

PLAN: Charlestown

Austin Street Parking Lots Visioning Workshop

October 27, 2022



Welcome

Jason Ruggiero, Community Engagement Manager

Meeting Recording

At the request of community members, this event will be recorded and posted on the PLAN: Charlestown project webpage at <http://bostonplans.org/PlanCharlestown> for those who are unable to attend the zoom event live.

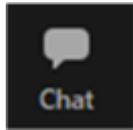
It is possible that participants may be recording the meeting with their phone cameras or other devices. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.

If your camera and microphone are off, you can still participate through the text chat feature at the end of the presentation.

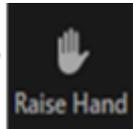
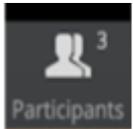
Note: These meetings are not subject to Open Meeting Law. Open Meeting Law also does not require that public bodies allow public comment or public participation during meetings.

Zoom Tips

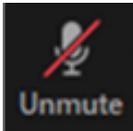
Welcome! Here are some tips on using Zoom for first-time users.
Your controls are at the bottom of the screen



Use the chat to type a comment or ask a question at any time –
Members of the PLAN: Charlestown team will enable the chat at the end.



To raise your hand, click on “Participants” at the bottom of your
screen, and then choose the “Raise Hand” option in the participant box



Mute/unmute – Participants will be muted during the presentation –
the host will unmute you during discussion if you raise your hand and
it is your turn to talk



Turns your video on/off

Code of Conduct

- Virtual planning events will be held via the Zoom “Meeting” platform, which allows participants to control their engagement features such as “mute/unmute,” “camera,” and other features. Zoom Webinar does not allow these capabilities.
- During presentations, the chat feature will be turned off. The chat feature will be enabled once a presentation is complete. Participants are encouraged to raise their hands to ask questions if needed. The virtual “Raise Hand” feature is located at the bottom of the Zoom screen (hand icon).
- We strongly encourage speakers to turn on their cameras while speaking.
- Comments or questions from the public will be limited to 2 minutes of speaking time. Two questions per person at a time is the maximum. A 30-second follow-up comment after a staff member responds is allowed. These time limits will be strictly enforced.
- All attendees are expected to respect one another and any differences of opinion. We welcome differences of opinions, including opinions that differ from those of BPDA staff. Always assume good intentions when any contradictions or disagreements are made. Constructive comments and opinions should be aimed at topics, not people.
- Unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated. Examples of unacceptable behavior are instances such as the following, but not limited to:
 - Threatening to take unwarranted legal action against meeting participants
 - Bullying participants either in the chat or verbally out loud
 - Harassment including criticizing, mocking, or posing threats against participants
 - Threats or derogatory speech against BPDA staff or other participants
 - Grandstanding or exceeding allowed time limits
 - Other violations within this code of conduct
- Those who violate the code of conduct may be subject to the following actions:
 - Given a verbal or written warning
 - Muted for the entirety of the meeting or event
 - Removed from the meeting or event

For all meeting content:

<http://www.bostonplans.org/plancharlestown>

Agenda

- Austin Street Parking Lots (6:10-6:20pm)
- Listening Tour Recap + Takeaways (6:20-6:40pm)
- Q&A (6:40-6:50pm)
- Activity - Break Out Rooms (6:50-7:15pm)
- Share-Out + Next Steps (7:15-7:30pm)

If you have a follow up item, please reach out to Jason Ruggiero (**Jason.Ruggiero@boston.gov**) and we will be in touch as soon as possible.

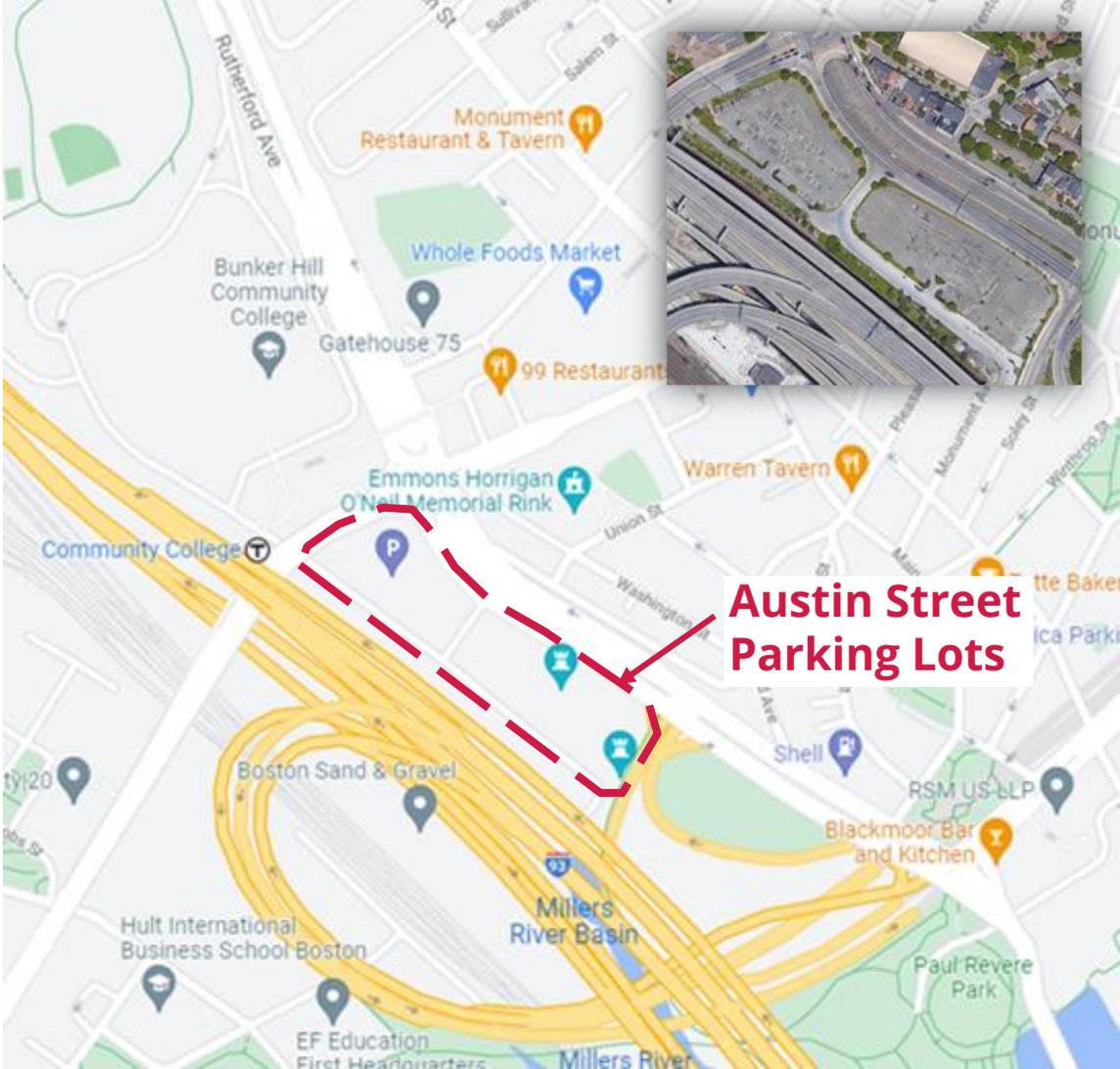
Austin Street Parking Lots

Rebecca Hansen, Director of Real Estate

Patricia Cafferky, Senior Planner

Austin Street Parking Lots

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Care and Custody | BPDA |
| Property Acreage | 6 Acres |
| Current Use | Parking lots operated by BPDA and used by BHCC students |



**Austin Street
Parking Lots**

Why Now?

