

City of Boston
PLANNING DEPARTMENT



FY27 BUDGET PROCESS:
*City Council Ways and Means
Budget Hearing*



CITY of BOSTON



Planning Department

AGENDA



Department Overview

- Mission
- Org Chart
- Our Work

FY27 Budget Overview

- FY27 Recommended Operating Budget



“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

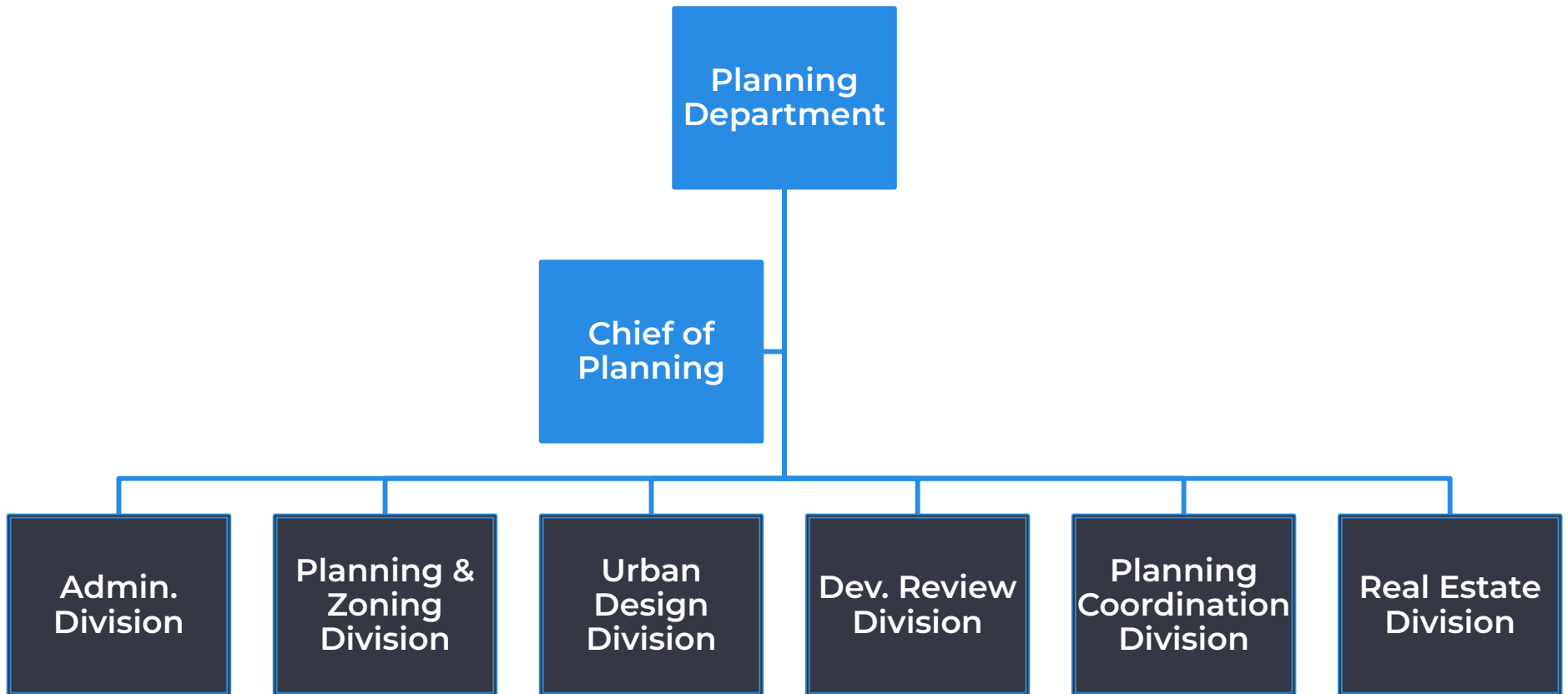
Our mission is to address our City's greatest challenges: resilience, affordability, and equity, and we will take real estate actions and prioritize planning, development, and urban design solutions that further these priorities.

