



# Squares + Streets

## Zoning Draft Amendment

*Proposed zoning updates for Boston's main streets  
+ neighborhood centers*

### Public Meeting

# Zoom Controls to Listen to Interpreters



**(EN)** Look for the interpretation icon (globe) at the bottom of your screen and select the language you want to hear.

**(Cabo Verdean)** Djobe íkune di interpretason (un globu) na parti inferior di tela y selesiona bu língua ki bu kre skuta reunion.

**(Kreyòl Ayisyen)** Chèche ikòn entèpretasyon ki gen fòm (glòb) anba ekran ou an epi seleksyone lang ou vle tande a.

**(Español)** Busque el ícono de la interpretación (globo) en el borde inferior de su pantalla y seleccione el idioma en el que desea escuchar.

**(Tiếng Việt)** Tìm biểu tượng phiên dịch (hình quả địa cầu) ở phía cuối màn hình của bạn và chọn ngôn ngữ bạn muốn nghe.

**(简体中文)** 查找屏幕底部的翻译图标（地球仪），然后选择您想听到的语言。

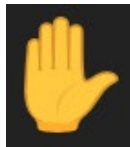
**(繁體中文)** 查找屏幕底部的翻譯圖標（地球儀），然後選擇您想听到的語言。

# Zoom Meeting Info + Tips

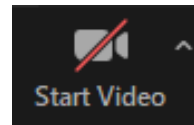
- **The BPDA will be recording this meeting** and posting it on the BPDA's project webpage. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.
- **Zoom controls are available at the bottom of your screen.** Clicking on these symbols activates different features.
- **Use raise hand function** (dial \*9 if joining by phone) **and wait to be called upon to unmute** (dial \*6 if joining by phone) before asking your question or providing comment.



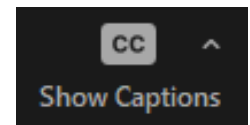
Mute/unmute



Raise hand to get in line to ask a question or provide comment



Turn video on/off



Turn on captions

# Please Ask for Clarification!

**Ask questions in the chat along the way** – our staff are available to answer during the presentation!

**Ask for us to clarify any terms or concepts we discuss** – we want to make sure that what we cover is accessible to everyone so you can all share your informed feedback!

# Squares + Streets Zoning Team

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**Kathleen Onufer**, Deputy Director of Zoning



# Agenda

- Where to Find the Draft Zoning Information
- What We've Done & What We've Heard So Far
- Zoning for Squares + Streets
- Squares + Streets Draft Zoning Districts
- Land Use Modernization
- Connecting Land Uses to Licensing Process
- Next Steps to Refine the Draft Zoning
- Q&A and Discussion





# Where to Find the Draft Zoning Information

# Squares + Streets Zoning Districts

## Initiative Webpage

Go to: <https://www.bostonplans.org/zoning/zoning-initiatives/squares-streets-zoning-districts>

### Zoning Initiatives

#### Squares + Streets Zoning Districts



#### Latest Updates

##### Overview

**Squares + Streets Draft Zoning Text Amendment**

**Connecting Planning Processes to Squares + Streets Zoning**

##### Upcoming Events

##### Past Events

##### Timeline

#### Latest Updates

**[Tuesday, December 5]** The draft zoning text amendment for Squares + Streets has been released! The draft zoning text amendment and materials to help explain the proposed zoning can be found in the **Squares + Streets Draft Zoning Text Amendment** section below as well as in the **Helpful Resources** box of this page.

The public comment period to share your thoughts and feedback on the draft zoning is now open and will close on **SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024**. Please share your comments through this **public comment form**.

#### Contact

Abdul-Razak Zachariah  
Planner  
617.918.4221

#### Helpful Resources

2023-12-05 DRAFT Squares + Streets Zoning Text Amendment

2023-12-05 Reference Guide – Squares + Streets Amendment Overview and Dimensional Regulations

2023-12-05 Land Use Modernization Visual Guide

2023-11-13 Squares + Streets Citywide Draft Zoning Recommendations Public Meeting Materials

2023-10-16 Squares + Streets Zoning Analysis Public Meeting Materials

### → Squares + Streets Draft Zoning Text Amendment ←

To create new Squares + Streets Districts, a new chapter in the Boston Zoning Code called **Article 26** has been drafted. Related updates to several existing chapters of the Zoning Code are being proposed as well, including **Article 8** (Regulation of Uses) and other citywide chapters of the Zoning Code to make sure that updates to Art. 26 and Art. 8 are reflected throughout the Zoning Code.

Please review the **DRAFT ZONING AMENDMENT AND EXPLANATION MATERIALS BELOW** to understand how all these updates work together to enable these zoning districts to function to meet the goals of this initiative:

- [DRAFT Squares + Streets Zoning Text Amendment](#)
- [Reference Guide – Squares + Streets Amendment Overview and Dimensional Regulations](#)
- [Land Use Modernization Visual Guide](#)

**Help us revise this draft zoning by sharing your comments through [THIS PUBLIC COMMENT FORM](#) from now until SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024!**



# Resources to Read and Understand the Draft Zoning

## DRAFT Squares + Streets Zoning Text Amendment

### Compiled Draft Text Amendment for Squares + Streets

Last revised: December 5, 2023

Contents	Page
<b>Overview</b>	
1. <a href="#">Amendment Overview and Reference Guide</a>	2
<b>Primary Additions</b>	
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3. <a href="#">Summary of Changes to other Articles</a>	14
4. <a href="#">Article 8 (New Use Table)</a>	20
5. <a href="#">Article 23 (Parking)</a>	73
<b>Smaller Changes</b>	
6. <a href="#">Article 3 (Establishment of Zoning Districts)</a>	80
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## Amendment Summary and Reference Guide

### Squares + Streets Amendment Summary

Squares + Streets is a planning and zoning initiative to modernize regulations for how development can happen in Boston's commercial centers. This draft text amendment will adjust the zoning code to enable these changes. By itself, none of these changes have any immediate effect on any existing zoning districts anywhere in the city. Zoning districts must be mapped, through a zoning map amendment, to take effect. The BPDA plans to conduct a full process for zoning map amendments in Squares + Streets as part of Small Area Plans, beginning in early 2024.

The new Squares + Streets districts involve three additions to the zoning code—Article 26 (Squares + Streets District Regulations), Article 8 (Use Table), and Article 23 (Parking)—that enable the bulk of the streamlining. Other minor changes make these consistent with the rest of the zoning code.

**New Zoning:** Article 26 (Squares + Streets), Article 8 (Use Table), and Article 23 (Parking)

**Article 26: A new article for the Boston Zoning Code, creating the Squares + Streets districts.** Sections 26-1 and 26-2 describe the purpose of the five Squares + Streets districts, and give a summary of each of them (S-0 through S-4). Following that, the article includes a diagram explaining the district dimensional standards and a table with more detailed dimensional regulations, described in more detail in the following reference guide. It also provides "additional use and performance standards," which provide some additional information that cannot fit inside the other edits to Article 8.

**Article 8: A modernized use table for Squares + Streets and other future citywide zoning districts.** The new use table will be named Table A and the existing base code use table will be renamed Table B. The Squares + Streets districts will, at the moment, be the only districts operating under the new Table A. Table A is a comprehensive modernization of Boston's definitions of what is allowed or not allowed in the city's different zoning districts and subdistricts.

In addition to the Draft Article 8 text, a **companion Land Uses Visual Guide is available** on the Squares + Streets Zoning Districts webpage that provides photo examples of each land use.

## Land Use Modernization Visual Guide

### Land Use Modernization Visual Guide

#### Entertainment/Events

A facility which regularly hosts live entertainment events, including but not limited to event centers, theaters, cinemas, night clubs, concert halls, arenas, and stadiums, or similar use. Such use may receive a Live Entertainment License.

**Small** - An entertainment facility with a capacity of up to 500 persons.

**Medium** - An entertainment facility with a capacity of 501-2,000 persons.

**Large** - An entertainment facility with a capacity of 2,001-10,000 persons.

**Extra Large** - An entertainment facility with a capacity of greater than 10,000 persons.



# Sign Up for the Zoning Notices & Updates Newsletter

See our “Get Involved” page at <https://www.bostonplans.org/about-us/get-involved>.

The screenshot shows the 'Get Involved' page on the Boston Planning & Development Agency website. The page has a dark blue header with the agency logo and navigation links. Below the header is a sidebar with a menu of links. The main content area is titled 'Get Involved' and contains a sign-up form. The form includes fields for Email, Confirm Email, First Name, Last Name, Street Address, Address Line 2, City, State (a dropdown menu currently showing 'Alabama'), Zip, and Phone. Below these fields is a section titled 'I want information emailed to me on:' with a sub-section for 'Neighborhoods' where users can select one or more neighborhoods from a list of checkboxes. At the bottom of the form, there is a section titled 'I'm interested in: (optional)' with checkboxes for various topics. An orange arrow points from this section to a larger, detailed view of the same section on the right.

