canterbury Neighborhood Association

Case study: American Legion Hwy/Parkway

Our ten years of organizational neighborhood advocacy has demonstrated to us that full local impact-neighborhood participation in the review and critiquing of development proposals leads to significantly improved projects, including remediation of some historical harms, for the neighborhood, residents, businesses, the city and often the developer. Residents have local knowledge of these development sites that is not always known or fully appreciated by city officials or development teams. Sometimes the developer does know, but would rather that knowledge not be shared.

Currently, developers wanted support from neighborhood groups so as to enable a speedy pass through BPDA, ZBA PIC, BCDC or Conservation Commission hearing. That was the bargaining chip. With the Squares and Streets initiative and other proposed changes to Article 80, it is unclear how neighboring residents and others will have an effective opportunity to correct design errors in these proposals. The BPDA staff is spread thin and can not know or see everything.

Three cases of recently approved development projects improved by input from those most impacted.

1. 289 Walk Hill St. (at American Legion and Walk Hill St.)

Developer proposed: 4 and 5 story 136 unit building towering over Canterbury Brook, the mature trees on its banks and the nearest homes and school. Site plans did not identify the brook. No real community benefits to the immediate neighborhood. No solution to future additional rush hour congestion on Canterbury St. and intersections. Claimed to have no responsibility for the 180' frontage along ALH, including sidewalk snow removal.

Residents successfully advocated for: 106 units, 3-4 stories, 19' front street offset and 10' side offset with beautiful plantings including shade trees. ALH sidewalk and fence reconstruction, maintenance and snow removal along ALH sidewalk. Community benefits: \$50k for pedestrian safety/traffic-calming in the adjacent neighborhood. Developer agreed to a conservation easement and restoration of Canterbury Brook and its river banks with a public viewing patio off Walk Hill St. BTD found that the developer's "assumptions made regarding the existing site-generated traffic volumes did not match with the community's observations", therefore had them take additional traffic counts, which led to improvements in signal timing at the high-crash ALH/Walk Hill intersection.

Project under construction, Canterbury Brook in process of restoration. A new addition to our neighborhood that existing and new residents can be proud of.

2. Scrub-a-Dub

565 American Legion Hwy Renovation

Developer proposed: Remodeling the interior but also maintaining most of a dangerous and illegal 130' asphalt curb cut, no sidewalk, two two-way dangerous driveways, very near a school zone intersection.

Residents successfully advocated for: two regulation-width narrower driveways and curb cuts, white concrete at-grade sidewalk, and a long, beautifully landscaped island between the two curb cuts, buffering pedestrians from the car wash activities and noise. Pedestrian safety and street view are now greatly improved. Project completed.

3. 602 Canterbury St. (next to Scrub a Dub)

Developer proposed: Paving over Canterbury Brook for egress onto ALH with a 14 unit building with parking. He denied the previous decades of site usage as an auto junk yard with toxic auto parts and fluids throughout the site and immediately adjacent to the brook. He claimed incorrectly that the site was all paved.

Residents successfully advocated for: Residents appealed to EEO Chief, who stated that the city does not pave over open brooks. Residents testified at the ZBA and Conservation Commission with photographic evidence of the existing conditions. ZBA denied the proposal and told the developer to work with the community. The Con. Com required the developer to test the site's ground for pollutants and to rehabilitate Canterbury Brook and its riverfront.

Project under construction.

Summary:

Involvement by those who will be impacted most by each development is essential, and must be baked into all current and future city policies and procedures regarding land disposition. Article 80 reform, rezoning initiatives, and the like must only go forward if they incorporate and enforce much more robust engagement and input from the immediate and nearby residents and the civic groups that bring them together. The city must change from using a process-oriented checklist of "community engagement" activities, to an improvement and results-oriented model that respects its constituents.

Sincerely,

Rick Yoder and Lisa Beatman

Co-Leaders of Mount Hope Canterbury Neighborhood Association

Response:

Please see our response to this submission in the "Responses to Public Comment Letter Submissions" available at

<https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning/zoning-initiatives/squares-streets-zoning-districts#comment-period>.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 16:56:31

Name: Elaine Coveney

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

N/A

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

N/A

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Hypocritical "community engagement" process:

- Fast-tracking of S+S makes it impossible to review and comment coherently on the 118-page zoning text amendment. In fact, the December 5 version of the amendment is being revised and the current version is not even available for review.
- By definition, comments submitted via this form will be limited and superficial. There is no apparent vetting of submissions, so those who post loudly and often will be judged to represent the voice of residents across the city. Meanwhile, the BPDA insists it cannot extend the comment period beyond February 2.
- BPDA staff are unable or unwilling to answer substantive questions posed at community meetings and other "informational" events. Adherence to talking points appears to be a priority.
- No specifics available for zoning map process: who from community will be included, how consensus will be reached, what happens if community says "none of the above."

No discussion of additional significant changes and new definitions to zoning code outside of S+S, specifically nonconforming additions, parking, loading zones, trash enclosures, and the definition of "ground floor." Apparent elimination of "single family" zoning category.

Completely inadequate in promoting preservation of existing cultural or historic assets.

Completely inadequate in ensuring that climate resiliency measures are prioritized (e.g., tree canopy is preserved/expanded to reduce heat island effects). Climate resiliency goals should be integrated into zoning changes, not treated as separate and unrelated objectives.

Completely inadequate in preventing displacement of existing residents and businesses. Rents in new buildings tend to be higher than those in older buildings that are paid for because construction costs have to be amortized. Two of the new apartment complexes at Forest Hills are offering one month free rent, presumably because they have excess vacancies.

