



# HYDE PARK

Neighborhood Strategic Plan 2011



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CITY OF BOSTON  
Thomas M. Menino  
Mayor



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REDEVELOPMENT  
AUTHORITY  
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# Executive Summary



On April 29, 2008, The Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) Board, along with Mayor Thomas M. Menino, voted to plan for and rezone Hyde Park. The end products of this community planning initiative are this Neighborhood Strategic Plan, to be followed by a new zoning article specific to Hyde Park. An eleven member Advisory Group, composed of residents from all over Hyde Park, was appointed by the Mayor after an extensive nomination process. The Advisory Group has worked with the BRA/City, consultant team, and the wider community in the planning phase of the process, and will continue to work on the rezoning. Approximately 20 Advisory Group working sessions and full community meetings were held during this planning process.

This report, The Hyde Park Strategic Neighborhood Plan, documents the results of the planning process. The plan provides a blueprint for future development, and identifies priorities such as transportation, open space and streetscape improvements that can be implemented over time, independent of the new zoning regulations. The plan also includes specific recommendations for the development of the new zoning article for Hyde Park.

Through community meetings and discussions with the Advisory Group, the following community vision for the future of Hyde Park, along with a series of Goals and Objectives for achieving that vision, were developed. The Vision, Goals



and Objectives detailed in this report provided the framework for the analysis and specific recommendations of this Strategic Neighborhood Plan.

## THE VISION

Hyde Park should be an attractive, vibrant, and safe neighborhood that:

- Celebrates its unique cultural and urban diversity, and natural and historic resources;
- Provides housing, jobs, commercial and recreational opportunities for a diverse population;
- Supports and encourages the expanding creative economy; and
- Is innovative in the reuse/redevelopment of underutilized buildings and parcels.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Residential Districts

Many of the discussions with the community and the Advisory Group centered around:

- Preservation of the character of Hyde Park’s existing residential neighborhoods
- Design of both new buildings and renovations to existing buildings
- Compatibility of residential use with adjacent industrial use and the location of district boundaries
- Desire to encourage transit use, as well as to increase residential density through mixed–use development around transit stations, and subsequently reduce parking in those areas
- Property owners’ confusion over zoning and the variance process
- Potential for permit parking on selective/selected streets

Recommended zoning changes are designed to preserve the existing density, scale and character of the neighborhood subdistricts and maintain or increase required open space on individual lots. Recommendations for design guidelines and a new and thorough survey of the important historic resources will help to ensure that new buildings are compatible with existing residential development. Other recommendations focus on ensuring that the community continues to embrace its diversity through the provision of diverse unit sizes and affordable housing.

### Commercial Districts

The main objective of the commercial district recommendations is to encourage the long-term economic viability of the neighborhood’s commercial districts by ensuring

that the districts are attractive components of the community, serving the needs of Hyde Park residents and non-residents alike.

Key desires identified by the community included:

- Attracting and maintaining a better mix of stores and services to serve both residents and patrons from outside the neighborhood
- Ensuring sufficient parking to support commercial districts
- Ensuring that the scale and character of new commercial development is compatible with existing development
- Improving existing storefronts and ensuring attractive commercial districts in the future through signage and design requirements and guidelines
- Encouraging mixed-use (any combination of retail, office and housing) to create more lively commercial districts

The recommendations for Cleary and Logan Squares are designed to maintain the small, local store character, while continuing to allow opportunities for some development of residential uses on upper floors, to create a more lively district. Recommendations include support of the 2009 Retail Market Study recommendations, development of design guidelines to create a vibrant pedestrian environment that attracts customers, and introduction of a series of streetscape and urban design improvements such as signage, gateway elements and public art.

It is also recommended that a Neighborhood Design Overlay District (NDOD) be created for the Cleary/Logan Square subdistrict so that all projects, even as-of-right, would have a required design review component at the BRA. The Overlay District will encourage the preservation and sensitive rehabilitation of historic buildings and ensure that new buildings are compatible with the district's historic character.