**Who We Are**  
Mayor Wu's Vision for the BPDA  
Leadership  
BPDA Board  
Departments  
Careers at the BPDA  
BRA History  
BPDA Achievements  
Raymond L. Flynn Marine Park  
Glossary  
[Get Involved](#)  
Model Room  
Contact Us  
Archives  
Public Records Request  
Press Kit  
Credits  
Copyright and Disclaimer

**Get Involved**

*If you do not speak English and wish to sign up for communications, please email [bpdawebcontent@boston.gov](mailto:bpdawebcontent@boston.gov).*

Email: \*  Confirm Email: \*

First Name:  Last Name:

Street Address:  Address Line 2:

City:  State:

Zip:  Phone:

Affiliation:

**I want information emailed to me on:**

Neighborhoods:  
Sign up for email updates and notifications by selecting a Neighborhood below:

Citywide (Check all)

<input type="checkbox"/> Allston	<input type="checkbox"/> Back Bay	<input type="checkbox"/> Bay Village	<input type="checkbox"/> Beacon Hill
<input type="checkbox"/> Brighton	<input type="checkbox"/> Charlestown	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinatown	<input type="checkbox"/> Dorchester
<input type="checkbox"/> Downtown	<input type="checkbox"/> East Boston	<input type="checkbox"/> Fenway	<input type="checkbox"/> Hyde Park
<input type="checkbox"/> Jamaica Plain	<input type="checkbox"/> Leather District	<input type="checkbox"/> Longwood Medical Area	<input type="checkbox"/> Mattapan
<input type="checkbox"/> Mission Hill	<input type="checkbox"/> North End	<input type="checkbox"/> Rookinade	<input type="checkbox"/> Roslbury
<input type="checkbox"/> South Boston	<input type="checkbox"/> South Boston Waterfront	<input type="checkbox"/> South End	<input type="checkbox"/> West End
<input type="checkbox"/> West Roxbury			

**I'm interested in: (optional)**

Development Projects  Institutional Planning  Urban Renewal

Downtown & Neighborhood Planning

Climate Change Planning & Sustainable Development

Zoning Notices & Updates

Research Publications  
Sign up for email updates and notifications by selecting a Research Publications below:

**I'm interested in: (optional)**

Development Projects  Institutional Planning  Urban Renewal

Downtown & Neighborhood Planning

Climate Change Planning & Sustainable Development

Zoning Notices & Updates

# What We've Done & What We've Heard So Far



# Public Meetings on Squares + Streets Zoning

**Zoning Analysis  
Public Meeting #1**  
(Oct 16)

**Zoning Analysis  
Public Meeting #2**  
(Oct 30)

**Zoning  
Recommendations  
Public Meeting**  
(Nov 13)

**Draft Zoning  
Amendment  
Public Meeting**  
(Dec 5)

**Draft Zoning  
Amendment  
Update Public  
Meeting**  
(Jan 8)

**Final Zoning  
Amendment  
Public Meeting**  
(Feb 6)



**Where we are today!**

# Past Engagement and What We've Heard

Squares + Streets Survey  
(Closed Dec 1, 770+ responses)

Presentations at Civic  
Associations + Community  
Organizations  
(20 mtgs, 4 focus groups so far)

Zoning Analysis Public  
Meetings  
(Oct 16 + Oct 30)

Squares + Streets Zoning  
Office Hour Sessions  
(10 in Nov)

Zoning Recommendations  
Public Meeting  
(Nov 13)

Feedback Focus Groups  
with Building + Design  
Professionals  
(Oct + Dec)

Concerns about  
**fewer  
community  
processes** in  
small-scale  
development

Avoid districts  
that encourage  
**consolidating  
small parcels** +  
removing  
existing  
businesses

Create defined  
**open space +  
streetwall  
regulations** that  
actually produce  
usable public  
space

Understand the  
**level of impact**  
of specific land  
uses on  
**congestion**

Any new zoning  
must be  
**enforced + not  
treated as a  
pretext for  
negotiation**

Maintain clear  
buffers between  
**strictly  
residential  
districts + main  
streets areas**

Desire for  
streets that  
balance a  
**variety of  
possible  
activities +  
open space**

**More time  
needed** for the  
public to review  
+ provide  
feedback

# Past and Ongoing Outreach

Communications



**Squares + Streets Zoning Districts Upcoming Public Meetings**  
 To learn more about the Squares + Streets initiative, check out the [Squares + Streets website](#) for more information. To learn about the specific Squares + Streets zoning work that will be discussed at these meetings, check out the [Squares + Streets Zoning Districts](#) page.

**Squares + Streets Citywide Draft Zoning Amendment Public Meeting**  
**Tuesday, December 5, 2023 | 6:00 PM-8:00 PM**  
 The Boston Planning & Development Agency will host a virtual public meeting on December 5, 2023 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM to present a draft zoning text amendment that will create new [Squares + Streets zoning districts](#) to be adopted into the Boston Zoning Code.

**Virtual Public Meeting**  
**Squares + Streets**

**DECEMBER 5**  
 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

**Zoom Link:** [bit.ly/3G0Quaa](https://bit.ly/3G0Quaa)  
**Toll Free:** (833) 568-8864  
**Meeting ID:** 161 840 5669

**Project Description:**  
 Please join the Boston Planning & Development Agency's Zoning Reform Team at a virtual public meeting to discuss important draft zoning updates to the Boston Zoning Code as part of the citywide Squares + Streets initiative.  
 The proposed zoning text amendment will create new zoning districts and rules for areas of activity along main streets and neighborhood centers. These new districts will promote a mix of building uses and sizes, create diverse housing opportunities, and encourage active streets.  
 Interpretation will be provided in Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, and Cape Verdean Creole. Additional interpreting services and document translation services are available upon request at no cost to you and can be requested by contacting [languageaccess@boston.gov](mailto:languageaccess@boston.gov). Please request interpreting services no later than 5 days before the meeting date.  
 Register and learn more at [bit.ly/CitywideSquaresStreetsZoning](https://bit.ly/CitywideSquaresStreetsZoning).

**mail to:** [Abdul-Razak.Zachariah@boston.gov](mailto:Abdul-Razak.Zachariah@boston.gov)  
 Boston Planning & Development Agency  
 One City Hall Square, 9th Floor  
 Boston, MA 02201  
**phone:** 617.918.4221  
**email:** [abdul-razak.zachariah@boston.gov](mailto:abdul-razak.zachariah@boston.gov)

**City of Public Comment Period:**  
 1/2/2024  
**website:** [bit.ly/SquaresStreetsCZDA](https://bit.ly/SquaresStreetsCZDA)

**BostonPlans.org** [@BostonPlans](https://twitter.com/BostonPlans)  
 Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

Newspaper Ads



Survey Drop Boxes



Social Media Posts



Transit Ads



Pop-Ups and Intercept Surveys

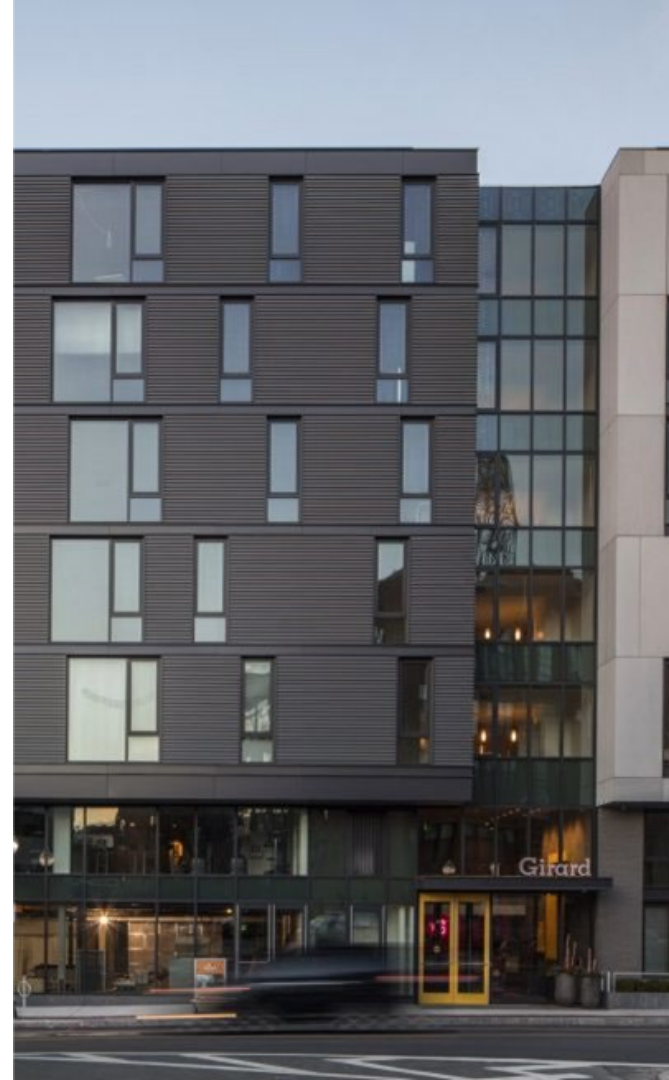


Youth Workshops

In-Person Engagement

# Ensuring Community Voice and Robust Design Review

- Rigorous community process to develop new zoning maps, but do this at the **planning** scale, rather than project by project
- Article 80E small project design review, community engagement, and mitigation in place (>15 units)
- Article 80B large project design review, community engagement, and mitigation in place (>50,000 sf)
- License Board community process for businesses



# Addressing Preservation

- Returning to historic buildout of many Squares + Streets before demolitions
- Enabling innovative adaptive reuse and additions
- Map based on parcel size and building scale for retention (vs. redevelopment)
- Small area plans will work with the community to look at what exists today and identify what sites are culturally significant



*Beates Block, Hyde Park, 1965 (photo provided by Historic Boston Inc. who report this is now a bank parking lot)*



*A remaining 5 story building among newer 1-story buildings*



# Addressing Anti-Displacement

- Written multiple districts to allow for finer grain of development (and more precise mapping of zoning districts to existing context)
- Not allowing Planned Development Areas (PDAs)
- Maximum building floorplate - places a limit to the scale of redevelopment possible
- Not allowing more than one building per lot in smaller districts
- Will require additional policy investments beyond zoning, as identified in planning and community processes



# Enhancing the Public Realm

- Setting a variety of yard requirements to retain and create open space and streetscapes for diverse public activities
- Encouraging open space amenities like plazas, courtyards, balconies, and terraces
- Using yard requirements to provide permeable area and create buffers between areas of different scales
- Identifying and requiring “active uses” in certain districts to encourage pedestrian

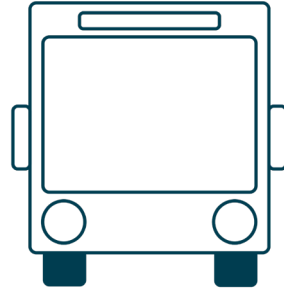


# Zoning for Squares + Streets



# Why focus on Squares + Streets?

More housing is essential to the well-being of our communities. When **housing growth is paired with an abundance of commercial, civic, cultural, and transportation resources**, residents and businesses feel benefits beyond access to housing.