Citywide Land Audit

- The Land Audit is an inventory of all vacant or underutilized City-owned property.
- The data will guide the City in meeting Boston's most urgent needs, including **affordable housing, community development, and climate resilience.**

American Rescue Plan Act Funding

- Mayor Wu has dedicated funds through the **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)** to build affordable housing in mixed-income communities on key properties identified in the land audit
- This important funding source must be obligated by 2024

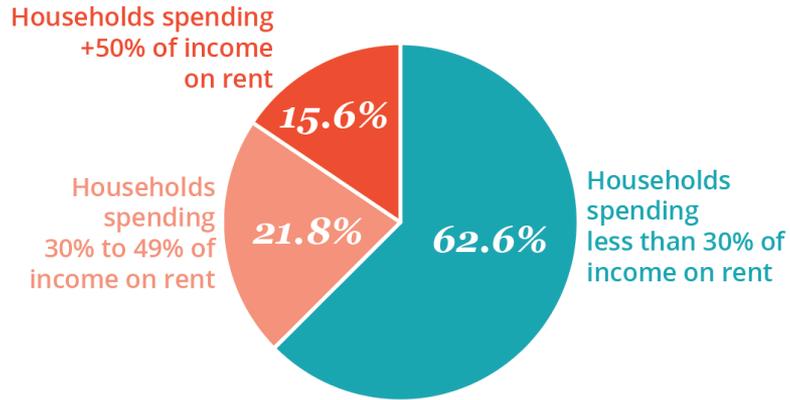


Public Land for Public Good: Citywide Land Audit

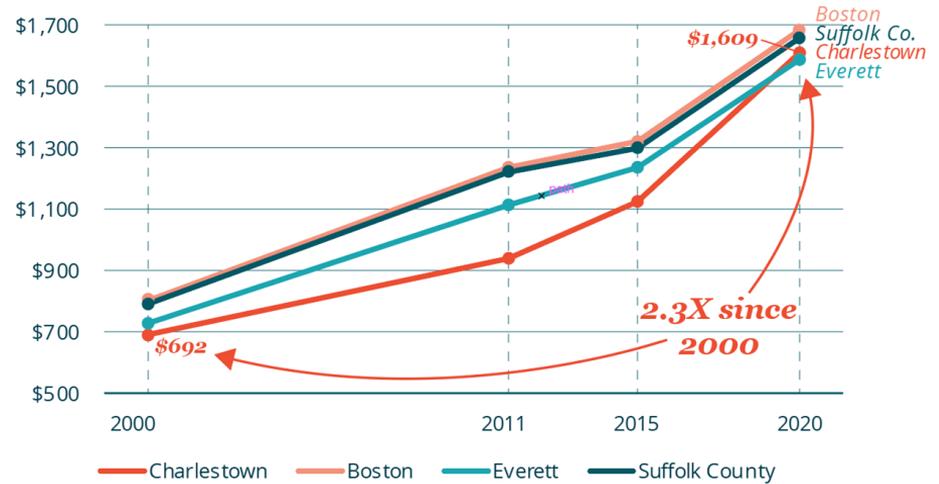


Housing Need

Charlestown Rent Burdened Households in 2020 (ACS 5-year data)



Median Rents Over Time in Charlestown and Nearby Geographies (ACS 5-year and Census data)



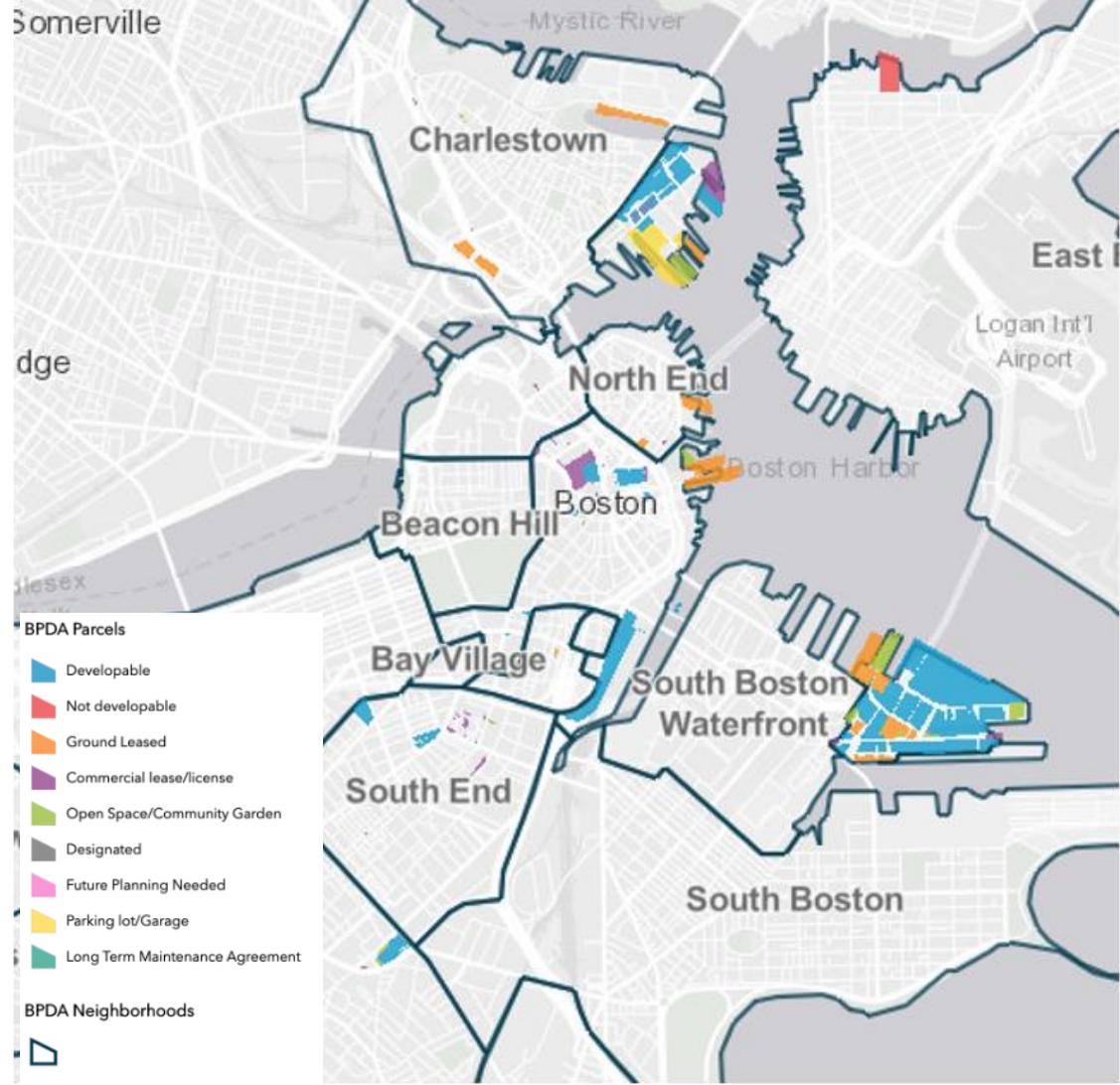
Planning Led Development In Action

The City of Boston has a handful of key goals for the site(s), including:

- **Create affordable and workforce housing**
- Deliver on some key community needs and desires coming out of PLAN: Charlestown
- Support the community-serving businesses
- Create wide sidewalks with space for street trees, protected bike lanes, benches, and plenty of walking space (i.e. apply Boston's Complete Streets Guidelines)
- Create and connect open spaces

How does the BPDA lease land?

1. Conduct **due diligence and strategic planning** to determine which parcels to issue for development
2. Lead a **community process** to hear feedback about appropriate uses and design guidelines
3. Issue a **Request for Proposals (RFP)** that is open to all respondents. RFPs lay out the guidelines for proposals, submission requirements, and evaluation criteria.
4. **Evaluate** proposals with community feedback