Response:

The definition of ground floor is the existing definition of first floor in the code; there is no change. Single family still exists as a use category in most neighborhood articles of the zoning code. Changes to parking, loading, and trash enclosures reflect existing practice by BTDA, BPDA Transportation, and the PIC. We are including these requirements to provide greater transparency to users of the code. The Zoning Code has strong provisions for green building and climate resiliency, which apply citywide, in Article 37 and Article 25A respectively. We are currently working on additional strategies to strengthen Article 37 for Zero Net Carbon Zoning. More broadly, thank you for continuing to engage in the process, including on many planning issues that cannot be directly resolved through zoning.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 17:27:17

Name: Armani White

Neighborhood: Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

see below

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

see below

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

"Dear Boston Planning and Development Agency Chief Arthur Jemison,

Thank you for the tremendous work you have done to advance affordable housing and equity in the City of Boston since taking office, including your updates to the Inclusionary Development Policy and Linkage, making accessory dwelling units easier to build, and investing in first time homebuyers. We have been awaiting the type of transformation you have committed to - creating a more economically equitable, resilient, and affordable Boston and abolishing the BPDA.

Despite these admirable efforts, the Coalition for a Truly Affordable Boston (CTAB) has multiple concerns regarding the city's planning and development initiatives. These concerns relate to the ongoing transformation of the BPDA and the status of initiatives intended to advance affordable housing, affirmatively further fair housing, and the need for greater anti-displacement protections as part of the citywide rezoning. We request a meeting to work toward solutions to these issues.

The CTAB coalition consists of over 20 community organizations representing hundreds of Bostonians. Many of us have been working to improve housing justice in Boston for decades and have long felt that the BPDA, formerly the BRA, stood in the way of advancing affordable housing.

In our efforts to advance truly affordable housing in Boston, members of our coalition have been strong, active participants in the mayor's initiatives, most recently as members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to shape the mayor's IDP study.

While we are hopeful and optimistic about the intended transformation, we have concerns about its process and content so far. Our concerns relate to the following:

Lack of strong affordability, fair housing, and anti-displacement policies

Rezoning processes are underway in multiple neighborhoods that are experiencing high levels of displacement, including East Boston, Dorchester, Mattapan, and Hyde Park. Because multiple city initiatives on affordability & stability are still incomplete, these rezoning processes are being conducted in the absence of substantive anti-displacement reforms or fair housing zoning reforms that specifically promote affordable housing.

In October 2022, Mayor Wu issued an executive order calling for the BPDA to issue a report within 120 days on potential zoning code changes that would incentivize and accelerate the creation of affordable housing. The recommended solution to fixing our zoning code is a complete overhaul if the goal is to accelerate the creation of affordable housing. The report also less enthusiastically recommends incremental changes to the zoning code and warns of how that pathway could result in the same confusing, inconsistent, and unwieldy zoning code. Currently, squares and streets and citywide zoning reform seem to be a piecemeal approach with no eye towards affordability and fair housing, despite having the goal of incentivizing and accelerating the creation of affordable housing.

Additionally, the City has promised to develop an anti-displacement toolkit this year, but it is not yet complete. The results are high-displacement neighborhoods being rezoned without specific affordability and stability reforms in place. For example, the anti-displacement section of PLAN: East Boston only lists previously-existing policies and programs. The list includes the state's Rental Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program, which recently became more difficult to access, leading to a significant increase in evictions, as reported by the Boston Globe. These are not the deep reforms that were promised. We welcome equitable growth in our neighborhoods, but it is not equitable to delay multiple affordability initiatives while rezoning high-displacement areas.

Lack of transparent process and equitable community input

We are very concerned about the administration's commitment to community processes. Not just in housing, but in general, some examples of which we will refer to later in this document.

The process of change under this administration has been confusing, with little buy-in from the housing justice community. In the 15 months since October 2022, little information has been released on the commitments of the Mayor's executive order, such as a report from the BPDA on potential zoning reforms to incentivize affordable housing production.

Additionally, there are no affordable housing advocates or organizational reps on the Article 80 steering committee. These reforms have major implications for zoning, and the rationale of rezoning most of the city before completing this fundamental work is confusing.

Additionally, while we support expediting the building of affordable housing, it cannot be at the expense of a mutually agreed city-residents' community process.

And while we were honored to serve on the IDP TAC, the process was not ideal in terms of community involvement. It was concerning that the administration announced the IDP language while the TAC process was still ongoing, blindsiding our members. It must be different if people are to have faith in the committee process and, thereby, the community process. We hope that that process can be reflected on to learn how to have an improved procedure for community informed change with Squares and Streets (S&S), Article 80, and other reforms.

Finally, the Squares and Streets initiative, which has been introduced as a step in the process of transforming the city's development process for the better, has also surprised many in our community. There was little discussion with housing justice advocates about the strategy behind the new S&S zoning amendment. We would like more clarity on the following:

Including fair housing in S&S: The January 2022 AFFH Executive Order Mayor Wu says, ""The only way to affirmatively further fair housing is to embed the principles of freedom of choice, equal access, diversity, and inclusion in areas of urban planning, housing development, and zoning so that location does not determine anyone's quality of life or ability to prosper."" There is nothing in the proposed Squares & Streets that embeds or even mentions these principles in Boston's zoning . Why is there no mention or plan for fair housing?

When will we have a comprehensive fair housing review, which is outlined in Goal 7 of the City of Boston Assessment of Fair Housing?

Knowing that the development process is speeding up to reduce costs, what types of trade offs are being explored that will increase affordability and create deeper affordability in our efforts towards fair housing and an equitable city?

