



Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative



Blue Hill Ave / Cummins Hwy Working Advisory Group (WAG) Meeting #8

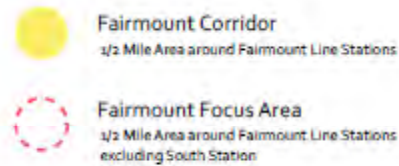
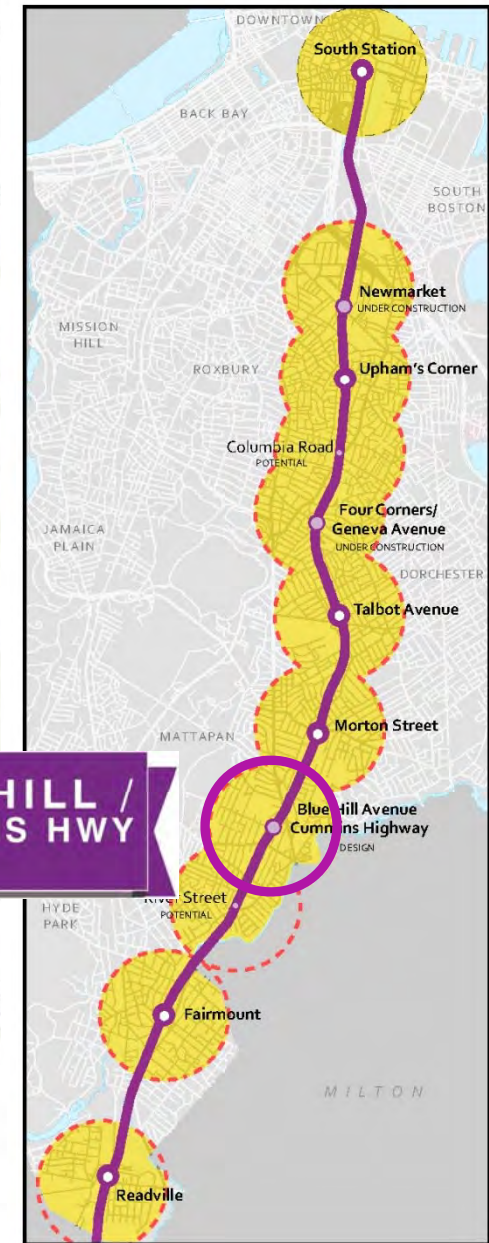
Tuesday, May 20, 2014
 6:00 – 8:00 PM
 Mattapan Health Center

Prepared by:
The Cecil Group Team
 The Cecil Group
 HDR Engineering, Inc.
 Byrne McKinney & Associates, Inc.
 McMahon Associates
 Bioengineering
 SAS Design, Inc.
 Shook Kelley



AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions (6:00pm)
2. Station Area Plan Summary (6:15pm)
3. Summary Discussion (6:40pm)
4. Open House Preparation (7:30pm)
5. Next Steps (7:45pm)



WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS



Station Area Plan Summary

Community Vision

The community vision was created through a community planning and visioning process that included a community workshop, community open house, and a series of eight meetings with a Mayoral appointed Working Advisory Group (WAG), many in-person visits to each Station Area neighborhood, stakeholder, resident and advocate interviews and an analysis of the existing conditions of the Station Area. The Vision Statement sets a direction for future efforts in the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area. The Community Goals add more detail to the statement.

Vision Statement

The Blue Hill/Cummins Highway Station Area is a safe and walkable community with high quality residential neighborhoods, a vital commercial and cultural district at Mattapan Square, excellent transit access and affordability.



Mattapan Square is the commercial center of the Station Area

Community Goals

The goals of the community vision are to:

- Minimize displacement of current residents and businesses to preserve diversity of the community
- Reinforce residential community with safe streets, high quality parks and housing that is renewed while retaining affordability
- Strengthen commercial and cultural activity in Mattapan Square

The Station Area Plan seeks to leverage transit for new economic prosperity and to reinforce the Station Area as an important hub of commercial and cultural activity in the Fairmount Indigo Corridor. The recently built Mattapan Health Center reinforces a health orientation and supporting economy that is evolving within the Station Area and its neighborhood center.

Key recommendations of the community vision have been outlined by topic areas including Prosperity, Home, Place, Getting Around, Quality of Life and Public Space. The Station Area Plan balances recommendations in each topic area to reinforce a high quality livable district and neighborhood.



Station Area Plan Summary

Illustrative Vision Plan

An illustrative plan of the community vision is shown below. The illustration reflects the physical strategies that are part of the Station Area Plan including new transit-oriented development near the rail station, new mixed-use development within the Mattapan Square Main Streets district, new infill residential development to stabilize surrounding neighborhoods, streetscape improvements to form gateway enhancements to the Main Street districts and to enhance critical connections to the rail station and surrounding attractions.

