

City of Boston **PLANNING DEPARTMENT**



FY26 BUDGET PROCESS:
*City Council Ways and Means
Budget Hearing*



AGENDA



Department Overview

- Mission
- Org Chart
- Our Work

FY26 Budget Overview

- Current Spend & Recommended Changes



**“In this moment of need, we have
an opportunity and an obligation
to change how we plan for
Boston’s future. We’re charting a
new course for growth, with
people as our compass.”**

- Mayor Michelle Wu

January 25, 2023
State of the City Speech

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to address our City's greatest challenges: **resilience, affordability, and equity**, and we will take real estate actions and prioritize planning, development, and urban design solutions that further these priorities.

We seek to build trust with communities through transparent processes that embrace predictable growth.

The Planning Department's purpose is to: **develop comprehensive short and long term plans** for Boston's built environment, establish a **consistent and predictable zoning code** for the city, **advance exceptional and inclusive design standards**, provide **predictability to guide development** that is responsive to **community needs**, and plan for the **effective use of public real estate**.



PLANNING DEPARTMENT TRANSFORMATION OVERVIEW

1

Change how we Plan for Growth:

- **Zoning reform** to make development more predictable and tied to comprehensive planning
- **Design vision** to shape how future spaces are designed
- **Article 80 modernization** for stronger transparency and predictability around development
- **Public land for public good** in our real estate transactions

2

Restructure Planning with City Government:

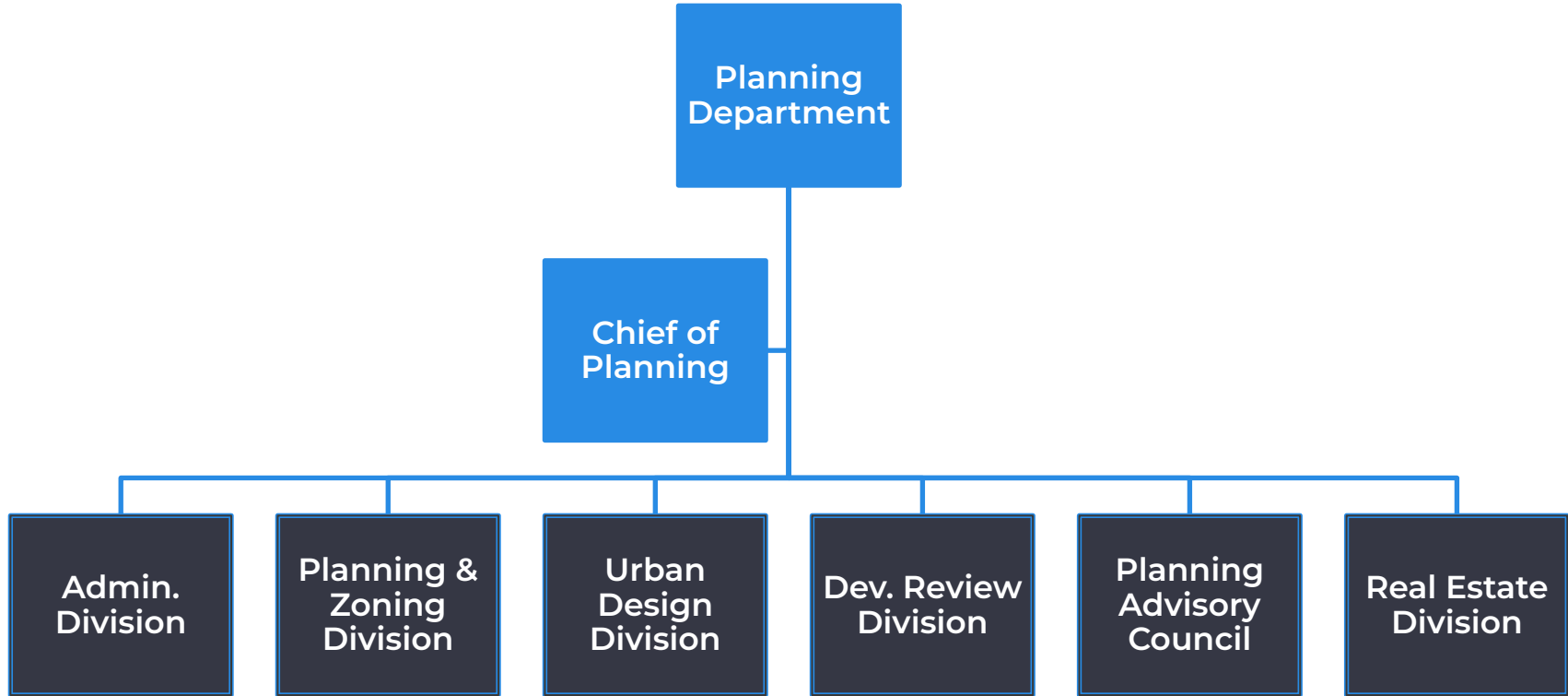
- **Create a Planning Department** within the City of Boston through City Council Ordinance, restoring planning as core function of city government
- **Majority of BPDA staff and finances moved to City control on July 1, 2024**
- **Planning Advisory Council** to coordinate citywide planning and implementation