Set more predictable development standards

Promote plentiful housing diversity and opportunity for a growing population

Reduce time and money spent on transportation

Bring people closer to the benefits of City services and investments

Encourage more patrons, employees, and opportunities for local small businesses

# Mayor Wu takes on key to new housing — Boston's arcane zoning code

Hacking away at its 4,000 pages will require political courage and some speed.

By [The Editorial Board](#) Updated September 19, 2023, 4:00 a.m.



# How do we update zoning?

Tonight we're talking about the Squares + Streets text amendment

## Zoning text amendment

Change(s) in the **written text** of the Zoning Code that become **new or updated rules** for land use and development that we can apply to specific sections of the City or the City as a whole.

	One Family (1F)	Two Family (2F)	Three Family (3F)	Conservation Multifamily Residential (MFR)	Community Protection Subdistricts (CPS)	Facilities Subdistricts (CF)
Child care center	EA	EA	EA	EA <sup>(2)</sup>	A	EA

(2) Where designated "A" or "C," provided that such use is located on the ground floor, or in a basement with a separate entrance; otherwise forbidden.

## Zoning map amendment

Change(s) in the **geographic location and application of specific zoning rules** on the zoning map of one or more areas within the City.



Zoning map amendments come in the future

# How do we update zoning?

## Need for zoning reform identified:

- Citywide planning processes
- District plans
- Report on Boston Zoning
- High number of zoning appeals
- Mismatch between existing and allowed

Previous planning

## Planning process to develop Squares and Streets zoning:

- Analysis of parcels, building trends, citywide goals
- **Public engagement** throughout
- Internal “test-fitting” to develop typologies

We're here now

## BPDA Board approval and then Zoning Commission approval

- **Public feedback** + draft zoning presented to BPDA Board
- If approved, another **public comment period** before Zoning Commission

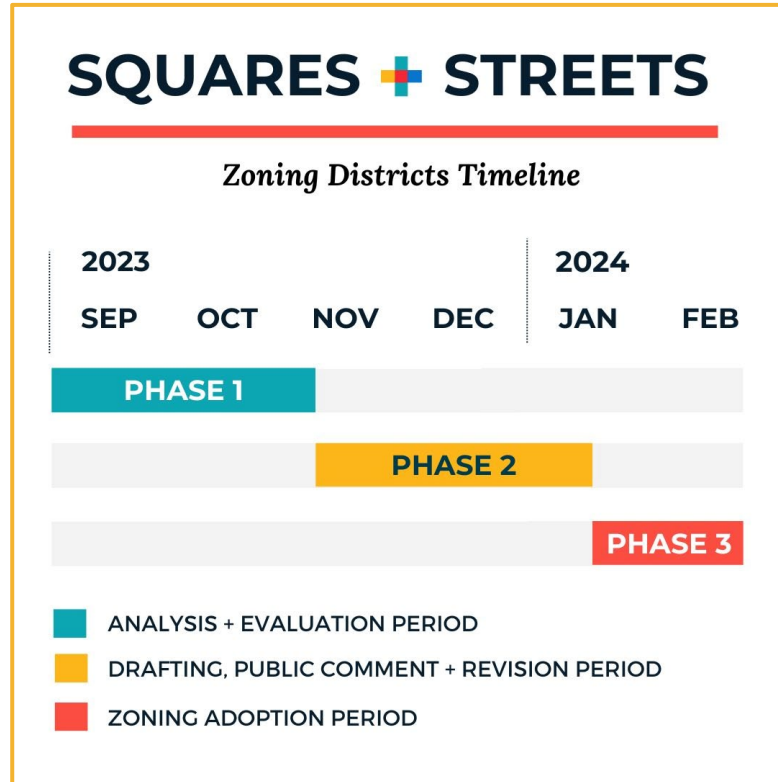
## Small Area Plans

- **Public engagement** on appropriate form for local squares and corridors
- **Public engagement** on zoning map amendment

We're going here next

# Process + Project Timeline

**First:** create options in citywide **zoning** to support Squares + Streets areas.



**Then:** Conduct **planning processes** (Small Area Plans) in specific Squares + Streets to select zoning options for an area.






**Finally:** Codify small area plan into **zoning map**.



# Squares + Streets Draft Zoning Districts



# Squares + Streets Districts

S0	S1	S2	S3	S4
				
<p><b>Transition Residential</b></p>	<p><b>Main Street Living</b></p>	<p><b>Main Street Mixed Use</b></p>	<p><b>Active Main Street</b></p>	<p><b>Active Squares</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition between low and high activity streets and squares</li> <li>• Residential and accessory only</li> <li>• Context-scale yards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small-scale storefronts allowed on the ground floor with limited uses</li> <li>• Predominantly residential</li> <li>• Small scale yards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstreet zero-lot-line, but lower lot coverage to require courtyards, yards, or plazas</li> <li>• Small to medium active ground floor uses required among mix of uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstreet zero-lot-line</li> <li>• Residential or small scale hospitality</li> <li>• Active uses required</li> <li>• Lot coverage responds to parcel size</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider range of mixed-use upper floors</li> <li>• Medium to extra large scale ground floor active uses</li> <li>• Lot coverage responds to parcel size</li> </ul>

# What's shared across each district?

- **Limit building footprint and building width** to better reflect existing urban design scale
- Include **maximum building lot coverage** and **minimum permeable area of lot** to shape future development
- **Set dimensions for yards where they are important**, such as larger rear yards adjacent to residential areas



# What's shared across each district?

- Give **small projects** the same **parking flexibility** as **large projects** by removing parking minimums and **modernize loading requirements** (S0-S4)
- Create better places to live by requiring square footage for **open space amenities** like balconies, roofdecks, terraces, and ground floor courtyards, streetscapes, and plazas (S2-S4)
- Create vibrant streetscapes by requiring a certain amount of **active ground floor uses** and limiting the amount of windowless “**blank walls**” on the ground floor (S3-S4)

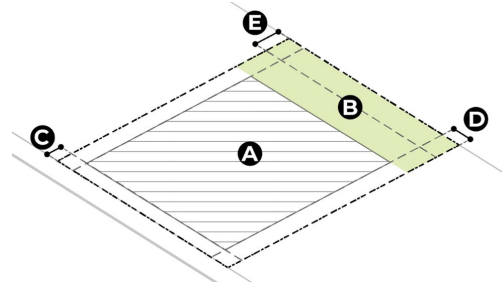


# What differentiates each district?



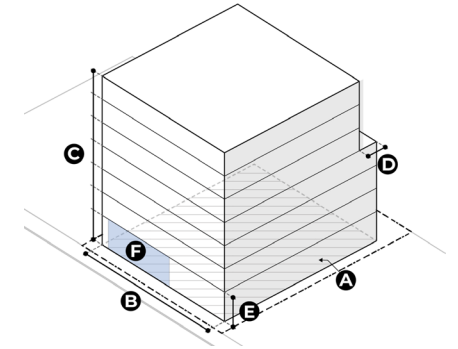
## Uses

- Ground floor vs. upper floor uses (or max size overall)
- Whether active uses are required on the ground floor



## Lot Standards

- Building lot coverage
- Size of front, rear, and side yards
- Permeable area of lot



## Building Form

- Building floor plate
- Maximum building width
- Maximum building height and stories
- Rear setbacks

# S-0 District: Transition Residential

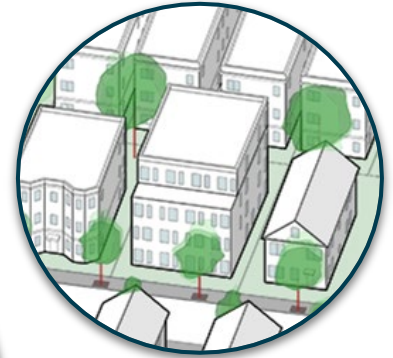
Fine-grained residential district that provides a transition from mixed-use and high activity streets and squares to lower activity residential areas.

## Uses

- Only residential uses allowed; limited to sub-Article 80 scale

## Form

- Transition “round the corner” to the rest of the neighborhood; only mapped on smaller parcels
- Small maximum building floorplate
- Front and side yard requirements make space for trees, lowest lot coverage and highest permeable area requirements



*Larger front yard space*



*A percentage of the yard must be permeable, such as with lawn or plantings*

# S-0 District: Transition Residential

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

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

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



*Larger front yard space*

*Larger side yard*



# S-1 District: Main Street Living

Predominantly residential buildings that can also have small-scale storefronts or offices on the ground floor.

## Uses

- Small-scale neighborhood retail like cafes, art galleries, or small sized grocery stores allowed on the ground floor, although ground floor residential is a common condition
- Residential required on the upper floors

## Form

- Small-scale side and front yards to provide more permeable area and a buffer with lower and higher scale areas



*Small scale front yard*



# S-1 District: Main Street Living

Lot Standards	
Building Lot Coverage	70%
Front Yard	6' minimum
Rear Yard	10'-15' minimum
Side Yard	14' cumulative (3' minimum)
Permeable Area of Lot	15%

Building Form Standards	
Floorplate	8,000 square feet max
Building Width	120' maximum
Height	50' / 4 stories maximum



# S-2 District: Main Street Mixed Use

Mainstreet mixed-use buildings where ground-floor-retail and storefronts are the prevailing condition.