Recommendations illustrated within the study area for the Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway Station Area Plan includes portions of Mattapan within 1/2 mile of the rail station



Station Area Plan Summary

Key Findings

Prosperity

- 1 Redevelop City-owned Cote Ford Property to bring new investment
- 2 Leverage MBTA Parking Lot Parcel as a community development catalyst
- 3 Improve utilization of existing upper level commercial space
- 4 Strengthen storefront and small business programs
- 5 Expand training and education for local wealth creation

Home

- 6 Maintain affordability and minimize displacement of residents
- 7 Invite mixed-income and multi-family redevelopment near station
- 8 Infill residential to strengthen neighborhoods
- 9 Expand homeownership programs to build local investment

Place

- 10 Improve character of Mattapan Square Main Streets
- 11 Strengthen gateways at Blue Hill Avenue
- 12 Reinforce culture and public art
- 13 Expand restaurant offerings
- 14 Highlight the Neponset River as a unique asset

Getting Around

- 15 New station entry improvements at Blue Hill/Cummins
- 16 Mattapan Square intersection improvements
- 17 Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway streetscape improvement
- 18 Enhanced parking management in Mattapan Square

Parks/Public Space

- 19 Improve safe connections to existing parks
- 20 Enhance lighting and safety at existing parks
- 21 Enhance gateway connections to the Neponset River
- 22 Rebalance streetscape and sidewalks for pedestrians

Quality of Life

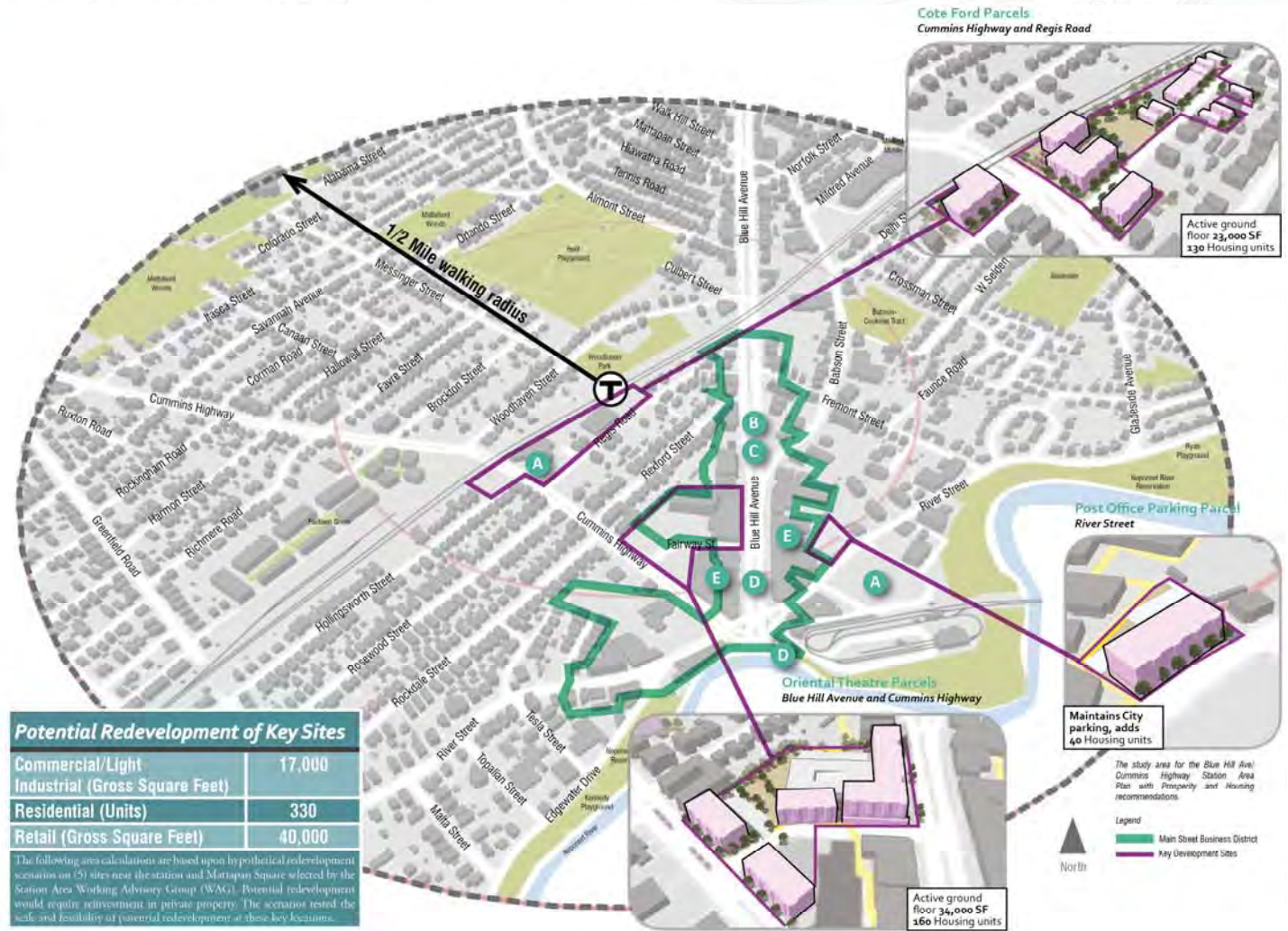
- 23 Address Station Area crime and safety concerns
- 24 Expand cultural/community/gathering space offerings
- 25 Reinforce community and family orientation