3

Repurpose BPDA Tools/Powers via State Legislation:

- **Home Rule Petition** - abolishes the BRA's urban renewal era focus on blight and decadence
- Replace with tools for **affordability, resilience, equity**
- The HRP passed City Council and is now at State House

PLANNING DEPARTMENT ORG CHART





OUR WORK

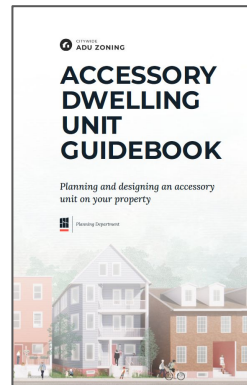
PLANNING AND ZONING DIVISION

FY 25 ADOPTED

- Net Zero Carbon Zoning
- ADU Guidebook
- Squares + Streets Minor Text Amendment
- Roslindale Squares + Streets Plan and Zoning (pending May 21)

FY 25 UNDERWAY

- Squares + Streets (Cleary Square, Fields Corner)
- Zoning for Downtown and Chinatown
- Allston-Brighton Community Plan
- Harvard ERC District and Greenway Plan
- Beacon Park Yards Plan
- Zoning for Neighborhood Housing (ADUs)
- Implemented Planning Review Standards



UPDATES TO BOSTON'S ZONING CODE



EAST BOSTON

- After rezoning, median days between applying for an appeal and decision **dropped from 196 days to 73 days.**
- Projects that need a variance are **down by 10% since rezoning**, saving time for Planning staff and applicants.
- **Approved projects have increased by 25%** since the rezoning.



UPDATES TO BOSTON'S ZONING CODE



MATTAPAN

- After rezoning, median days spent between applying for a permit and receiving one **dropped by 20 days.**
- **Approved permit applications have increased from 61% to 91%.**

URBAN DESIGN DIVISION - PEOPLE -CENTERED DESIGN



The Urban Design (UD) department is responsible for crafting and executing a beautiful, human-scale, and inclusive vision for the design of the built environment across Boston.

DESIGN VISION FIVE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION

- Design Principles
- Design Guidelines
- Design Review Process Reform
- Neighborhood Character Facilitation Guide
- Database of Community and Cultural Assets
- Case Study Research



PLANNING ACADEMY



**DOWNTOWN &
NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK
ACTIVATION**



GREENING WHILE GROWING
Comprehensive Open Space Plan

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Development Review Modernization is creating a new development culture for Boston by replacing a complex, outdated process. Based on extensive stakeholder input—over 2,600 survey responses, 12 public events, and over 60 focus groups—we’ve developed a series of actions for the Planning Department to implement.

This summer, the Planning Department will begin early implementation in areas with broad support. Others require additional study, analysis, and community engagement before moving forward to implementation.

THREE CORE CHANGES



Effective Engagement

Diversify input by expanding learning opportunities and forming an advisory group that reflects Boston’s diversity while preserving existing expertise



Consistent Standards

Create new standards for how projects provide mitigation and community benefits to support the City’s need



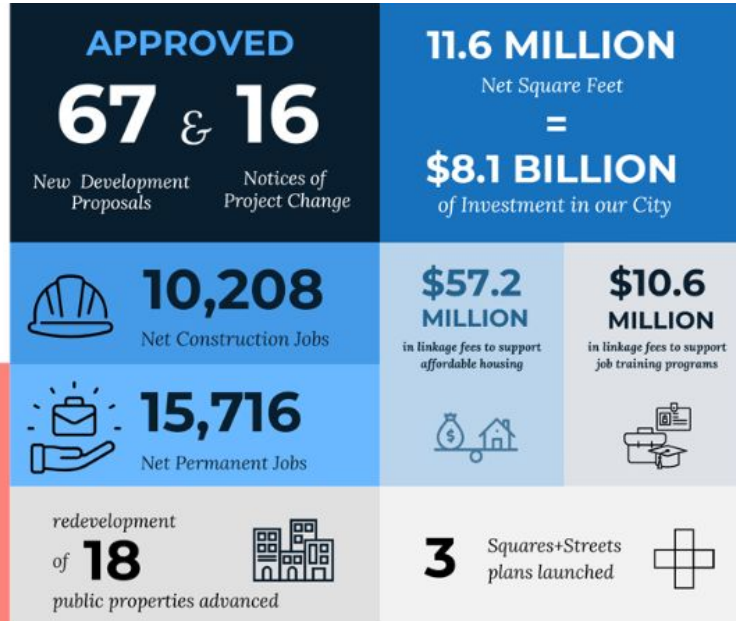
Coordinated Review

Establish a transparent, sequential, and coordinated approval process across the City

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

Over the last year, the Planning Department has worked to advance development projects that support the City's goals.