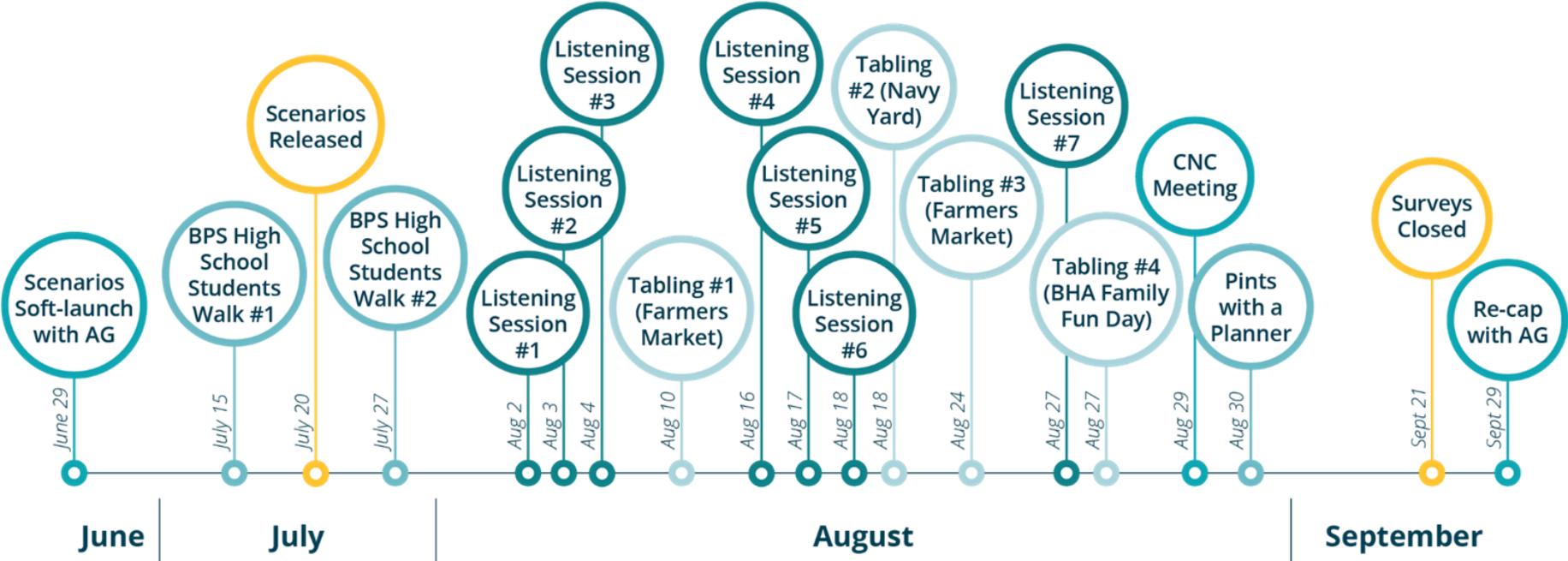
Next Steps



Listening Tour Recap + Takeaways

Patricia Cafferky, Senior Planner

Listening Tour Timeline *(8 weeks, 15 events)*





*BPS Student Walk/Drawing Events
July 15th+27th*

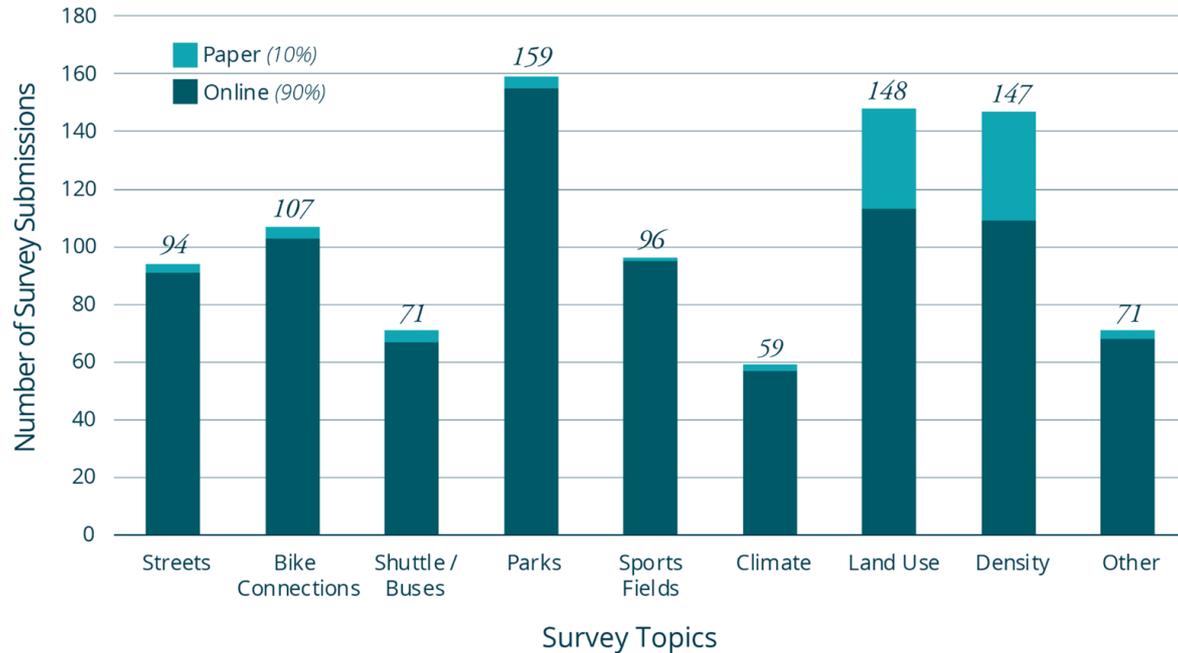


BHA Family Fun Day Aug 27th

Pints with a Planner - Aug 30th

Survey Participation

Survey Responses by Topic (952 Submissions)



Survey Data

boston planning & development agency

About Us | Contact Us | Careers | News | Calendar | Translate Page

Neighborhoods Zoning Planning Work with Us Development Housing Research 3D Data & Maps

Planning

- What is Planning?
- Imagine Boston 2030 Implementation
- Planning Initiatives
- Climate Change & Environmental Planning
- Downtown & Neighborhood Planning
- Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)
- Regulatory Planning & Zoning
- Transportation & Infrastructure Planning
- Institutional Planning
- Urban Design
- Urban Renewal

PLAN: Charlestown

Latest Updates

- [Summary & Goals](#)
- [Past Planning Phases](#)
- [Past Events](#)
- [Advisory Group](#)
- [Planning Efforts Related to PLAN: Charlestown](#)
- [Share Your Thoughts](#)

STAY CONNECTED

Sign up for Neighborhood Email Updates!

NEIGHBORHOOD

Charlestown

EVENTS

29 Sep PLAN: Charlestown Advisory Group Meeting

NEWS

June 15, 2022

Latest Updates

PLAN: Charlestown is in the process of performing a neighborhood-wide needs analysis, drafting urban design guidelines for the neighborhood, and creating the next iteration of scenarios for the future of the neighborhood, all of which will inform the plan's coming recommendations. You can check out the draft scenarios released in July 2022 by visiting: bit.ly/PLANCharlestownScenarios. You can download the survey results, below, or read more about the draft scenarios in the Past Planning Phases section of this web page.

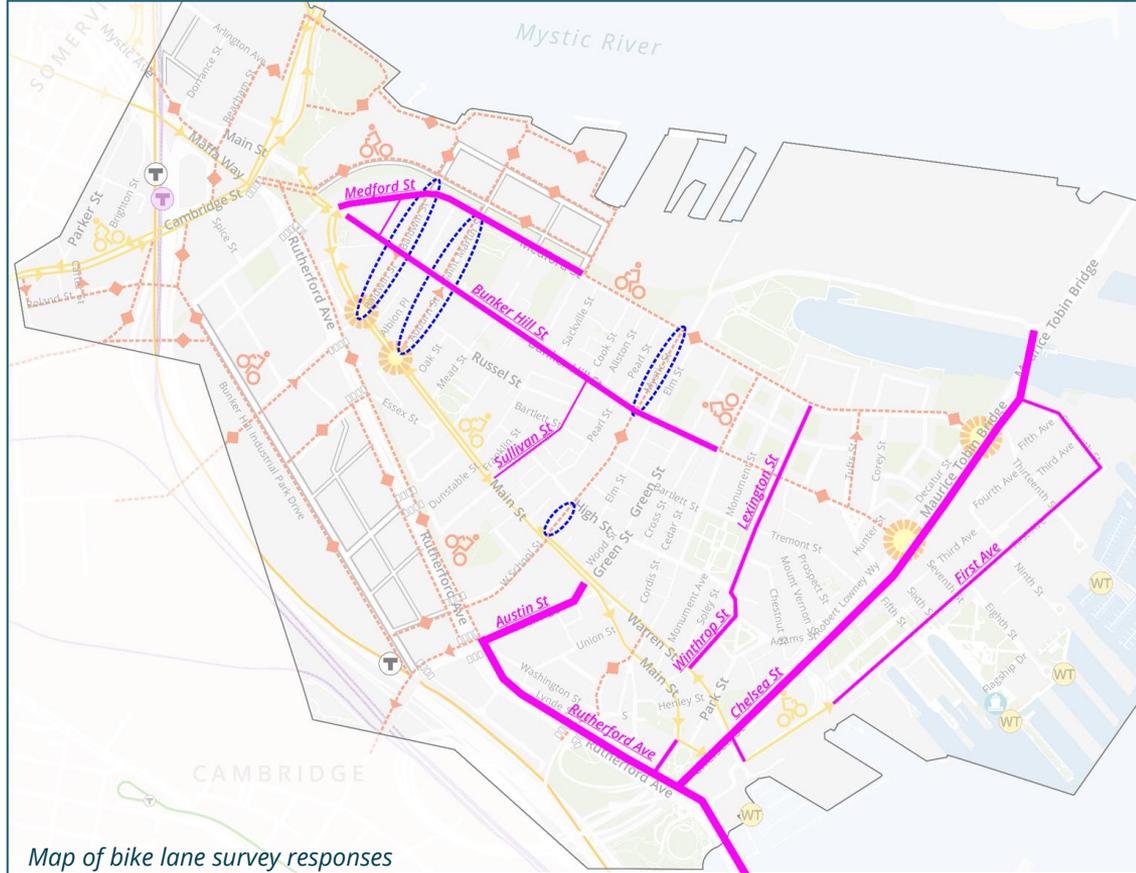
[Download the results of the draft scenarios surveys \(PDFs, .zip file\)](#)

You can download all of the survey data here by going to our PLAN: Charlestown website.