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 ORG CHART





OUR WORK

PLANNING AND ZONING DIVISION



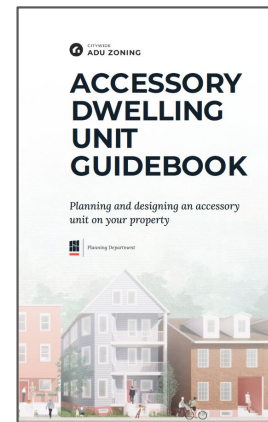
FY 26 ADOPTED

- Harvard ERC District and Greenway Plan
- Squares + Streets Community Led Update
- Downtown Zoning
- Chinatown Zoning (forthcoming)
- Sign Code Modernization (forthcoming)
- Groundwater Conservation Overlay District Updates



FY 26 UNDERWAY

- Squares + Streets (Cleary Square, Fields Corner)
- Allston-Brighton Community Plan
- Beacon Park Yards Plan
- Zoning for Neighborhood Housing (ADUs)
- Citywide Needs Assessment
- Implemented Planning Review Standards



UPDATES TO BOSTON'S ZONING CODE

DOWNTOWN

- Projects that need a variance are **down by 10% since rezoning**, saving time for Planning staff and applicants.
- **Three office-to-residential projects** now require no zoning relief.
- A **nail salon** opened without having to go to the ZBA.



110 units proposed in the Office-to-Residential project at 31 Milk Street

URBAN DESIGN DIVISION - PEOPLE-CENTERED DESIGN



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



PLANNING ACADEMY



DOWNTOWN & NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK ACTIVATION

DESIGN VISION FIVE-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION

- Design Guidelines & Review Process Reform
- Planning Academy
- Tactical Activation Projects
- Improved Databases
 - Historic Asset Inventories
 - Open Space Assets Inventories



SPACES FOR YOU
Comprehensive Open Space Plan

Boston Planning Academy

The Planning Academy includes **eight sessions dedicated to digging into the history, context, and complexities** of Planning, Design, and Development.

Our goal is to **support community members in more actively taking part** in shaping the future of Boston.

The first Planning Academy kicked off with 25 residents from across Boston on April 29 and will wrap up on June 17th!

Explore how planning decisions are made and why your voice matters

Learn how to shape and influence planning decisions!