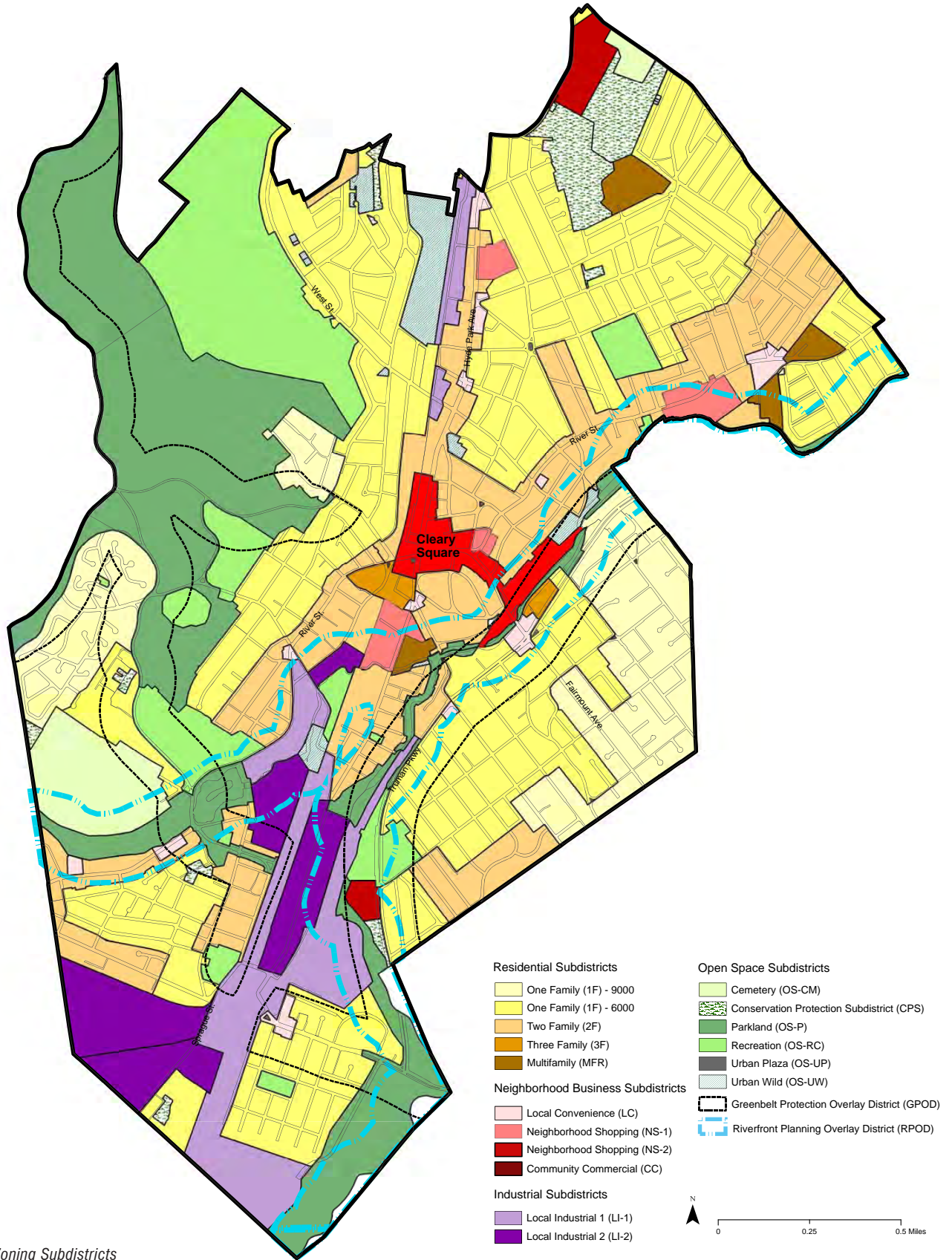
Recommendations for other commercial subdistricts include modifying boundaries to reflect existing and appropriate future development, and the creation of design guidelines for both building and site design. These guidelines may include limiting the size, location and number of driveways, prescribing the placement of buildings, and detailing requirements for landscaping parking lots.

### **Industrial Districts**

There is a strong commitment on the part of the community to preserve Hyde Park's industrial legacy through maintaining key industrial districts for continued industrial use, continuing to look for emerging industries that can be attracted to Hyde Park, and ensuring that zoning and other regulations continue to support those industrial uses which bring jobs and economic vitality to the community.