Station Area Plan Summary

Prosperity

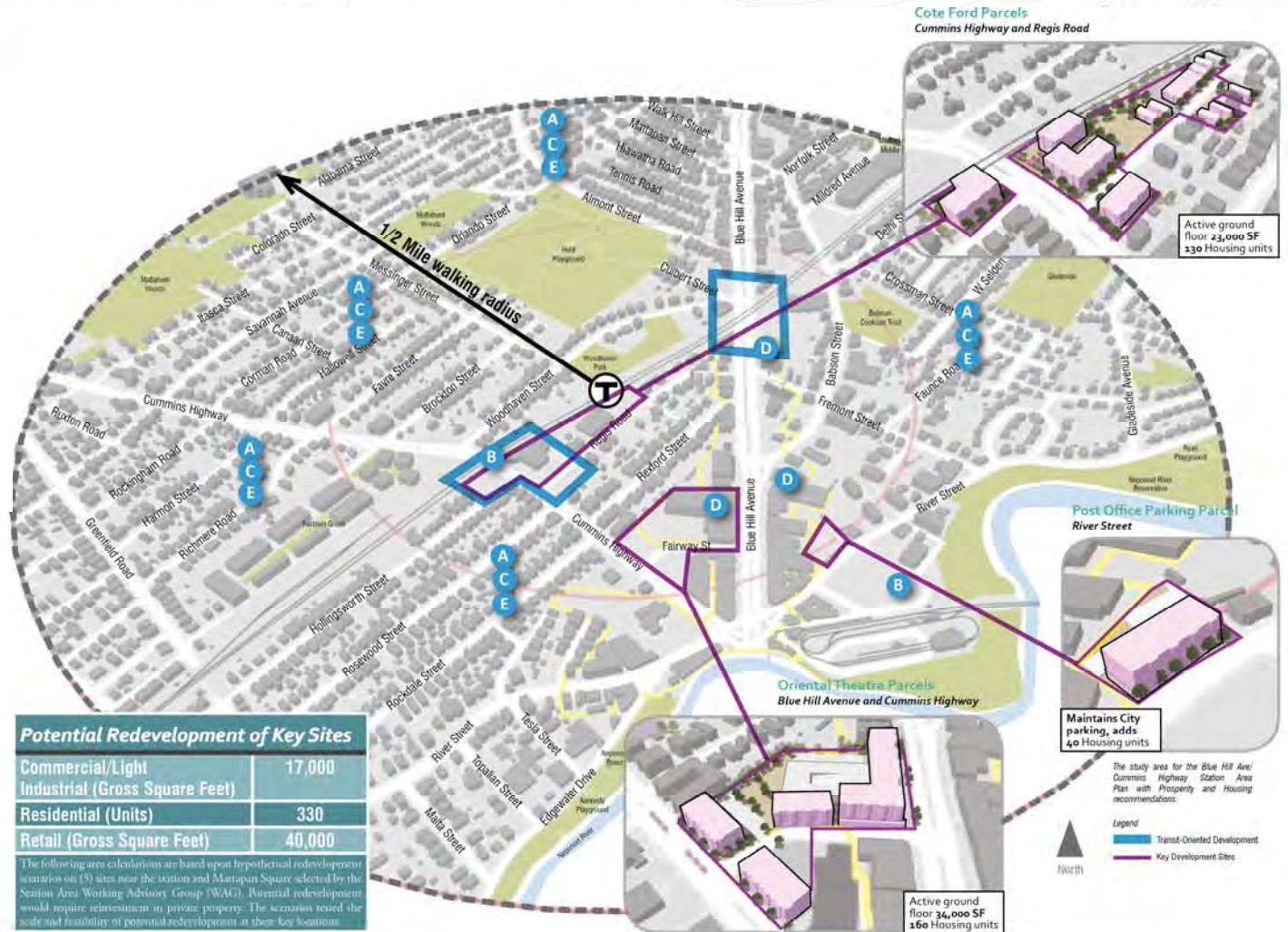
Strengthen local wealth creation in the Station Area through business, training and entrepreneurial support. The following approaches are intended to build prosperity for current residents and small businesses:



