

A VISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN BOSTON

Murray G. Miller, Director of Preservation, City of Boston

The logo for the City of Boston, featuring a white capital letter 'B' on a black square background with a red horizontal bar at the bottom.

B

POLISH AMERICAN CITIZENS CLUB



FIRST LOCALLY-DESIGNATED HISTORIC DISTRICT



Source: Peabody Essex Museum

505

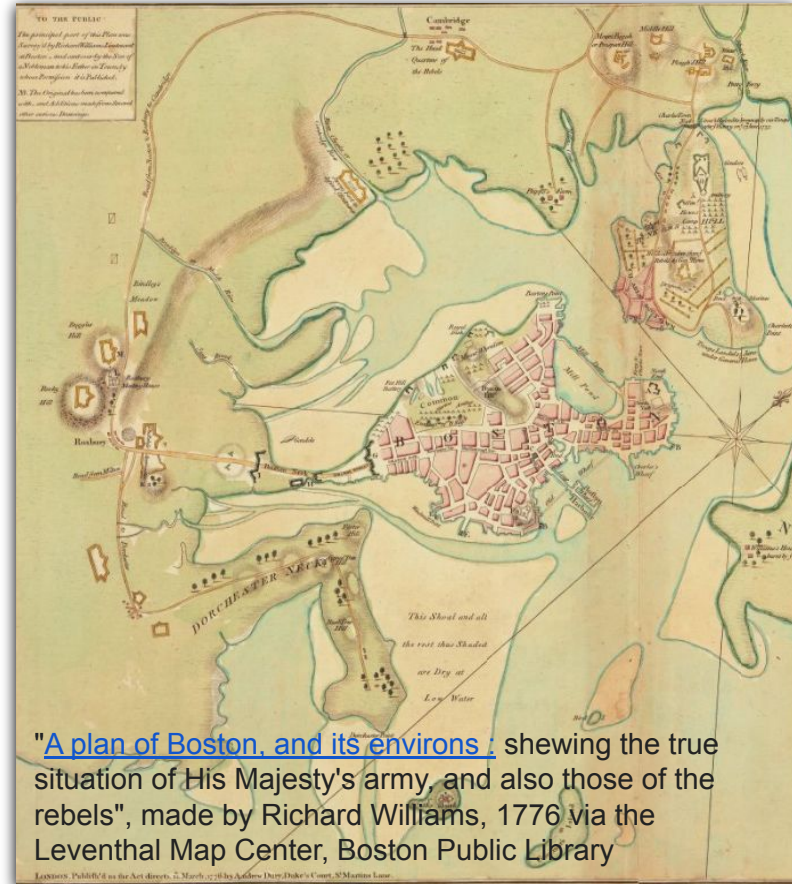


THE SIEGE OF BOSTON



Source: Peabody Essex Museum

5 of 5



"[A plan of Boston, and its environs](#)" shewing the true situation of His Majesty's army, and also those of the rebels", made by Richard Williams, 1776 via the Leventhal Map Center, Boston Public Library



BEACON HILL (SOUTHERN SLOPE)



Source: City Archives



BEACON HILL (NORTHERN SLOPE)



Source: City Archives



Source: City Archives



BEACON HILL HISTORIC DISTRICTS (THEN AND NOW)



Source: Boston Landmarks Commission



Source: Peabody Essex Museum



66 PHILLIPS STREET (LEWIS AND HARRIET HAYDEN HOUSE)



Source: Historic New England



5 PINCKNEY STREET (LOUIS GLAPION/GEORGE MIDDLETON HOUSE)



Source: Historic New England

*Greetings from
The Oldest House on Beacon Hill*



STABLE AT SHIRLEY EUSTIS HOUSE



Source: Boston Archaeology

Inset photo; photo showing the original interior roof structure likely dating back to the structure's original construction.



STABLE AT S. EUSTIS HOUSE

CHARLESTOWN



CODMAN SQUARE



Source: Boston Public Library Feb. 25, 1925



Source: Boston Landmarks



FIELDS CORNER



BLUE HILL AVENUE



Source: City Archives



NEW YORK STREETS



Source; Boston Public Library



Source, City Archives



SCOLLY SQUARE



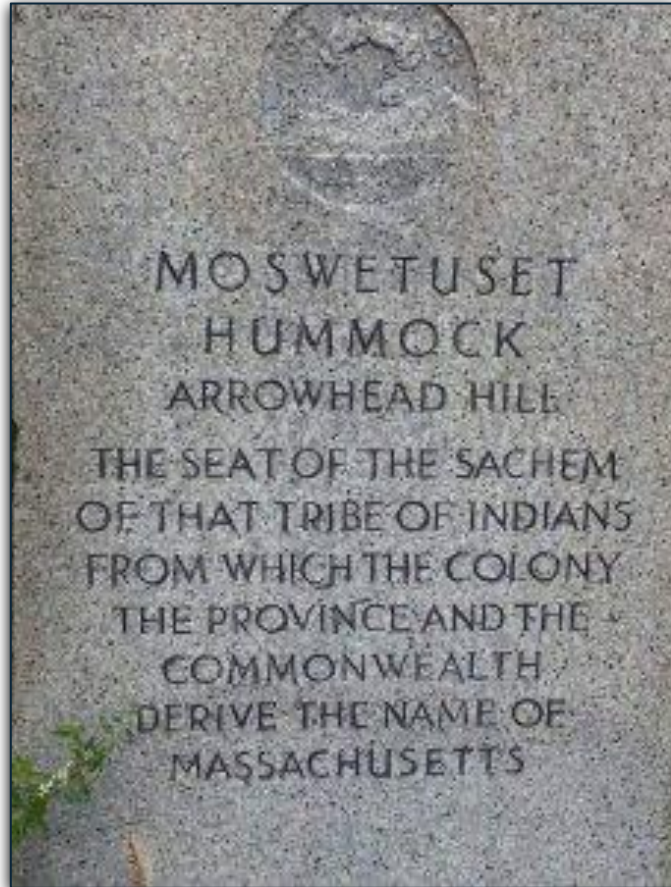
Source: Boston Public Library



Source: Boston Public Library



EARLY DISPLACEMENT - MASSACHUSETT TRIBE



Source: A People's Guide to Firsting and Lasting In Boston



HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAMS



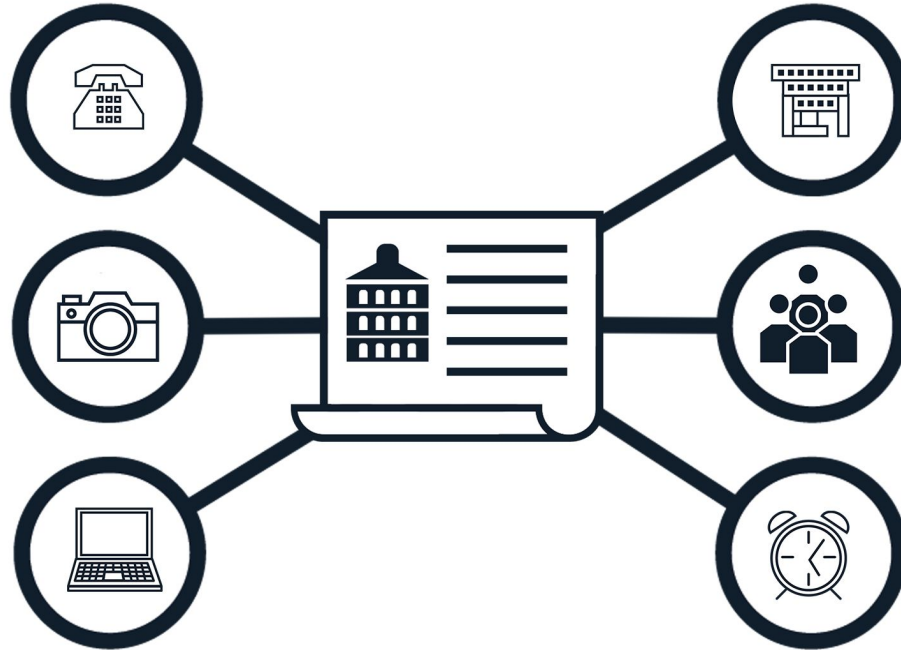
**100% OF STAFF TIME IS
PROCESSING APPLICATIONS AND
DESIGNATING LANDMARKS**



BEACON HILL



A RESOURCE INTENSIVE APPROACH





OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ORGANIZATION (EXISTING CONDITIONS)

