

2025



PLANNING ADVISORY COUNCIL

Year Two Highlights

CITY *of* **BOSTON**



Planning Department

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STRUCTURE AND CORE FUNCTIONS

The Planning Advisory Council is an internal coordinating body that guides a shared vision for a green, growing, family-friendly Boston and coordinates investments in the built environment to realize that vision. It was created by Mayor Michelle Wu, via Executive Order, in January 2023.



Mayor Michelle Wu delivering the 2023 State of the City Address

As the Mayor's "Built Environment" Cabinet, appointed members of the Planning Advisory Council (PAC) include:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kairos Shen (Chair)
<i>Chief of Planning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dion Irish
<i>Chief of Operations</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheila Dillon
<i>Chief of Housing and Director, Mayor's Office of Housing</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mariangely Solis Cervera
<i>Chief of Equity and Inclusion</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenny Mascary
<i>Interim Chief of Arts and Culture</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Swett
<i>Chief Climate Officer</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jascha Franklin-Hodge
<i>Chief of Streets</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segun Idowu
<i>Chief of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashley Groffenberger
<i>Chief Financial Officer, Collector-Treasurer</i> | |

Alongside the Mayor's Office, key Cabinet and Staff leadership also regularly advise on and engage in the work of the PAC, including Brianna Millor, Chief of Community Engagement, Kenzie Bok, Administrator of the Boston Housing Authority, and José Massó, Chief of Human Services.

The Council is supported by three full time staff, Katharine Lusk (Executive Director), Anne Schwieger (Assistant Director), and Joy Armstrong (Implementation Manager). It benefits from the support and collaboration of colleagues across the City.

OUR MISSION:

Delivering quality of place improvements for our constituents through coordinated, responsive government.

THE CORE FUNCTIONS OF THE PAC ARE:

MAKING COLLABORATION ROUTINE

We connect leaders and staff across departments to break down silos and work better together.

DRIVING IMPLEMENTATION

We track and report progress to make sure community priorities in City plans move forward quickly.

BUILDING PUBLIC TRUST

We create new ways to engage residents, so they can stay up to date on and influence key projects and plans.

LEADING CROSS-CABINET INITIATIVES

We lead special cross-departmental initiatives that require a dedicated set of hands to bring everyone together and create momentum.



Mayor Michelle Wu and colleagues from the Streets Cabinet, the Department of Innovation and Technology, Boston Public Schools and Planning Advisory Council discussing a cross-departmental project.

MAKING COLLABORATION ROUTINE

MONTHLY CONVENINGS OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT CABINET

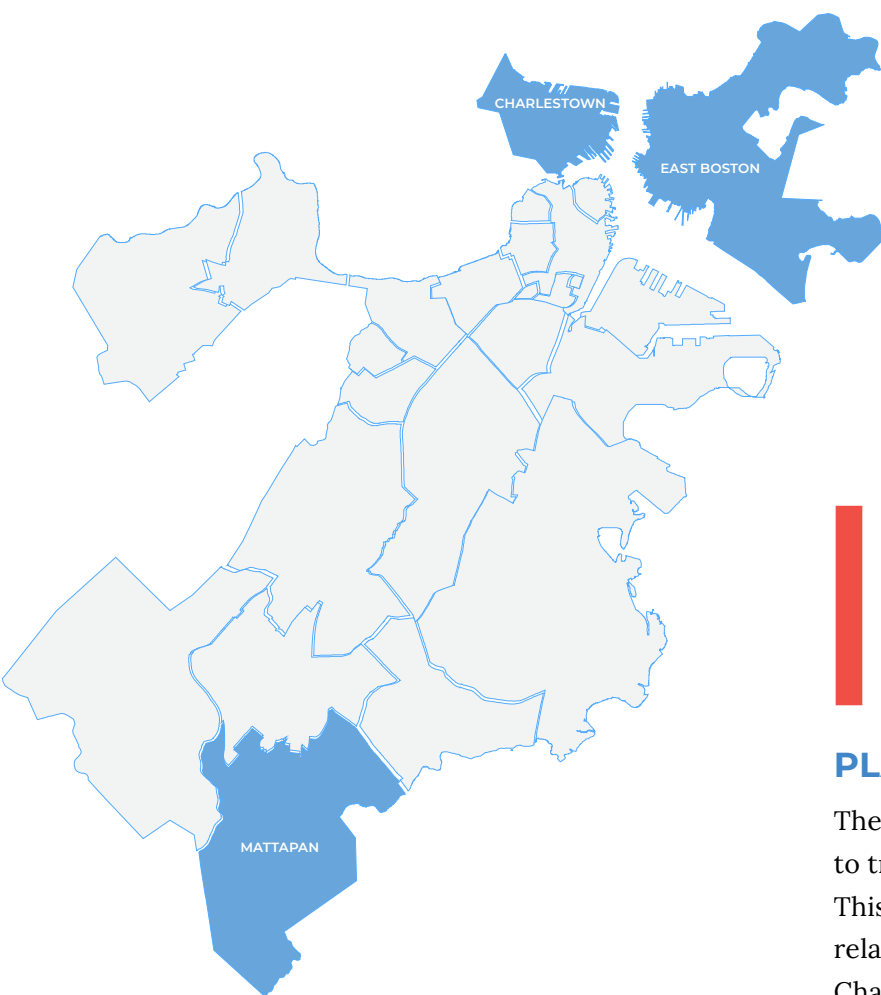
The PAC hosts monthly meetings of the nine appointed Cabinet Chiefs and key collaborators. These meetings allow for cross-Cabinet deliberation and decision-making on major planning and infrastructure initiatives. This year's presenters spanned the Planning Department, Public Facilities, Parks and Open Space, the Mayor's Office of Housing, Streets, Boston Public Schools, Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion, Finance, and the Department of Innovation and Technology.