Survey Results: Bike Connections

LEGEND

-  Ferry Terminal
-  Water Taxi Stop
-  Bike Lanes Proposed by Scenarios
-  Existing Bike Lanes
-  Intersection Improvement Proposed by Scenarios
-  Streets Highlighted for Bike Lanes in Survey Responses (*Line thickness = frequency of response*)
-  Streets Identified as Potentially Poor for Bike Lanes



Map of bike lane survey responses

Survey Results: Parks

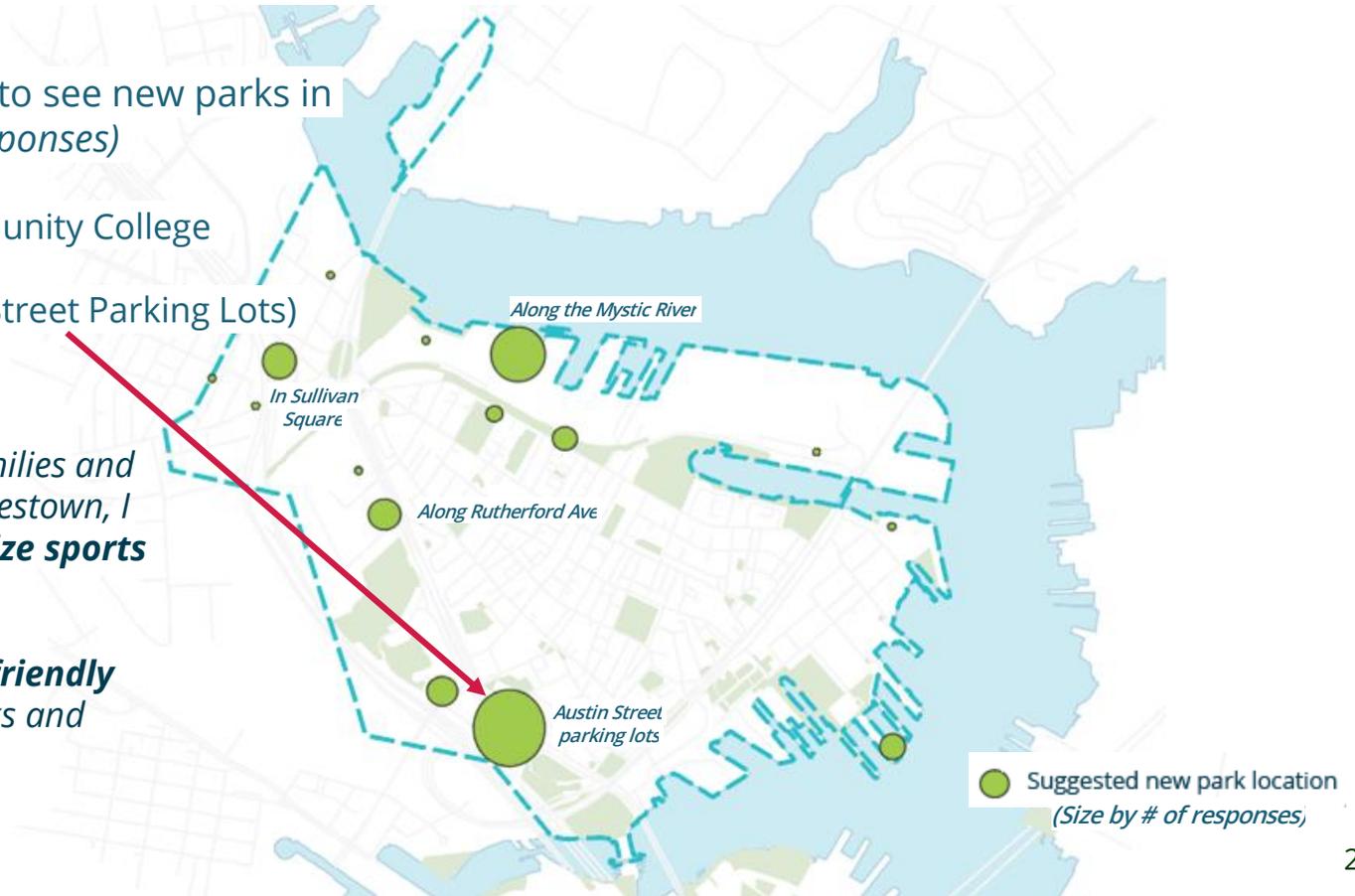
Where would you like to see new parks in Charlestown? (160 Responses)

- Bunker Hill Community College parking lots (39%)
(AKA: The Austin Street Parking Lots)

Quotes:

*“Given the number of families and children that live in Charlestown, I definitely want to **prioritize sports fields** for the kids.”*

*“Please incorporate **dog friendly spaces** within linear parks and greenways.”*



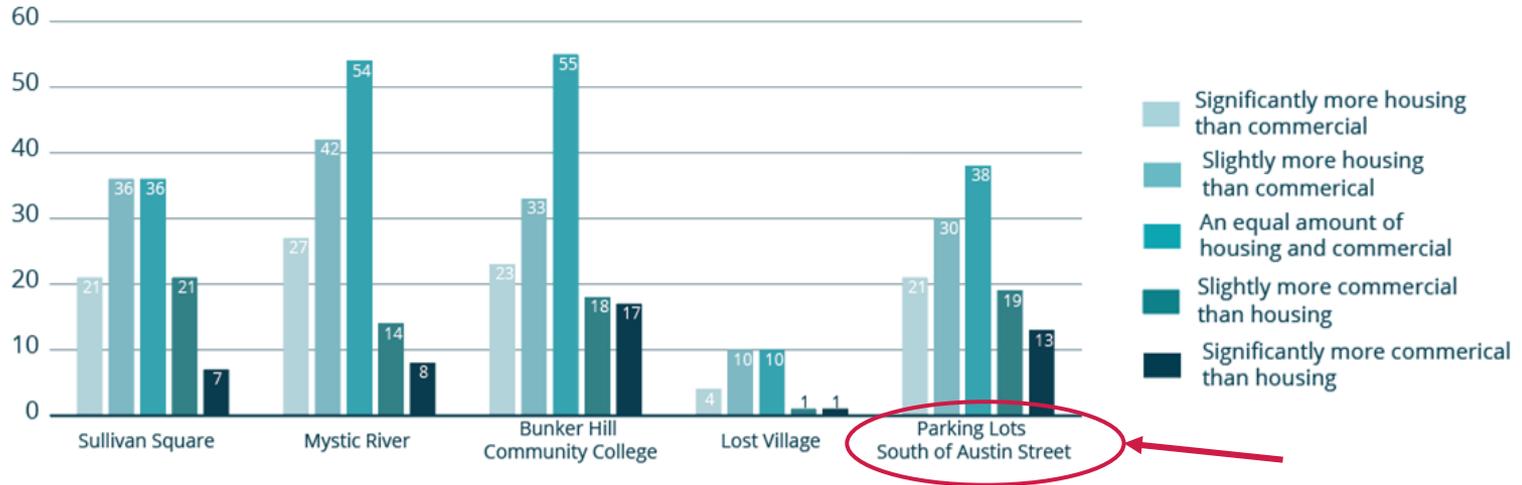
Survey Results: Sports Fields

What sports fields do you travel outside of Charlestown to use at least once a month? (185 Responses)