Station Area Plan Summary

Home

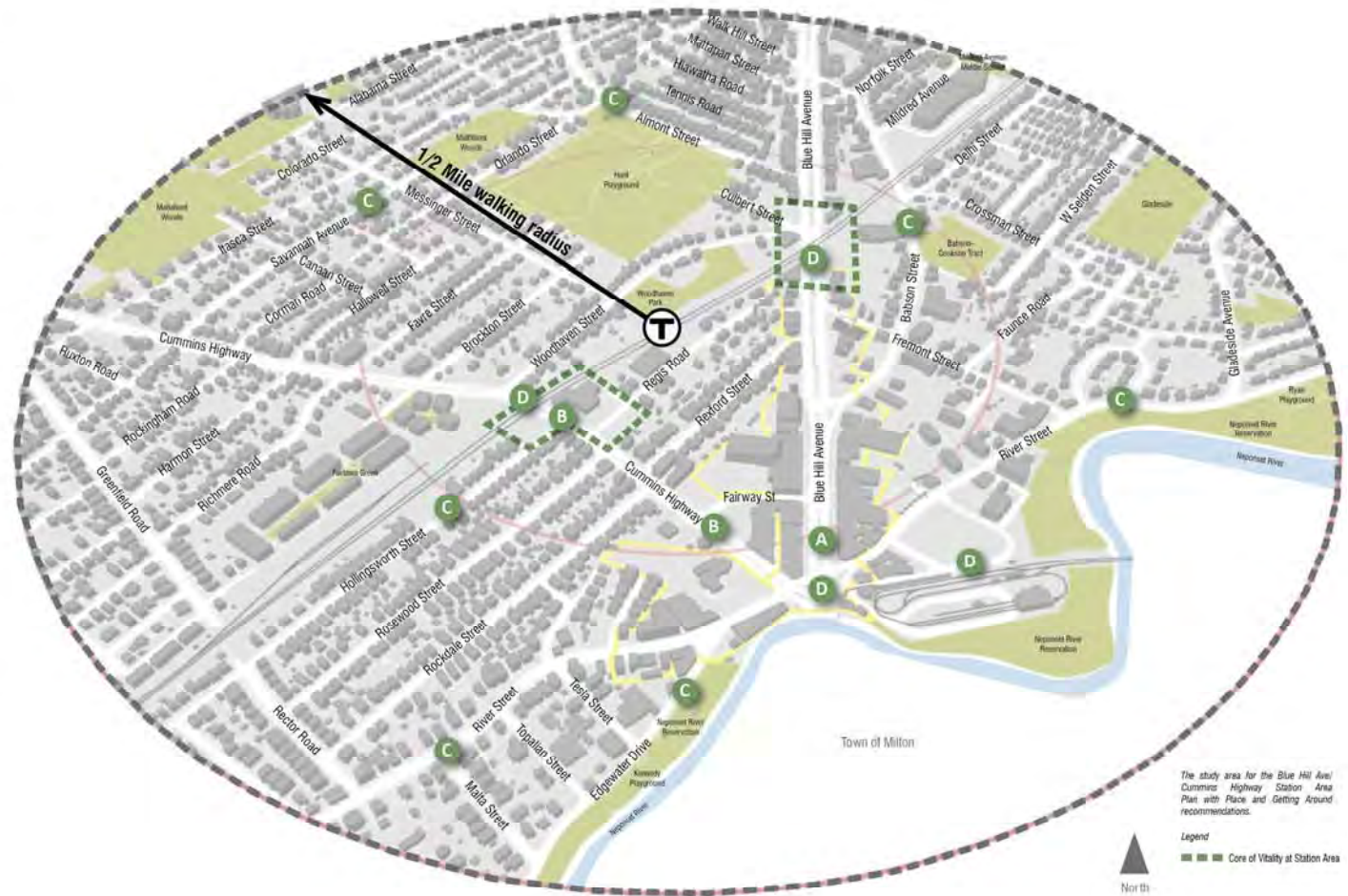
Provide new mixed-income housing opportunities near the station and stabilize existing neighborhood streets to support vitality and prosperity. The approach to housing in the Station Area focuses on the following:



Station Area Plan Summary

Place

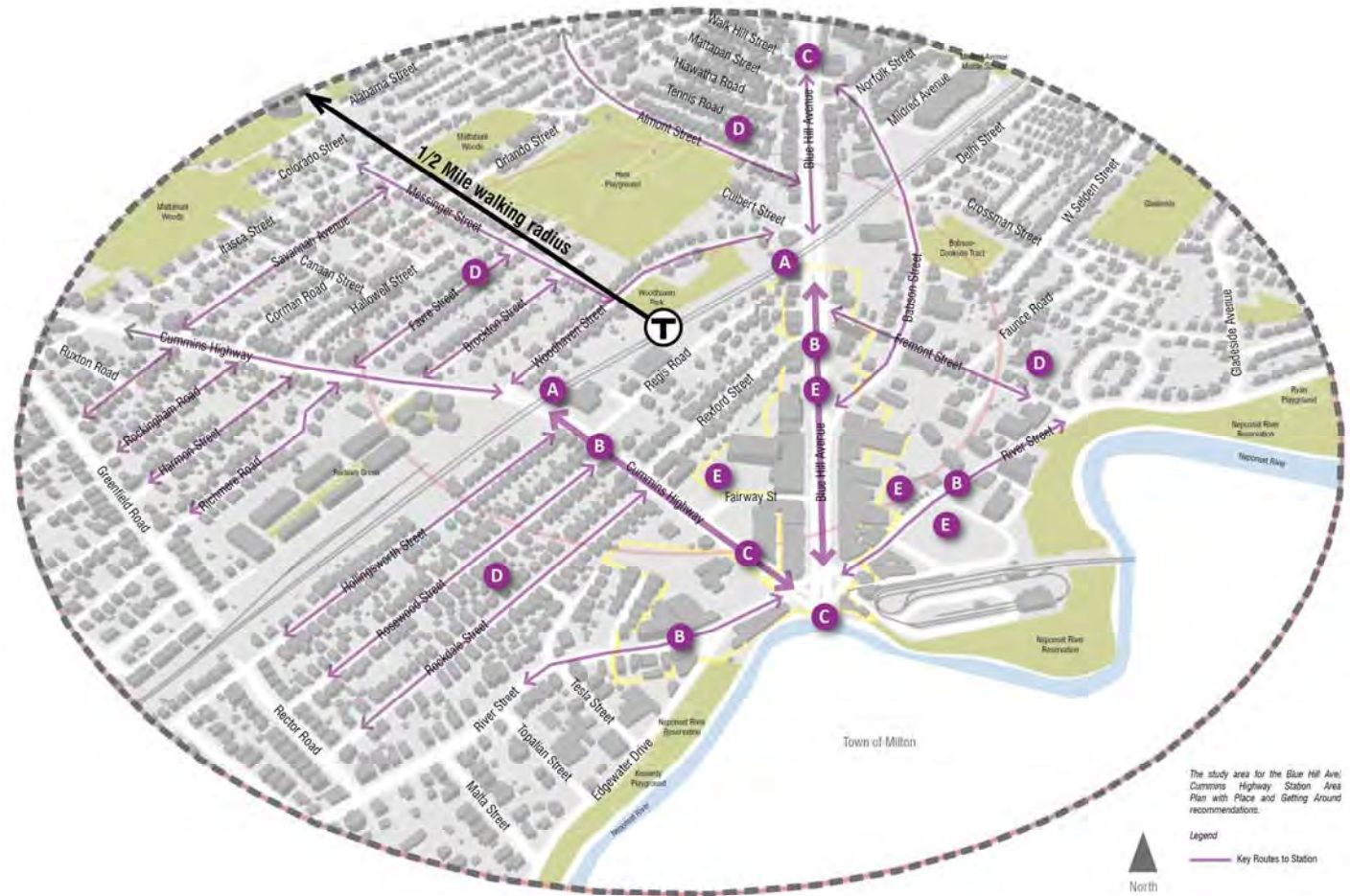
The historic and cultural narratives of Mattapan Square are diverse and strong. The Station Area's character and physical environment should reflect the longevity of the location as an important City node and crossroads:



Station Area Plan Summary

Getting Around

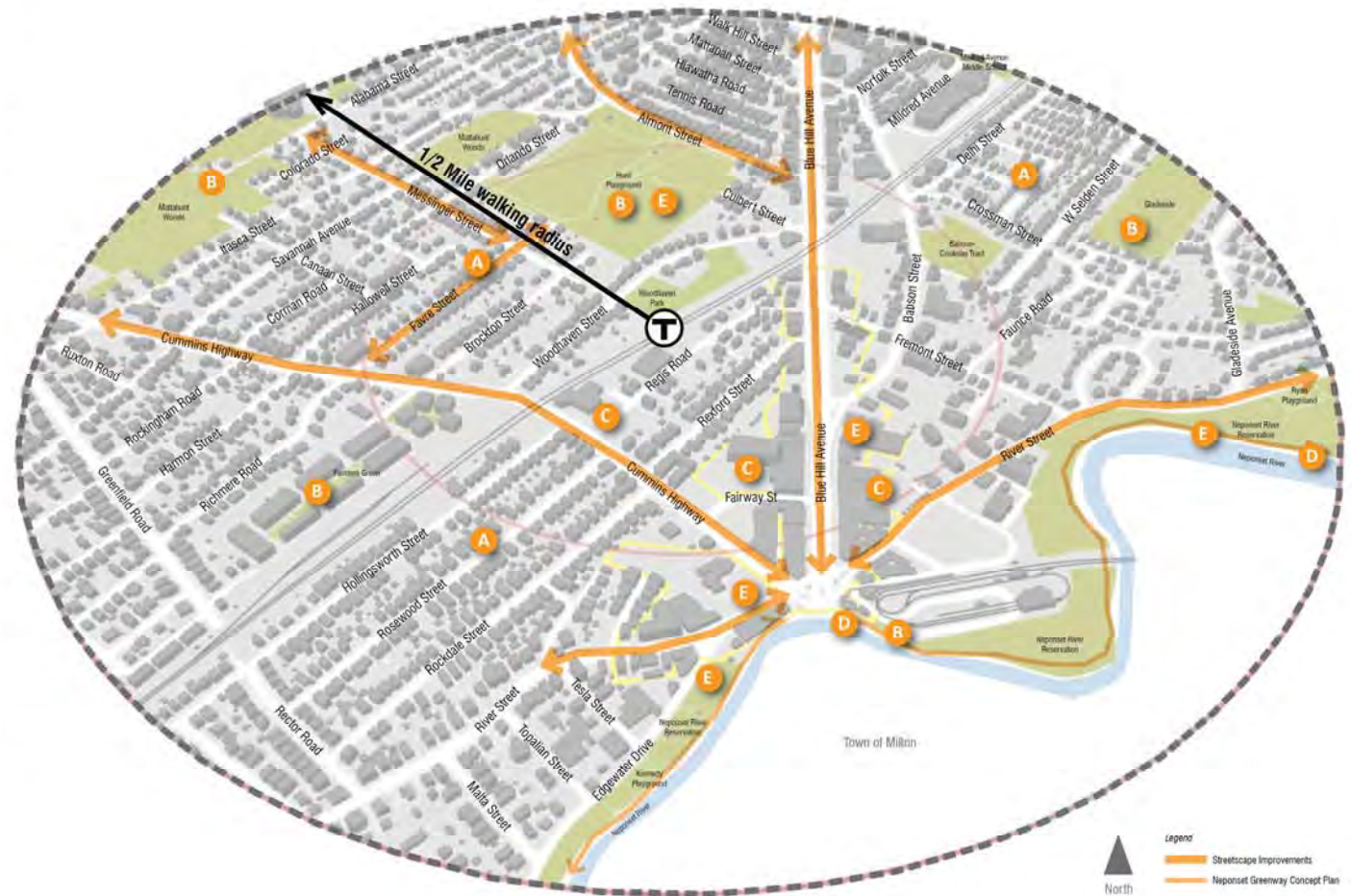
The new rail station at Blue Hill Avenue/Cummins Highway will enhance connections to downtown. The following approaches enhance connection and circulation within the Station Area for all modes of transportation and leverage the new transit investment:



Station Area Plan Summary

Parks and Public Space

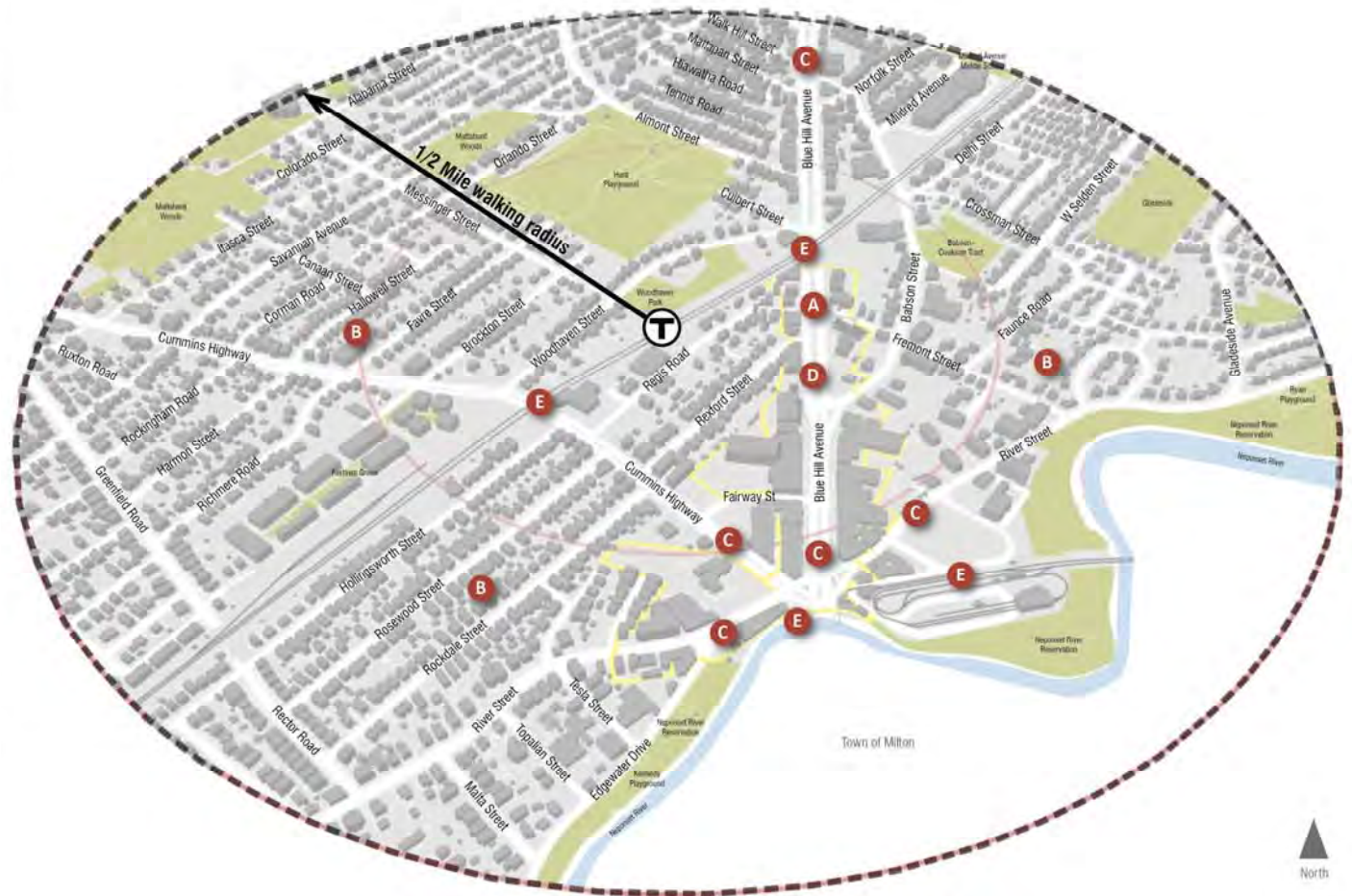
Publicly accessible open space is well-distributed around the Station Area (relative to other neighborhood averages). Rather than add new open spaces, access, use and safety of existing resources should be enhanced. The following approaches have been identified to improve neighborhood open space amenities:



Station Area Plan Summary

Quality of Life

The Station Area is anchored by the Main Streets district and quality of life enhancing amenities, such as the Mattapan Health Center. The following approaches build upon existing amenities to improve quality of life:



Station Area Plan Summary

Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Hwy Implementation Actions

The Implementation Actions are the critical components of Station Area strategies highlighted as actionable items.

The community vision outlined for the Blue Hill Ave/Cummins Highway Station Area is not achieved through a single action or solution, but through a series of purposeful and strategic changes that position the Station Area for a positive and incremental evolution over time. This continuum of positive change is already underway and can be expedited with the following key actions:

Invite Positive Investment at Cote Ford

The Station Area would benefit from market-based private investment to redevelop underutilized properties. One such property, the Cote Ford site, is City-owned and will be publicly disposed for redevelopment. This process is important to build momentum for investment. The property is at a critical location adjacent to the new rail station and can bring increased vitality and activity to Cummins Highway and Mattapan Square while better connecting the station and the Main Streets district. The community should set high expectations for reuse of the property that is consistent with the community vision, but should be welcoming and supportive toward appropriate responses. Under any reuse scenario, environmental issues on the site should be appropriately remediated.

Strengthen and Improve Mattapan Square

The Mattapan Square Main Streets district is the focus of commercial and community activity nearest the station. It is important to strengthen and improve the character and business environment of the Square to build positive

activity near the station and to anchor the community. A Storefront Improvement program with a revolving loan fund, a business improvement district or small business assistance grants can all assist in the improvement and beautification of Mattapan Square.