Residents have expressed a strong interest in encouraging job creation in emerging industries such as medical/life sciences manufacturing, creative economy and green/clean technology. Prospective businesses have expressed a desire for locations that





Recommended Zoning Subdistricts

Subdistrict	Minimum Lot Size	Maximum Building Height	Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)*	Minimum Front Yard Setback**	Minimum Side Yard	Minimum Rear Yard Setback**	Minimum Open Space
<b>One Family - 1F-9000</b>	9,000 sf	35'/2.5 floors	.3	25' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)	<b>10'</b>	40' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)	<b>1800 sf</b>
<b>One Family - 1F-6000</b>	6,000 sf	35'/2.5 floors	.5	25' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)	10'	40' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)	<b>1800 sf</b>
<b>Two Family - 2F-5000</b>	5,000 sf for 1st unit & 3,000 sf for each add'l. unit	35'/2.5 floors	.5	20' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)	10'	40' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)	<b>1750 sf</b>
<b>Three Family - 3F-4000</b>	<b>4,000 sf for 1st unit &amp; 2,000 sf for each add'l. unit</b>	35'/3 floors	.8	20' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)	10'	40' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)	<b>800 sf/unit</b>
<b>Multi-family - MFR</b>	<b>5,000 sf for 1st two units &amp; 2,500 sf for each add'l. unit</b>	<b>35'/3 floors</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)</b>	<b>10'</b>	<b>40' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)</b>	<b>400 sf/unit</b>
<b>Local Convenience - LC</b>	none	35'/2.5 floors	.5	15' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)	none	20'	none
<b>Neighborhood Shopping 1 - NS-1</b>	none	35'/3 floors	1	10' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)	none	10'	none
<b>Neighborhood Shopping 2 - NS-2</b>	none	40'	<b>2</b>	10' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)	none	10'	none
<b>Community Commercial - CC</b>	none	35'/3 floors	1	0' (or consistent w/ adjacent buildings)	none	10'	none
<b>Local Industrial 1 - LI-1</b>	none	35'	1	0'	none	20'	none
<b>Local Industrial 2 - LI-2</b>	none	35'	2	0'	none	20'	none
<b>Conservation Protection</b>	<b>1 acre for residential; none for other</b>	<b>35'</b>	<b>.3</b>	<b>50'</b>	<b>50'</b>	<b>50'</b>	<b>none</b>
<b>Open Space - OS</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

\* The ratio of gross floor area of a structure to the total area of the lot

\*\* On already developed blocks, the setbacks of new infill buildings should match the existing setbacks of the other buildings on the block.

*Proposed Zoning Subdistricts for Hyde Park (changes from existing zoning shown in bold italics).*

provide an attractive environment for their employees. At the same time, a number of Hyde Park's industrial subdistricts are located along major roadways and/or the Neponset River and Mother Brook, and some are adjacent to either residential or commercial subdistricts.

The recommendations for industrial districts, including design guidelines and changes in allowable uses, help to enhance Hyde Park as an attractive location for these emerging uses in addition to the more traditional industrial uses, while ensuring that industrial districts are compatible with adjacent non-industrial districts. It is recommended that Industrial Subdistrict Design Guidelines and zoning requirements limit driveway size and quantity, and require sidewalks, attractive screening



and landscaping. Design guidelines should be aimed at improving the pedestrian environment, even in industrial areas. Use regulations should require all activities, except loading, to be indoors, and zoning requirements may limit hours of operation.

It is also recognized that not all industrial uses are desirable in all parts of Hyde Park. It is recommended that smaller industrial districts that currently contain no industrial use, or that conflict with adjacent residential use, be rezoned.

### **Open Space**

Protecting and expanding access to open space was a key goal identified by the community. A key recommendation includes creating a series of open space subdistricts to prohibit future development of any publicly-owned open space, and to provide greater protection of privately-owned open space.

A proposed new Riverfront Protection Overlay District (RPOD) is recommended to preserve and enhance river resources and the natural environment by protecting the supply of vegetation and open space along the Neponset River and Mother Brook. The RPOD should require compliance with design guidelines (similar to those being proposed in the commercial and industrial districts) which respect the natural features of the area, require waterfront setbacks and encourage public access and views to the water where uses are non-residential.

Recommendations to increase open space resources include acquisition of several Boston Department of Neighborhood Development (DND) and privately-owned parcels for open space uses ranging from community gardens to a Sprague Pond waterfront park. Other recommendations include support of the proposed Fairmount Greenway which will follow the Fairmount Commuter Rail corridor; support of the Neponset River Reservation Master Plan; and improved access to the Neponset River and Mother Brook.

Recommendations such as a wayfinding program and increased programming for activities at various locations throughout the neighborhood, including boating and performances, will help to attract and engage residents.

### **Neighborhood-Wide Process Recommendations**

To ensure that new construction, expansion and renovation projects are compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood, it is recommended that BRA design review be required in all subdistricts on all projects over 750 square feet that are visible from a public street or public open space. It is also recommended that the community work with Boston's Inspectional Services Department to strengthen enforcement requirements, including construction and maintenance of buildings and adequate parking for changes in building use.