Survey Results: Land Use

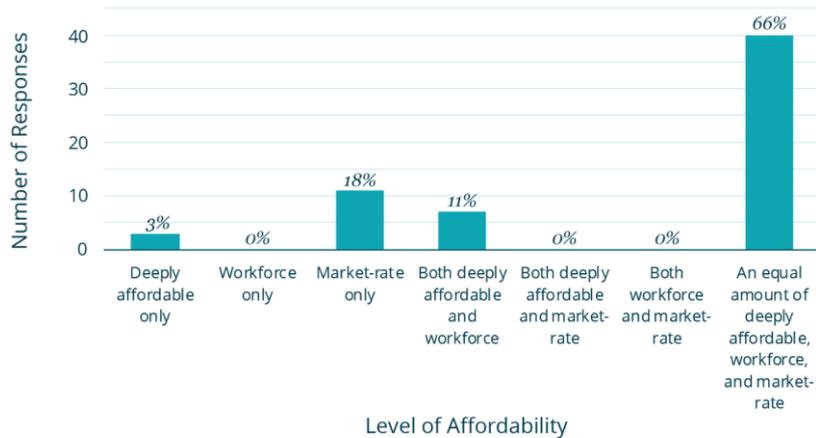
Land Use in Charlestown (148 Responses)



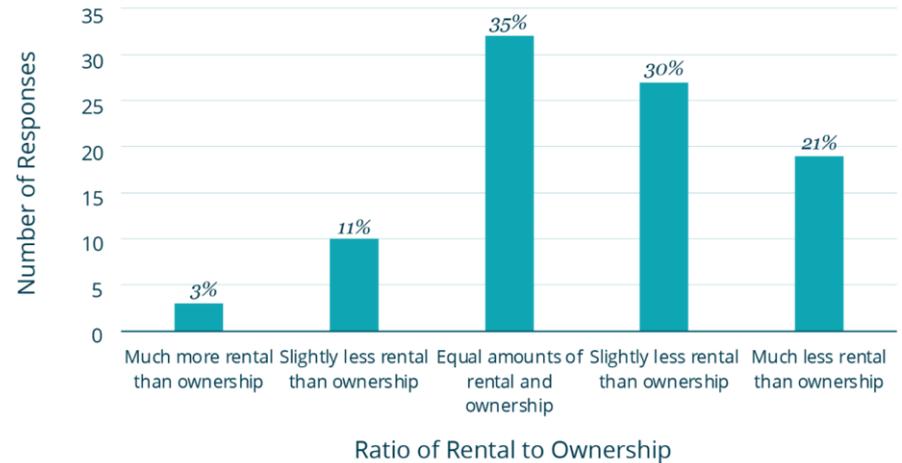
**Note: There was some concern from survey respondents that ground floor retail would not be allowed in "Housing Only" areas. As we attempted to note in the survey question, ground floor retail, as well as neighborhood services, would be allowed in all areas. This confusion may have skewed results more towards "Commercial" than they otherwise would have been.*

Survey Results: Land Use

What level of housing affordability should be prioritized for new Charlestown developments? (61 Responses)



What should the ratio of Rental to Ownership be in new Charlestown housing developments? (91 Responses)



Survey Results: Land Use

Opinions on land use in Charlestown:

*"We need affordable housing but **mostly we just need as much housing as possible of any type.** Especially in areas that are newly opened up for residential use, there's no risk of displacement, so if developers want to build lots and lots of market rate housing, we should let them."*

*"I would like to see a **shift from talking about mixed-use as a "buffer"** - what this sounds like is that people who move into mixed-use developments are less valuable than those who live in currently residential neighborhoods."*

*"Making use of the **Bunker Hill College area and the industrial area by the Mystic** makes a lot of sense and would greatly improve the neighborhood."*

*"Let's make **Charlestown a space where you want to spend a full day,** or (stretch goal) a whole weekend, instead of just an afternoon."*

Density Survey Questions

#3. What level of density do you feel is appropriate for the following areas (High, Medium, or Low): 1) Bunker Hill Community College area; 2) Parking Lots South of Austin Street; 3) The area along the Mystic River; 4) The Lost Village south of Cambridge St; 5) Sullivan Square



Low Density
68 Baldwin St
Residential
4 to 5 stories; 23 Units



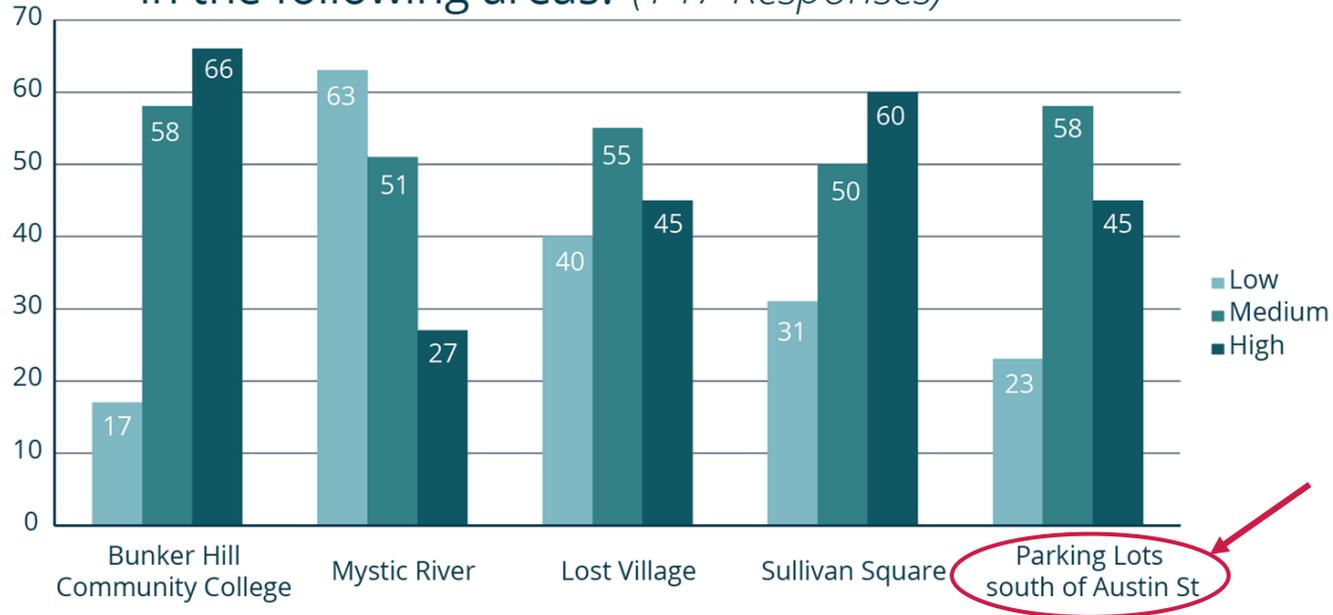
Medium Density
Flagship Wharf
Residential
11 stories; 198 Units



High Density
151 Park; Cambridge Crossing
Residential
20 stories; 400+ Units

Survey Results: Density

What sort of density would you like to see in the following areas? (147 Responses)



Survey Results: Density

Density concerns shared:

*"I support high density uses, but **hope we can include ground-level retail, etc.** and avoid a lot of unused green space, parking lots, or other dead areas that make the ground-level areas sterile for pedestrians."*

*"[I'm concerned about] increased traffic in and out of bottlenecks - this can be avoided by focusing on **transit oriented spots** for the maximum density."*

*"I am **worried that new residents will be used to shield existing residents** from negative neighboring uses. I am also worried that the developments will be too short and not cast sufficient shade on hot days."*

Questions?

(Please hold comments to 2 minutes so we can hear from everyone! Thank you!)

