



CASS CROSSING

# COMMUNITY

# Q&A

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JUNE 2021 // PREPARED BY ONYX GROUP - NOVO GROWTH PARTNERS, INC



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OUR PROPOSAL IS FOUNDED ON THE PRINCIPAL OF  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

WE BELIEVE WE HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY AS  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPERS TO EFFECTIVELY DESIGN,  
AND CURATE SPACES TO ELEVATE THE INDIVIDUALS  
AND FAMILIES OUR BUILDINGS SERVE.

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[WWW.ONYXBOSTON.COM](http://WWW.ONYXBOSTON.COM)

## WHY DID YOU DECIDE ON THE HOUSING PROGRAM YOU ARE PROPOSING (I.E. RENTAL VS. HOMEOWNERSHIP, UNIT SIZES, ETC.)?

### **Rental Vs Homeownership**

As home prices are increasing, a significant majority of Roxbury's population cannot compete in a home or condo market. Our development includes mixed-income rental units as the primary focus for the residential component. Providing rental units was the most viable option to support our local residents at all income levels.

Our rental model also has allowed us to provide a community destination with unique commercial opportunities focused on Roxbury entrepreneurs and business owners. Our commercial opportunities are estimated to generate up to 120 new jobs for the community, and create a destination. Our residential model supports more jobs for the community while providing deep levels of housing affordability.

### **Housing program and sizes**

The Crescent RFP has certain stipulations that all developers must adhere to which significantly limited our options. In our desire to change the face and “Look” of affordable housing, we tailored our housing program accordingly.

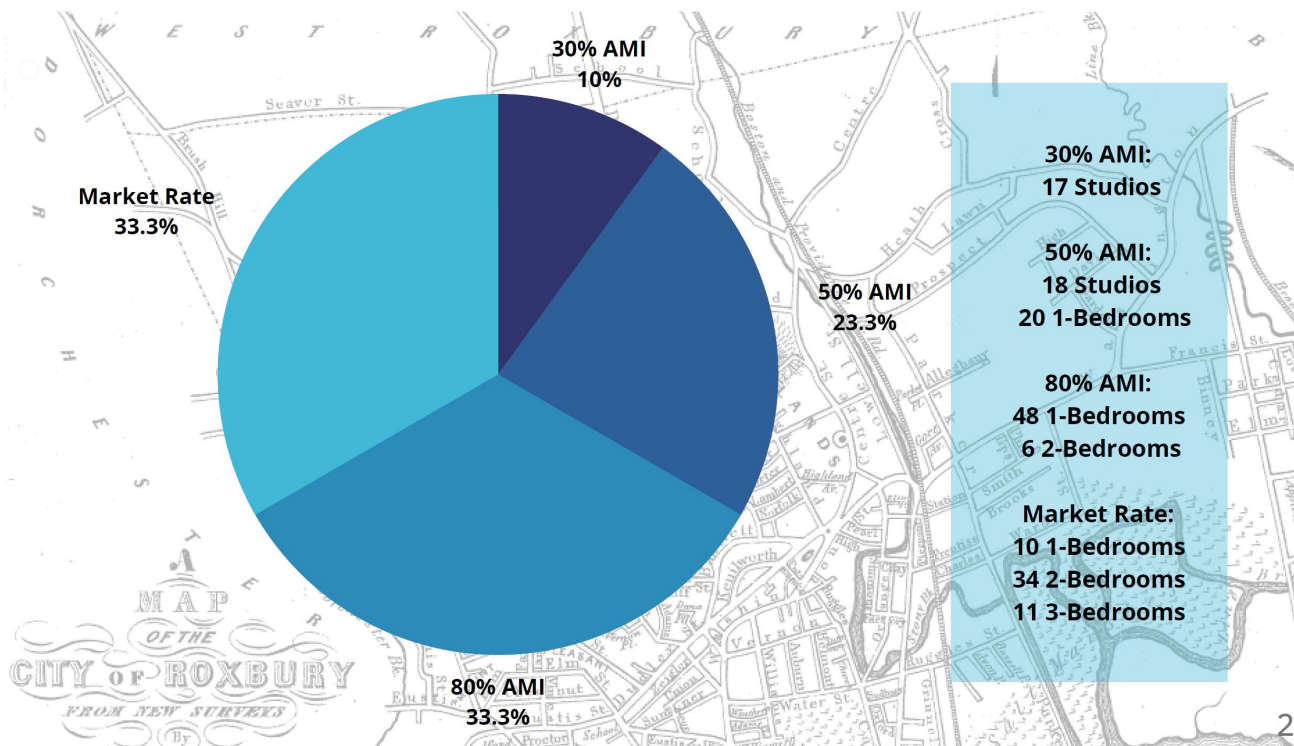
Our design includes a range of compact and non-compact residential units. Boston has created compact living policies to help build more homes that are well-designed and well-located. With our proposal, we create living spaces where people have easy access to work and play. These living areas are well-designed units with storage and natural light, shared common areas, and encourage transportation options that reduce car usage. Per the city of Boston’s website, “Smaller units may make living in Boston near jobs and other community spaces more affordable”.