The local Main Street district should be empowered to create programs and connections that reinforce opportunities, links and connections on the Fairmount Indigo Corridor. Parallel efforts between other Corridor Main Streets districts should be reinforced in Mattapan Square. In particular this effort should look for complementary cultural and public arts efforts that could expand this aspect of the Station Area.

Develop Innovative Resident, Small Business and Entrepreneurial Training

Mattapan Square should not only be a center of commercial activity, but also a center of innovative training and resource centers for residents, small businesses and entrepreneurs. Programs and partnerships should focus upon adding productive uses to upper floor vacancies dedicated to building the capacity for local wealth creation and prosperity.

Improve Traffic in the Square

The critical intersection at the center of Mattapan Square between Blue Hill Avenue, Cummins Highway and River Street, should be the focus of additional study and strategic circulation improvements. Short term improvements may include pedestrian signals with countdown displays, additional crosswalks, and adjustments to signal timing. Additional study should focus on an origin-destination study of traffic movements, feasibility study of traffic signal phasing modifications or geometric changes and a investigation of potential design alternatives.

Rebalance Blue Hill Avenue Public Realm

Public realm improvements to Blue Hill Avenue should be considered according to Boston's Complete Streets guidelines to rebalance the needs of all users of the roadway including vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. Improvements must prioritize the importance of Blue Hill Avenue as a city-wide connector and a source of high volumes of traffic that support businesses, but also should be a safe and comfortable walking environment for shopping and leisure.

Enhance Streetscape at Cummins Highway

The connection between the Rail Station entry and the center of Mattapan Square on Cummins Highway is critical for pedestrian access and connectivity. Streetscape enhancements should improve the safety, accessibility and comfort of walking conditions on the north side of Cummins Highway. Curb cuts on Cummins Highway should be relocated to side streets wherever possible to consolidate vehicular access and enhance continuity of pedestrian routes.

Enhance Connections to the Neponset River

Physical and functional connections to the unique natural asset of the Neponset River should be reinforced in Mattapan Square. Enhanced physical connections should be examined at the MBTA Mattapan Trolley station, pedestrian crossings at Blue Hill Avenue and public space and plazas down to the river. Functional connections should be explored for complementary businesses, recreational opportunities and public realm improvements that build upon this unique asset.

Retain a Diverse Resident and Business Population

The diversity of the Station Area, culturally, racially and socio-economically should be retained and built upon as a primary asset of the Station Area. Station Area strategies to reinforce this effort include adding new housing units to help retain Station Area affordability over time, including a mix of incomes as part of new development projects, and building local wealth through training, education, entrepreneurship and homeownership.

The long term dynamics of transit improvements and land value will tend to push rents higher over time. A homeownership program that empowers the local community to invest in Station Area property helps to prevent displacement and to connect residents directly to long term benefits. This type of program may require a partnership between community development corporations, lending institutions and the City to provide education, investment and capital resources. This type of program could be coupled with an effort to revitalize problem properties and neighborhood issues sometimes associated with absentee landlords.

Maintain Community Voice and Presence

One of the greatest strengths of the Station Area is the very engaged and informed community of residents, advocates and business owners who vocally defend and represent the collective voice of the community. It is important to maintain this voice as part of the implementation tools focused around the Station Area. It is equally as important to be protective and cautious of the power of this community voice and to strive to maintain a collective discourse and dialogue that is representative and inclusive within the context of a diverse community.



Community Open House Prep (7:30pm)

1. Open discussions with Consultants, WAG, City and MBTA
2. Copies of Executive Summary
3. 30x40 Boards of Executive Summary Enlargements
4. Handout Guide
5. Opportunity for Feedback –
 - Prioritizing Importance of Strategies
 - Open Comments – What did we miss?



Community Open House Boards (7:30pm)

PARKS/PUBLIC SPACE

Relative to City of Boston averages, the Station Area is deficient in the percent of land that is publicly accessible open space. The following approaches have been identified to improve neighborhood access to strategically located open space amenities:




FAIRMOUNT INDIGO PLANNING INITIATIVE

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

A Public Access -
Improve openness of existing public or private open spaces including activity along the edges and street frontages of the North Burying Ground.

B Convert Vacant Parcels -
Strategically convert vacancies into amenities including playgrounds and agriculture.

C Development Requirements -
Require new public spaces with large new development projects to a targeted community benefit.

D Right-of-way Uses -
Develop strategic and creative expansion of pedestrian space in public ways.

E Open Space Networks -
Use the Boston bike network and Fairmount Greenway Concept Plan to connect to nearby open space resources.

PRIORITY

PLACE A DOT NEXT TO THE STRATEGY YOU FEEL IS MOST IMPORTANT

WHAT IS MISSING? OTHER THOUGHTS?

FAIRMOUNT INDIGO PLANNING INITIATIVE



Community Open House Handout (7:30pm)

4 Place

Next, the topic of enhancing a sense of place - what makes Upham's unique and attractive. **What strategy has the most potential to enhance the beauty of Upham's.**

5 Getting Around

This topic highlights strategies to enhance mobility for everyone in Upham's - drivers, pedestrian, cyclists, bus and train riders. **What feature will help you get around everyday quicker and easier?**

6 Parks and Public Space

Next, a series of strategies to address a lack of open space in Upham's Corner. **What do you think will be most effective for creating useful parks and public space in Upham's?**

7 Quality of Life

Finally, you have almost made it through all of the topics of the plan! These strategies are ideas to improve the quality of life at Upham's Corner. **Which strategy would improve your daily life the most?**

8 Actions

Articulating a vision for the future is the first step. Many stewards, stakeholders and actions will be required to move this vision into the future. **What is the most important next step?**



Blue Hill/Cummins Hwy STATION AREA PLAN

Welcome to the Community Open House!

