



## Land Use and Development 2026 Policy Agenda

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A Better City's 2026 Land Use and Development Policy Agenda focuses on four priority goals that provide a framework for action. Additionally, as new opportunities for engagement arise, A Better City will monitor and advocate for the incorporation of the following cross cutting performance measures into all city and state planning processes to ensure legitimate and acceptable outcomes: predictability, transparency, clarity, and engagement.

### Goal 1: Support Improvements to the Process of Planning and Development in Boston

- Leverage the expertise of A Better City members to monitor and provide feedback on implementation of the Article 80 Modernization initiative and ensure predictability and transparency that supports a clear connection between development impacts and community benefits.
- Monitor city-wide zoning reform, including the adoption of measures that are part of the stated goal of shifting orientation of City-wide zoning from neighborhood-based efforts to focus attention on mixed-use nodes within the neighborhoods.
- Analyze lessons learned from the Squares and Streets Initiative, which is the first step of this reform.
- Monitor the impact of recently adopted Downtown Zoning changes.

### Goal 2: Support Measures to Enhance the Post-Pandemic Revitalization of Downtown and Other Commercial Areas

- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of City of Boston programs aimed at enhancing downtown vitality including residential conversion of underutilized office buildings, enhancement of nightlife activity, sidewalk vitality, placemaking initiatives, and support of small businesses.
- Analyze the ongoing expanded pilot program for residential conversions, focusing on identifying challenges and opportunities for improvements, especially related to the economic climate and the physical constraints of available buildings.
- Review completed projects and conversion projects underway for lessons learned.
- Develop strategies to address long term impacts of increased office vacancies including reduced property values, decreased property tax revenue for the City, impact on residential property taxes, and potential reduction of city services.
- Identify and promote innovative solutions to revitalize commercial areas and address evolving needs of business and residents in the post-pandemic environment.

### Goal 3: Support Economic Development and Competitiveness for the City and the Region

- Capitalize on the region's legacy of innovation, to attract and retain top talent and businesses and to promote the region's higher education institutions, which generate expertise in a range of disciplines, and their role in developing a skilled and diverse workforce to support a robust and diverse economy.
- Promote policies that increase housing supply, reduce housing costs, and improve transportation infrastructure to retain talent and enhance the region's economic competitiveness. Advocate for increased transit oriented multifamily development



through implementation of the MBTA Communities Act and related local zoning changes across Eastern Massachusetts.

- Explore innovative solutions to address workforce outmigration that go beyond regulatory environment zoning and include additional measures to increase housing supply and reduce costs.

#### **Goal 4: Support Reshaping the Regulatory Framework to Address Changing Conditions**

- Identify and advocate for regulatory adjustments that balance sustainability and equity goals with economic development and competitiveness, ensuring that regulations do not create unnecessary obstacles to attracting new businesses, developing new housing, and supporting transportation projects.
- Collaborate with A Better City's Energy and Environment team to review and provide comments on proposed changes to local and state environmental regulations.
- Engage with stakeholders across various sectors to gather diverse perspectives and ensure that regulatory changes are informed by a broad range of viewpoints.
- Monitor the implementation of new regulations to assess their effectiveness in support of stated goals and identify any unintended consequences.