WHAT'S THE PLAN? SERIES

The PAC and the Planning & Zoning Division continued to co-host What's the Plan?, a monthly cross-departmental forum that delves into the substance of plans and how Department staff are moving them forward. In the past year, nearly 300 colleagues participated in this unique learning space. Topics presented this year included the Boston Housing Strategy 2025, the Boston Public Health Commission's Live Long and Well Agenda, the City's Coastal Resilience Plan, the Boston Housing Authority's work on Transforming and Growing Boston's Public Housing, Boston Public Schools Long-Term Facilities Plan, Go Boston 2030 ReVisioned, the City's first Anti-Displacement Action Plan, the Community Safety Team's Summer Safety Plan, the City's Small Business Strategy, and Youth and Planning.

SHARED INTERNAL CALENDAR PILOT

In spring 2025, the Department of Innovation and Technology, PAC, and the Planning Department's Community Engagement team launched an internal shared calendar pilot for City project teams working in Allston-Brighton. The goal is to improve coordination and avoid competing meetings - which is better for staff and our constituents. The pilot will expand to include additional neighborhoods in the coming year.



DRIVING IMPLEMENTATION

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TRACKERS

The PAC continued to develop implementation tools to track progress on plan-aligned public projects. This year, we tracked the City's progress on projects related to PLAN: East Boston, PLAN: Mattapan, PLAN: Charlestown, and the Franklin Park Action Plan. Tracking plan implementation is the foundation upon which accurate and timely public progress reports are built.

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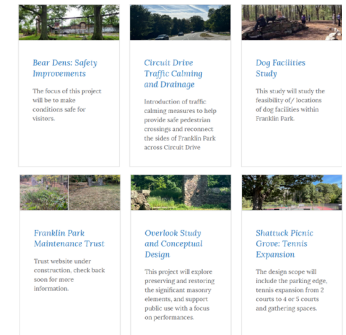
FRANKLIN PARK ACTION PLAN

With support from the PAC, a dedicated cross-departmental working group continued to advance the Franklin Park Action Plan, a roadmap for investment in Franklin Park to restore the landscape, support uses desired by park users, and keep the park accessible and welcoming.

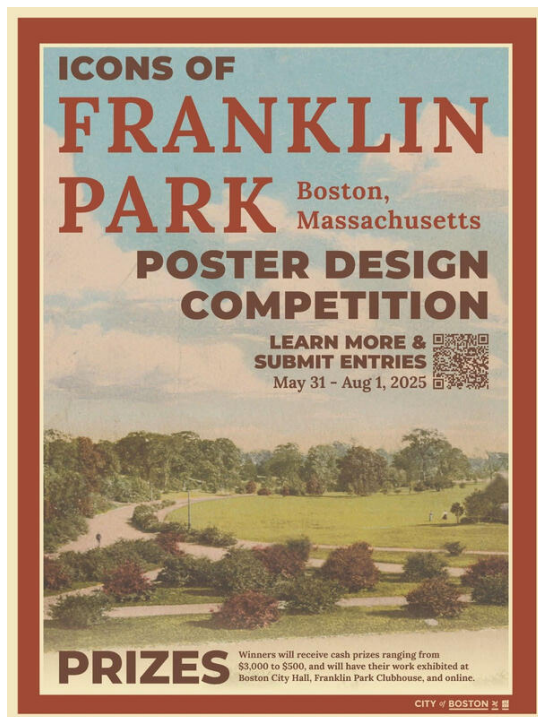
This year, the City advanced key strategic priorities including: studies focused on the restoration of the Overlook Ruins, planning for traffic calming and drainage improvements on Circuit Drive, expanding the Shattuck Picnic Grove Tennis Courts, safety improvements to the Bear Dens, and initial work on White Stadium.

