

Background material on Anti-Displacement Zones

Prepared by Action for Equity, 3.18.19

1. What is an Anti-Displacement Zone?

A specific neighborhood where we want to:

- Protect current residents from being displaced
- Maintain current demographic/racial/ethnic and economic character
- Be designated in the zoning code as a new type of zoning district with special standards and programs

2. Look at the roots of our neighborhoods. And what is happening now.

1. Mortgage redlining drove Black residents to living in segregated areas and limited their ability to increase their assets. New Deal, GI Bill, FHA housing bills excluded Black residents. So people ended up in a few neighborhoods.
2. Black people and immigrants were excluded from good jobs: excluded from union rights since the 1930's; government failure to enforce minimum rights; bias in hiring; prison pipeline.
3. Place-based organizing in communities of color in Boston created our vibrant communities: Dudley St. Neighborhood Initiative, Project RIGHT, Chinese Progressive Association, Greater Four Corners Action Coalition, CityLife/VidaUrbana, East Boston Ecumenical Community Council.

But now...

- Inflow of people: expansion of urban employment drawing in many people to the new jobs that do not go to local people
- Inflow of capital: new development makes money in our neighborhoods, increases gentrification that in turn attracts other people

3. Boston's own Zoning language says we should be protected.

A purpose of zoning is to protect the public health of all portions of the public equally.

The social determinants of health (what impacts our health) include having stable, safe housing and employment and economic stability.

Section 3-1A in Boston's Zoning Code

- a. Planned Development Areas "...no development plan or master plan shall be approved by said Authority unless said Authority finds that....nothing in such plan will be injurious to the neighborhood or otherwise detrimental to the public welfare...."

WE are the neighborhood. The neighborhood is the people.

4. Other cities are already doing this—why not here?

Columbia Heights, Washington DC
Guadeloupe Neighborhood, Austin TX
Inner North and Northeast, Portland OR
Hill District, Pittsburgh PA

Example of a Vision Statement from Austin TX

Low-income residents and persons of color, and their children, in historically disadvantaged communities have the opportunity to stay and return to their neighborhoods in the face of rising property values and the influx of more affluent residents. Over time, opportunities remain for new low-income residents to live in the community. Residents have a meaningful role in shaping the future of their neighborhood.

5. Should YOUR neighborhood be designated an Anti-Displacement Zone?

Possible characteristics showing vulnerability (example from Austin TX).

These are NOT “criteria”— as in "are you in or are you out". These are characteristics you can consider to document why YOU think YOUR neighborhood should be designated an Anti-Displacement Zone.

Income level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Below 80% of median family income, % households with children in poverty ▪ # people under-employed or unemployed
Historic racial exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communities of color
Education level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ % of heads of household or people over 25 without a college degree
Lack of economic control over housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ % or # of renters without permanent subsidy or secure housing ▪ Rents already rising
Gentrification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Higher income people moving in ▪ White people with higher incomes moving in ▪ New development is changing the economic and racial character of the neighborhood ▪ New development for higher income people being built or being planned

6. Examples of tools we need to protect Anti-Displacement Zones. Some are zoning. Some are programmatic.

Control the market—keeps rents down, make it harder to flip units, raise rents, evict tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Just cause eviction Tenant ownership—right of first refusal Right of return of displaced residents Wrap around support and legal protections Condo conversion restrictions Affordable rehabs for sale Reduced real estate tax burden
More funding for more subsidies and how to use the funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased linkage fees Community Land Trusts Real estate transfer tax Developer impact fees
Reduce gentrification from new development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More deeply affordable units Inclusionary zoning
Increase income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1st Source hiring Training and access support

7. What is the current campaign to win this?

Action for Equity has been leading a campaign demanding a new zoning article, Chapter 91, focused on protecting the Fairmount Corridor as an Anti-Displacement Zone. It can be expanded to other areas of the city.