## Uses

- Small to medium sized neighborhood uses allowed on the ground floor
- Residential and some small retail allowed on the upper floors

## Form

- Mid-rise buildings that can fill the front of the lot (zero-lot-line) to help create a “main street” like streetscape
- Lower lot coverage than larger scale districts to ensure some yard space



# S-2 District: Main Street Mixed Use

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

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



*Mix of active and residential uses on ground floor*

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

# S-3 District: Active Main Street

Mainstreet residential and small-scale hospitality buildings in neighborhood mixed-use areas with a wider range of ground floor uses.

## Uses

- Accommodates larger-scale ground floor uses that draw people to streets and squares like live entertainment or a large gym
- Active ground floor uses are required
- Residential required on the upper floors

## Form

- Taller mid-rise buildings allowed, with mainstreet zero-lot-line conditions
- Higher lot coverage allowed



# S-3 District: Active Main Street

Lot Standards	
Building Lot Coverage	90% (70% on large parcels)
Front Yard	2' minimum
Rear Yard	10'-15' minimum
Side Yard	5'-15' minimum (0' if abutting party wall)

Building Form Standards	
Floorplate	20,000 square feet max
Building Width	150' maximum
Height	85' / 7 stories maximum
Outdoor Amenity Space	20%



# S-4 District: Active Squares

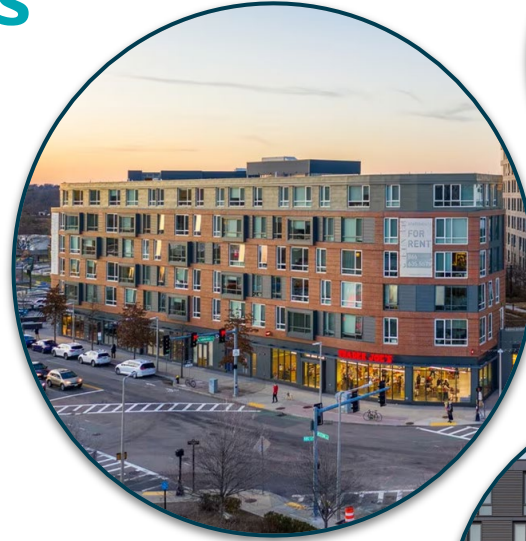
Mid-rise mixed-use building in neighborhood mixed-use areas with a wide range of active ground floor uses.

## Uses

- Mixed-use residential or commercial upper floors
- Wide range of uses allowed on the ground floor
- Active ground floor uses are required
- Residential uses limited to upper floors

## Form

- Taller mid-rise buildings allowed, with mainstreet zero-lot-line conditions
- Larger rear setbacks next to residential districts



# S-4 District: Active Squares

Lot Standards	
Building Lot Coverage	90% (70% on large parcels)
Front Yard	2' minimum
Rear Yard	3'-20' minimum
Side Yard	5' minimum (0' if abutting party wall)

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

*Increased outdoor amenity space requirement*



*More active uses allowed above ground floor*

*Active uses required on the ground floor*



# How did we arrive at these districts?

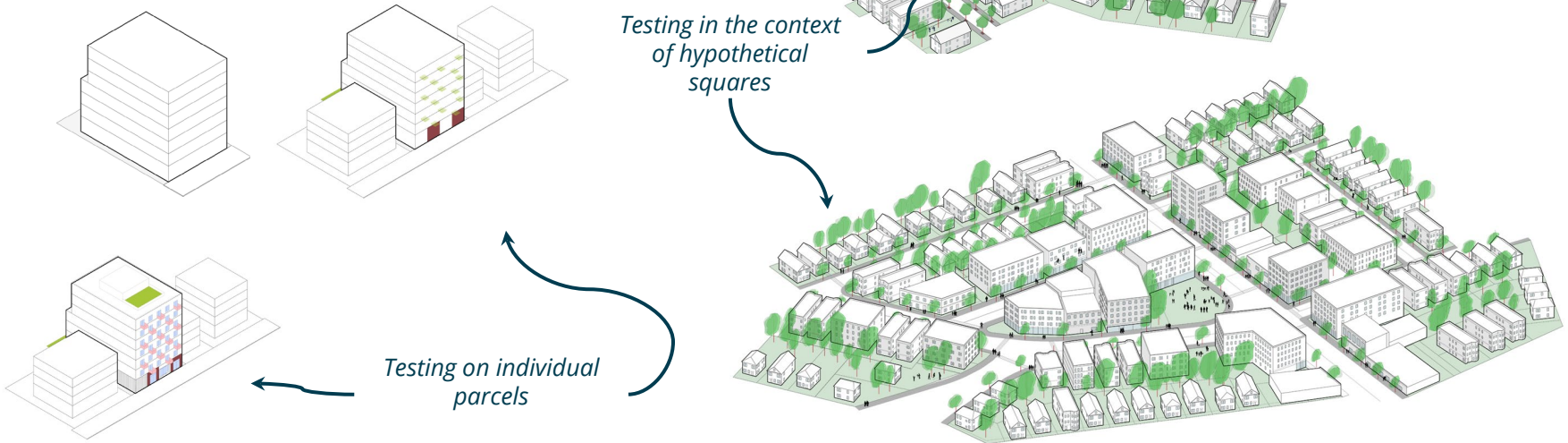
- **Analysis**
  - Analyzed a dataset of over 200 mixed-use projects across all scales, with a deep dive into more specific measurements for 40 projects.
- **Code Review**
  - Energy, accessibility, and state buildings codes all have a strong impact on building form. Where can/should zoning align?
- **Test-Fitting**
  - What happens when zoning and building code are applied to real parcels?





# Test Fitting

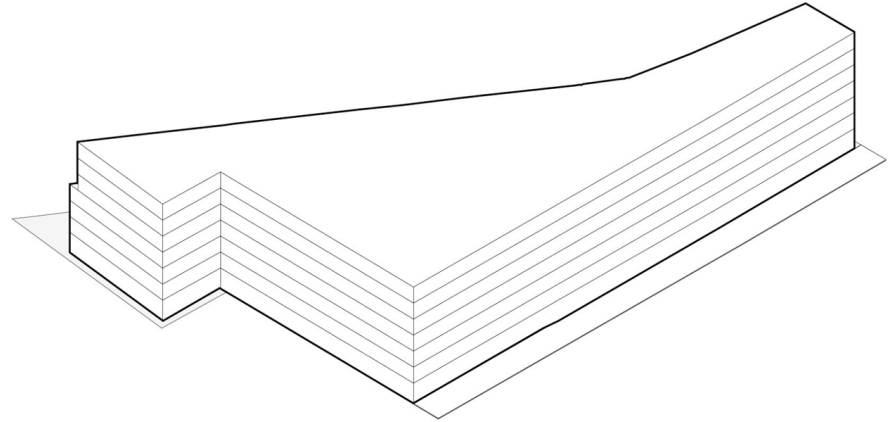
Throughout the development of the zoning districts, building form and lot standards were tested on parcels that might be found in squares and streets areas.



# Test Fitting

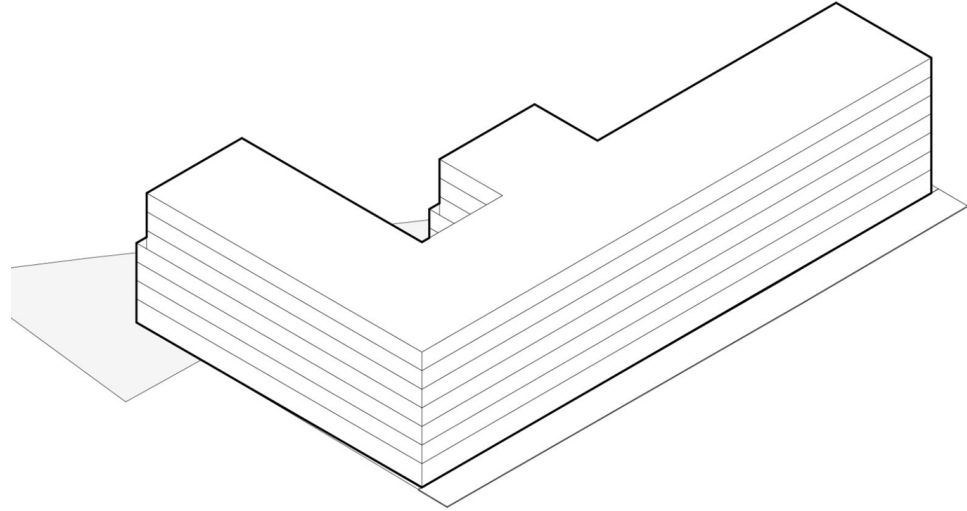
How does this play out on a real parcel representing the largest scale of development on the largest type of parcel in Squares + Streets districts?

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



# Test Fitting

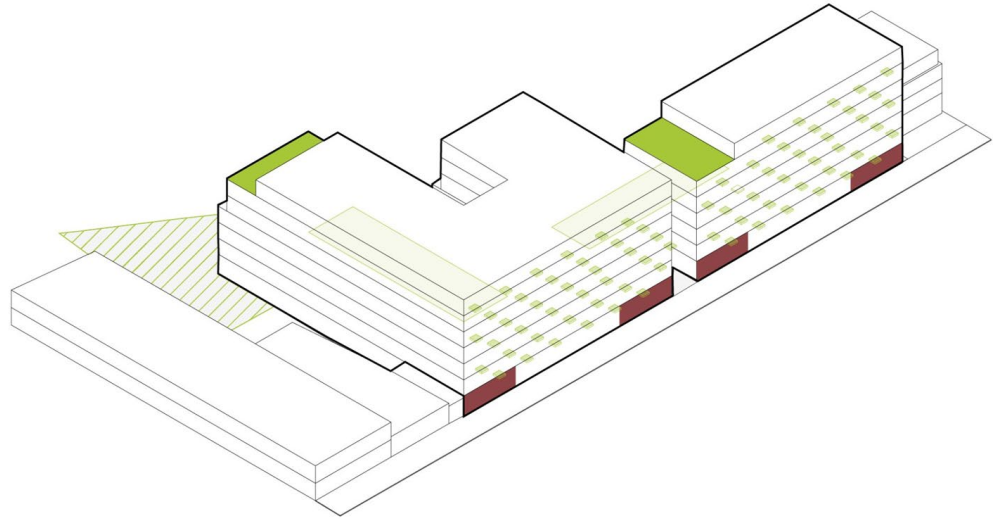
...add in setbacks requirements, stepbacks requirements, and alignment with the building code.