Additionally, the Franklin Park Trust has undertaken high priority projects to remove invasive species, restore the Wilderness, repave Glen Road, and improve safety at Ellicott Arch.

ONGOING INITIATIVES



Examples of ongoing projects to advance the Franklin Park Action Plan



FRANKLIN PARK ICONS POSTER COMPETITION

The PAC and the Urban Design Division supported the Boston Parks Department in developing a new 'Icons of Franklin Park' poster competition, together with the Franklin Park Coalition and the Boston Society of Landscape Architects. Designers and artists were invited to submit poster designs that highlight the physical and cultural icons of Franklin Park's past and present.

Poster advertising the Icons of Franklin Park Poster Competition

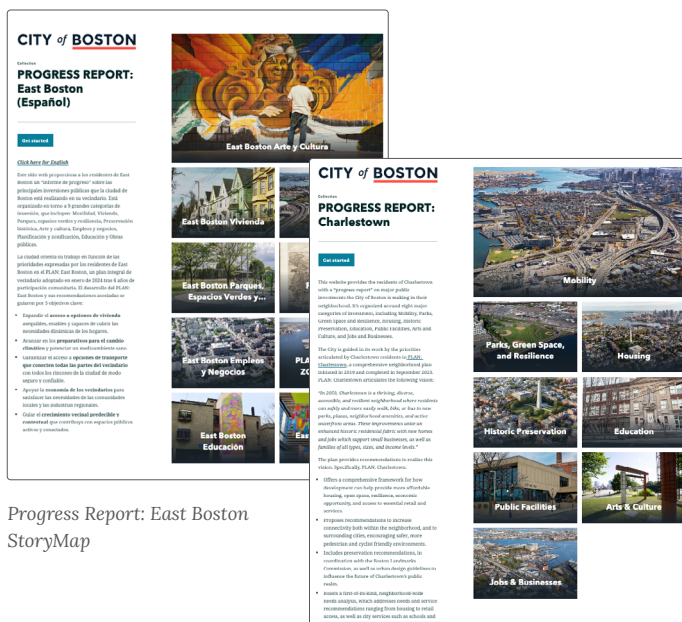
BUILDING PUBLIC TRUST

PROGRESS REPORTS AND “HUB & SPOKE” COMMUNICATIONS

The PAC created new public reporting channels to help constituents understand progress on a range of public investments in their neighborhood. This year, we developed and launched a “hub & spoke” communications strategy, leveraging social media, online newsletters, a blog, print collateral, and [Boston.gov](https://www.boston.gov) to reach constituents wherever they are.

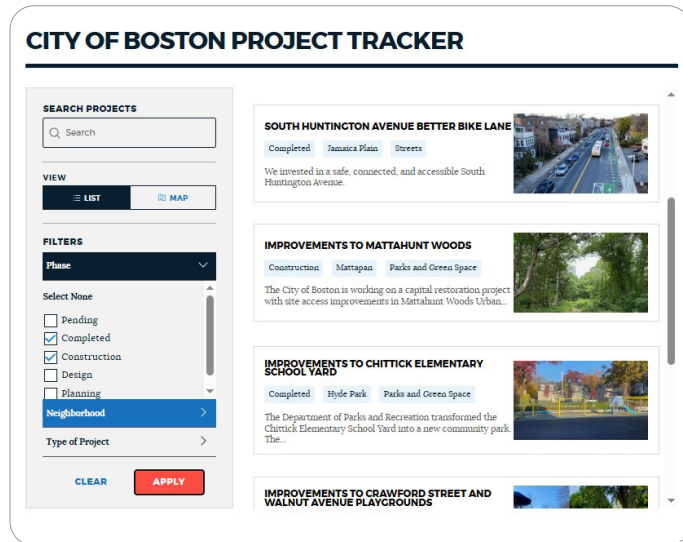


Graphic of the PAC’s “hub and spoke” communications strategy



At the “hub” are public Progress Reports in the form of StoryMaps. This year, the PAC published reports on the implementation of [PLAN: East Boston](#) and [PLAN: Charlestown](#) in multiple languages. These public sites detail the investments the City is making in major community priorities outlined in the plans, including Mobility, Housing, Parks, Green Space and Resilience, Historic Preservation, Arts and Culture, Jobs and Businesses, Planning and Zoning, Education, and Public Facilities.

A PUBLIC CAPITAL PROJECT TRACKER



Citywide Project Tracker on Boston.gov

The PAC continued its partnership with the Department of Innovation and Technology to improve the consistency and quality of publicly available information on major capital projects. Together, we launched Boston's first citywide [Capital Project Tracker](#) on [Boston.gov](#). Now residents can explore all major city investments in their neighborhood, from parks to schools to community centers and streets. As part of this initiative, the PAC helped staff across City departments migrate 180 projects to a new standardized project page format. Created with input from City staff and constituents, this new template includes clear information on the purpose, timeline, and status of major capital projects across Boston.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

The City's first Community of Practice dedicated to Community Engagement brings together staff from more than 20 departments who engage constituents to help transform Boston. Monthly staff-led sessions enable them to learn new skills, better collaborate, and share best practices and resources. This year's highlights include training on effective meeting facilitation, staff-led case studies on community engagement methods in Squares + Streets and transportation projects, and a training on the new [Boston.gov](#) project page template to ensure residents have high quality, consistent information on capital projects in their neighborhood.