Will the updated inclusionary development policy be the only tool used to stimulate affordable housing development in these new zones?

How can community advocates play a role in ensuring there is true community input, including better marketing of the process, and that affordable housing is a focus?

There seem to be no requirements for multi-family units. Has there been a study to consider the fair housing implications of not requiring parking or multi-family units?

If an accelerated speed of development is allowed with no consideration for affordable housing, anti displacement measures, or other points we've raised, how is housing justice advanced?

Input from housing justice advocates is extremely important in any major change, especially when the hope is to build more affordable housing and prevent displacement. In the draft S&S zoning, there is only one mention of affordable housing, explaining parking requirements for affordable housing are removed entirely. The public changes to the citywide zoning code include removing requirements for parking overall, which is usually a tool used to require more affordable housing. If these draft documents will be enshrined in February, when will we have time for this type of input and research? We hope that by raising these concerns, you are beginning to see the issue with the process as we see it.

It is through the implementation of policies like AFFH that the City of Boston meets its Fair Housing obligations. While this is not always stated explicitly in the municipal code, this understanding must be the throughline through which all housing policy and development are connected. As such, it is absolutely necessary that development for protected classes--like families--be clearly included in planning policies. When we have raised concerns at public S&S meetings about fair housing and affordability in the S&S process, no one has been able to identify who will be focused on ensuring any changes affirmatively furthering fair housing. Has the city abandoned its fair housing commitments that are enshrined in the zoning code?

S&S is not the only instance of a proposal that is supposedly beneficial to the community under this administration that has caused uproar from housing justice advocates - we have witnessed this in the changes to New Market District, Dorchester Bay, and Suffolk Downs. In addition, some of our members who also work on other issues such as transportation, workforce development, job access, etc. have expressed concerns about the community process in those areas as well. Plan Newmarket covered areas beyond the Industrial Park, yet there was not significant engagement from residents in the area. It is important for the administration to ensure these processes are productive, not just boxes to be checked off. Otherwise, you miss the input of the real experts, the people who are being impacted. They have a lot to add if you listen.

We are concerned about the future of our city. We want to be a resource and share our perspective on proposed changes as a coalition of advocates for truly affordable housing in Boston, with the goal of helping to transform this city for the better.

Thank you for your consideration. We are making an urgent request for a meeting to discuss these important issues as soon as possible and welcome any questions you might have in the meantime. Please feel free to contact CTAB Consultant Armani White at 857-222-3233 or CTAB Coordinator Kathy Brown at 617-851-0543, on behalf of the Coalition for Truly Affordable Boston.

Best regards,

The Coalition for Truly Affordable Boston"

Response:

Please see our response to this submission in the "Responses to Public Comment Letter Submissions" available at

<https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning/zoning-initiatives/squares-streets-zoning-districts#comment-period>.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 17:53:26

Name: Josep Impellizeri

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I like the idea of standardizing on form configurations and on customizing zoning for each district.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

The Zoning Amendment heights, setbacks, and building floorplates are too high, too narrow, and too large for the S0 and S1 Form standards. In many neighborhoods, commercial districts border older, and in some cases historic, residential neighborhoods. Buildings over 3 stores (35 feet) will tower over existing abutting residences. Without proper setbacks, property setbacks, buffers (i.e., trees, etc.) and proper floorplate to scale to these abutting areas, the quality of life for abutting neighborhoods will be adversely impacted. The S0 Form should be split into an S0A with a much smaller scale and footprint (eg. 3 stories, 35 ft height, 15 setbacks from abutting residential properties, etc.) and an S0B which can be the current proposed S0. The same applies to the S1 Form... This should also be split into an S1A and S1B where S1A would be scaled down to better accommodate and transition from existing single family residential neighborhoods to more densely built areas. Further, if a district doesn't WANT to use the form factors, it should be able to develop and agree on its own "standard" configurations and forms for its district, such that they are within the zoning rules.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

The current description of the Zoning amendment process is vague and unclear with respect to how feedback will be incorporated into a revision that will be released back to the public for review and consideration BEFORE being voted on in March. It is unclear how the BPDA will deal with and incorporate changes and to the extent the public will see any updates before a vote. This is causing considerable distrust and concern.

Response:

Thank you for your comments. The existing height limit of most commercial and mixed-use districts in neighborhoods in the zoning code is 35 feet (but not all!). Across the City, we

think we've sized floorplates, thought about the relationship of building to lot, and set up yard requirements that will make for appropriate transitions to 4 story buildings.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 22:02:28

Name: Joseph Impellizeri, Chair HNCA Development Ciommittee

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

See submitted comments in next section.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I am writing on behalf of the Highland Neighborhood Civic Association's Development Committee. We are located in West Roxbury and our Development Committee is focused on real estate development and zoning matters which impact the quality of life of our residential district and the strength and viability of its neighboring commercial district.

The purpose of this letter is to communicate our thoughts on the proposed Zoning Amendment intended to set the legal and zoning framework to enable the City's effort to enable its Streets & Squares initiative.

First, we want to make clear that the Development Committee supports the City's efforts to increase housing and its effort to do this near MBTA transit sites and corridors. We understand that this will involve increased density in our area.

Our primary interest is making sure that the changes being considered incorporate what we think are critical attributes that preserve the quality of life and unique attributes of our neighborhood, and other City neighborhoods, as these changes are undertaken. We want the changes to be constructive to the district and its development. The changes proposed should not cause undue detriment to the district and we encourage these changes be made in a way that they can be successful.

