

## Dear Neighbors,

As many of you know, over the last several years, the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) has been developing a comprehensive planning initiative to shape the future of our neighborhood: [PLAN: Charlestown](#). The Charlestown Preservation Society (CPS) has supported the process and goals of the PLAN from the beginning. **The release of the final draft is now live, and with a heavy heart, we are asking you to oppose the current plan.**

The document is an impressive body of work with many strong ideas for the creation of affordable housing, open space and new development. We are proud to have supported and advocated for these very important needs in the community, however, the PLAN contains new concepts that contradict its original goals and intention to positively shape the future of our neighborhood, it disregards the many comments CPS and others have submitted around the protection of historic Charlestown, and discounts the need for supportive infrastructure and services to underpin growth.

Our concerns lie within the PLAN's inability to protect the historic character of our neighborhood, its use of "aspirational goals" rather than data-backed recommendations, the City of Boston's and the MBTA's inability to responsibly plan necessary infrastructure and services, and its disregard of previous regional planning processes.

At the highest level, our concerns include:

- **Adding 10+ million more square feet than a 2019 regional planning study used as a basis for planning mobility in the region.**
  - A 2019 Lower Mystic Regional Planning Study indicated that Charlestown could add eight million square feet, this plan greatly exceeds that.
- **Doubling the existing building heights on Main Street (at the Bunker Hill Mall) from 35' (3-stories) to 70', 90' (8-stories) on Austin St and School St and 150' (14-stories) on Rutherford Ave.**
  - Previous drafts proposed 50' along Main Street and 90' on Rutherford, and the community clearly stated that the proposed heights were too tall for the abutting context of the historic neighborhood.

- **Increasing the building heights between Medford Street and the Mystic River (below historic Doherty Park) from what is now 55' to 180'. (Taller than the historic Schrafft's tower)**
  - Previous drafts proposed a max building height of 50-120' (the scale of Charlestown's industrial waterfront.) The final draft raised the heights despite clear planning recommendations for 120' max and community concerns.
- **The PLAN's use of aspirational goals to reduce personal vehicle use by 50 percent. That number is not based on data, planning or forecasting.**
  - The planning consultants have stated that even if this happens, traffic and gridlock will increase and back up into the neighborhood.
- **The BPDA's lack of planning to support population growth.**
  - The PLAN spends 90+ pages summarizing what Charlestown has now, rather than outlining strategies to support the future, such as partnerships with the MBTA, Boston Public Schools and Boston Parks and Recreation. It states the need for support once the population grows, but does not plan for it.
- **Inconsistent recommendations for approval of proposed developments that ignore the goals and recommendations for preservation and adaptive re-use of historic buildings.**
  - The [40 Roland Street](#) project proposes to demolish two historic buildings: 128 Cambridge Street and [40 Roland Street](#). The BPDA is moving them forward for board approval despite clear PLAN recommendations for preservation and reuse.
  - 1-2 Thompson Square addition was recommended for approval despite the project's requirements to demolish portions of the historic mansard roofline.
  - The 10 Thompson Square project was recommended for approval with insufficient off-street parking required of buildings with over 6 units.

The BPDA is closing out the PLAN: Charlestown process prematurely in order to approve development projects. Public comments are due by Sept. 6th, a "close-out" meeting is scheduled for Sep 11th and zoning amendments produced from the PLAN will go in front of the BPDA board for approval Sep 16th.

We have lost faith in the process and our comments have been ignored. Charlestown deserves a thoughtful, well considered plan that meaningfully seeks to preserve, grow and enhance the neighborhood, its infrastructure and services responsibly. **This draft is**

**not that plan. We ask that you join us in opposing PLAN: Charlestown for these reasons by emailing and calling the following:**

- Mayor Michelle Wu: [Mayor@boston.gov](mailto:Mayor@boston.gov)
- Chief of Planning, Arthur Jemison: [arthur.jemison@boston.gov](mailto:arthur.jemison@boston.gov)
- Councilor for District 1, Gabriela Coletta: [gabriela.coletta@boston.gov](mailto:gabriela.coletta@boston.gov)
- Representative Dan Ryan: [dan.ryan@mahouse.gov](mailto:dan.ryan@mahouse.gov)
- Office of Neighborhood Services, Sean Breen: [sean.breen@boston.gov](mailto:sean.breen@boston.gov)
- Liaison to the BPDA, Jason Ruggiero: [jason.ruggiero@boston.gov](mailto:jason.ruggiero@boston.gov)

Public comment is open until September 6, 2023, and comments should also be submitted via this [feedback form](#).

Thank you for your support in protecting our neighborhood,  
*CPS*