We intend to meet and exceed the requirements of Boston’s compact living policy to create and curate a healthy living environment for our residents.



# WHY DID YOU DECIDE ON THE HOUSING PROGRAM YOU ARE PROPOSING (I.E. RENTAL VS. HOMEOWNERSHIP, UNIT SIZES, ETC.)?

## LEVELS OF AMI HOUSING AFFORDABILITY



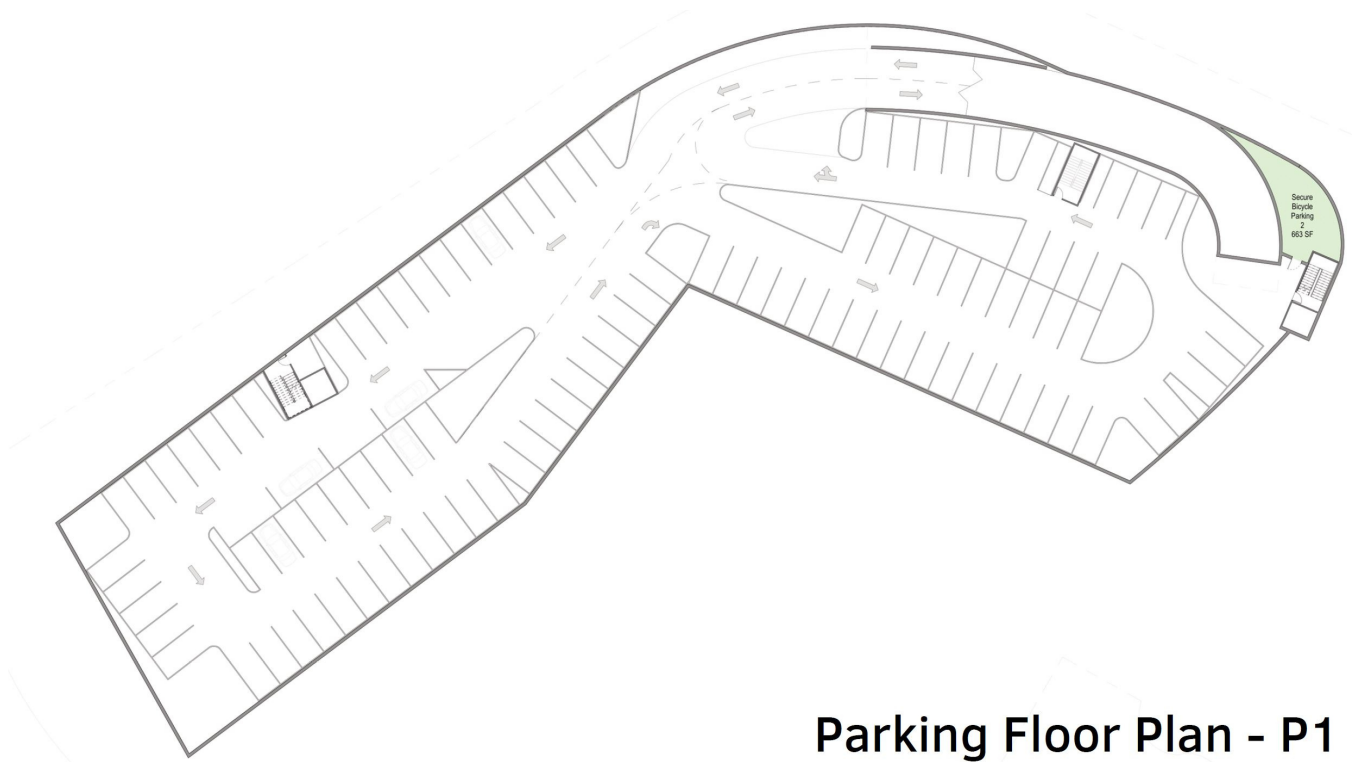
## UNIT TYPE & SIZE RANGES

UNIT TYPE	SQUARE FOOT RANGE
STUDIO	350 - 650 SF
ONE BEDROOM	450 - 700 SF
TWO BEDROOM	650 - 800 SF
THREE BEDROOM	900 - 1,100 SF



## DESCRIBE WHY YOU CHOSE THE NUMBER OF PARKING SPACES IN YOUR PROPOSAL, CONSIDERING THAT CRESCENT IS SO CLOSE TO THE RUGGLES T STOP.