B

A VISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN BOSTON

CHALLENGES

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Information Gaps
Time and Resources
Traditional Practice of Historic Preservation
Legislation, Regulations, and Processes
Climate Change
Affordable Housing
Development Pressure
Different Values
Environmental Stewardship
Historic Resource Surveys
Education and Awareness
Customer Experience
Interdepartmental Collaboration

OPPORTUNITIES

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OHP ORGANIZATION (EXISTING CONDITIONS)



City of Boston
Historic Preservation

DEPARTMENT STAFFING

DIRECTOR OF OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION	7%
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ARCHAEOLOGY	26%
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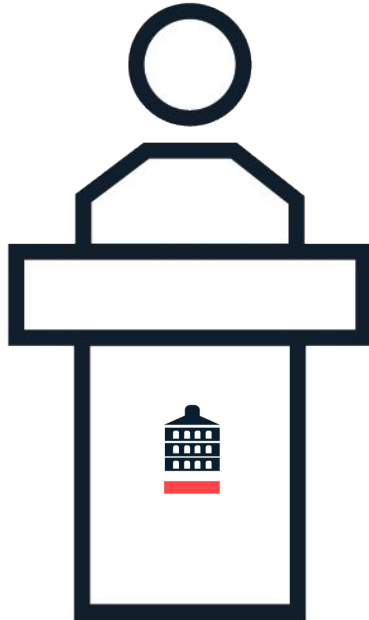
LANDMARKS	60%
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COMMEMORATION	7%
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LANDMARKS COMMISSION



11 HISTORIC COMMISSIONS

18 LANDMARKS COMMISSIONERS

76 DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

94 TOTAL*

Volunteers drawn from a limited pool that increases with each district designation.

**Members & Alternates*



A VISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN BOSTON

LANDMARKS COMMISSION

A scenic view of a park with a large tree, a body of water, and a field of white tulips. Two people are walking in the distance.

LANDMARKS COMMISSION

KEY GOALS & PRIORITIES

GOAL: *To ensure equity and inclusion in the identification, study, and protection of Boston's diverse historic resources in every neighborhood of the city and for the benefit and enjoyment of all Bostonians.*

SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES

- *Provide strong support for and participate in the planning initiative to revise or **replace Article 85 (Demolition Delay Ordinance)**.*
- *Support efforts to **revise the Boston landmarking state legislative language***

LONG-TERM PRIORITIES

- *Update and expand citywide survey of historic resources*



OHP ORGANIZATION (EXISTING CONDITIONS)



City of Boston
Historic Preservation

DEPARTMENT STAFFING

DIRECTOR OF
OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION 7%



ARCHAEOLOGY 26%



LANDMARKS 60%



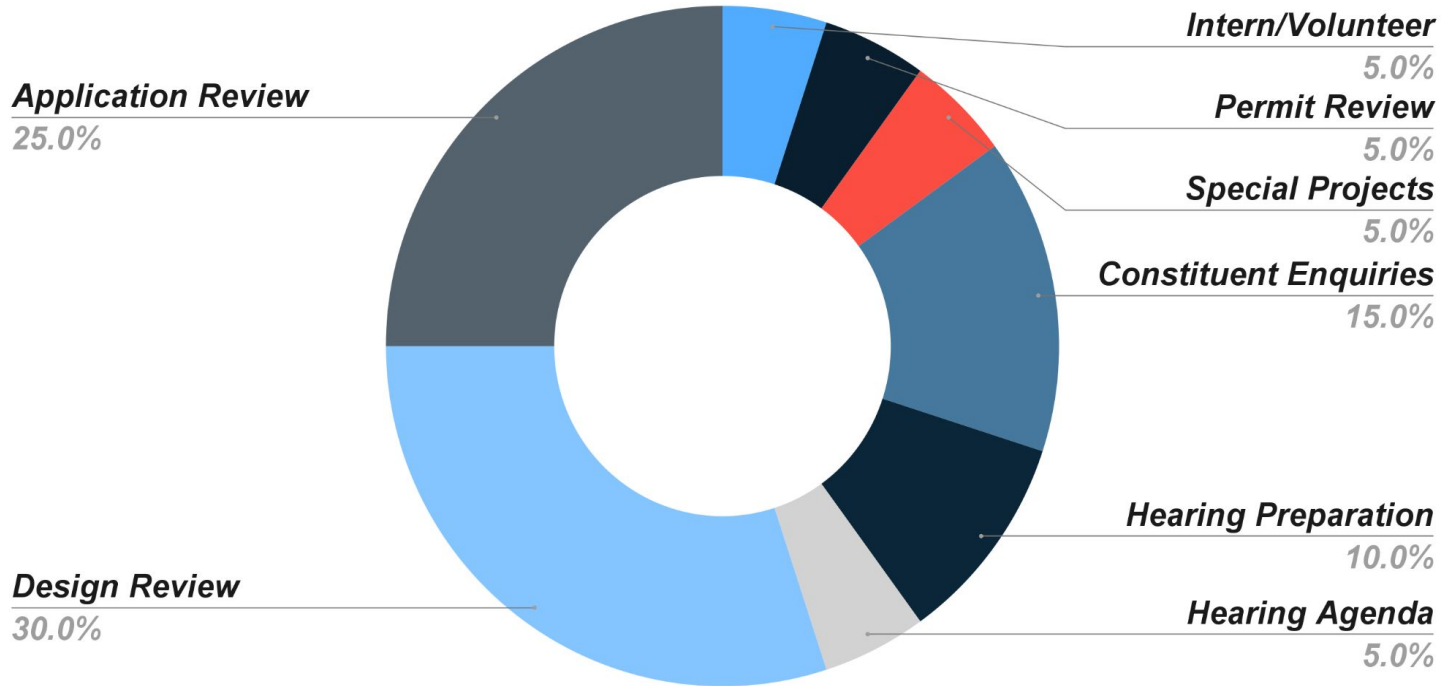
COMMEMORATION 7%

STAFF TIME

1. Designations
2. Design Review
3. Other



OHP ORGANIZATION (EXISTING CONDITIONS)



**DESIGN
REVIEW
STAFF
TIME
62%**



+ Hearing Management After Hours



OHP ORGANIZATION (EXISTING CONDITIONS)



City of Boston
Landmarks Commission

95% of design review applications that are required to go to District Commissions **are substantially appropriate** as a **result of staff's design review** with applicants before a public hearing