# Test Fitting

The zoning sets a maximum building floorplate and building length that means there has to be two smaller buildings, rather than one giant building.

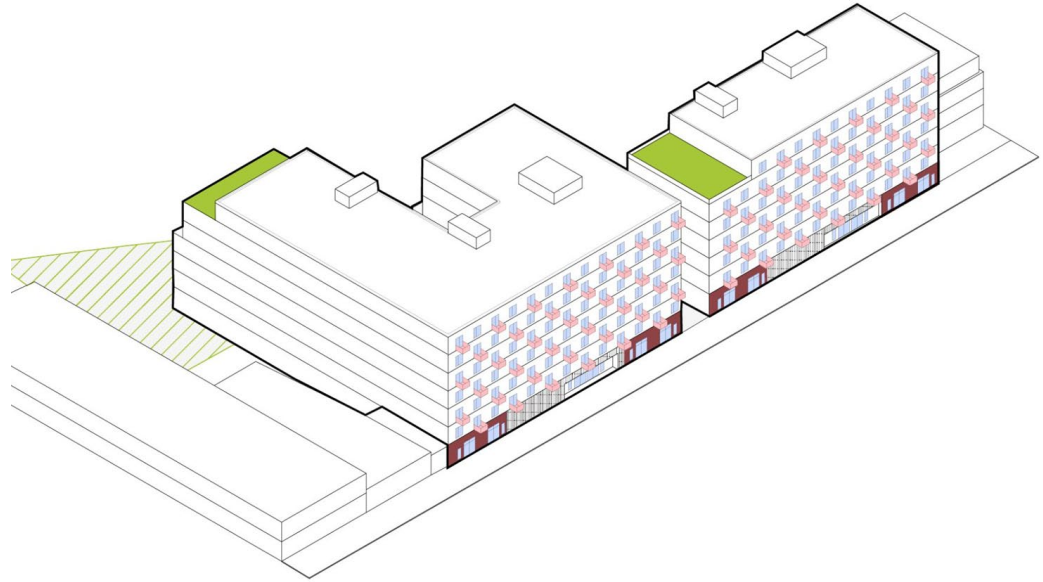
Amenity space requirements create more stepbacks and sculpt the massing.



# Test Fitting

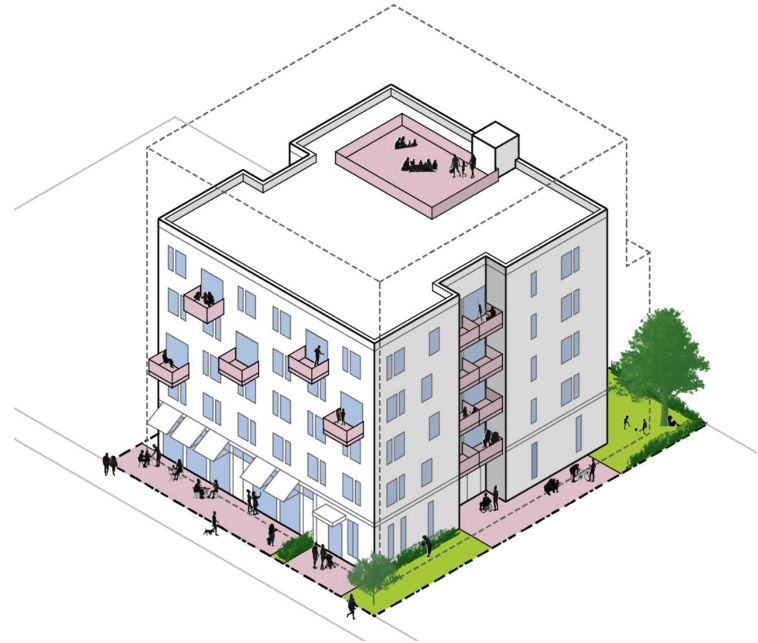
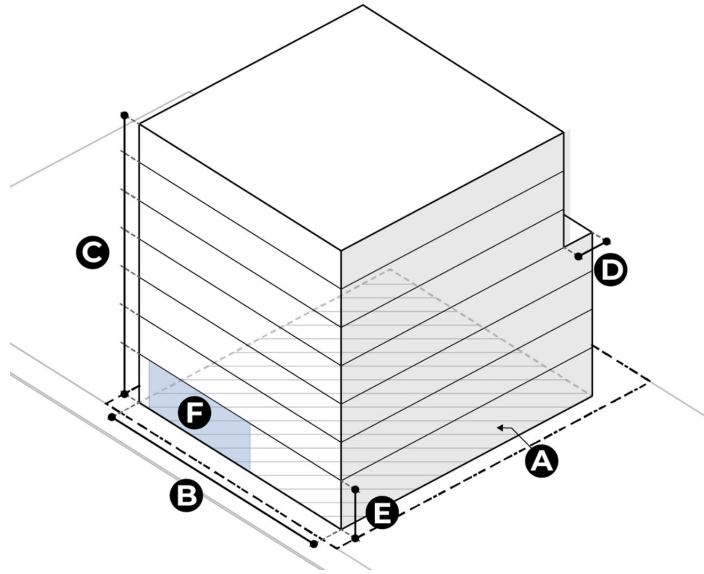
Active use requirements, blank wall restrictions, and other requirements add texture to the building and shape the ground level experience.

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



# Beyond Zoning

Once Squares + Streets zoning sets the maximum envelope, tools such as the Boston Design Vision, community process, and BPDA Design Review shape the project to reflect the character and needs of the local context.



# Land Use Modernization



# Land Use Regulations

Boston's Zoning Code regulates **how land can be used**

Each land *use* is delegated as **allowed, conditional, or forbidden** in each area of the City

- ***Conditional*** means it requires a conditional use permit, based on set criteria, from the Zoning Board of Appeal



# Challenge

## Current Use Regulations:

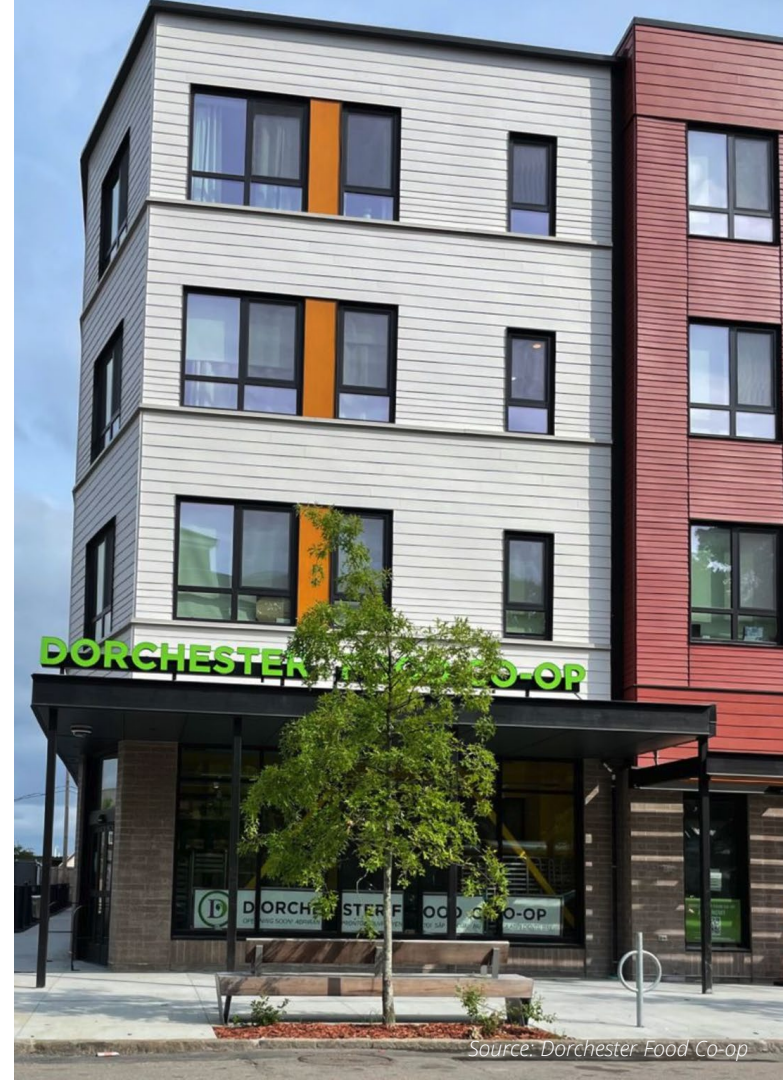
- exist in **many places throughout the code** (each neighborhood article as well as the base code)
- are **difficult to navigate** for both the public and the Inspectional Services Department staff who review building permits.
- are also **outdated** and don't always address current planning goals




# Opportunity

## New Use Regulations:

- include a **simpler table** with similar uses consolidated and obsolete uses removed
- include **improved definitions**
- include **use and performance standards** where appropriate
- Becomes the basis for **City-wide zoning reform** and singular place where future updates can be made



# Modernization Methodology

1. Establish inventory of all uses throughout the zoning code
    - a. Remove obsolete uses
  2. Group similar uses together, create new uses
  3. Write new definitions for uses, including use and performance standards where applicable
    - a. Include language that allows Inspectional Services Dept to determine similar uses in the future
- 