We are proposing up to 202 parking spaces for Cass Crossing. We foresee the commercial component of Cass Crossing being an attraction and destination for area residents and outsiders from our community. We intend to provide ample parking for our residents, parking options for the archdiocese, and provide the infrastructure to support our broader strategic goal to build Roxbury as a feature and destination for performance and the physical arts. We believe providing ample parking is critical to the success of Cass Crossing business.

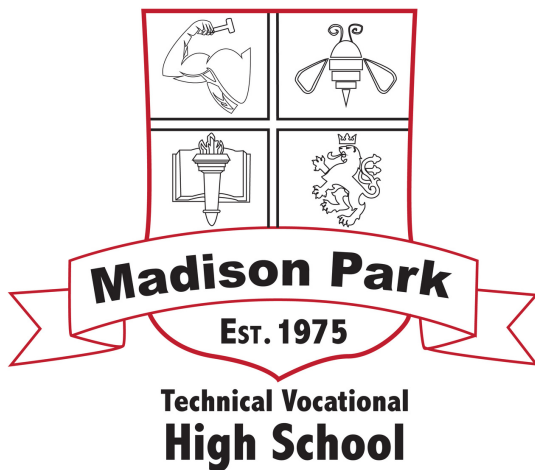


**Parking Floor Plan - P1**

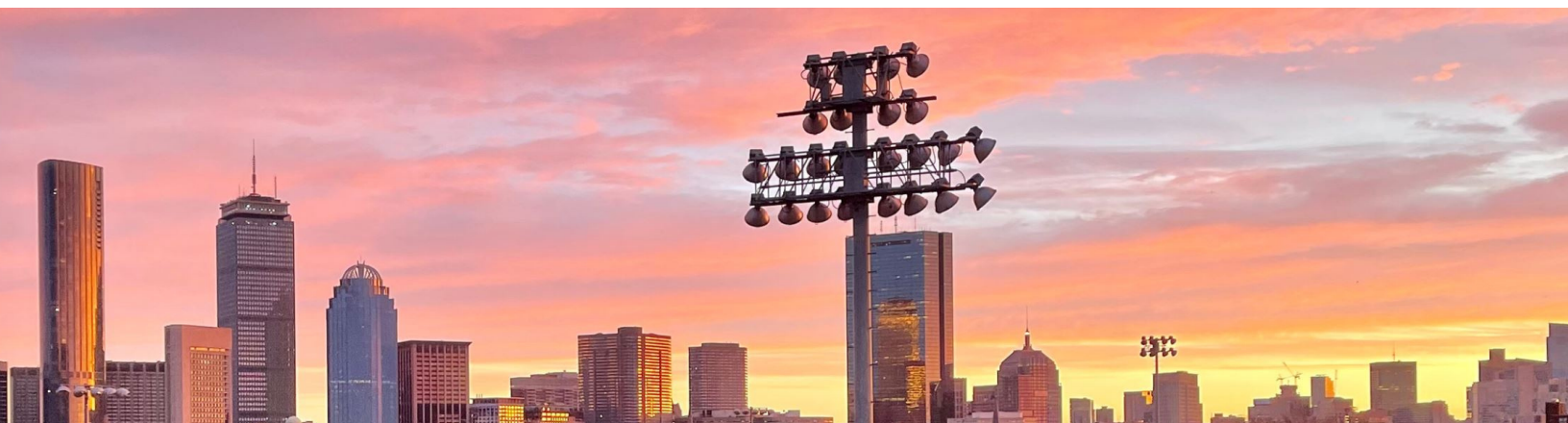
## WHAT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST TO ENGAGE MADISON PARK HIGH SCHOOL AS PART OF YOUR DEVELOPMENT?