Meet others interested in making Boston a home for everyone

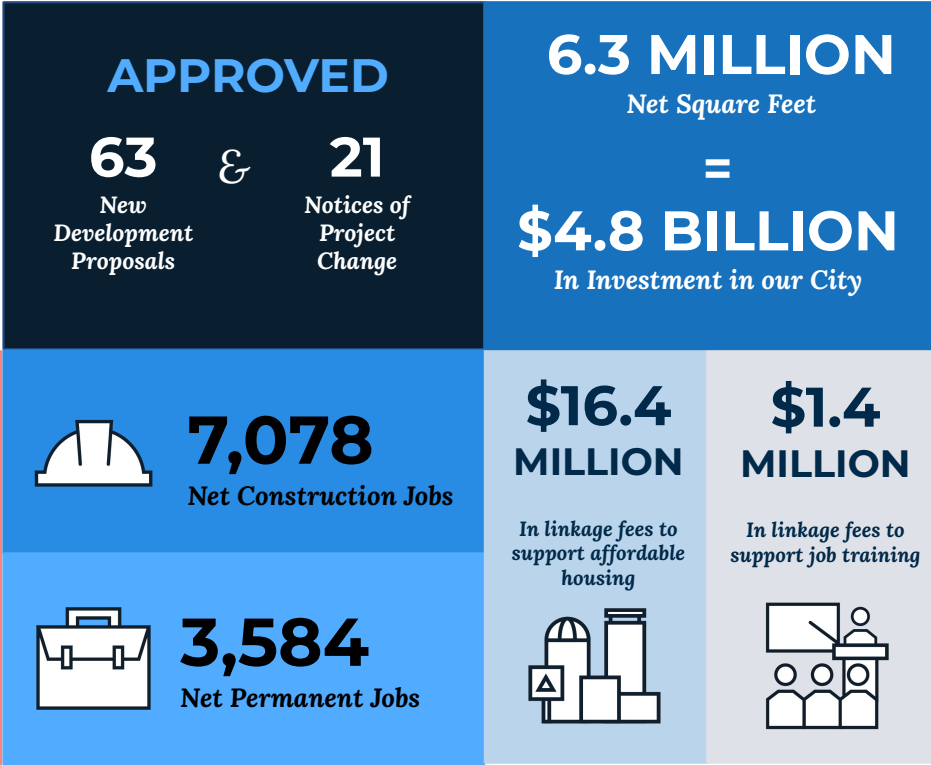


DEVELOPMENT REVIEW



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

2025 IN REVIEW



3,809
NET RESIDENTIAL
UNITS APPROVED



Of which

1,340 UNITS
Will Be Income Restricted

19,735
HOUSING
UNITS

46.8 MILLION
SQUARE FEET

**APPROVED DURING THE
WU ADMINISTRATION**

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW



Article 80 Modernization is an effort started in 2023 and led by the Planning Department to review, analyze, and recommend improvements to the technical code, operations, and community engagement practices related to our development review process.

What are we trying to achieve?
A predictable, timely, and transparent development review process that can improve and modernize how we grow Boston.

THIS YEAR, OUR WORK FOCUSED ON



Internal Operations

Development Review was revised to include an administrative prefile and clarify of review scope. These changes will make Article 80 more predictable and consistent across projects.



Zoning Changes

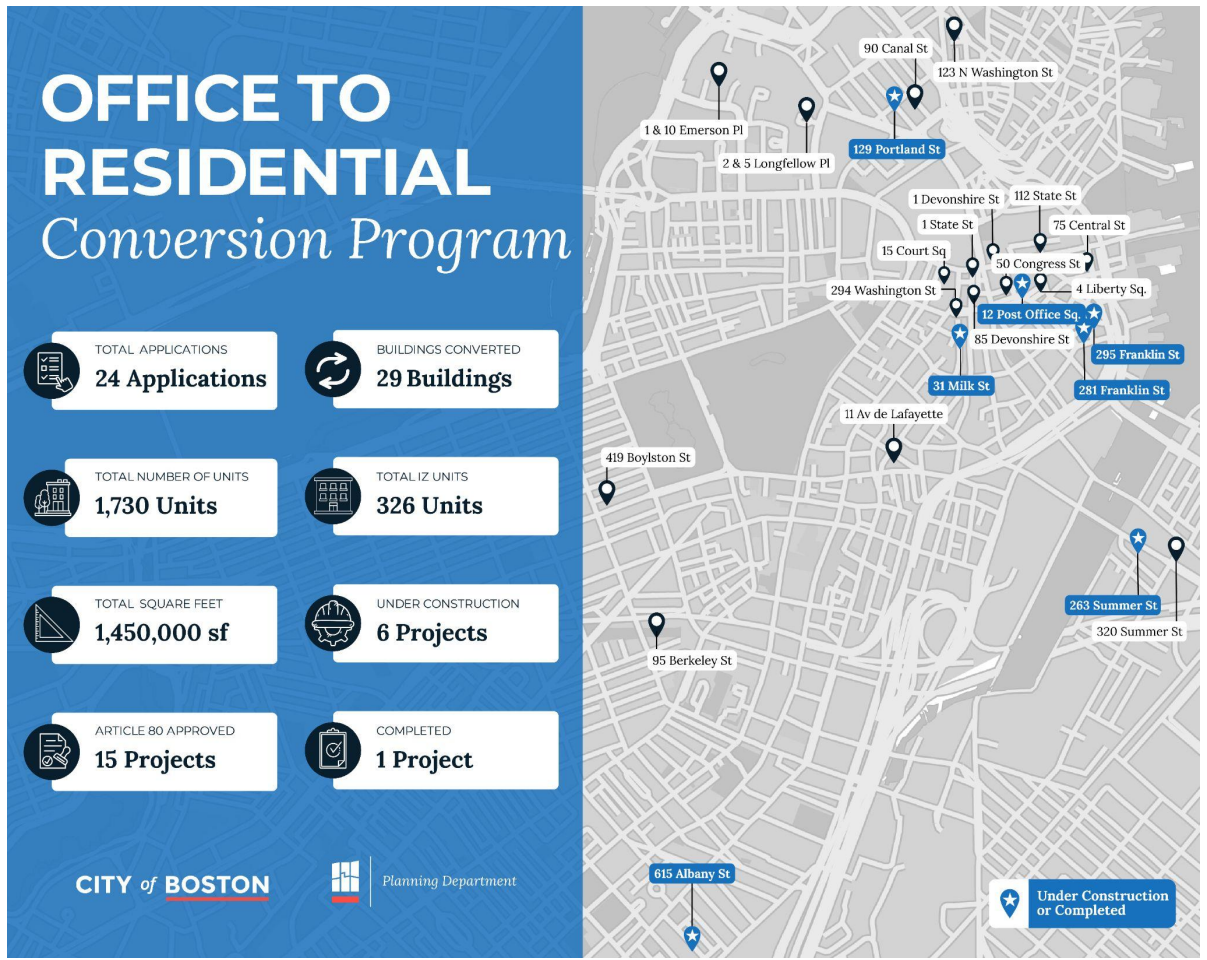
An amendment adopted in August 2025 updated BCDC thresholds, made changes to support conversions and sustainability, modernized communication methods, and improved readability.