## Consult with other City departments throughout drafting process

- Inspectional Services Department
- Licensing Board
- Disabilities Commission
- Age Strong Commission
- Public Health Commission
- Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture
- Air Pollution Control Commission
- Mayor's Office of Housing
- Boston Transportation Department

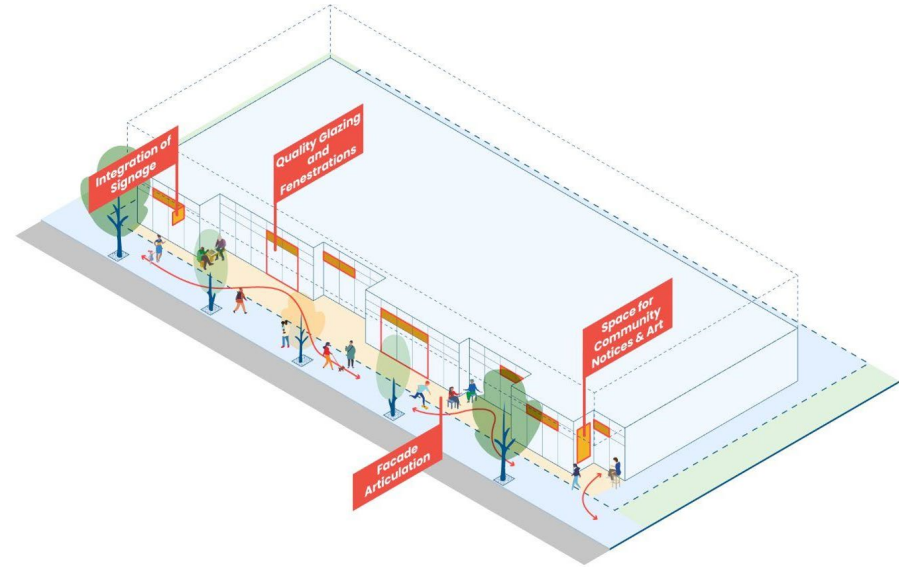
# New Use Table

OPEN SPACE USES	ACTIVE USES	COMMERCIAL USES	TRANSPORTATION USES	ACCESSORY USES
Cemetery	Child Care/Adult Day Health Center	Adult Entertainment	Airport-Related Remote Parking Facility	Accessory ATM
Private Open Space	Community Center	Arts Studios	Gasoline Station	Accessory Car Share
Publicly Accessible Open Space	Grocery Store - Small	Bank	Major Transportation Facility	Accessory Drive-Through
<b>CIVIC USES</b>	Grocery Store - Large	Check Cashier	Motor Vehicle Rentals	Accessory Dwelling Unit (Detached)
Municipal Use	Entertainment/Events - Small	Drive-in	Motor Vehicle Sales	Accessory Dwelling Unit (non-Detached)
Place of Worship	Entertainment/Events - Medium	Funeral Home	Standalone Parking Garage	Accessory Electrical Vehicle Charging
School, K through 12	Entertainment/Events - Large	Hotel - Small	Standalone Parking Lot	Accessory Entertainment/Events
<b>RESIDENTIAL USES</b>	Entertainment/Events - Extra Large	Hotel - Large	Vehicular Services	Accessory Family Day Care Home
Artists' Live-Work	Makerspace	Office - Small	<b>INDUSTRIAL AND STORAGE USES</b>	Accessory Helicopter Landing Facility
Fraternity or Sorority	Museum or Art Gallery	Office - Large	Crematory	Accessory Home Occupation
Group Living - Small	Restaurant - Small	Research Laboratory	Food and Beverage Production	Accessory Keeping of Animals
Group Living - Large	Restaurant - Large	<b>HIGHER EDUCATION USES</b>	General Industrial	Accessory Keeping of Laboratory Animals
Household Living - 1-4 units	Retail Cannabis Establishment	College or University Use	Light Manufacturing or Trade Establishment	Accessory Office
Household Living - 5-8 units	Retail Store - Small	School, Trade or Professional	Non-retail Cannabis Establishment	Accessory Parking
Household Living - 9-14 units	Retail Store - Medium	<b>HEALTH CARE USES</b>	Restricted Industrial	Accessory Personnel Quarters
Household Living - 15+ units	Retail Store - Large	Clinic	Self-Storage	Accessory Research Laboratory
Lodging House	Retail Store - Extra Large	Hospital Use	Storage of Fuel or Minerals	Accessory Smoking
Mobile Home Establishment	Indoor Recreation	Nursing or Convalescent Home Use	Storage of Supplies and Scrap	Shared Parking
Student Housing	Service Establishment - Small		Urban Agriculture	
Temporary Shelter Facility	Service Establishment - Large		Warehouse or Distribution Center	
	Social Club			

# Defining “Active” Ground Floors

## Active Uses

- Child Care/Adult Day Health Center
- Community Center
- Grocery Store
- Entertainment/Events
- Makerspace
- Museum or Art Gallery
- Restaurant
- Retail Cannabis Establishment
- Retail Store
- Indoor Recreation
- Service Establishment
- Social Club



*Q: What should be considered an “active” use?*

# Community Center

Creating new Community Center use to capture both traditional community centers, and other community gathering spaces like libraries.

Considered an active use.

	S0	S1	S2	S3	S4
Community Center	C	A	A	A	A



*Boston Public Library, Mattapan*



*Roslindale Community Center*



*Family Nurturing Center, Dorchester*



*BCYF Curley Center, South Boston*

# Entertainment/Events

Capacity thresholds are used to allow Entertainment/Events in a **range of scales and districts**.

- Small - Up to 500 people
- Medium - 500-2,000 people
- Large - 2,000-10,000 people
- Extra Large - 10,000 or more people

	S0	S1	S2	S3	S4
Entertainment/Events - Small	F	A-G	A-G	A-G	A
Entertainment/Events - Medium	F	F	C-G	A-G	A
Entertainment/Events - Large	F	F	F	C	C
Entertainment/Events - Extra Large	F	F	F	F	F

## Small



Brighton Music Hall - 476 people

## Medium



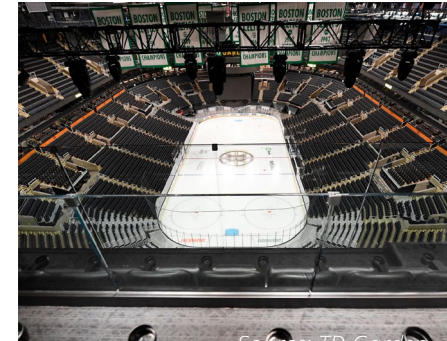
Strand Theatre - 1,400 people

## Large



Symphony Hall - 2,371 people

## Extra Large



TD Garden - 19,580 people

# Restaurant

Current zoning separates Restaurant, Take-out restaurant, Drive-throughs, Restaurant with entertainment, Bar, and Bar with entertainment.

New zoning includes one use called “Restaurant” (which is separated by size), as well as “drive-throughs” and “entertainment/events” as accessory uses. Take-out is allowed in all restaurants.

Small - less than 2,500 square feet  
 Large - at least 2,500 square feet

“**accessory entertainment/events**” for restaurants/bars that may have an entertainment component (e.x. The Bebop) 



	S0	S1	S2	S3	S4
Restaurant - Small	C-G	A-G	A-G	A	A
Restaurant - Large	F	C-G	A-G	A	A
Accessory Drive-Through	F	F	F	F	F
Accessory Ent./Events	C	A	A	A	A

Small



Cafe JuiceUp, Mattapan - 700 sf

Large



Bell in Hand Tavern - 6,000 sf



# Retail Store

Current zoning separates “local retail,” “general retail,” “liquor stores” and “pawnshops.”

New zoning includes all of these in one “Retail Store” use, but separates by size.

- Small - less than 2,500 square feet
- Medium - 2,501-10,000 square feet
- Large - 10,001 - 50,000 square feet
- Extra-Large - at least 50,000 square feet

	S0	S1	S2	S3	S4
Retail Store - Small	F	A-G	A-G	A-G	A
Retail Store - Medium	F	C-G	A-G	A-G	A
Retail Store - Large	F	F	C-G	A-G	A
Retail Store - Extra Large	F	F	F	F	C

## Small



*Birch Florist, Roslindale - 750 sf*

## Medium



*Walgreens, East Boston - 9,000 sf*

## Large



*Source: Google Maps*

*T.J. Maxx, Back Bay - 45,000 sf*

## Extra Large



*Source: Suffolk Construction*

*Target, Fenway - 150,000 sf*

# Grocery Store

Grocery Store is not currently a use in the zoning code (considered part of retail). “Grocery store” is now included to be able to **allow them explicitly in more places.**

**Size distinctions** can limit large grocery stores in residential neighborhoods where impacts from customer traffic could be a nuisance.

Small - less than 15,000 square feet  
 Large - at least 15,000 square feet

	S0	S1	S2	S3	S4
Grocery Store - Small	C	A	A	A	A
Grocery Store - Large	F	F	C	C-G	A

## Small



*The Daily, Dorchester - 3,500 sf*



*Dorchester Food Co-Op - 6,000 sf*

## Large



*Star Market, Copley - 57,000 sf*

# Use and Performance Standards

**TABLE A: ADDITIONAL USE AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

USE AND PERFORMANCE STANDARDS	S0	S1	S2	S3	S4
<b>ACTIVE USES</b>					
Ground Floor Active Use Requirement	No	No	No	Yes <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Active Use Depth (min)	-	-	-	20'	25'
<b>RESIDENTIAL USES</b>					
Ground Floor Dwelling Units Allowed	Yes	Yes	Only with 4' Front Yard (min)	Only with 4' Front Yard (min); Forbidden on Primary Lot Frontage	Only with 4' Front Yard (min); Forbidden on Primary Lot Frontage
Dwelling Units (maximum)	14	-	-	-	-
<b>INDUSTRIAL AND STORAGE USES</b>					
Food and Beverage Production	-	-	-	-	Must include associated Restaurant or Retail Store

**Footnotes to Table A**

1. Active Uses, as defined in Article 8 Table A, are required to occupy a minimum of 50% of the building width on the primary lot frontage on the ground floor, at the minimum active use depth specified in Table A. Active use frontage meeting this requirement may be approved on any lot frontage that is not the primary lot frontage for any proposed project that is subject to or has elected to comply with Large Project Review or Small Project Review in accordance with the provisions of Article 80.