In partnership with Ted Galante Architecture Studio and Brian McCaskill, Executive Director of Madison Park Vocational High School, we intend to partner and utilize his neighboring students, local tradesmen and women to engage them on all facets of the development of Cass Crossing.

Additionally, Cass Crossing intends on providing internships to the students for aspects of the project from inception to completion. Upon completion of an internship with Cass Crossing, we plan to assist students in resume creation and career planning services. We seek to engage other community partnerships and businesses to participate in the development process.



*Cass*Crossing



## HOW MANY OF THE EXISTING TREES WILL BE PRESERVED? HOW MANY WILL NEED TO BE REMOVED?

Our current plan includes the removal of approximately seven trees as identified in the site plan below. We intend to keep as many trees as possible and create a center courtyard of trees, other foliage, and flowers to enhance the natural environment of this parcel. We have made intentional efforts to maintain and enhance the green space on this parcel to support the cause of environmental equality, and allow us to do our part in mitigating the heat island effect.

Cass Crossing also includes a rooftop green space, and foliage on the facade of the building. The anchor restaurant space currently programmed for the third floor on the Tremont side of our development is planned to have an outdoor patio with trees and other foliage.

Our consultant arborist will be involved throughout the design, planning, and construction of Cass Crossing to ensure we maintain our commitment to preserving and enhancing the green spaces at Cass Crossing.





## DOES THIS PROJECT INCLUDE HOMELESS FOCUSED PROGRAMMING?

10% of our residential rental units (currently 17 units), are allocated for individuals with an AMI of 30%. This translates to a minimum of 17 studio units available at \$430-\$478/month, with income capped for these units at \$25,400 for a household size of one (per 2021 BPDA income and price limits).

We also intend to work with community organizations like ABCD to provide transitional housing, and child care service programs within the additional archdiocese parcel as proposed in the appendix of our original submission, and identified on onyxboston.com.





THERE ARE A NUMBER OF MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS AREA WITH VACANT RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL SPACE. WHAT STEPS WILL BE TAKEN TO ACTIVATE THE GROUND FLOOR?

Our development program focuses on the placemaking commercial opportunity of the crescent parcel. We believe this parcel is ideally positioned to be transformative for the residents of lower Roxbury, and the surrounding community at large. For this reason, a large portion (~40,000sf) of our total allowable square feet (218,000sf) is dedicated to commercial opportunities.

**We have thoughtfully and intentionally programmed our commercial space by identifying the commercial needs of the surrounding area.** We believe this strong commercial program will activate the ground floor of our development at times of the day. Our current commercial programming includes opportunities for local entrepreneurs and business owners in the following sectors:

- Performance Space, curated by a Grammy award winning artist, Terri Lyne Carrington
- Commerce/Food Hall, connected to the performance space and outdoor courtyards, with restaurant selections featured by area entrepreneurs
- Local Coffee Shop/Bakery
- Anchor Jazz Bar and Restaurant
- Fresh Grocer with local pharmacy collaboration
- Fitness
- Dental
- Banking Opportunities

We have started conditional negotiations with several tenants interested in this as a growth opportunity due to the proximity to Ruggles station and Northeastern University.



## CAN YOU TALK ABOUT PEOPLE OF COLOR IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS ON YOUR TEAM?



The lead developers of CassCrossing and owner/operators of The OnyxGroup Development Company are:

- **Chanda Smart**, CEO & 50% owner, OnyxGroup
- **Shabnam Mashmasarmi**, COO & 50% Owner, OnyxGroup

Our other **Minority leaders** are including but not limited to:

- Legal counsel - Taisha N. Sturdivant
- Financial Consultant and CPA - Glenn Dickerson
- General Contractor - Liseth Valdez - Latina owned
- Construction Consultant - Carlos Castillo

Our Community Partners such as Thaddeus Miles & Mike King are also local people of color. In addition, as a commitment to M/WBE's, Cass Crossing partners and consultant groups are required to meet a minimum 51% employment to minority leadership positions.





## HOW DOES YOUR DESIGN RELATE TO THE ST. KATHARINE DREXEL CHURCH BUILDING?

Our design intentionally preserves the historical nature of the St. Katharine Drexel church building, we also maintain sight lines to the church spire from Ruggles Station.

We intend to work with the archdiocese to ensure the development of the Crescent Parcel is harmonious within the context of these buildings, and also meets their parking and other needs.



## HOW ARE YOU FINANCING YOUR PROPOSAL?

Our current financing plan utilizes our deferred developer equity in the project, and LIHTC (also as equity in the project) to secure the total loan from one of the several institutional lenders we have sought out. Outside of the institutional lenders, we have secured interest from a large private money lender and other institutions.