OHP ORGANIZATION (EXISTING CONDITIONS)



City of Boston
Landmarks Commission

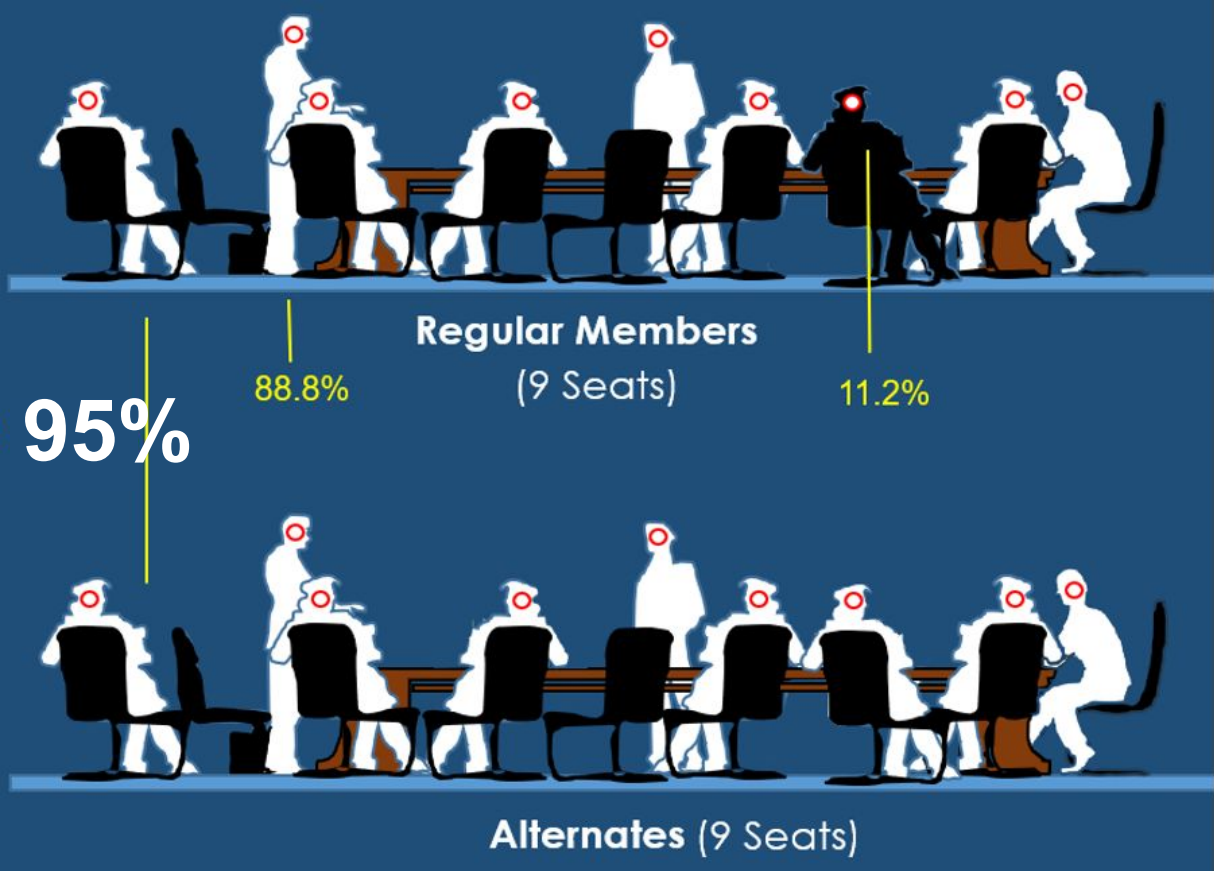


95% of design review applications that are required to go to the Commission **are substantially appropriate** as a **result of staff's design review** with applicants before a public hearing

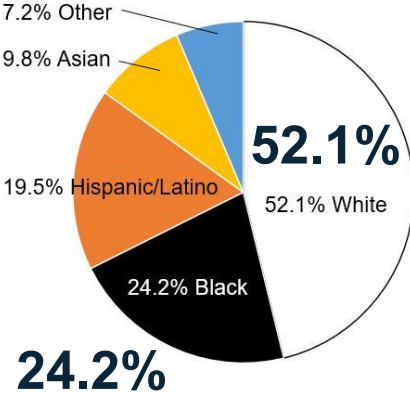
95% of the **13,000 applications** to the Landmarks Preservation Commission receives in a typical year are **resolved at the staff level.**



LANDMARKS COMMISSION

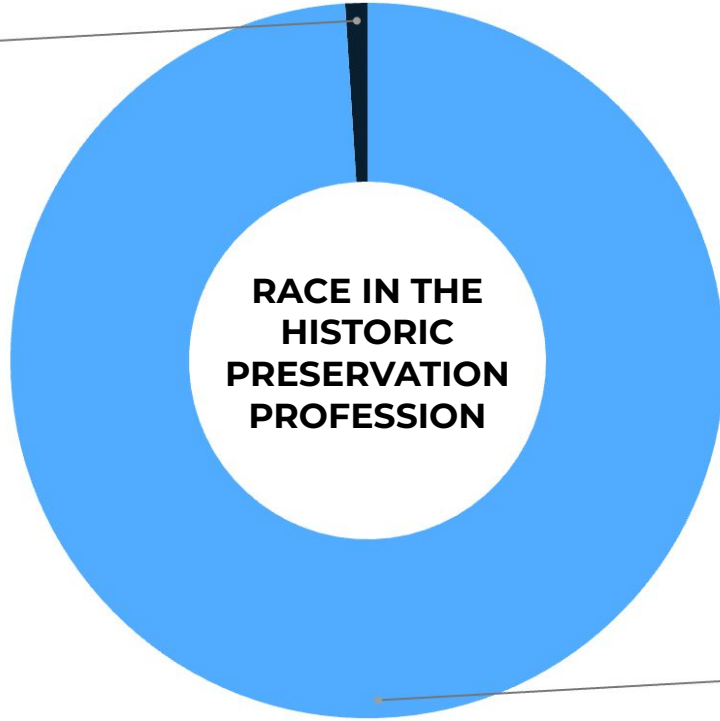


CITY OF BOSTON DEMOGRAPHICS



THE PRACTICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

All Other Races
1.0%



White
99%



<https://www.rethos.org/post/equity-in-historic-preservation-elevating-unheard-voices>



A VISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN BOSTON

COMMEMORATION COMMISSION

A blue-tinted photograph of a historic building with a statue in the foreground, surrounded by lush green trees. The statue is a full-length standing figure on a pedestal, set against a backdrop of dense foliage. The building features arched windows and classical architectural details.

COMMEMORATION COMMISSION

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOSTON COMMEMORATION COMMISSION (BCC)

To advise the Mayor and relevant departments on making Boston's celebrations of historic anniversaries, preservation policies, and tools, robust and inclusive of all history.