In that spirit we offer the following inputs:

1. PROCESS – Publish Feedback Updated Amendment. While we preferred an extended comment period, our main concern is the current process does not have a clear release of an updated revision of the new Amendment, based on community feedback, that the City can see and consider before it is finalized for a vote in March.

Any revision should be made available to the public for review before any final vote so feedback can be provided in advance of the vote by residents, business and property owners, and our elected officials; this may require additional time, but not much and would do a lot to help address public concern. Additionally, it might be helpful for the

amendment to provide for some flexibility in the parameters of the Form options to accommodate the inevitable practical issues and considerations that will emerge as the City works through the various S&S districts over the next one to three years.

2. AMENDMENT FORM FACTORS – Add two smaller scale Form Factors, S0A and S1A. While we like the idea of standard form factors to enable consistent zoning, we observe that the current proposed forms S0 through S4 (S5?) do not deal with the real issue of districts abutting largely single-family neighborhoods, especially older established neighborhoods, and historic districts. Also, it does not adequately address elevation differentials between these neighborhoods and the areas of development. Specifically, we believe S0 and S1 form factors abutting such neighborhoods do not recognize the need for more transition options. Permitted heights of 50 feet in these sections along with minimal rear and side setbacks are very problematic. A 4-story building with 3-foot side setbacks, a large floorplate, and occupancies greater than 14 units will dominate the single-family residential buildings abutting it. In some cases, these residential buildings are at meaningfully higher or lower elevations creating privacy issues for established single family buildings that were built and occupied with the reasonable expectation that their access to light, air, and relative privacy would be preserved. We propose a “win-win” solution by splitting both S0 and S1 designations into two. For example, an S0A and an S1A would be scaled down to provide a more reasonable transition from very low height/density to higher height/density. If an S0A and an S1A form could be created with height limits of 3-stories (35 feet), larger setbacks, and unit limits, this could help preserve the existing desirable scale attributes of our districts while expanding them.

The current form factors for S0 and S1 could still exist in the planning model as options and be labeled S0B and S1B. This change will provide greater more subtle flexibility for districts in their own eventual local planning. The challenge we highlight here is shared by other districts.

3. TRANSPORTATION – Designate City Commuter Stops as Zone 1A & Increase Service. Increasing housing and density in districts like ours will not succeed unless there is a fundamental integration with the MBTA in terms of service and pricing. The Needham commuter rail line runs through our area and is too expensive for many commuters. All commuter rail stops in the city must be designated as Zone 1A. Also, the limited weekend service will not accommodate carless residents. The bus service needs enhancement as well. Without these changes, adding people WILL add cars; lots of them.

4. PARKING – Consider “Edge Districts” & WFH Impacts. Our district is an “Edge District”. By this we mean we are on the edge of the City and major commuter roadways into and out of the City. The reality is that many people live in our district AND work outside the City, commuting by car. They also shop at the nearby commercial centers on Route 1. The planning premise of a hub-and-spoke commuting model where people live in the area and walk to public transportation to go downtown is not necessarily the case. Many people like to live here to have access to the City, its services, and resources but do not work in the City. The work-from-home shift applies here too.

There needs to be more consideration of the need for parking to support higher densification in Edge Districts. If not, the results will be a transformation to the kind of parking and traffic congestion we see today in dense sections of Boston.

5. GREENSPACE – Can we have some too? While we have many single-family homes, many lots are small as are their yards; condos and apartments have little to none. The City frequently shows “After Pictures” associated with the S&S initiative often showing large yards for single family homes... not the case here. The S&S initiative does not seem to factor in a holistic consideration of greenspace and open space as part of the densification of housing. All these people, but where will they go to rest and enjoy the neighborhood? There needs to be some form of ratio requirement or limit to density that is proportional to open and greenspace. Developments should factor in more of this space as part of their floorplate.

6. HOUSING UNIT CONFIGURATIONS – Transient or Families? There does not appear to be adequate consideration of the kind of housing development we want to attract. Many condo and apartment units built recently along Centre and Spring Streets cannot accommodate families with children. They seem designed for single professionals and young couples.

There needs to be some form of configuration attributes to the proposed changes or we will not achieve long term residency with a population invested in the City.

7. COMMERCIAL DISTRICT PRESERVATION – Avoiding “Mallification” of Commercial Districts. Many of our commercial districts are under stress. The pandemic was a mixed bag for neighborhood business as some failed and others saw their value appreciated by many people working from home. The real challenge is that many, if not most, of these business owners are mom-and-pop or specialty shops/restaurants reflecting their owner/entrepreneur’s creativity. These businesses often do not own their buildings. We did a survey of Center Street properties from the Holy Name Circle to Richwood Street; there were ~55 properties, more than half of which had absentee landlords (outside of West Roxbury or MA). Many have been owned for a long time and have a low purchase basis.

If not handled properly, many existing commercial landlords will elect to cash out and sell or partner with developers on large multistory housing units in these S&S districts. Ultimately this will drive up commercial rents in new and remaining existing buildings. The result will be that local small businesses will be driven out to be replaced by national chains. The neighborhoods will lose their charm and uniqueness as we see the same “mallification” that took place in the Faneuil Hall Marketplace spread to our neighborhoods.

Remember, Boston is a City of Neighborhoods, NOT a city with neighborhoods.... That’s what makes it work at the residential level and keeps people in the City.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph Impellizeri

Chair, HNCA Development Committee.