Engagement Improvements

Engagement improvements such as site signage guidelines, an Early Engagement Toolkit, advisory group trainings and an Advisory Group Code of Conduct were implemented in early 2026.

OFFICE TO RESIDENTIAL CONVERSION PROGRAM



“ Initial Successes ”

- **24 applications**
 - 29 buildings
- **1.45M sf of Class B & C office space**
 - 18% of vacant Class B & C stabilized
- **1,730 units**
- **326 affordable units on site**
 - 296 at 60% AMI
 - 30 for voucher holders
- **~3,500 new people living downtown**
- **321 units delivered by end of 2026**
 - 6 projects under construction
 - 1 project completed
- **8 tax abatements signed (121B's)**

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 2025, the Council allocated **\$110M to the Housing Accelerator Fund**. The Planning Department is actively working on investments for \$50M of those for private market rental projects.
- First projects coming in Summer 2026

REAL ESTATE DIVISION - PUBLIC LAND FOR PUBLIC GOOD

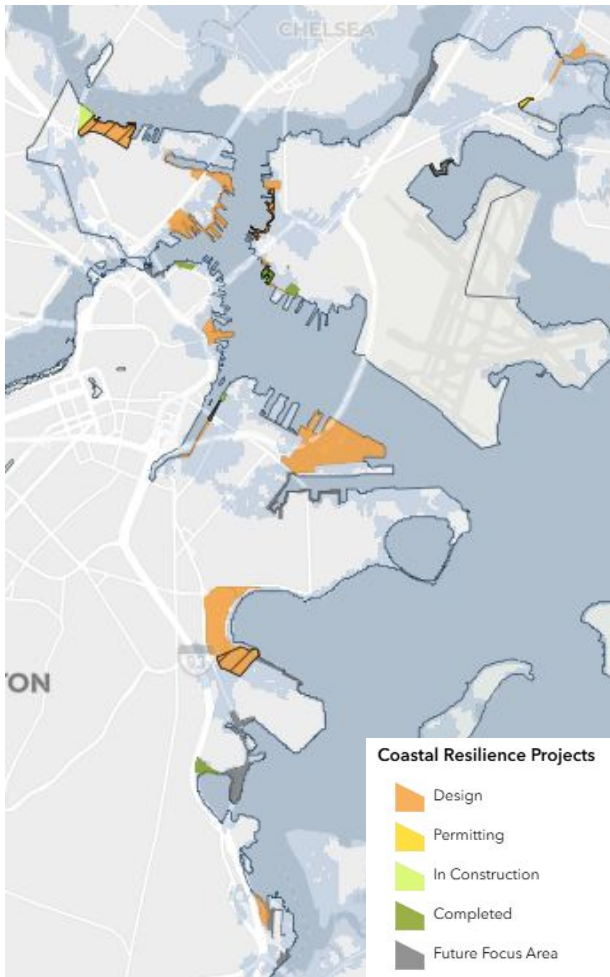


Parcel 8 in Roxbury

With a goal of utilizing **Public Land for Public Good**, projects expected to break ground or make major strides in FY27 include:

- **Parcel 8 aka NUBA:** Breaking ground in mid 2026, this project in Roxbury will create 109 affordable housing units, including 45 homeownership units, and a public park.
- **Hollander-Holworthy aka Garrison Trotter Phase IV:** Breaking ground this Summer, this project in Roxbury will create 16 affordable and 7 market rate homeownership units in addition to public roadway improvements.
- **Welcome Home Boston Phase 3:** A close collaboration between Planning and MOH, WHB3 offered City-owned land for the development of small scale affordable, family-size condo units across Roslindale, Hyde Park, Dorchester, and Roxbury. Designation of teams for 11 sites is expected mid 2026.