GOALS

- **EVENTS, EXHIBITS, AND TRAILS SUBCOMMITTEE**
 - *producing recommendations for events and exhibits*
- **TIMELINES, ARCHIVES, AND CURRICULA SUBCOMMITTEE**
 - *timeline of significant historical events in Boston*
- **LEGISLATION AND PRESERVATION TOOLS SUBCOMMITTEE**
 - *Complete citywide historic building survey*
 - *Reforms for the Article 85 process*





POLICIES AND TOOLS



COMMEMORATION COMMISSION



POLICIES AND TOOLS

**TOURISM &
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**



COMMEMORATION COMMISSION



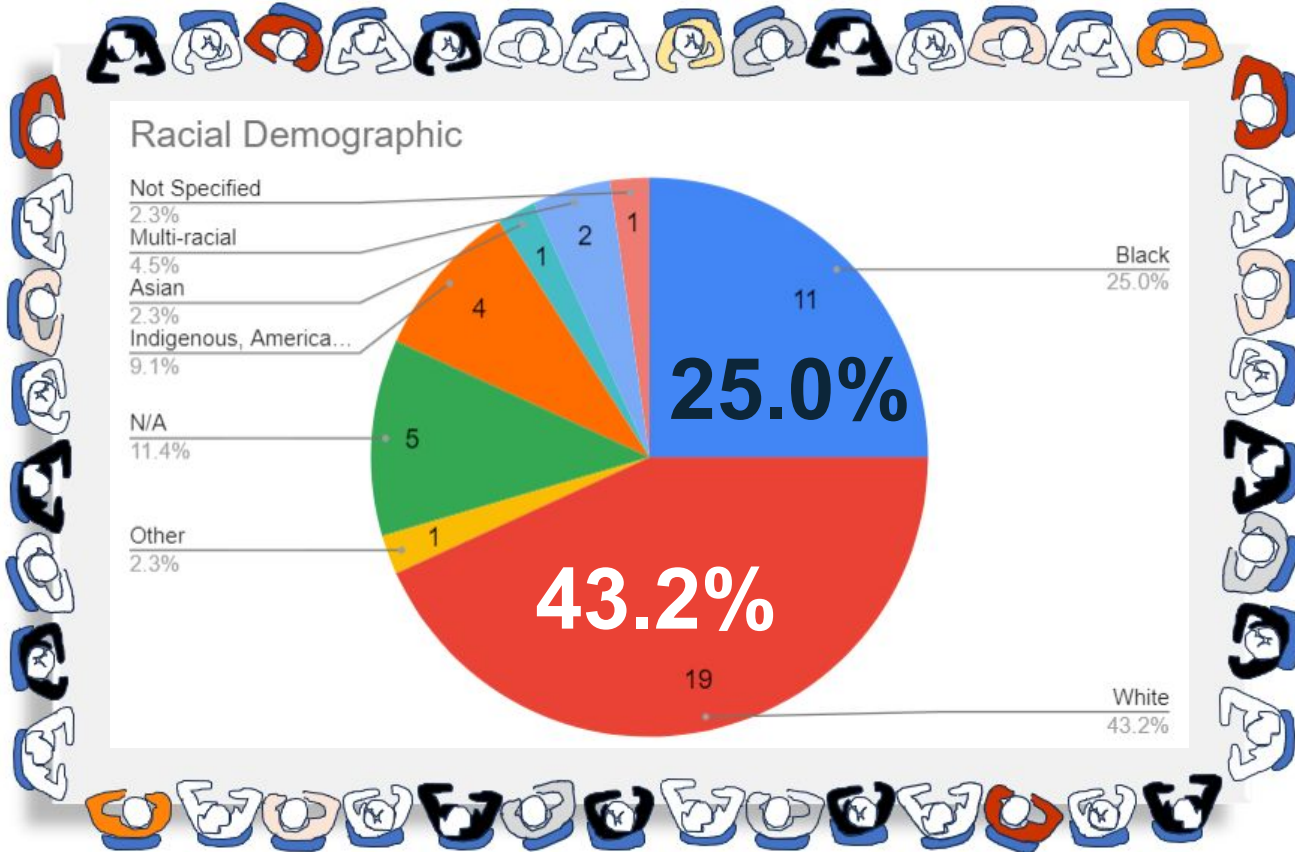
COMMEMORATION COMMISSION



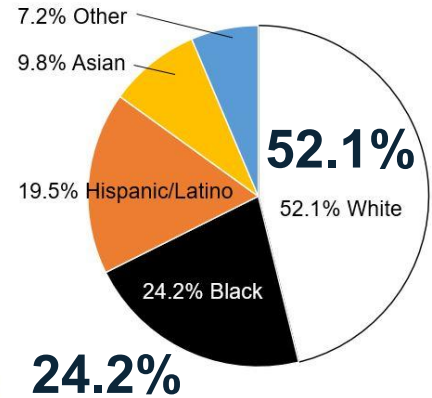
COMMEMORATION COMMISSION



COMMEMORATION COMMISSION



CITY OF BOSTON DEMOGRAPHICS



A VISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN BOSTON

ARCHAEOLOGY PROGRAM

A scenic view of a park with a pond, trees, and a field of white tulips. Two people are walking on the grass near the water.

FOCUS

- *Battle of Bunker Hill, Charlestown*
- *Redoubt, landscape, burials, and homes destroyed by fires*
- *Diverse histories, including:*
 - *Native and Black participants in Battle*
 - *Native grave protection*
 - *Enslaved members of Charlestown households*
 - *Women and Children at home*
 - *Pre-1775 Institutional organizations of Charlestown that may represent diversity*



ARCHAEOLOGY PROGRAM

“COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY”

- *Research questions designed/asked by communities impacted by the stories*
- *Archaeological dig designed by COB Archaeology to attempt to answer the questions*
- *Community participates in dig and analysis*



Source: Boston Archaeology



ARCHAEOLOGY PROGRAM (INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS)



First official meeting between the Massachusett Tribe and any Mayor of the City of Boston

(Photo left by Bob Allison) Showing VP of the Massachusett, Thomas Green, and City Archaeologist giving a Suffolk University class a tour of the archaeology and Native history of Boston Common



A VISION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN BOSTON

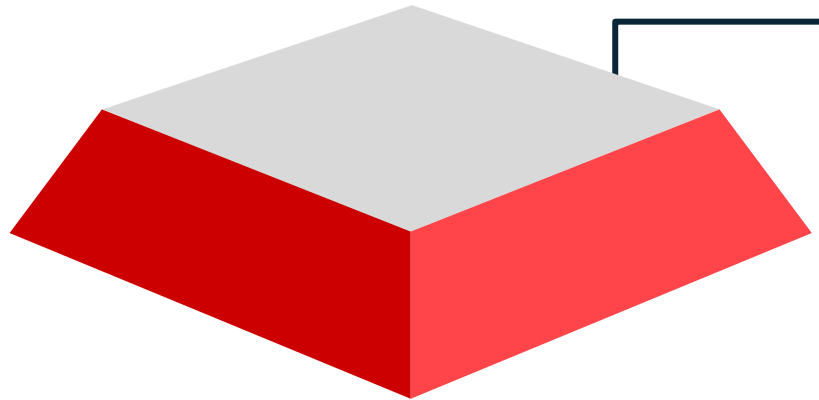
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

(Proposed)



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (PROPOSED)

REVIEW EXISTING REGULATIONS WITH THE BLC THAT COULD SUPPORT STREAMLINING



1. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- *Streamlining Regulations and Processes*
- *Existing Resources Alignment*