2024 IN REVIEW



15,926 HOUSING UNITS

40.5 MILLION SQUARE FEET

APPROVED DURING THE WU ADMINISTRATION

REAL ESTATE DIVISION - PUBLIC LAND FOR PUBLIC GOOD



Parcel R1 aka Chinatown BPL

With a goal of utilizing **Public Land for Public Good**, projects expected to break ground or make major strides in FY26 include:

- **Parcel R-1 aka Chinatown BPL:** Expecting to break ground this Summer, this project will create 110 affordable housing units and the new Chinatown BPL branch.
- **Hollander-Holworthy aka Garrison Trotter Phase IV:** Expecting to break ground this Summer, this project will create 16 affordable and 7 market rate homeownership units.
- **Welcome Home Boston Phase 3:** A close collaboration between Planning and MOH, WHB3 will offer City-owned land for the development of small scale affordable, family-size condo units across Roslindale, Hyde Park, Dorchester, and Roxbury.

COASTAL RESILIENCE IMPLEMENTATION

Current design and coordination efforts to close 2030 flood paths:

SOUTH BOSTON:

Permitting and private property owner access agreements for **Fort Point Channel**; Schematic Designs for **Raymond L. Flynn Marine Park**.

DOWNTOWN / NORTH END:

Long Wharf Coastal Flood Resilience Planning & Feasibility study and schematic designs.

CHARLESTOWN:

Charlestown Navy Yard/Little Mystic Channel Flood Resilience Planning & Feasibility study and schematic designs.

EAST BOSTON:

Received \$1.98M in FEMA HMGP funding for **Lewis Mall and Carlton Wharf**. This Summer, an RFP will be released for a consultant to advance designs and permitting.



PLANNING ADVISORY COUNCIL



DEVELOPED BOSTON'S ANTI-DISPLACEMENT PLAN

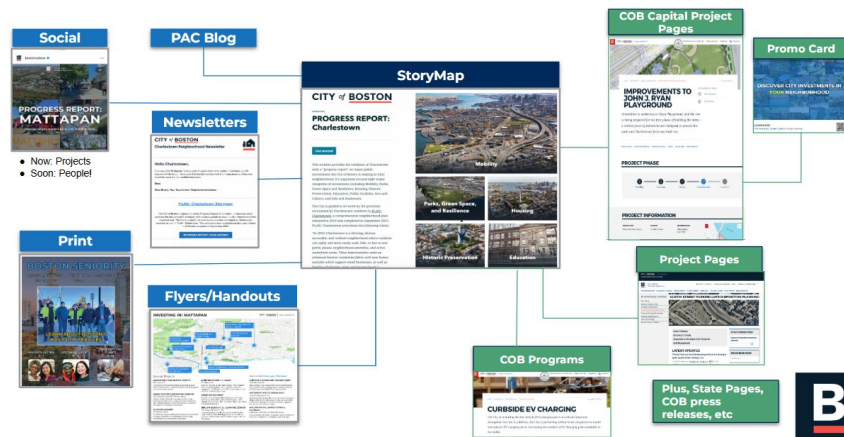


IMPROVING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES & COORDINATION

Skills-building with planners and engagement leads from across Cabinets, E.g.:

- Effective surveying
- Multi-lingual outreach
- Shared community engagement calendar (in development)

CREATING “HUB & SPOKE” COMMUNICATIONS ON BUILT ENVIRONMENT



TRACKING & SUPPORTING DELIVERY OF PLANS

Thus far:

- PLAN Mattapan
- PLAN Charlestown
- PLAN East Boston
- Franklin Park Action Plan

HOUSING ACCELERATOR FUND



WHAT IS THE HOUSING ACCELERATOR FUND?

An innovative strategy to utilize the City's financial strength, alongside MassHousing's extensive underwriting experience, to build much-needed housing.

In January, the Council allocated **\$110M to the Housing Accelerator Fund**.

FIRST CONTRACTS COMING THIS SUMMER

First projects in Allston and Dorchester are likely to get approval and finalize their investment contracts in the next few months.

The goal is to have all funds committed by end of FY26.

OFFICE TO RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION PROGRAM



“ Received **15 applications** to create **762 units** of housing across **20 buildings**, converting **over 606,000 sf of older office** space, exceeding initial goals ”

- Includes creating 140 affordable units on site consisting of 131 units at 60% AMI (17%) and 9 units for section 8 voucher holders
- Results in 1,500+ new people living downtown



PLANNING DEPT

FY26 RECOMMENDED BUDGET

FY26 OPERATING BUDGET



Category	FY25 Approved	FY26 Recommended
Personnel Services	\$24,274,853	\$24,080,811
Contractual Services	\$7,477,723	\$5,194,009
Current Charges	\$651,787	\$502,300
Supplies & Materials	\$193,712	\$146,500
Equipment	\$80,000	\$66,400
Total	\$32,678,075	\$29,990,020

FY26 Recommended Budget by Category