COASTAL RESILIENCE IMPLEMENTATION



Current design and coordination efforts to close 2030 flood paths:

DOWNTOWN / NORTH END:

Long Wharf Coastal Flood Resilience Planning & Feasibility study and schematic designs complete; Schematic design study at **Columbus Park**.

SOUTH BOSTON:

Permitting and private property owner access agreements for **Fort Point Channel**; Construction of deployable at **Martin's Park**; Schematic Designs complete for **Raymond L. Flynn Marine Park**.

EAST BOSTON:

Received \$1.98M in FEMA HMGP funding for **Lewis Mall and Carlton Wharf**. This year we will finalize designs and permitting to allow us to move into construction.

CHARLESTOWN:

Charlestown Navy Yard/Little Mystic Channel Flood Resilience Planning & Feasibility study and schematic designs; Construction of deployable at **Main Street**.

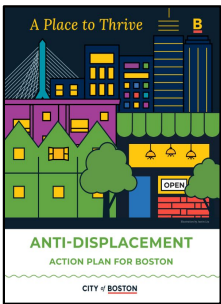
DORCHESTER:

Grant application for an alternatives analysis design study submitted to the ECO One Stop portal for the **Neponset Circle waterfront**. Building level adaptation pilot program ongoing in **Port Norfolk**.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL PLANNING COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION



IMPLEMENTING BOSTON'S ANTI-DISPLACEMENT PLAN



Article 80 Direct Displacement Disclosure

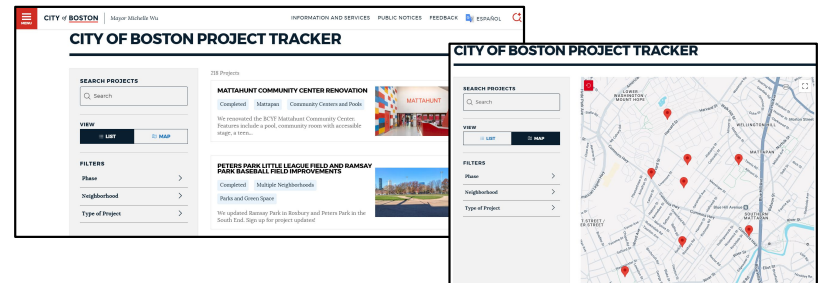
Aim: Improve predictability; Mitigate residential/small business/cultural displacement

- Oct '25: Adopted by BPDA Board
- Jan '26: Took affect
- Ongoing: Evaluation for 1 year pilot

CAPITAL PROJECT TRACKING

Citywide Capital Project Tracker

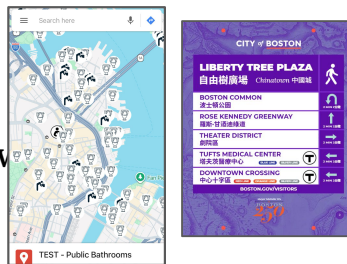
Aim: Improve transparency for the public around projects in their neighborhoods tied to planning



ECONOMIC REGENERATION

Ready Downtown/Chinatown

Aim: Accelerate improvements in anticipation of Summer '26 events, including visitor supports, SOGR, new and refreshed gathering spaces, day and nighttime activations



PLAN DELIVERY & COORDINATION

- Monthly meetings, aka “Built Environment Cabinet”
- Ongoing tracking of PLAN Mattapan, East Boston, Charlestown, plus PLAN Downtown and PLAN Nubian



PLANNING DEPT FY27 RECOMMENDED BUDGET

FY27 OPERATING BUDGET



Category	FY26 Approved	FY27 Recommended
Personnel Services	\$24,080,811	\$24,693,705
Contractual Services	\$5,194,009	\$4,216,238
Current Charges	\$502,300	\$423,500
Supplies & Materials	\$146,500	\$126,500
Equipment	\$66,400	\$15,000
Total	\$29,990,020	\$29,474,943