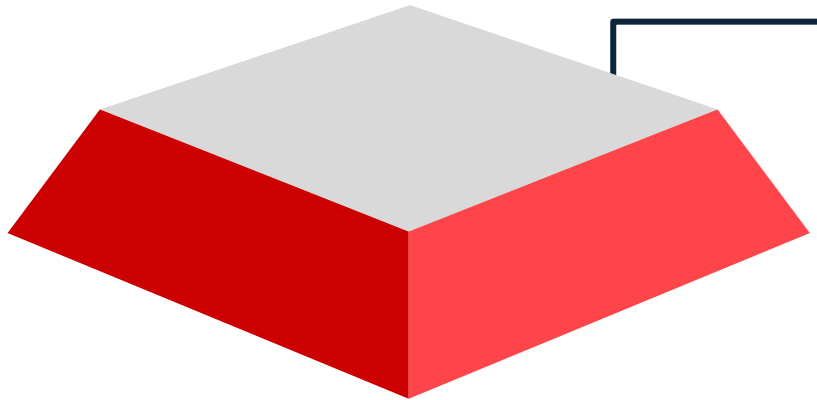


STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (PROPOSED)

REVIEW EXISTING REGULATIONS WITH THE BLC THAT COULD SUPPORT STREAMLINING



STREAMLINING THE DESIGNATION PROCESS



1. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- *Streamlining Regulations and Processes*
- *Existing Resources Alignment*



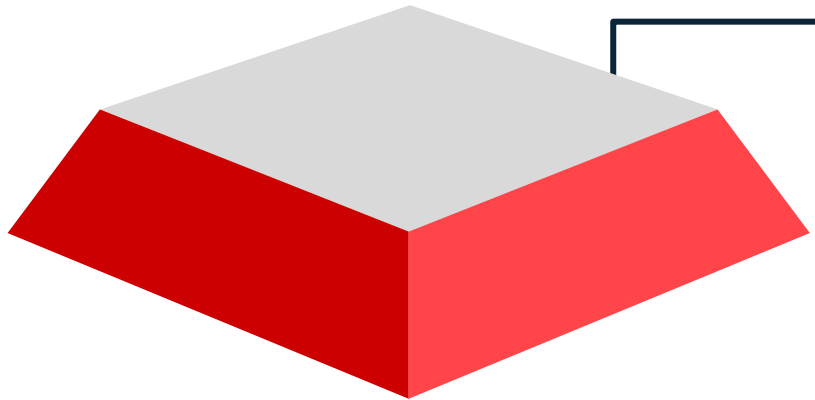
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STREAMLINING THE DESIGNATION PROCESS

STREAMLINING THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

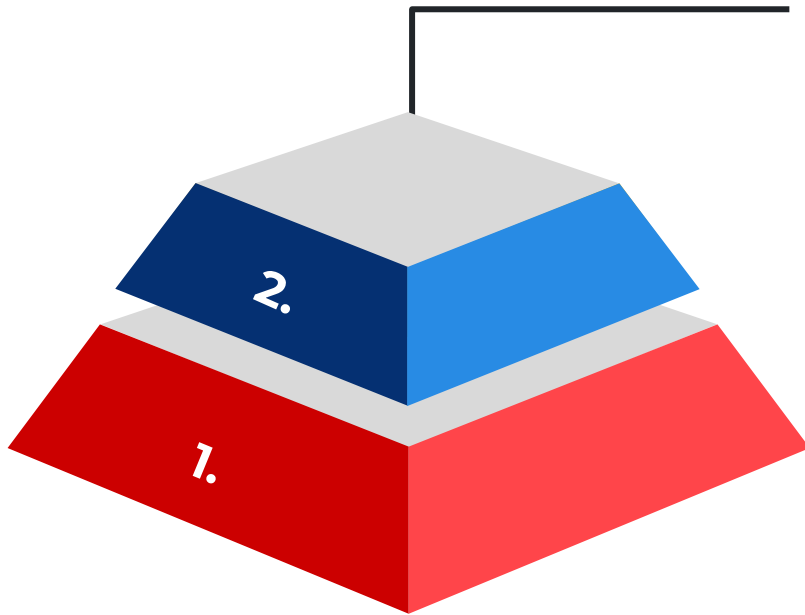


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STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (PROPOSED)

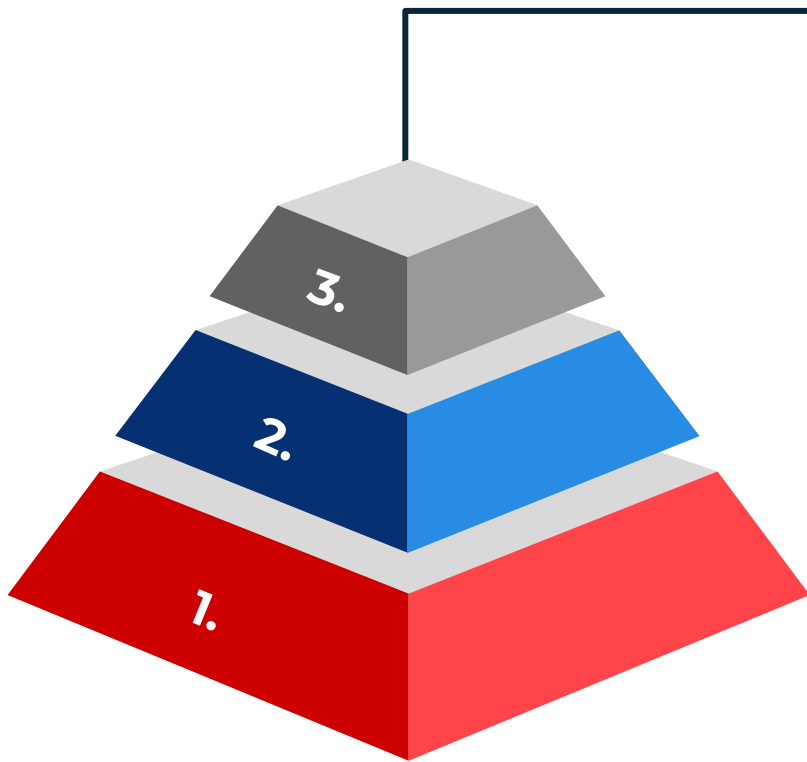


2. ALLOWING FOR:

- *Development of a Historic Context Statement for Untold Stories - 250th Anniversary.*
- *Undertaking Historic Resource Surveys focused on Underserved Communities*



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (PROPOSED)