## Transportation

Transportation recommendations for Cleary and Logan Squares focus on improving traffic circulation and parking. During the course of this Planning and Rezoning Study, the City of Boston has undertaken a series of roadway improvements aimed at improving traffic circulation in and around the Squares. These improvements are supported by this report. Creative parking solutions include shared use of MBTA lots during nights and weekends, shared parking amongst private business owners and off-site parking to reduce the number of small, site-specific parking lots.

Non-automotive modes of transportation are equally important to Hyde Park residents. Neighborhood-wide transportation recommendations focus on improving and encouraging use of non-automotive modes. Pedestrian and bicycle related recommendations include sidewalk and crosswalk improvements and improvements to bicycle accommodations. Transit recommendations include advocating for more frequent MBTA commuter rail service and reduced fares, as well as targeted improvements to bus service and facilities.

## Sustainability

Sustainability recommendations are integrated throughout this Neighborhood Strategic Plan. Key sustainability concepts incorporated into this plan include:

- Diversity of housing types, sizes, income level
- A focus on the center, creating a sense of place
- A variety of open space types
- Neighborhood activity over many hours of the day and night
- A variety of multi-modal transportation choices with fully connected pedestrian and bicycle routes and the introduction of car sharing programs
- Preservation of natural terrain and vegetation
- Clean up and reuse of former industrial properties
- Continued support of mixed commercial and residential use
- Predictable, fair, cost-effective development decision
- Citizen and stakeholder participation
- Preservation of historic building fabric

This Neighborhood Strategic Plan also promotes sustainability through the following recommendations:

- Encourage inclusion of green building elements in projects that, because of their size (under 50,000 square feet), are not subject to Article 37 “Green Buildings.”
- Expand homeowner education to include information about City initiatives around energy conservation and generation and references to utility-sponsored





audits and incentives.

- Expand information available to small and mid-sized locally owned and independent businesses to include the Sustainable Business Leader Program
- Encourage Low Impact Development (LID) concepts and measures such as limited disturbance to natural areas and resources, the promotion of pervious surfaces and maintenance of the natural stormwater drainage and hydrology of an area.
- Support and encourage the permanent installation of plaques that bear the warning “Don’t Dump - Drains to Neponset River.”
- Support the Grow Boston Greener (GBG) initiative to increase the urban tree canopy .
- Encourage the installation of LED lighting, now being installed in streetlight fixtures several Boston neighborhoods.
- Ensure that the potential for riverine flooding be taken into account by developers of properties close to the Mother Brook and Neponset River.
- Encourage the use of the upcoming Climate Action Plan for the City to provide guidance around the issue of climate change.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the recommendations from this Strategic Plan will be an ongoing process that could extend over the next 15 to 20 years. In the short-term, new zoning and ongoing design review will help to ensure that future development is consistent with the community’s vision for the character, density and scale of the neighborhood. Other recommended measures that can be implemented in the short-term will help to support the realization of the vision described throughout this Plan.

Implementation of many of the other recommendations in the plan will be dependent upon availability of funding as well as coordination and cooperation with other entities including City of Boston departments, state agencies such as the MBTA and the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and private property owners. The BRA will coordinate implementing this plan.

For each plan recommendation, the following chart indicates the parties that will be involved in implementation, and the time frame in which implementation can be expected to occur. For the purpose of this chart, short-term is defined as up to four years, mid-term is defined as five to eight years, and long-term is defined as more than eight years.

This chart provides the City, the community and the BRA a framework for implementation and a guide for coordination with other agencies.

RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENTS / ORGANIZATIONS / PARTIES INVOLVED	TIME - FRAME
<b>Residential Areas</b>		
Rezone residential subdistricts consistent with new residential zoning subdistricts in other Boston neighborhoods that have been rezoned	Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA), Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Introduce a minimum useable open space requirement	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Introduce regulations limiting the location of off-street parking areas	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Require 2 off-street parking spaces per newly constructed residential unit	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Evaluate the Permit Parking program if spillover parking from commercial areas becomes a problem	Boston Transportation Department (BTD), City of Boston	Mid-term
Create residential design guidelines	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Encourage diverse unit sizes	BRA	Ongoing
Encourage development of housing to accommodate “middle-income” residents	BRA, DND	Ongoing
Encourage participation in homeownership and home improvement programs	DND	Ongoing
Disseminate an educational brochure explaining the zoning / project review process	BRA, ISD, HPMS	Short-term
Complete a new and thorough survey of important historic resources	Boston Landmarks Commission, Massachusetts Historic Commission	Mid-term
Work with BLC to develop Neighborhood Design Overlay Districts in all appropriate neighborhoods	Boston Landmarks Commission, BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
<b>Commercial Areas</b>		
Develop design guidelines that support attractive, pedestrian friendly districts for all commercial subdistricts	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Adjust the boundaries of commercial subdistricts to be more consistent with existing commercial development	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Introduce Artists' Mixed Use as a specific use in Zoning Regulations	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
<b>Cleary &amp; Logan Squares:</b>		
Create Neighborhood Shopping Subdistrict (NS-2) to provide a diversified commercial environment serving larger region	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Encourage mixed-use development (retail/office/residential) by a reduction in parking requirements for mixed-use.	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Develop attractive gateways at key locations	Hyde Park Main Streets	Mid / Long-term
Work with MBTA to provide free parking in Cleary Square Commuter Rail lot at night and on weekends	Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), BTD, property owners	Mid / Long-term
Work with property owners to improve rear facades facing the MBTA and private parking lots	BRA, property owners, HPMS	Short / Mid-term
Upgrade the municipal parking lot to provide opportunities for other temporary uses such as a Farmer's Market	BTD, property owners	Short / Mid-term
Reconfigure the pocket park on River Street (mid-block between Hyde Park Ave. and Harvard/Maple Streets) to improve pedestrian flow from the public parking lot onto River Street and to discourage disruptive loitering	City of Boston, BTD	Mid / Long-term



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>DEPARTMENTS / ORGANIZATIONS / PARTIES INVOLVED</b>	<b>TIME - FRAME</b>
Expand and improve the Cleary Square Plaza and encourage property owners to improve building facades facing the MBTA lot and plaza	City of Boston, Hyde Park Main Streets, property owners, DND-Main Streets Program	Long-term
Provide information to new and existing businesses on programs that provide technical assistance to small businesses	BRA, Hyde Park Main Streets, Neighborhood Groups, DND-Main Streets Program	Short-term
Implement the recommendations from the Retail Market Study (2009)	Hyde Park Main Streets, BRA, property owners, Neighborhood Groups	Mid / Long-term
Implement the Public Works Department's Roadway Improvement Plan for River Street / Hyde Park Ave.	BTD, BPWD	Short-term/ some items complete
Provide streetscape improvements including wider sidewalks along River Street	BTD, BPWD	Mid / Long-term
Encourage installation of public art throughout the Squares to support the local arts scene and enliven the Squares	Artists' Groups such as the Hyde Park Arts Initiative (HPAI), Hyde Park Main Streets, property owners	Mid / Long-term
Create a Neighborhood Design Overlay District that encourages the preservation and sensitive rehabilitation of historic buildings	BRA, BLC, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Encourage the Boston Landmarks Commission to complete a new survey of historic resources in the Squares	Boston Landmarks Commission, Massachusetts Historic Commission	Mid-term
<b>Other Commercial Areas:</b>		
Create Local Convenience Subdistricts (LC) to provide convenience retail and services for the immediate neighborhood and pedestrians	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Create Community Commercial Subdistricts (CC) to provide goods and services to the larger neighborhood and patrons from outside the neighborhood	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Develop design guidelines that support attractive, pedestrian friendly districts for all commercial subdistricts	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Adjust the boundaries of commercial subdistricts to be more consistent with existing commercial development	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Introduce Artists' Mixed Use as an allowable or conditional use in all commercial districts	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
<b>Industrial Areas</b>		
Encourage job creation in medical / life sciences manufacturing, creative economy, green / clean technology, and other emerging industries	BRA	Ongoing
Replace M1 and M2 subdistricts with LI-1 and LI-2 subdistricts which allow Artists' Mixed Use space and general commercial use in specifically designated areas	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Develop design guidelines and requirements for all industrial subdistricts	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Rezone the Readville Yards as an LI-2 subdistrict	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Eliminate smaller industrial districts that currently contain no industrial use or that conflict with adjacent residential uses	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Provide streetscape improvements and design guidelines along lower Hyde Park Avenue	BRA, BTD, Boston Public Works Department (BPWD), property owners	Mid / Long-term
Introduce Artists' Mixed Use as a specific use in Zoning Regulations	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
<b>Open Space</b>		
Create Open Space Zoning to protect open spaces	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term

RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENTS / ORGANIZATIONS / PARTIES INVOLVED	TIME - FRAME
Support efforts of the Fairmount/Indigo Line CDC Collaborative to develop the Fairmount Greenway multi-use path and related open spaces through the neighborhood	Fairmount/Indigo Line CDC Collaborative, BRA, Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD), MBTA	Ongoing
Encourage DCR to improve maintenance at Stonybrook Reservation and to develop a reuse for the Thompson Center	Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)	Mid / Long-term
Provide access to the Mother Brook through acquisition of easements along private property and/or public acquisition of key parcels	DCR, City of Boston	Mid / Long-term
Have Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD) review the suggested DND parcels for eligibility for Conservation Protection Subdistrict (CPS)	Department of Neighborhood Development (DND), BPRD	Short-term
Continue implementation of the Neponset River Master Plan, including the development of a multi-use trail along Truman Parkway	DCR, BPRD, BRA	Ongoing
Create Riverfront Planning Overlay District (RPOD) along properties fronting the Neponset River and Mother Brook	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Encourage acquisition of Neponset River frontage at Hyde Park Avenue/River Road	DND, BPRD, DCR	Mid / Long-term
Develop signage program to direct people to open space	BPRD, DCR, Hyde Park Main Streets	Short / Mid-term
<b>Transportation</b>		
Prohibit drive-thrus neighborhood-wide, except conditionally in retail plaza locations	Boston Zoning Commission, BTD	
Encourage introduction of car sharing programs such as ZipCar	BTD, BRA	<b>Short-term</b>
<b>Pedestrians and Bicycles:</b>		
Expand sidewalks and enhance pedestrian crossings to facilitate access to neighborhood services & transit	BTD, BPWD, MBTA	Short / Mid-term
Improve bicycle accommodations to encourage bicycling (require bicycle parking at new developments)	BTD, BPWD	Short / Mid-term
Encourage introduction of bicycle repair and rental facilities	BRA	Short-term
<b>Public Transportation:</b>		
Advocate for more frequent commuter rail service	City of Boston, BRA, MBTA	Ongoing
Advocate for lower Commuter Rail fares (subway comparable) - Zone 1A	City of Boston, BRA, MBTA	Ongoing
Develop targeted improvements to MBTA bus service and facilities	City of Boston, BTD, MBTA	Short / Mid-term
<b>Cleary and Logan Squares:</b>		
Explore creative parking strategies such as shared parking for mixed-use and allowing off-site parking.	BTD, BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short / Mid-term
Implement the Public Works Department's Roadway Improvement Plan for River Street / Hyde Park Ave.	BTD, BPWD	Short-term/ some items complete
Restrict driveway access on major streets	BTD, BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Prohibit drive-thrus and auto-oriented uses such as auto repair and gas stations	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Improve Harvard Ave./River Street intersection	BTD, BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short / Mid-term
Promote Transit Oriented Development around commuter rail stations	BTD, BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENTS / ORGANIZATIONS / PARTIES INVOLVED	TIME - FRAME
Identify physical improvement to minimize potential congestion	BTD, BPWD	Short / Mid-term
<b>Neighborhood-Wide Process Recommendations</b>		
Require BRA design review on all new construction, expansion or renovation projects over 750 square feet that are visible from a public street or public open space	BRA, Boston Zoning Commission	Short-term
Strengthen enforcement of maintenance requirements	Inspectional Services Department (ISD)	Ongoing
Strengthen enforcement of parking requirements for new uses	ISD	Ongoing
Encourage inclusion of green building elements in projects	BRA, ISD, BED	Ongoing
Expand homeowner education to include information about City initiatives around energy conservation and generation and references to utility-sponsored audits and incentives.	BRA, ISD, BED	Ongoing
Expand information available to small and mid-sized locally owned and independent businesses to include the Sustainable Business Leader Program	BRA, ISD, BED	Ongoing
Encourage Low Impact Development (LID) concepts and measures	BRA, ISD, BED	Ongoing
Support and encourage the permanent installation of plaques that bear the warning "Don't Dump - Drains to Neponset River."	BRA, ISD, BED	Ongoing
Support the Grow Boston Greener (GBG) initiative to increase the urban tree canopy.	BRA, BPRD, BED	Ongoing
Encourage the installation of LED lighting	BRA, ISD, BPWD	Ongoing
Ensure that the potential for riverine flooding be taken into account by developers of properties close to the Mother Brook and Neponset River.	BRA, ISD	Ongoing
Encourage the use of the upcoming Climate Action Plan for the City to provide guidance around the issue of climate change.	BRA, ISD, BED	Ongoing