Additionally, we recognize we have commercial components proposed as part of this project and have secured a letter of intent from a private investor for the finance of the commercial component, and to serve as our guarantor. Our project design would use condominium structure to ease financing of non-eligible LIHTC basis items.

Upon successful project award by the BPDA, will evaluate the offers underwritten by each financial proponent and select the best option for this development.

**Project Financing**

- Mark Woods, Private Debt
- Boston Financial
- JP Morgan Chase & Co
- MassHousing
- Berkadia

**BOSTON FINANCIAL**  
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

**J.P.Morgan**

**MASSHOUSING**

**BERKADIA**

MAP OF THE CITY OF ROXBURY FROM NEW SURVEYS

## DO YOU HAVE ESTABLISHED RELATIONSHIPS WITH SMALL BUSINESSES FOR THE COMMERCIAL SPACE?

Yes, we have begun conditional negotiations with a local grocer, a gym, a local dentist, a local pharmacy, and will be creating opportunities for an anchor Jazz Bar and restaurant, a coffee shop/bakery, and smaller restaurants within the food hall to be adjacent to the performance space to be curated by Grammy Award winning artist, Terri Lynn Carrington.

\*Priority will be given to local Roxbury entrepreneurs, and business owners to occupy the commercial spaces available.

**For more information, or to request availability please email  
[info@onyxboston.com](mailto:info@onyxboston.com)**





## PLEASE PROVIDE MORE DETAIL ON THE COMMERCIAL PROGRAM

We have thoughtfully and intentionally programmed our commercial space by identifying the commercial needs of the surrounding area. For this reason, a large portion (~40,000sf) of our total allowable square feet (218,000sf) is dedicated to commercial opportunities. We believe this strong commercial program is best to ensure the ground floor is an activated and engaging space.

Our current commercial programming includes opportunities for local entrepreneurs and business owners in the following sectors:

- Performance Space, curated by a Grammy award winning artist, Terri Lyne Carrington
- Open Hall, commercial business opportunities in an open hall concept, connected to the performance space and outdoor courtyards
- Coffee Shop/Bakery
- Anchor Jazz Bar/Restaurant - with open space
- Grocer with local pharmacy collaboration (conditional LOI in negotiation)
- Fitness
- Dental
- Banking Opportunities

**We are open to other commercial programming options with local entrepreneurs and businesses. Please email [info@onyxboston](mailto:info@onyxboston) for more information.**



**First Floor Plan**

## HOW WILL SMALL BUSINESSES BE ABLE TO AFFORD MARKET COMMERCIAL SPACE?

We are providing dedicated an open hall which will allow local small businesses owners to share the cost of the services and amenities, while also lowering the overall cost burden of common area maintenance.

We have intentionally created and designed Cass Crossing as a commercial destination. Located directly across from a proposed Northeastern luxury student condo tower, the Northeastern campus, South End, and Ruggles station, this ideal location is positioned to generate significant local & non residential traffic for Roxbury small business owners and entrepreneurs to succeed.

The anticipated pedestrian traffic will be the direct result of our creation of Cass Crossing as a destination, and will serve to provide strong revenues for all businesses of Cass Crossing.



## WILL BUSINESSES LEASE OR OWN THE SPACE?

Our proposal includes leased commercial space; however, we are open to qualify a lease-to-own condo structure for interested small businesses/entrepreneurs.

Please email [info@onyxboston](mailto:info@onyxboston) for more information, and availability.





## WHAT ASSISTANCE WILL THE DEVELOPMENT PROVIDE SMALL BUSINESSES?

The commercial component will include a tenant improvement allowance of up to \$100/sf of leased space to assist in the interior cost of construction for the small business/entrepreneur. For a business occupying 1,000sf, this equals up to \$100,000 in applicable funds to be used towards the construction cost of the business interiors. Cass Crossing businesses will also be highlighted through our marketing efforts to drive business growth and traffic to Cass Crossing businesses.

Additionally, we intend on working with The Boston Main Streets, local neighborhood community groups and other small business services to provide business startup, development courses and other specific resources.





THANK YOU!

Check out our website and follow our Instagram for the most recent updates on Cass Crossing.

**[www.onyxboston.com](http://www.onyxboston.com)**

**Instagram: [@onyxbos](https://www.instagram.com/onyxbos)**