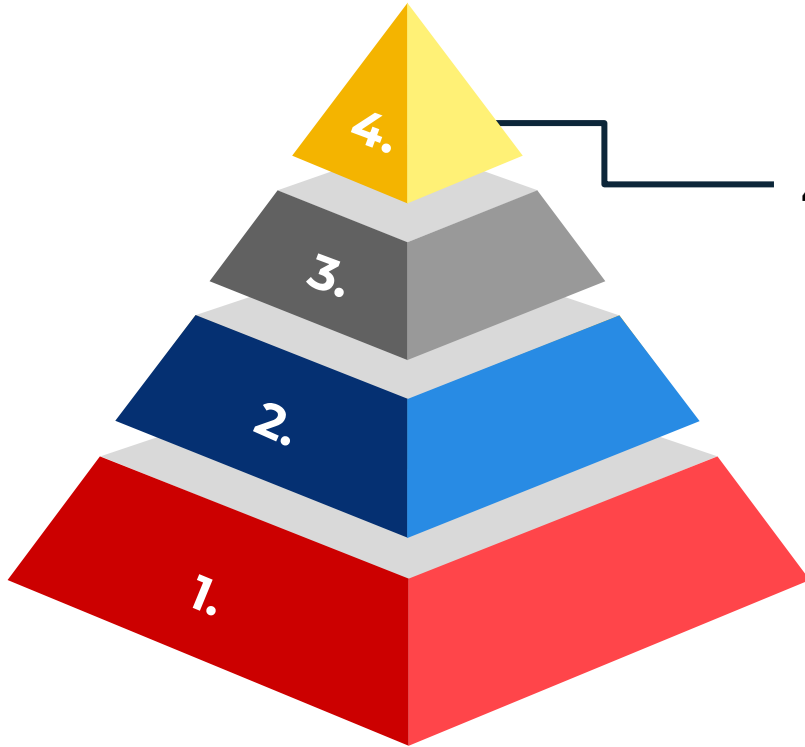


3. ALLOWING FOR

- *Rethinking Article 85 (Demolition Delay) as a Climate Action Strategy*
- *Supporting Environmental Stewardship/Sustainability through Historic Preservation Pilot Projects*
- *Demonstration Projects that Leverage Historic Preservation in Support of Economic Development Objectives*
- *Exploring Underutilized/Distressed Homes as Affordable Housing Option*
- *Flood Mitigation Pilot Projects as a Climate Action Mitigation Measure*



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (PROPOSED)



4. PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY FOR

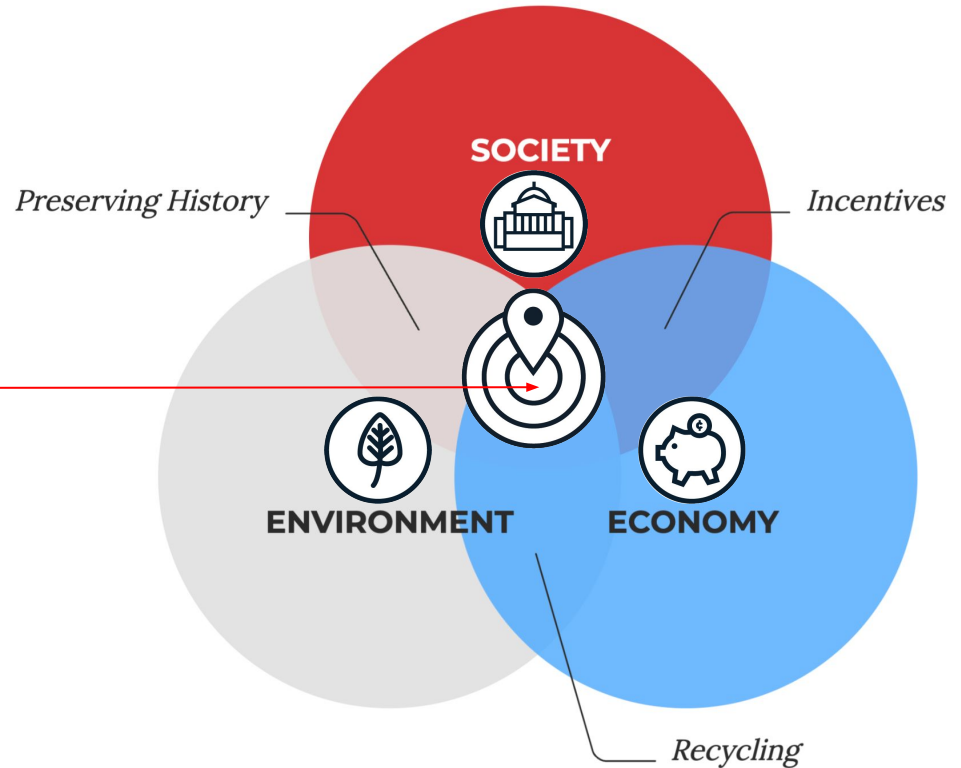
- *Broadening the Historic Preservation Program/ Relevancy*
- *Education & Awareness*
- *Excellence in Customer Service*
- *Interdepartmental Collaboration*



RETHINKING ARTICLE 85

DRAW STRENGTH FROM

- *Climate Action Plan (2019)*
- *Zero Waste Boston*
- *Historic Preservation Best Practices*



RETHINKING ARTICLE 85

ARTICLE 85

Incentivizing the optimization of embodied energy and providing for intensification that leaves a smaller carbon footprint.



INCENTIVES

Incentivizing interventions to mitigate climate change and facilitate energy efficiency actions in underserved communities



PRESERVING HISTORY

Preserving the history of Boston that is inclusive with a focus on underserved communities