LEADING SPECIAL CROSS-CABINET INITIATIVES



Cover of Anti-Displacement Action Plan

ANTI-DISPLACEMENT ACTION PLAN

The PAC led the development of the City's first Anti-Displacement Action Plan, [A Place to Thrive](#), which outlines more than forty initiatives that fill gaps in the City's ongoing efforts to protect residents, small businesses, and cultural institutions from displacement. In developing the plan, the City also released two reports as part of a discovery phase, highlighting constituent priorities elevated by more than 2,300 residents over multiple years, and analyzing the City's existing stabilization tools. Over the next two years, the PAC will continue to play a central coordination role.

ARTICLE 80 DIRECT DISPLACEMENT DISCLOSURE PILOT

While the City has strong tools to mitigate the economic impacts of new development—such as Inclusionary Zoning and Linkage Fees—it lacks a process to address the direct displacement of existing tenants due to new development. To address this, the Planning Department, Mayor's Office of Housing, Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion, and the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture are developing a new Direct Displacement Disclosure, which will be piloted in Fall, 2025.

COMMUNITY-LED, CITY-FACILITATED ANTI-DISPLACEMENT WORKSHOPS

The PAC and Planning piloted a new model of engagement centered on deep collaboration with trusted community organizations, piloting co-designed anti-displacement workshops tailored to neighborhood needs. Two workshops were hosted with community partners in summer 2025 – one in Allston-Brighton and the second in Codman Square – engaging over 140 residents in total.



Allston-Brighton Anti-Displacement Workshop



Codman Square Anti-Displacement Workshop

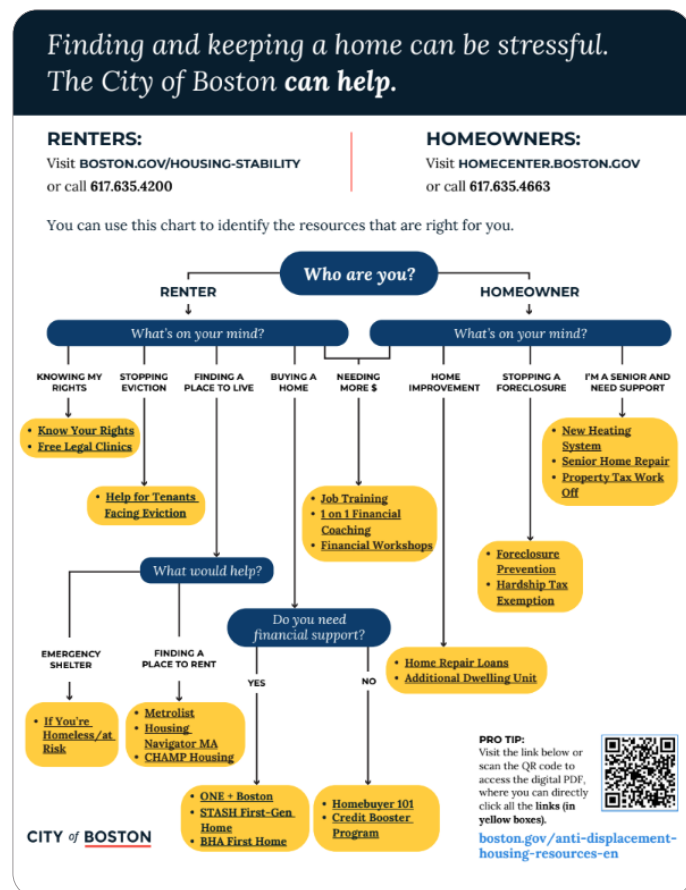
Through storytelling and small group scenario activities, the workshops aimed to increase resident awareness of stabilization tools and establish a method to integrate anti-displacement priorities into future planning efforts.



Infographic of community priorities related to displacement

MULTILINGUAL STABILIZATION RESOURCE GUIDES

The City of Boston has a wide range of resources to stabilize residents, small businesses, and cultural organizations, but navigating them can be difficult. To help with this, the PAC developed the [Housing Stability Resource Guide](#) and the [Housing Stability Resources for Older Adults Guide](#)—both available in twelve languages—highlighting key supports for renters and homeowners across multiple departments. The next guide, focused on small businesses, is being developed in partnership with the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion.



Housing Stability Resource Guide



Housing Stability Resources for Older Adults



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