Response:

Please see our response to this submission in the “Responses to Public Comment Letter Submissions” available at

<https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning/zoning-initiatives/squares-streets-zoning-districts#comment-period>.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 22:08:21

Name: Deborah Galiga

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

• What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Not much

• What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Response to Squares and Streets Proposal for Roslindale

Deborah Galiga

- Former Planner - worked on the Roxbury Master Plan with Stull and Lee, Lead Consultant
- Roslindale Resident and Homeowner for 23 years

I strongly oppose the Squares and Streets proposal for Roslindale. My suggestions, reasons and questions are listed below.

1. Slow down the process. Not enough time was given to stakeholders and residents to process and respond to this fast-tracked, "top-down" proposal. Please extend comment period by 6 months. What's the rush?
2. Concern about displacement of businesses in Roslindale Village. What happens to the Village businesses and their owners trying to make a living when the buildings they have been in, some for over 20 years or more, are demolished? What happens to their income stream? Will they be welcomed back into the new buildings? How long do they have to wait while the construction is going on? Even if they are able to return, will their customers have gone elsewhere? This proposal is unfair to business owners and their customers.
3. Who benefits from this proposal?

First, let's look at who DOESN'T BENEFIT.

- people needing affordable housing because they can't afford to live there

It doesn't sound like there will be guarantee of a high percentage of affordable housing built with this proposal.

- businesses / business owners
- customers of those businesses who have to go elsewhere
- local residents who walk to shop in the Village and patronize local businesses

We'll have to drive to other places to get what we need, depriving dollars from the Roslindale economy and adding to climate change.

- local residents who don't want to live in a construction zone for years

- long-time residents and newer arrivals who love Roslindale the way it is lose their funky, charming village

Who DOES benefit?

- developers (!)

Developers will use this zoning change as an opportunity to line their pockets by building luxury housing that only the rich can afford.

- rich and well-off people who can afford luxury housing

They have resources to pay for housing in many locations throughout Boston. Why should we build new housing for them in Roslindale when they can afford to live in the other luxury housing available or being built?

Discussion: Who benefits by adding up to 10 floors of housing above retail and potentially destroying a much-loved neighborhood center? Will the housing that is added be affordable, providing housing to those who need it and can't afford to buy or rent at today's prices? Or will it be developers building luxury housing that is unaffordable to the majority of folks who want a decent place to live they can afford? Who will be helped by Squares and Streets? The 1%? How is equity considered? Despite efforts not to compare Squares and Streets to "urban renewal," how is razing existing buildings and building new 10 story buildings in their place much different?

4. The planned destruction of a thriving, successful Village center

Roslindale Village is thriving just as it is. Both residents and visitors love its quirky charm and mix of building styles, which give it character and personality. It has taken a very long time and the work of many community activists, residents and the RMVS to change Roslindale from a neglected part of the city to a huge success story. Roslindale is now a happening, desirable neighborhood that new folks are drawn to and want to live in, partly because of the character and charm of its business district. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Stripping away Roslindale's quirky unique personality by building up to 10 story towers in the business district is a terrible idea. It would destroy an active village center and make it look like any of a thousand cookie-cutter, high-rise areas. No one I know wants charming Roslindale Village to look like the "new" Washington Street in JP, with its huge, expensive, luxury residences looming over the street. Or even worse - no one wants it to look the "new" Brookline Avenue. The canyon effect of those steel and glass skyscrapers and homogeneity of the buildings' architecture on Washington Street and Brookline Avenue is frightening and should not be welcomed in Roslindale.

5. Shadow effect could negatively impact Adams Park

When designing new buildings, planners and architects consider and study the effect that the shadows cast from the proposed buildings will have on nearby parks. In this case, a negative impact from 10 story buildings might be shadows that block out the sunlight over our beloved Adams Park, home of the hugely popular Farmer's Market. This lovely park at the heart of Roslindale is enjoyed by many all year round. What effect would shadows on the park have on the grass and the people who enjoy it?

6. What can be done to provide more housing?

Here are some suggestions that can be investigated to provide additional housing opportunities.

1. Utilize space in vacant office buildings to create housing.

According to Avison Young, the vacancy rate for Boston office buildings was at 17.1% in the fourth quarter of 2023, a 10-year high for Boston. They also reported that there was 10.1 million square feet of sublease space. Why waste precious city dollars razing a business district and building new, expensive buildings when existing buildings in Boston are vacant and waiting for new uses? Creating housing from vacant office building space seems like a better use of resources and is also transit-oriented development.

2. Investigate opportunities to build in Seaport. From my perspective, it seems there is ample vacant space in the Seaport area for new housing development, including affordable options. Why not search for vacant space to build on?

2. Infill Housing There are plenty of opportunities for developers to building infill housing within the residential fabric or on arterial streets. Roslindale has seen many of these projects built already on vacant lots or large lots that have been subdivided. Some developers respect the look, massing and zoning of the neighborhood to build attractive residences. Roslindale did not ask for, want or need this "top-down" planning initiative thrust upon us. Zoning is already in place for a reason. Let's keep the existing zoning in Roslindale and send developers with their 10 story luxury housing plans elsewhere.

Response:

Thank you for your comments. I hope you will continue to be involved in the Roslindale Square Small Area Plan, which launches on Feb 24. Nothing is proposed to be rezoned in Roslindale Square at this time; as part of the Small Area Plan, we will work closely with the broader community to analyze the existing zoning and pattern of lots and buildings, develop land use and building recommendations, and implement them through zoning.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 22:10:43

Name: Aron Boros

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I believe that the number one threat to Boston's long-term competitiveness is the lack of housing and new residential development. I'm excited about the new zoning for additional residential units in the S+S zoning districts.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I encourage the BPDA to continue to INCREASE the areas of the city that are zoned for more residential development. I hope that the planning process continues to REDUCE the barriers to building housing and to EXPAND housing access for all residents (and potential new residents!). I hope that the BPDA will show brave leadership in making Boston a city where housing is available for anyone who wants to live here.