DRAW STRENGTHS FROM



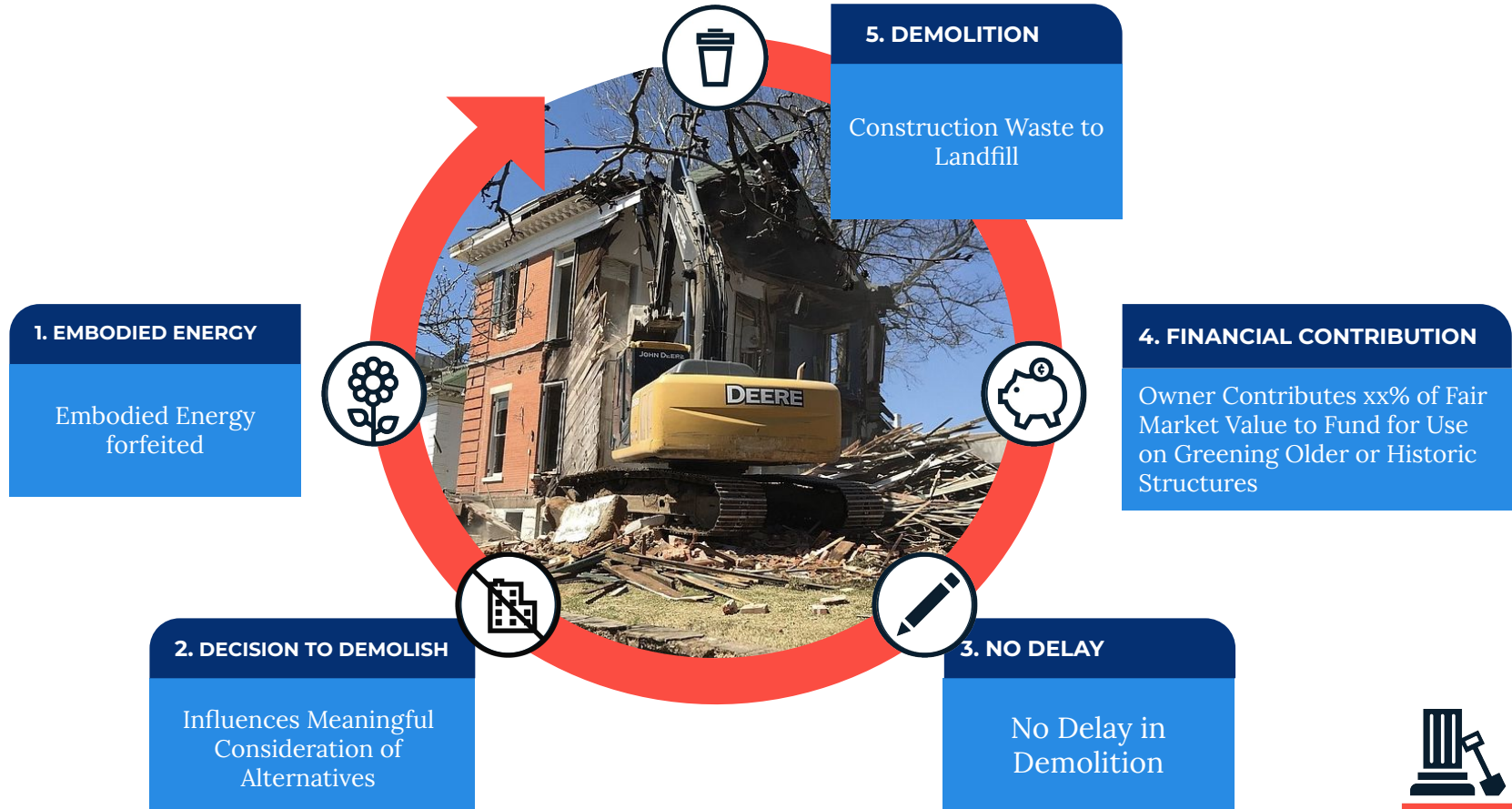
Preserving History



Recycling






RETHINKING ARTICLE 85



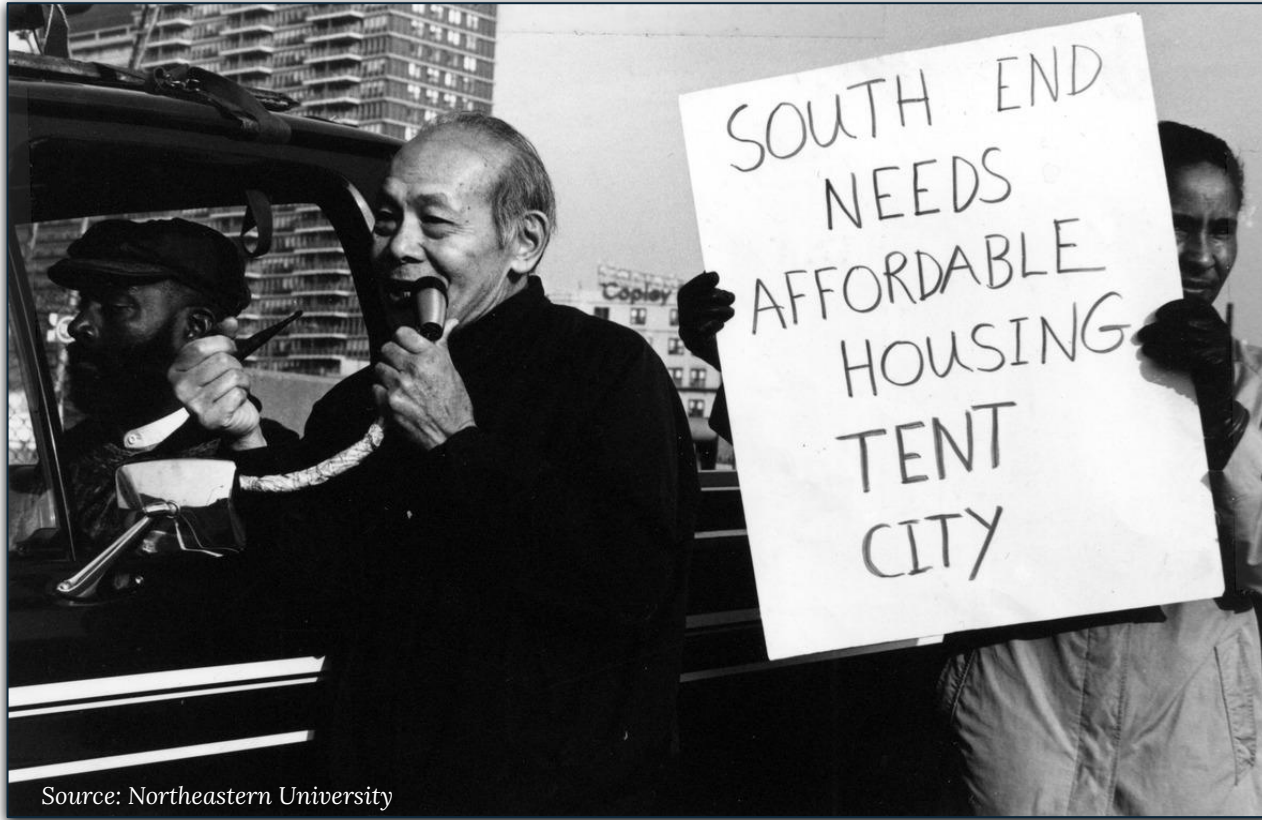
RETHINKING ARTICLE 85

POTENTIAL INITIATIVES TO CONSIDER

	UPGRADES	Repairing and upgrading older and historic properties in underserved communities to withstand future climate change
	RESHAPE BEHAVIOR	Using funds from a potential “rethink” of Article 85 to shape behaviors from those that contribute to adverse climate impacts to those that increase better environmental outcomes
	INCREASE DENSITY	Identifying opportunities to increase density in older and historic neighborhoods while creating affordable housing options that mitigate the prospects of displacement



HOUSING AFFORDABILITY



Source: Northeastern University



UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTION



3

43% OF DISTRESSED PROPERTIES IN BOSTON ARE SINGLE FAMILY HOMES



43% of distressed properties are single family.

4

MOST OF THE DISTRESSED PROPERTIES ARE LOCATED IN DORCHESTER, ROXBURY, AND MATTAPAN



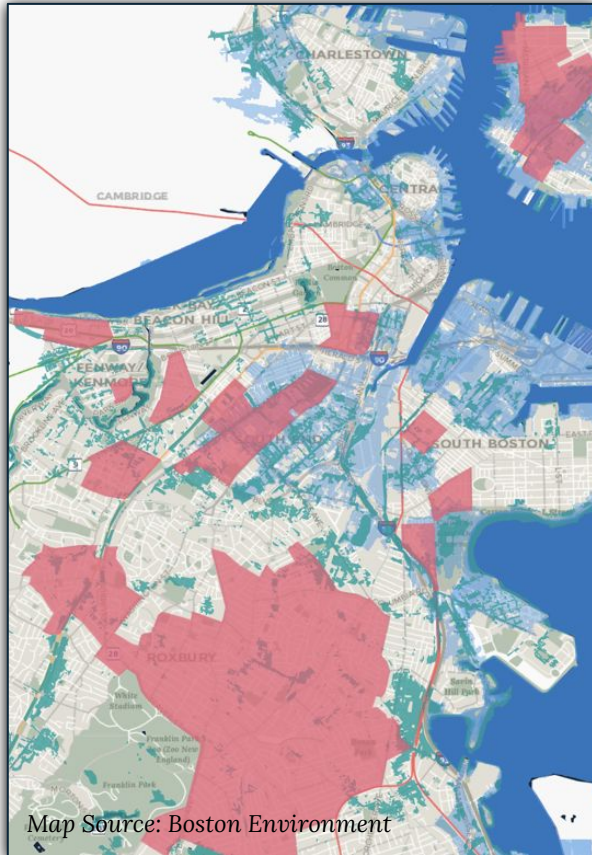
CLIMATE CHANGE



Source: WBUR



CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGIES



CURRENT STATUS

City of Boston has begun a partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete a Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study.

OBSERVATIONS

Flood hazards would impact Eastern edge of South End Landmark District, Fort Point Channel HD, Fort Point Channel Seaport Blvd Protection Area, “A” Street Protection Area, and certain Downtown landmarks.