# Land Use Feedback (so far) + How to Address

*Desires + Concerns:*

Creating more **“Third Spaces”** - places of community and gathering outside the home or workplace

Streamlined processes for opening **small businesses and community spaces**

**Permitting** can be an undue **burden** on property owners

Land uses may promote **congestion in areas with less transit access**

*Response:*

**Defining and requiring “active uses”** on the ground floor

**Clarifying definitions** for uses to capture newer types of businesses, **updating code to reflect existing conditions**

Mapping Squares + Streets in **areas with transit access**

Mixed-use, **walkable areas lessen reliance on cars**

**Size thresholds** to allow smaller uses

# How Can Your Feedback Shape Land Uses?

## Feedback:

"I can't figure out where \_\_\_\_\_ land use would fit in the table"

"I'm concerned about the impacts of \_\_\_\_\_ land use"

"I don't understand the language in \_\_\_\_\_ part of the zoning code"

Any other comments, questions, and concerns

## Response:

Refine definitions and/or create new uses

Look at applying a performance standard for that land use

Revisit and clarify text in the zoning code for legibility

Addressed case-by-case and follow up where necessary

# Office of Licensing & Consumer Affairs

• • •  
Daniel Green

# License Types

The Office of Licensing and Consumer Affairs grants and regulates licenses for restaurants, hotels, nightclubs, and special events in the City of Boston. The Office is comprised of five divisions:

- **Licensing Board**
- **Cannabis Board**
- Consumer Affairs
- **Entertainment Division**
- Special Events

(Yellow text are divisions that interact most frequently with ONS)

# Licensing Board

The Board grants and regulates various licenses and holds hearings on violations and license applications.

The Licensing Board issues:

- Common Victualler - license to serve food to be consumed on premise
- Alcohol Beverage
- Fortune Tellers
- Billiards & Bowling
- Dormitories/Lodging Houses

During 2020 and 2021, we worked closely with other City departments to issue temporary outdoor dining permits due to COVID.

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/licensing-board>



## Cannabis Board

The City passed an ordinance in 2019 establishing the Boston Cannabis Board (the “BCB”) which is the authority tasked with siting cannabis establishments in Boston. The BCB consists is tasked with ensuring equity in the issuance of cannabis licenses both in terms of to whom they are issued and where in the City they are issued.

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Law Boston must site a minimum of 52 retail recreational cannabis dispensaries. This number excludes other cannabis uses such as medical, cultivation, laboratory, manufacturing, and delivery. We currently have 11 licensed dispensaries.

More information can be found [here](https://www.boston.gov/boston-cannabis-board).  
<https://www.boston.gov/boston-cannabis-board>

# Entertainment Licensing

- The Entertainment Division grants and regulates various licenses and holds hearings on violations and license applications.
- The Division issues licenses for:
  - Annual Non-live entertainment
  - Annual Live entertainment
    - Requires “live entertainment” zoning
  - One-time entertainment (temporary) / special events
  - One-time carnival
  - Solicitation (not entertainment but we license it)

<https://www.boston.gov/departments/entertainment-licensing>

# What Needs a Community Process?

## Licensing Board

- Alcohol Licenses
  - New license application
  - Transfer to a different location
  - Change of hours of operation
  - Alteration of premise
  - Change of license class/classification (e.g. changing from wine/beer to all alcohol)
- Common Victualler
  - New license at a previously unlicensed location
  - Outdoor patio
  - Extension of hours past 11 pm

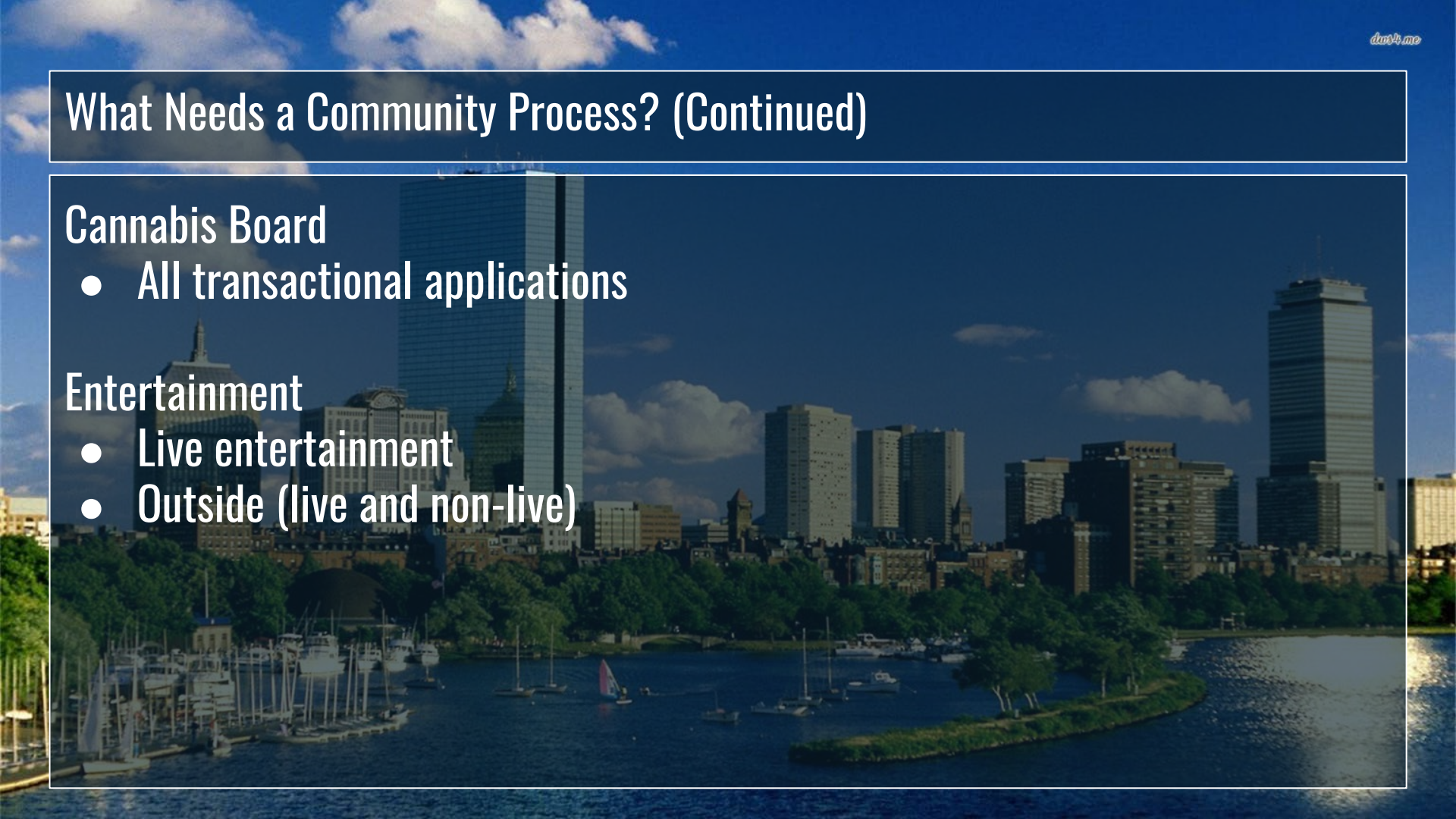
## What Needs a Community Process? (Continued)