Response:

Thank you for continuing to engage in the process. Addressing Boston's housing needs will take many strategies - of which Squares + Streets is an important one.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 23:04:38

Name: Susan Pranger

Neighborhood: Jamaica Plain

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

It has promise but needs more discussion.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

More transparency and explanation about the scope of "additional changes".

The BPDA continues to state that the Squares and Streets zoning amendment will only affect areas designated as an S+S district. However, both Katherine Onufer and Will Cohen have acknowledged that the amendment WILL impact existing districts outside S+S but that they do not consider the changes to be "substantive". The proposed changes may or may not be substantive or acceptable, however the public is generally unaware of the scope or potential impact of these "additional changes" because the BPDA has continued to state that the amendment does not impact areas outside S+S and the BPDA has not included the changes in any intelligible summary.

Per Katherine Onufer's email to me on 1/23/24, the BPDA does not consider these changes "substantive" because "the practice already applies universally, such as through PIC requirements, other legal requirements, or the standard of practice in BTM and BPDA Transportation Planning.". The fact that it is standard practice for the BPDA and ZBA to approve variances and other changes should not give them the authority to revise the zoning code without discussion.

The BPDA further explained (by email, but not in any public document) that only Article 2, Definitions, currently applies to all zones, including Neighborhood districts. Articles 13, 23, and 24 only apply to base districts (those areas that are not designated as Neighborhood or Waterfront districts) and would apply to the future S+S districts. However, BPDA has also stated their intent to make Neighborhood districts more uniform, which raises the potential that these changes could be applied more broadly in the future. This information should be made transparent to the public.

- Article 13 – Nonconformity – The language would allow, as of right, additions that do not meet dimensional side and rear yard and height requirements, as long as they align

with existing non-conformities, and meet other requirements such as open space and FAR (which is being eliminated).

- Article 23 – parking – Proposed changes limit curb cuts and prohibit parking in ALL front yards.
- Article 24 – loading zone – This reduces the number of required loading zones.
- Page 16 only notes that new Use Table A is added, however the existing Use Table (now B) is also modified to delete S, LM, WM and WS.

Response:

Please see our response to this submission in the “Responses to Public Comment Letter Submissions” available at

<https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning/zoning-initiatives/squares-streets-zoning-districts#comment-period>.

Timestamp: February 03, 2024 12:08:37

Name: Caitlyn Bongiovi

Neighborhood: Brighton

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I believe there is a greater need for diversification in Brighton for residential and commercial buildings. The zoning laws have restricted housing development to only 2-3 family, double-decker-like housing for too long, and I appreciate that this plan would add larger, new housing options that help us transition to an electric future.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

I would agree with community feedback that these zoning updates cannot come at the expense of depleting neighborhood character. We need diversification, not a complete gut of existing communities. I believe the community needs great clarity into the proposed zoning changes: what percentage is allotted to multi-unit housing, single family housing, commercial businesses, etc.

Response:

This is a proposed zoning text amendment at this time; it provides options for modern mixed-use zoning that do not currently exist in the code. It is not proposed to be mapped anywhere but Mattapan at this time (which follows on PLAN: Mattapan). Through planning processes, including the Allston-Brighton Neighborhood Plan, we will work with you and other community members to carefully analyze local conditions and zoning, develop zoning recommendations, and bring updated zoning for adoption. Each of these steps will include significant public engagement.

Timestamp: February 03, 2024 20:50:03

Name: Joy Bogen

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

- What do you like about the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Bringing more development to areas such as Hyde Park that have long been neglected and let go. Most other areas of Boston have seen development which has proven a very positive change for the city.

- What would you like to see changed in the proposed zoning text amendment draft for Squares + Streets zoning districts?

Clear and concise by right zoning language that does not get tied up by angry local groups who fight every change purely for the fight and not for the greater good of the community.

- Please provide any additional comments not addressed above here:

Hyde Park has such potential. It is on many public transit lines and has the potential to provide much needed housing in place of many older, single or two story buildings. Unfortunately the local groups are very vocal and do not represent the entire community. Many business owners would like to see more housing to bring in more residents. Parking requirements are also very strict and prohibit meaningful housing growth.

Response:

Thank you for taking the time to comment - we will be working with you and others to directly address these comments (and create a new zoning map) during the Small Area Plan for Cleary Square. I hope you will stay engaged in that process.

The following responses are follow-up responses to questions received after the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association Meeting that Mayor Michelle Wu and BPDA representatives attended on Monday, January 30, 2024.

Timestamp: January 31, 2024 20:03:37

Name: Jess Hamilton

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

How is the Squares and Streets being coordinated with the Blue Hill Avenue Action Plan since they seem similar and complementary to each other?

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/housing/blue-hill-avenue-action-plan>

Response:

Thank you for the question - PLAN: Mattapan envisioned that rezoning (as evidenced in the proposed S+S rezoning) and transportation/streetscape improvements along one of the City's most important corridors could both help achieve larger goals. As you've identified, these efforts are complementary; however, because the Blue Hill Avenue Action Plan is a long-term plan for the design and operation of the public right-of-way, it has its own dedicated public process (reflecting the detail needed to get to construction drawings and implementation!)