INITIATIVES TO CONSIDER



Advance nominations for landmark designation that involve properties subject to sea level rise.



Establish incentive program for property owners subject to sea level rise.

CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGIES



1

BUILDINGS ARE THE LARGEST CONSUMERS OF ENERGY - U.S. EPA

2

THE MOST SEVERE HARMS FROM CLIMATE CHANGE FALL DISPROPORTIONATELY UPON UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

3

70% OF EMISSIONS IN BOSTON COME FROM THE BUILDING SECTOR - City of Boston Environment Department



CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGIES



Source: 2019 City of Boston Distressed Properties Report

INITIATIVES TO CONSIDER



Direct Grant Pilot Project in Underserved Communities such as Mattapan, Chinatown, etc.



Energy Audits for Commercial, Institutional, Multi-Family Structures

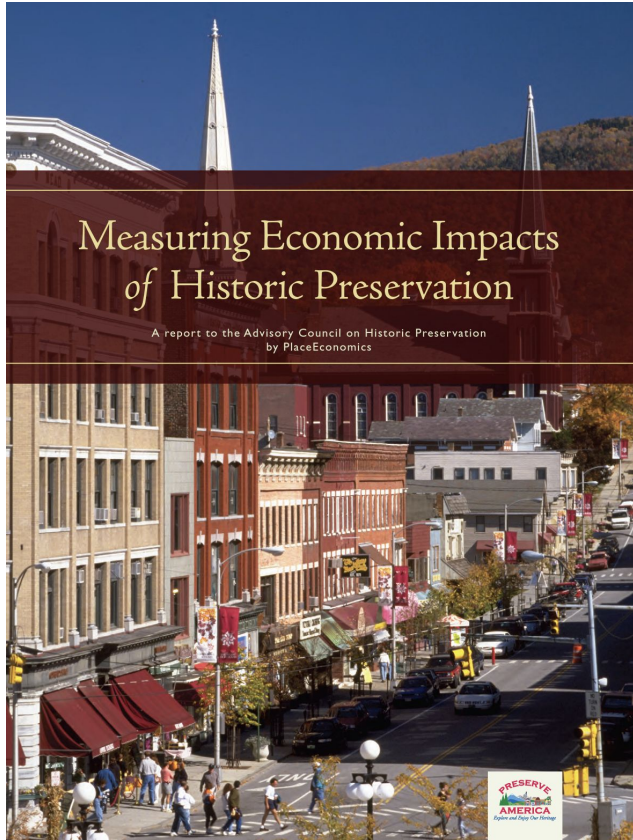


Weatherization, Decarbonization, and cooling of Older and Historic Buildings



Hazardous Material Mitigation and Education on Basic Home Maintenance

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HISTORIC PRESERVATION



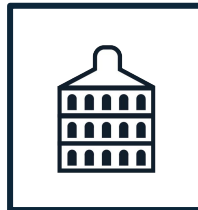
CURRENT STATUS

While historic preservation contributes significantly to Boston's local economy, the ability to capitalize and leverage its benefits is limited.

OBSERVATIONS

Historic preservation is a powerful tool for housing and economic development. Historic preservation makes a significant contribution to Boston through tourism and the rehabilitation of historic places.

INITIATIVES TO CONSIDER



Expedite any application that rescues/utilizes a threatened, underutilized, or distressed eligible or historic property for affordable housing in underserved communities



**UPLIFTING
UNDERREPRESENTED
COMMUNITIES AND
MITIGATING ADVERSE
EFFECTS OF CLIMATE
CHANGE THROUGH HISTORIC
PRESERVATION**



City of Boston
Historic Preservation

EYE ON INVESTMENT

Toward an Equitable and Sustainable Vision for
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
in BOSTON



City of Boston
Historic Preservation

**EYE ON THE 250TH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
UNITED STATES**

21st CENTURY CHALLENGES

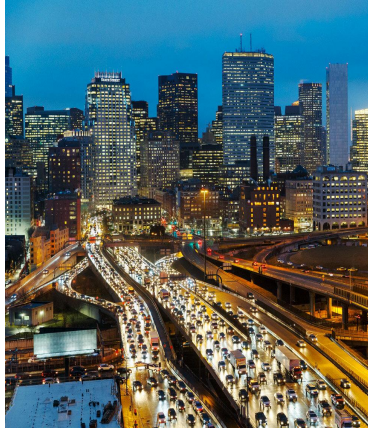


HEAT EMERGENCY

A heat emergency has been declared in Boston from **Thursday, July 27** through **Friday, July 28**.

boston.gov/heat

CITY of **BOSTON**



EYE ON STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

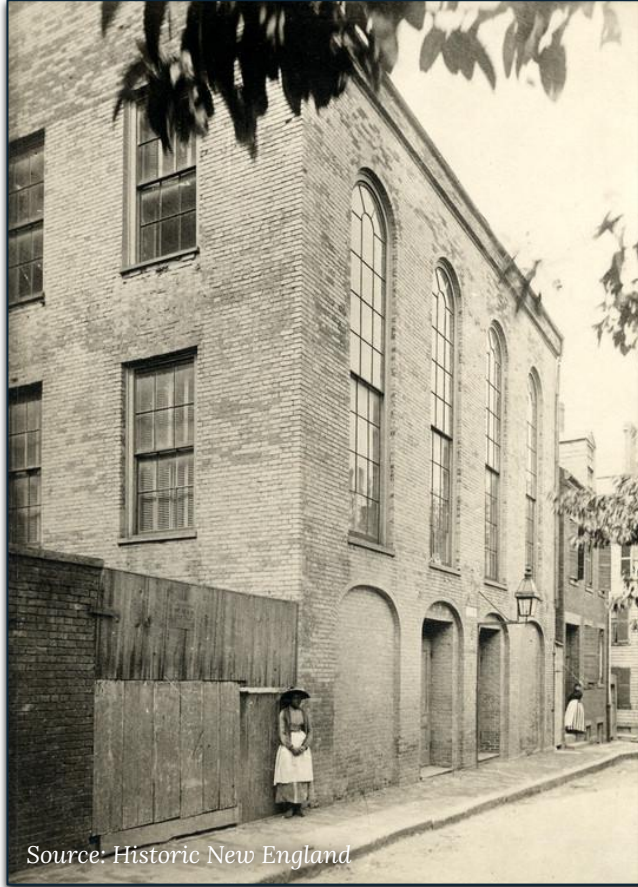


City of Boston
Historic Preservation

- **STREAMLINING REGULATIONS, PROCESSES AND PRACTICES**
 - **HISTORIC CONTEXT**
- HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEYS
- **PRIORITIZING AND ADVANCING LANDMARK DESIGNATIONS**
 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS
- **REVITALIZE UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES**
 - CLIMATE RESILIENCE
 - **ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- **EDUCATION AND AWARENESS**
 - INTERDEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION

MEETING HOUSE

CHINATOWN



Source: Historic New England



Source: Chinese Historical Society of New England



Source: BPL



VISION STATEMENT



City of Boston
Historic Preservation

By 2030, Boston's Office of Historic Preservation will be nationally known for its transformative efforts to uncover, share, and preserve local stories of the city's rich history, advancing environmental stewardship and uplifting underserved communities for the benefit of present and future generations

THANK YOU



Q&A Session



NEXT STEPS

- Vision Feedback
- Community Engagement
- Action Planning
- Interdepartmental Engagement
- Community Engagement