Visioning Activity - Break Out Rooms

Rebecca Hansen, Director of Real Estate

Activity - 4 Breakout Rooms

Room 1 - Housing

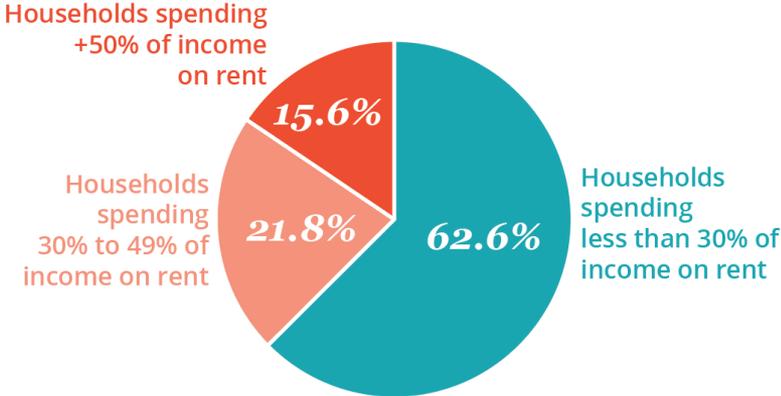
Room 2 - Ground Floor
Activation / Retail

Room 3 - Open Space

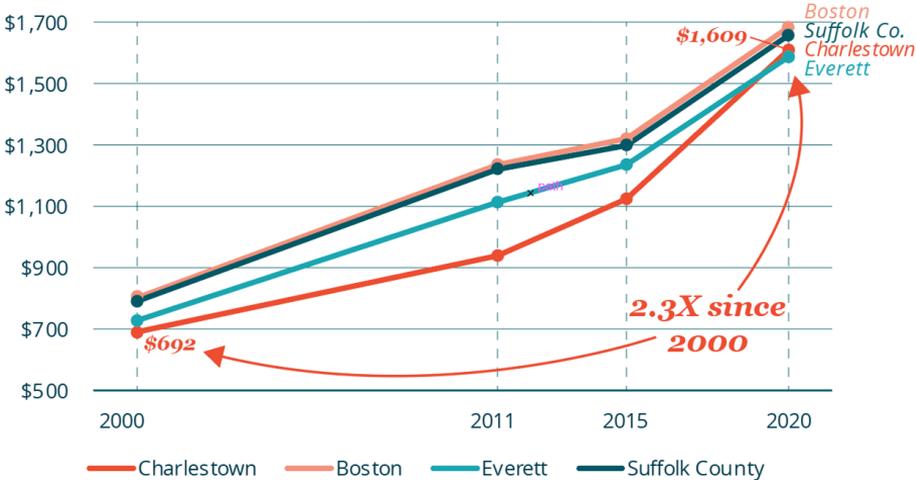
Room 4 - Mobility

Room 1 - Housing

Charlestown Rent Burdened Households in 2020 (ACS 5-year data)



Median Rents Over Time in Charlestown and Nearby Geographies (ACS 5-year and Census data)



What levels of affordability should be targeted? (Deeply affordable? Workforce?)

What types of housing should be included? (ex. ownership, rental, compact, senior/supportive, etc)

Room 2 - Ground Floor Activation + Amenities



What neighborhood services should be accommodated here?



What kinds retail/restaurants would you like to see accommodated here?



What kinds of community spaces would your neighborhood benefit from here?

Room 3 - Open Space



Who should the open space be for? (ex. Dogs, children, college students, seniors?)



What kinds of open spaces should be prioritized for inclusion? (ex. Butterfly gardens? Lacrosse/soccer fields? Playgrounds?)



How would you like to see climate resilience incorporated?

Room 4 - Mobility



Where should people access the site and how should they move around it?



What kinds of transportation infrastructure should be prioritized on the site?



How should the site tie into the city's larger transportation network?

4 Break Out Rooms

Room 1 - Housing

1. What levels of affordability should be targeted?
2. What should the mix of ownership to rental units be?
3. What types of housing should be included? (ex. compact, senior/supportive, student, etc)

Room 2 - Ground Floor Activation / Retail

1. What neighborhood services should be accommodated here?
2. What kinds retail/restaurants would you like to see accommodated here?
3. What kinds of community spaces would your neighborhood benefit from here?

Room 2 - Open Space

1. Who should the open space be for? (ex. Dogs, children, college students, seniors?)
2. What kinds of open spaces should be prioritized for inclusion? (ex. Butterfly gardens? Lacrosse/soccer fields? Playgrounds?)
3. How would you like to see climate resilience incorporated?

Room 4 - Mobility

1. Where should people access the site and how should they move around it?
2. What kinds of transportation infrastructure should be prioritized on the site?
3. How should the site tie into the city's larger transportation network?

Share-Out

Share-Out - What did your group think?

Room 1 - Housing

1. What levels of affordability should be targeted?
2. What should the mix of ownership to rental units be?
3. What types of housing should be included? (ex. compact, senior/supportive, student, etc)

Room 2 - Ground Floor Activation / Retail

1. What neighborhood services should be accommodated here?
2. What kinds retail/restaurants would you like to see accommodated here?
3. What kinds of community spaces would your neighborhood benefit from here?

Room 2 - Open Space

1. Who should the open space be for? (ex. Dogs, children, college students, seniors?)
2. What kinds of open spaces should be prioritized for inclusion? (ex. Butterfly gardens? Lacrosse/soccer fields? Playgrounds?)
3. How would you like to see climate resilience incorporated?

Room 4 - Mobility

1. Where should people access the site and how should they move around it?
2. What kinds of transportation infrastructure should be prioritized on the site?
3. How should the site tie into the city's larger transportation network?

Next Steps



Next Steps

***NEXT STEP: Draft Scenarios will be a framework for developers (height range, density, goals, etc)
It is not full site design.***

Present

2023

Goal RFP Release



Appendix

ROOM 1 - HOUSING

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What levels of affordability should be targeted?
2. What should the mix of ownership to rental units be?
3. What types of housing should be included?
(ex. compact, senior/supportive, student, etc.)



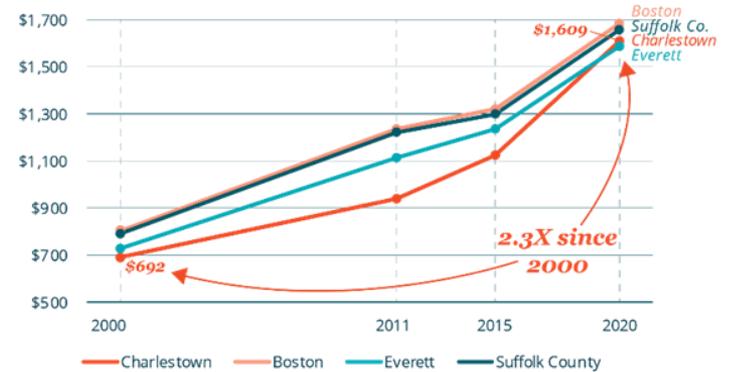
ROOM 1 - HOUSING

53% of Charlestown housing units are renter-occupied

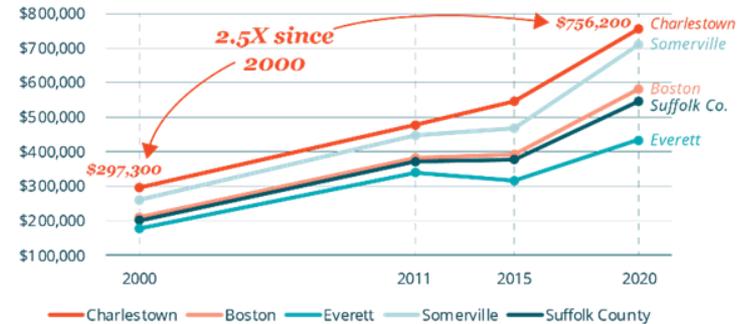
compared to

65% of Boston housing units are renter-occupied

Median Rents Over Time in Charlestown and Nearby Geographies (ACS 5-year and Census data)

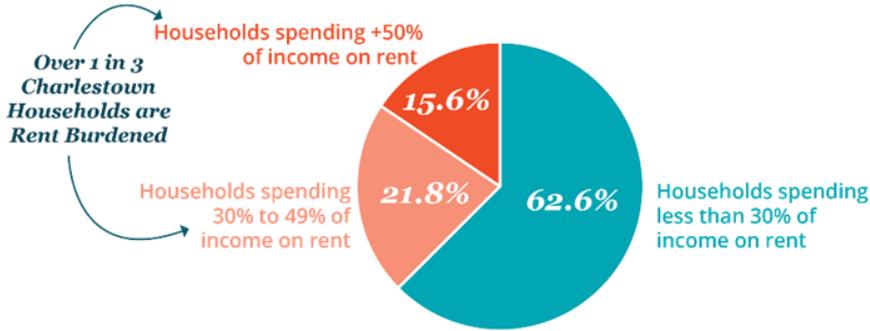


Median Home Values Over Time in Charlestown and Nearby Geographies (ACS 5-year and Census data)