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 10:11:41

Name: Alan Wright

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

Goal of S&S is to add more housing which will help control costs. But dvlpmnt in bus districts not enough - need more land freed up. There are hundreds of acres not built on in Boston such as MBTA land on Rowe St, vacant lots all over Roxbury, unused DCR land along Wash st in WR, 1 acre parcel on Dale St, private land on West side JP Pond, etc. What is City doing to free up this land for housing?

Response:

Thank you for the comment. MBTA and DCR are state agencies. Therefore, that property is state property. State property is not subject to local zoning. Where a State department seeks to develop property, the City is a stakeholder in the process and will advocate for the State to consider City goals and priorities, such as housing. One example of this is the City's work with the MBTA on the design process for Arborway Yard. City staff have participated in several public meetings with the goal of advocating for the highest and best use for the parcel. In addition, City staff made recommendations around ways the designs can be improved to increase housing on the site. In addition to State-owned property, there are several parts of the city which are subject to very low density development or limited ability to develop because of the zoning. Assessing places that are appropriate for growth is important and modifying our code to enable that growth is equally important.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 12:19:54

Name: Michele Brooks

Neighborhood: Allston

Comment:

How will the initiative affirmatively further fair housing? (I could not hear the answer via Zoom). In addition, what is the planned breakdown of one studios and one bedrooms versus family sized units? Will there be a parking exception for people with disabilities, elderly folks, etc who need parking availability?

Response:

Thank you for the comment. Squares + Streets is a City planning and zoning process. There is no specific development project proposed as part of this initiative and therefore there is no specific breakdown of units. The community process and plans which will be developed over the next 6-9 months will result in recommendations for capital projects, city programs, and community programs aimed at improving the neighborhood. These plans will also set priorities for developers to consider (such as community benefits) when they propose projects. The zoning recommendations that will be developed out of the community process will enable new uses and additional development in the future. Any project that is proposed in the rezoned areas will be held to the parameters of the new zoning. If a project qualifies as an Article 80 Large Project, it is subject to the AFFH policy that is in the zoning code, regardless of whether it's in the new zoning district(s) or not. In addition, all development projects with 7 or more units will be required to meet the new Inclusionary Zoning policy, regardless of whether the project is in a new zoning district or not. There are no parking minimums proposed in the new zoning, but that does not mean a developer can't propose parking spaces! All projects must meet ADA requirements. Finally, eliminating parking minimums also gives small-scale developers and property owners the same flexibility that is currently afforded to large-scale developers. This is a way to encourage a broader range of scales of development, which is also a means to potentially increase affordability.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 22:23:45

Name: Dennis Kirkpatrick

Neighborhood: Roslindale

Comment:

Continue to feel this is asking us to invest in a concept that may or may not work and that may or may not apply. People deserve details. The last re-zoning took over a year here and was heavily invested by business, residents, city, and a development company. The new plan needs the same process regardless of it being BPDA or anew city department. This is causing a lot of people citywide to distrust Municipal Government across the board. That is a terrible shame.

Response:

Zoning reform is absolutely critical and one of the primary ways that the City can seek to make planning and development more predictable, transparent, and aligned with community needs in Boston. Ending the City's over-reliance on the ZBA and instead implementing thoughtful planning and rezoning across the city so that all Bostonians, regardless of influence or money, are playing by the same set of rules will help to get us there. Over-reliance on the ZBA is not just about the number of cases that are reviewed by that body, but about more closely examining why there are so many cases before them. There is a significant amount of research which indicates that upzoning can increase housing supply and affordability, particularly if implemented with supportive policies such as parking reforms that favor lower-priced housing development. The order of this process looks different from past processes because we have worked to develop zoning districts that can be applied citywide. These districts set a maximum size for what gets built, but there are still a number of ways that projects will get shaped, specific to each neighborhood, beyond zoning:

(1) Most projects built in these districts will be at the Article 80 scale, meaning BPDA staff and community voices will be able to work with each project to help it fit in with its specific context. (2) The Boston Design Vision is a city initiative working to understand how residents can see themselves in the buildings and outdoor spaces that define our city, and especially how local, cultural, and historic differences can be implemented in design. This project is currently exploring how to embed itself within development review, design review, and other city processes. (3) Small Area Plans will include a comprehensive vernacular analysis exploring on-the-ground built conditions unique to each plan area and making recommendations for how to improve projects that are proposed.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 23:42:24

Name: Eileen Velez

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

My home is on Hyde Park Ave between West St and Cleary Sq. Mr. Jemison said our block is considered High Zoning. He did say what that meant What does it mean? There are 2 abandoned houses 4 doors from me. I do not want to see those turned in apartment buildings.

Response:

Squares + Streets zoning districts will not be applied to the entire city, or even to entire neighborhoods. Squares + Streets is an initiative to enhance our neighborhood centers and main streets to serve residents and businesses. When these new Squares + Streets district options are added to the zoning code, they still will not apply to any areas in the city because they will not be "mapped" anywhere (with the exception of Mattapan's updated zoning, going through a separate review process). Instead, these zoning districts will serve as options for residents to consider during small area planning processes. BPDA staff will work with residents to determine the most appropriate mix of districts and the best places to map them in the area. Not every district needs to be used in every neighborhood and not every property in the planning area will be rezoned. A primary goal of the Small Area Plan process is to enable this process. Please stay involved and bring your concerns to the table.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 12:06:46

Name: Barbara Van Dyke

Neighborhood: West Roxbury

Comment:

Why were not ALL city residents informed of this initiative in clear plain layman's language? The city should be notifying everyone in Boston as all residents will be affected in one way or another. It is NOT the job of the residents of the city to inform each other about this. It is the job of the city. The 6 month delay requested would give you time to do this job which should have been done from the very beginning for it to be inclusive rather than selective.