This is your guide through a strategic vision for the future of Upham's Corner. This is your opportunity to share your thoughts about the vision and plan.

Move around the room following from topic to topic, at each topic **place a dot** on your top priority and **leave comments** as you go!

1 Community Vision

First, the vision statement and goals articulate and summarize the community input. These are the overall shared ambitions of the residents and businesses of Upham's. **What is most important for you in this vision?**

2 Prosperity

Next, a series of strategies are outlined to build prosperity for Upham's residents and businesses. **What element do you think is most important for Upham's Corner to be relevant in the future economy?**

3 Housing

Move onto housing, a look at what types of new housing would reinforce the neighborhoods of Upham's. **Which strategy is best for the neighbors on your street?**

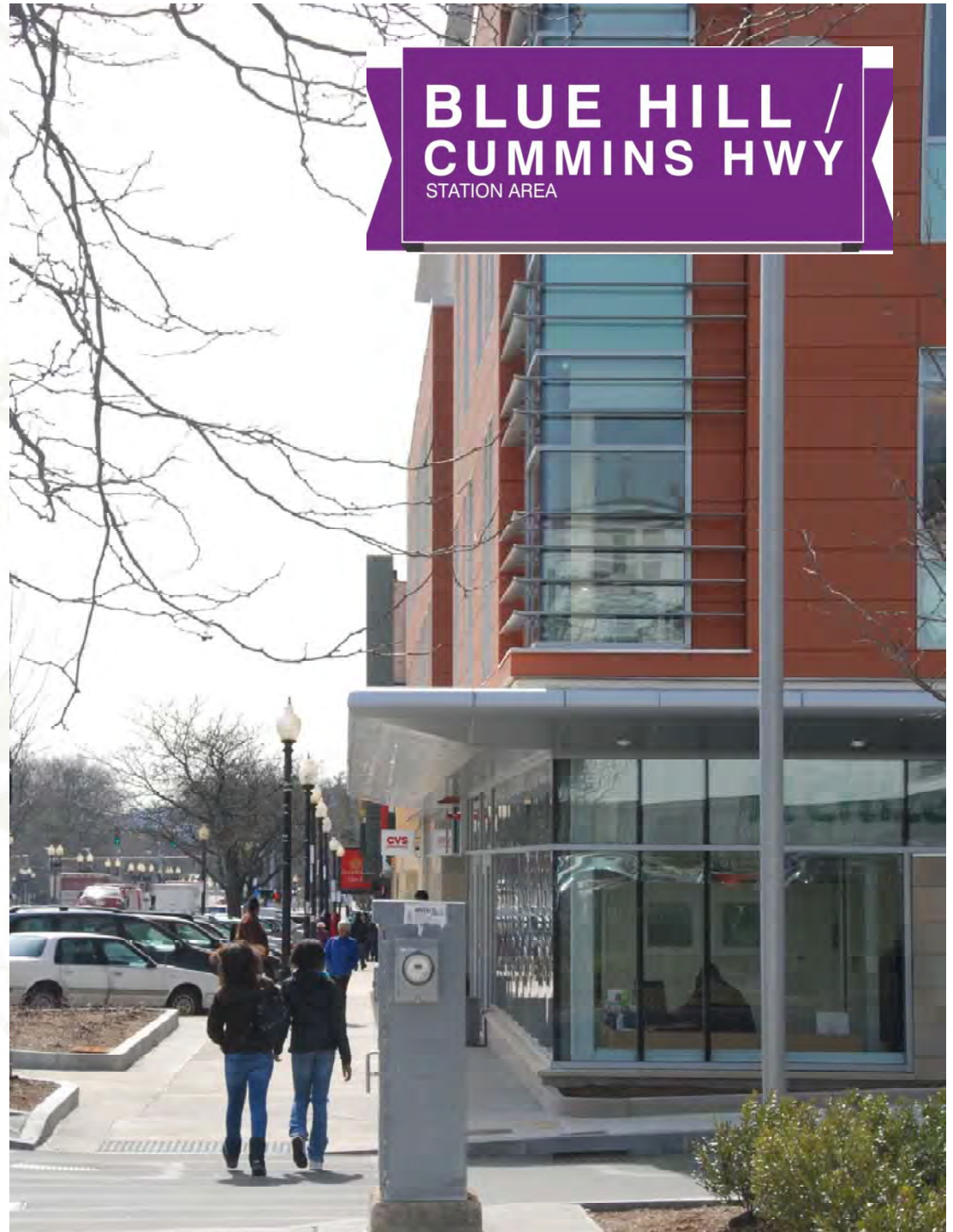
Back

Front



NEXT STEPS (7:30pm)

1. Draft Station Area Plan
2. Community Open House
Thursday June 12th
5-8pm
3. Final WAG Meeting
July TBD
Open House Review
Station Area Plan



Fairmount Indigo Planning Initiative



Blue Hill Ave / Cummins Hwy Working Advisory Group (WAG) Meeting #8

Tuesday, May 20, 2014
6:00 – 8:00 PM
Mattapan Health Center

Prepared by:
The Cecil Group Team
The Cecil Group
HDR Engineering, Inc.
Byrne McKinney & Associates, Inc.
McMahon Associates
Bioengineering
SAS Design, Inc.
Shook Kelley