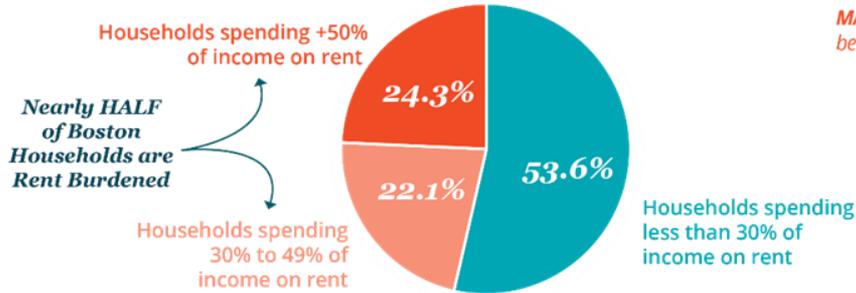


ROOM 1 - HOUSING

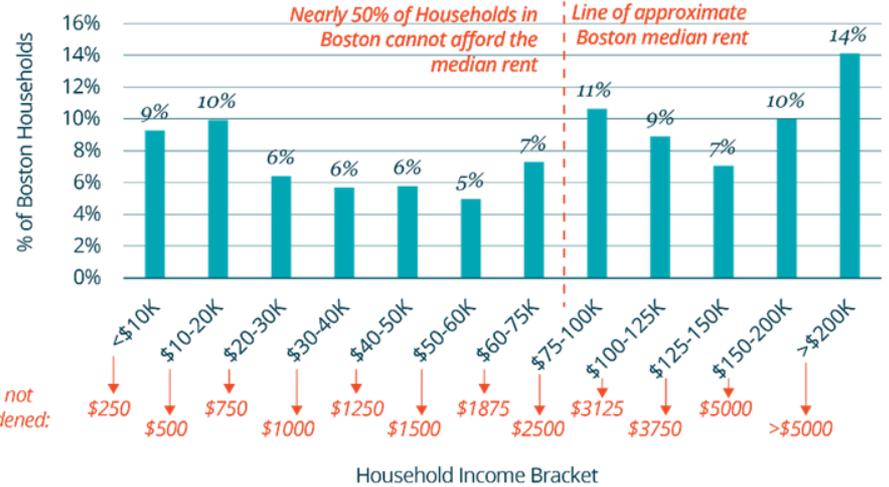
Charlestown Rent Burdened Households in 2020 (ACS 5-year data)



Boston Rent Burdened Households in 2020 (ACS 5-year data)



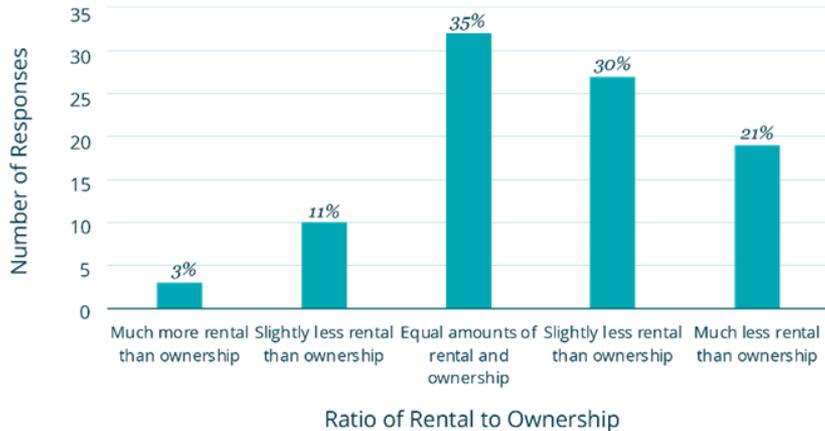
Household Incomes in Boston in 2020 (ACS data)



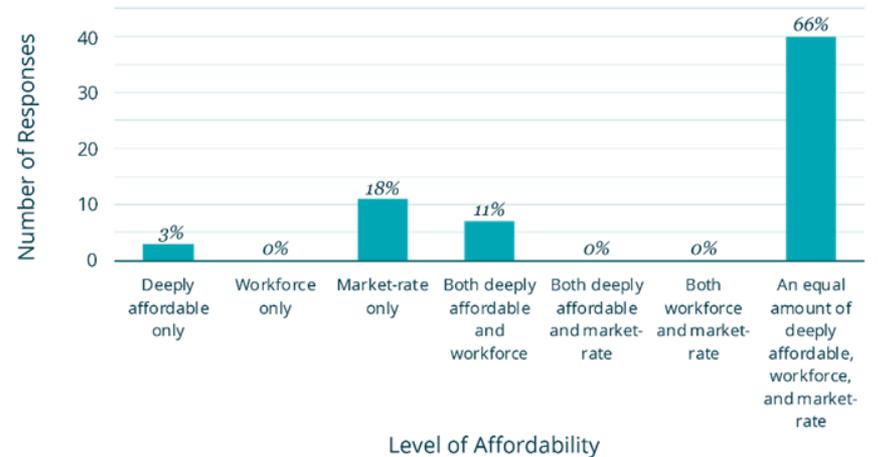
ROOM 1 - HOUSING

Responses to similar questions from the PLAN: Charlestown Draft Scenarios Land Use Survey, below.

What should the ratio of Rental to Ownership be in new Charlestown housing developments? (91 Responses)



What level of housing affordability should be prioritized for new Charlestown developments? (61 Responses)



ROOM 1 - HOUSING

LEGEND

-  Above Ground Highway
-  10+ Unit Residential Building
-  Austin St Parking Lots (BPDA Owned)



Map of Multi-family Residential Buildings Adjacent to Above Ground Highways in Boston

ROOM 2 - GROUND FLOOR ACTIVATION / RETAIL

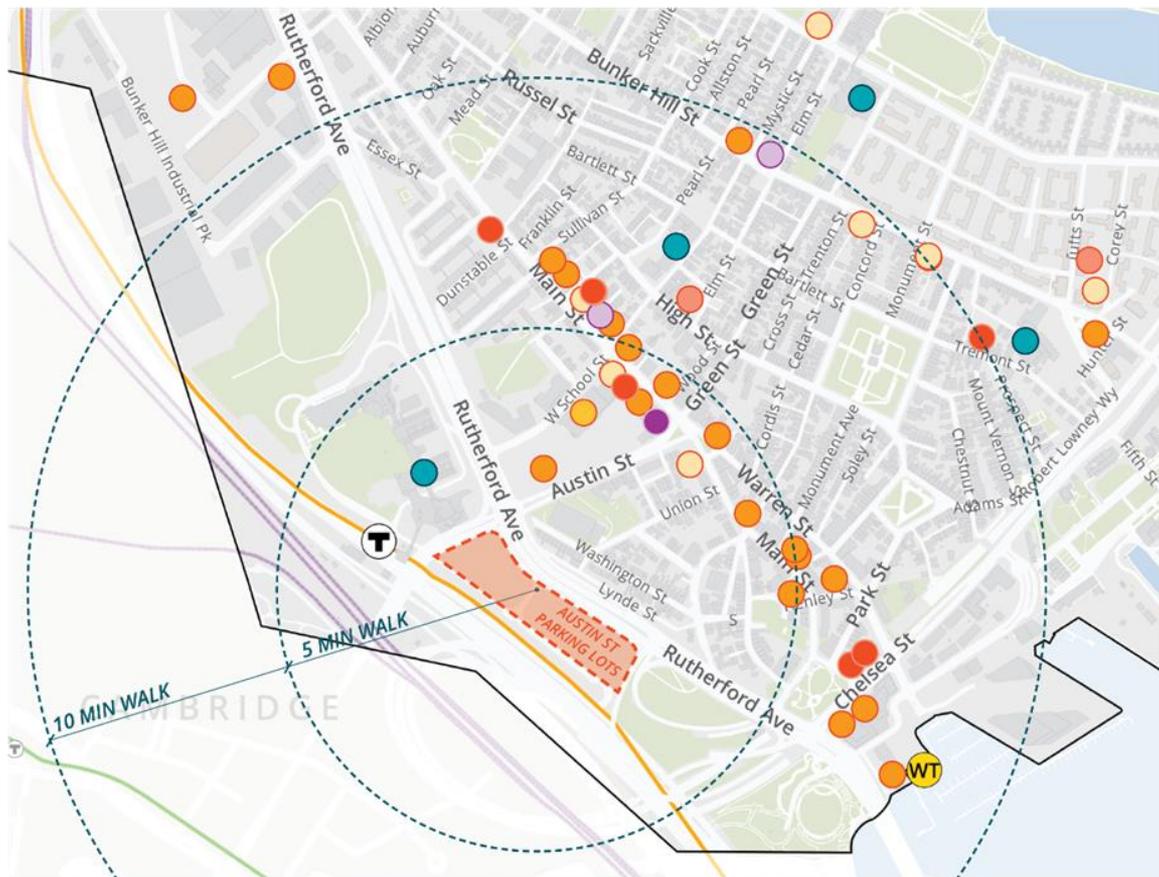
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What neighborhood services should be accommodated here?
2. What kinds retail/restaurants would you like to see accommodated here?
3. What kinds of community spaces would your neighborhood benefit from here?