Response:

Efforts to share information about Squares + Streets began in August 2023. Staff created a survey which received 764 responses and left information in community centers and libraries. In addition staff held pop-up events, attended 29 neighborhood association meetings, and placed ads on 100 buses and bus shelters which included a QR code that directed people to the Squares + Streets webpage. The community engagement process for the zoning amendment specifically included 6 citywide public meetings (conducted virtually via Zoom) between October 16th and February 6th, three of which occurred before the draft release and focused on the BPDA's early analysis, providing an opportunity for residents to give initial feedback on the direction of the zoning; and three of which occurred after the draft release, focused on presenting and hearing feedback on the December 5th draft. Each of these meetings were attended by about 115 community members on average. BPDA also held one to two recurring community office hours per week between November 1st and January 25th (a total of 22 hour-long sessions), which allowed BPDA staff to have one-on-one and small group conversations with residents. There were 5 focus groups held with professionals who often work with the Boston Zoning Code, including small-scale developers and Community Development Corporations (3 sessions) and design firms (2 sessions). To engage youth and better understand youth perspectives, staff from the BPDA's Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Reform teams also held two educational and visioning workshops with participants in the Mayor's Youth Council (MYC), including their Schools, Housing and Neighborhood Development committee and their Environment, Energy and Open Space committee. A public comment form was available for feedback to be provided on the amendment from December 5th through February 2nd and received over 250 comments. All public comments submitted through the form as well as comment letters submitted via email were shared weekly in BPDA's Zoning Notices & Updates Newsletter and the BPDA released a response to each comment. The BPDA Planning team published a report detailing the engagement activities that took place between late August and December 2023. It is available on the BPDA website (www.bostonplans.org/squares). Since the report was published, staff have continued to attend community meetings both virtually and in-person as requested.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 16:56:10

Name: Anonymous

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

What is being done to reach people who cannot come to meetings because of work or child care responsibilities? And people whose first language is not English?

How do people sign up to speak to staff one to one?

Response:

Thank you for the questions. All virtual meetings are recorded and posted online here: www.bostonplans.org/zoning4squares. Any notes taken at in-person meetings will also be posted online. Each of our in-person meetings will include childcare and food. We will be sure to message this broadly as we get into the planning process. Translation and interpreting services that reflect the needs of our distinct neighborhoods allows Limited English Proficient individuals to participate in our processes. In Hyde Park and Roslindale we will have Spanish and Haitian Creole interpreters available. Finally, we have scheduled several office hours sessions for the weeks ahead. Here is a direct link to the calendar, where you can choose a date and sign up:

<https://www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/calendar?eventtypeid=33&view=month>.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 16:57:44

Name: Anonymous

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

You've said that the language about the zoning forms will be added to the zoning code; then, later, you will work with neighborhoods to determine what zoning forms will be applied to which areas. What happens if none of the forms you add to the code fits the way a neighborhood wants to zone a given area? Would there be flexibility to change one of the forms at that point?

Response:

These zoning districts are based on analysis of existing built conditions around Boston. They are meant to be flexible enough to apply to a number of different contexts, but also reflect familiar patterns of building found throughout the city. Reorganizing the use tables, adding size thresholds, and the Active Ground Floor requirement will encourage and allow for more local retail and small businesses throughout Squares + Streets areas – a crucial part of what makes each neighborhood feel unique. That being said, the BPDA recognizes that there may be small changes needing to be made to the districts once they are applied. Recognizing that these are citywide districts, any changes that may be made will be given broad consideration.

Timestamp: February 02, 2024 17:01:14

Name: Anonymous

Neighborhood: Hyde Park

Comment:

I know someone who was at the recent meeting at the Hyde Park branch library, but was unable to attend the larger meeting at the Hyde Park community center. She didn't receive the email with the link to submit questions. I forwarded it to her, so she is all set -- but there may be others in the same situation who should receive it. Thank you.

Response:

Thank you for the comment and for forwarding the email and link. BPDA and the City of Boston obtained the in-person and online sign-in sheets from the Monday 1/29/24 meeting, where Mayor Wu and Chief Jemison committed to following up with attendees to answer any additional questions that were not addressed due to time constraints. Staff will reach out via our Hyde Park listservs with information on the plan kick-off and next steps. BPDA has also posted online (www.bostonplans.org/squares) about the kick off meetings in Hyde Park and Roslindale. Please feel free to email squaresandstreets@boston.gov at any time with additional questions.

Timestamp: February 01, 2024 08:57:00

Name: Eileen Boyle

Neighborhood: Dorchester - Savin Hill

Comment:

Hello,

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in these discussions.

Dorchester , Savin Hill neighborhood is not currently on the list of Squares and Streets, that being said, what changes in zoning will happen in residential areas of the city?

Where the housing is one to three families.

Columbia Savin Hill Civic Association is very concerned about over development where families need green space and a community of neighbors is very important.

Thank You,

Response:

Great question! Broader changes to the zoning code will be something that the team focuses on over the course of the next few years. Maintaining the type of mix of residential uses, like the mix in Savin Hill that you've referenced is a key goal. Another key goal is the greening of our code. That means providing more requirements for green space in yards, trees, and other green infrastructure. BPDA staff expect to work in partnership with residents through that process but will be focused on our mixed use districts in the near term. One of the things that we will be starting later this year is a Citywide Needs Assessment, which may help us identify these and other types of neighborhood needs. The CNA may also help us identify priorities and goals that can translate into broader policy and zoning reforms. Thank you for your involvement and please stay tuned for this work.