### Cannabis Board

- All transactional applications

### Entertainment

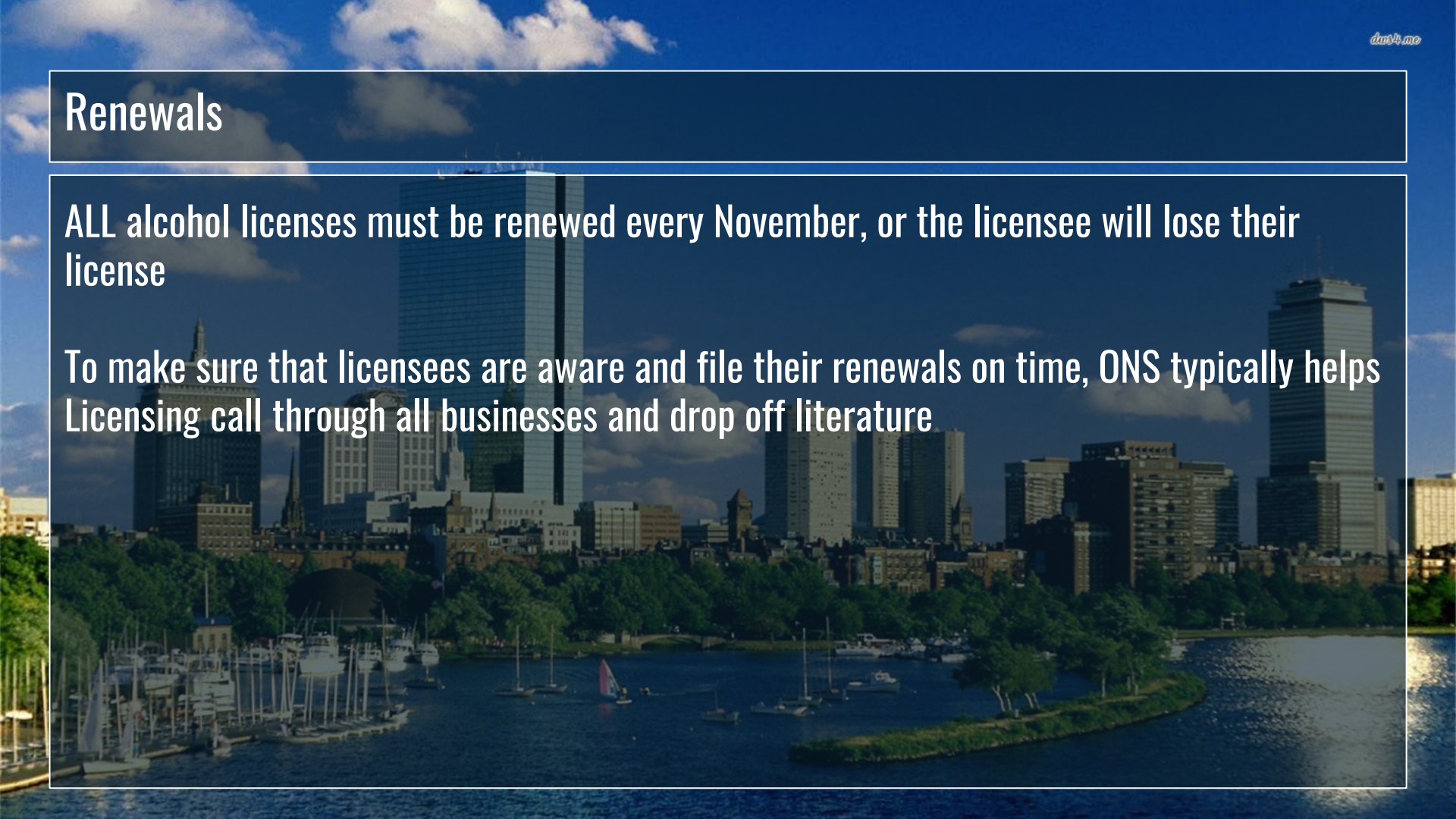
- Live entertainment
- Outside (live and non-live)



# Renewals

**ALL alcohol licenses must be renewed every November, or the licensee will lose their license**

**To make sure that licensees are aware and file their renewals on time, ONS typically helps Licensing call through all businesses and drop off literature**



# Next Steps to Refine the Draft Zoning



# Reminder: What parts of the Zoning Code are being updated in this proposed text amendment?

## Article 26

A new chapter to define Squares + Streets Zoning Districts

## Article 8

Updates to the "Regulation of Uses"

## Article 23

Remove minimum parking requirements for small projects in Squares + Streets

(with corresponding adjustments to reduce citywide off-street loading requirements in Article 24)

## Other articles

To make sure updates from Art. 26 and Art. 8 are reflected and workable throughout the Code

The draft amendment also does contain administrative or clerical changes to text, either to reorganize sections for clarity or remove language that is no longer applicable. These three articles are the substantive changes to the code. Please see the "smaller changes" section of the amendment summary for explanations of the adjustments to other articles.

# *How and when* **will these updates be made?**

## ***Fall 2023 – Winter 2024***

December - January comment period

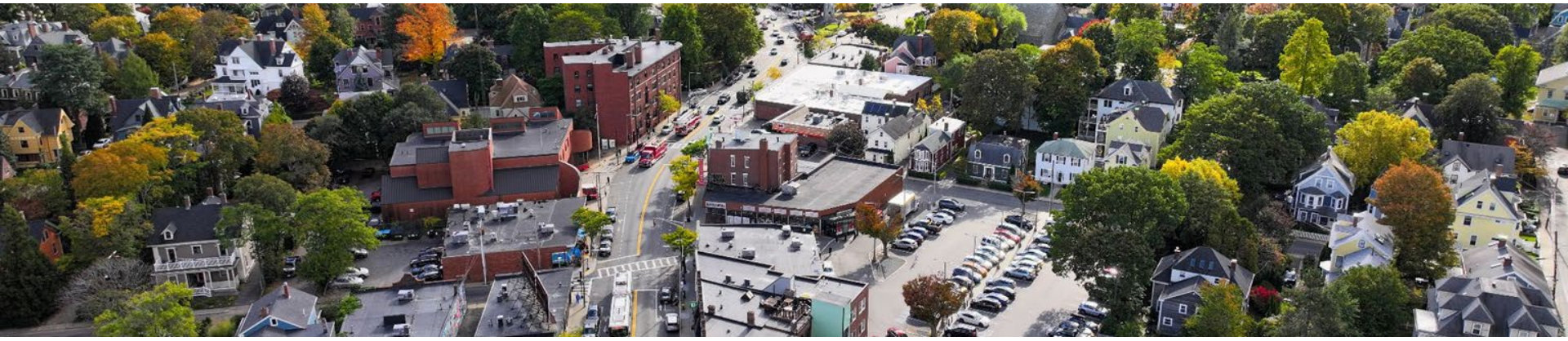
January in-person engagement forthcoming

Zoning text amendment to create **new Squares + Streets districts** in the Boston Zoning Code.

## ***Spring 2024***

**Small Area Plans** kickoff in February in specific Squares + Streets areas in the City.

Each small area plan will include a rezoning process for **updated zoning map amendments** that will include the Squares + Streets districts. Those amendments will have to go through the adoption process individually.



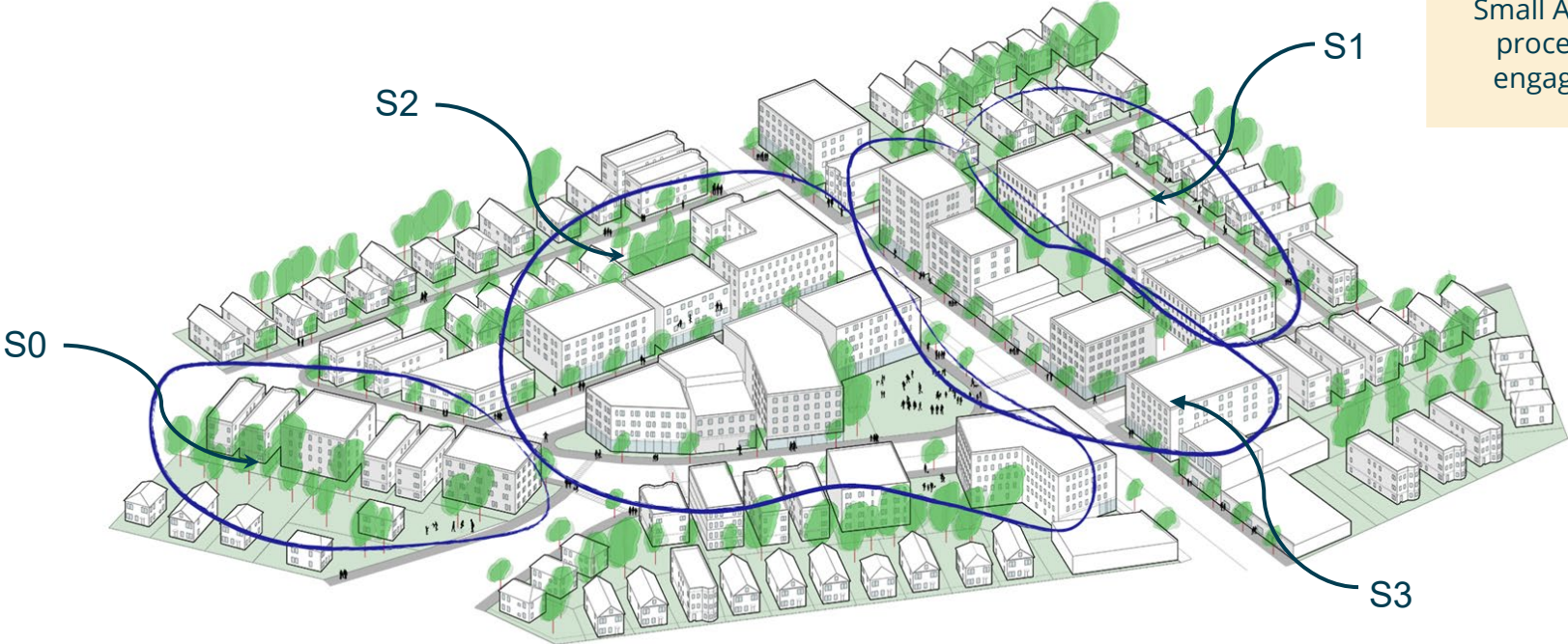


# How could districts be mapped?



# How could districts be mapped?

How and which districts are mapped will depend on the Small Area Plan process and engagement



# Small Area Plans: Analysis and Engagement

## *We will bring you analysis of:*

- the size and spatial characteristics of existing parcels and buildings,
- review of existing zoning, and
- review of recent variances and Article 80 projects in study area

to determine mismatch and opportunity for change.

## *We will work with you to:*

- understand community needs through engagement,
- present recommendations and facilitate iteration in partnership with the community, and
- collect work into a finalized plan document.



# Share Your Thoughts with Us!

## Come to Our Virtual Office Hours!

**6 sessions in Dec (afternoon + evening sessions):**

Week of Dec 4 (**THIS Thursday!**)

Week of Dec 11

Week of Dec 18

Week of Dec 25

## Attend an Upcoming Public Meeting!

**Jan 8:** Citywide S+S Zoning Text Amendment Update Meeting

**Feb 6:** Citywide S+S Zoning Text Amendment Final Meeting

## Give Us Your Feedback!

Share your thoughts on the draft zoning amendments now through the **public comment period form from now UNTIL JANUARY 28, 2024.**

## January Engagement

We're working to schedule more in-person engagement opportunities for **January 2024** before the close of the comment period.



# Thank you!

for more information visit: <https://www.bostonplans.org/squares>