ROOM 2 - GROUND FLOOR ACTIVATION / RETAIL

- INSTITUTION
- RESTUARANT
- GROCERY
- CONVENIENCE
- DRY CLEANER / TAILOR
- POST OFFICE
- HEALTH CENTER
- FITNESS BUSINESS



Map of Ground Floor Uses and Neighborhood Services in Walking Distance from the Site

ROOM 3 - OPEN SPACE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Who should the open space be for? (ex. Dogs, children, college students, seniors?)
2. What kinds of open spaces should be prioritized for inclusion? (ex. Butterfly gardens? Lacrosse/soccer fields? Playgrounds?)
3. How would you like to see climate resilience incorporated?



ROOM 3 - OPEN SPACE



Map of Open Space Network in Walking Distance from the Site

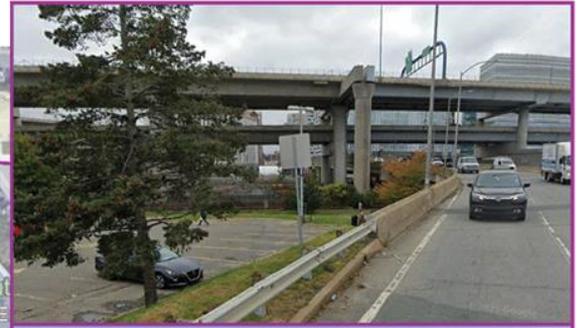
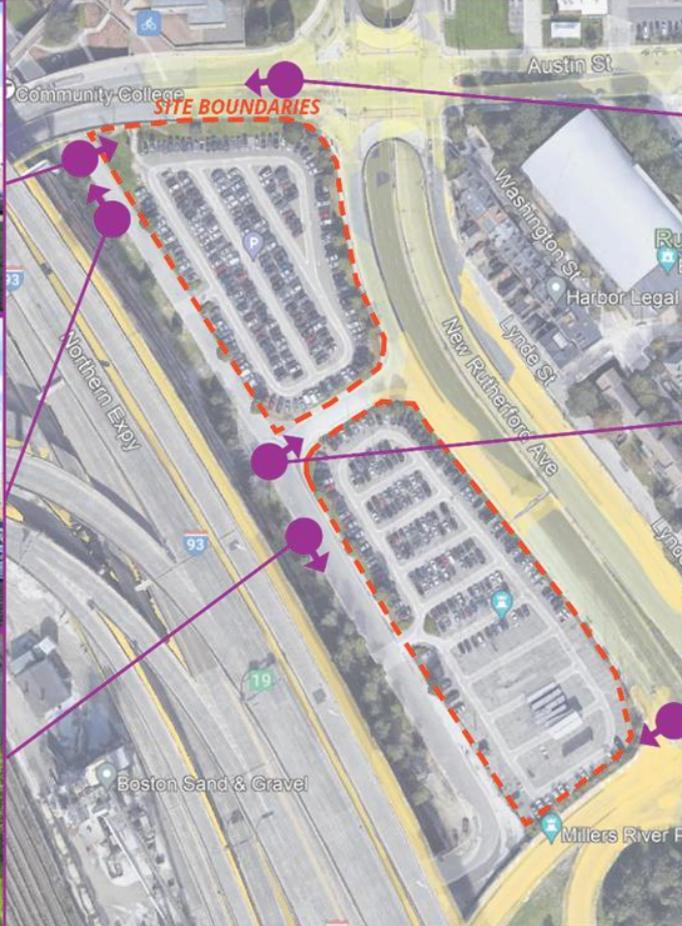
ROOM 4 - MOBILITY

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Where should people access the site and how should they move around it?
2. What kinds of transportation infrastructure should be prioritized on the site?
3. How should the site tie into the city's larger transportation network?

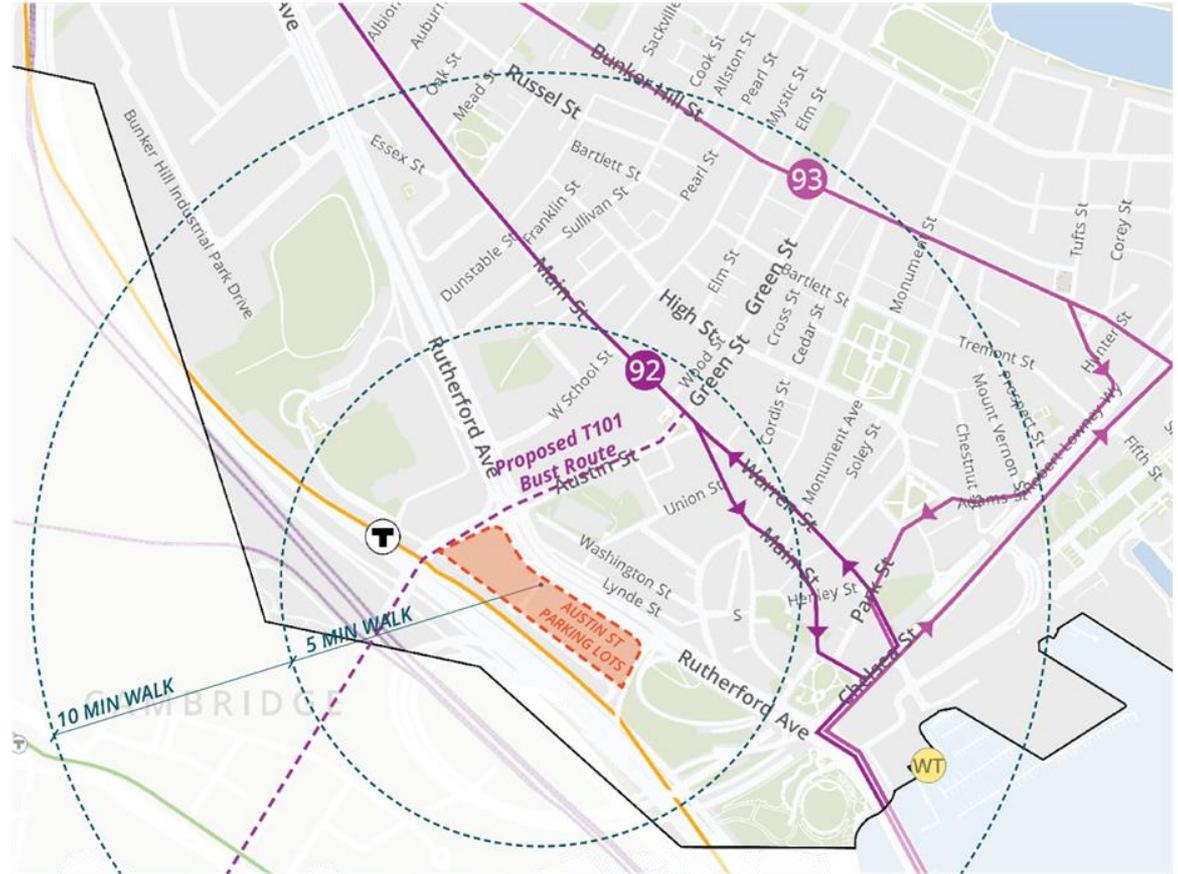


ROOM 4 - MOBILITY



Views of the Site

ROOM 4 - MOBILITY



Map of Transportation Network in Walking Distance from the Site

Summary of Participation

- 7 Listening Sessions → **56 different attendees**
- 9 Surveys → **952 survey submissions**
 - 858 (90%) online
 - 94 (10%) paper
- 4 Tabling events
 - **200+ postcards** distributed (English + Spanish)
 - **150+ paper surveys** distributed (English + Spanish)
- BPS High School Student Walks → **29 Students**
 - Joint effort w/ the Private Industry Council (PIC) Internship program
- Pints with a Planner → **60+ Attendees**
- CNC Meeting → **12 Attendees**
- Coming next month:
 - Coffee hour at Bunker Hill Housing with seniors
 - City Hall visit with Charlestown's Turn It Around youth group